

ACADEMY INTERNAL REVIEW



FERRIS STATE UNIVERSITY

CHARTER SCHOOLS OFFICE

MID-CONTRACT AND REAUTHORIZATION REVIEW





Charter Schools Office Vision, Mission, and Core Values

VISION

Ferris State University will authorize public school academies that promise to transform the lives of students by demonstrating high-quality performance.

MISSION

The Ferris State University Charter Schools Office focuses on student success and continuous improvement through quality oversight, professional learning opportunities, and relevant resources for its authorized public school academies.

CORE VALUES

The core values of the Ferris State University Charter Schools Office are the foundation of our organization's culture. Our values are static, unchanging and non-negotiable, built from the belief that learning is a lifelong process and *all* students can learn.

WE VALUE:

Student Learning

As a higher education institution, student learning is in our DNA; we see the opportunities created when students succeed, and we focus our oversight and support efforts on continual student success.

A Collaborative Working Environment

By supporting each other and building partnerships, we encourage a sense of community through cooperation, teamwork and consensus building with our stakeholders.

Diversity

Recognizing that stakeholders are made up of diverse populations, we honor diversity of ideas, beliefs, and cultures.

Opportunities

Through the work we do as a charter school authorizer, we help create learning opportunities and environments by lending support for professional growth and development.

Excellence

Committed to superior results, we engage in practices that produce the highest quality outcomes in all our endeavors.

Accountability

Accountability leads to academic progress—we believe in being held accountable for our work as an authorizer as deeply as we believe in holding all stakeholders accountable for their work.

Integrity and Trust

Our actions are guided by fairness and respect through transparency, effective communication and the building of positive relationships with each other and our stakeholders.

INTRODUCTION

This document is one of several key documents for those academies undergoing either a Mid-Contract or Reauthorization Review. These reviews are requirements as part of the charter contract and are essential to the Reauthorization process. **If this is an Internal Review for a Reauthorization onsite or virtual review, this document, when completed and submitted, also serves at the Academy's reauthorization application.** The Ferris State University Charter Schools Office (CSO) views these review processes as part of an ongoing evaluation of quality, and not as a singular event.

The **Academy Internal Review** focuses on the Michigan Integrated Continuous Improvement Process (MICIP), Contract Performance Report (CPR), internal data review information, and initiatives, policies, and procedures generated by staff and stakeholder meetings. These documents and procedures provide an opportunity for the Academy's school improvement team and other key stakeholders to self-reflect on some of the key indicators of quality student performance and organizational effectiveness. The CSO firmly holds that quality organizations engage in ongoing conversations regarding continuous quality improvement in all aspects of performance. This review must be based on staff, board, and stakeholder discussion and input to ensure accuracy and agreement on current and future activities, policies, and procedures.

The majority of the information the CSO team will be reviewing and discussing before, during, and after the review will focus on the following categories, all related to the FSU CSO pillars for successful academies:

1. Review of prior Mid-Contract and Reauthorization Review
2. Academic Progress (Pillar #1)
 - a. Academic Data
 - b. Curriculum, Instruction, and Interventions
 - c. The MICIP Process and Results
3. Fiscal Solvency (Pillar #2)
4. Operations (Pillar #3)
5. Compliance & Governance (Pillar #4)

INSTRUCTIONS

The Academy Internal Review is a series of questions that need to be discussed and researched by the school staff. When the process is completed, the Charter School Office (CSO) should have a basic knowledge of strengths and weaknesses the school identifies related to the five categories listed on the previous page. The school's responses to the questions need to be short and to the point (bullet points, short statements, examples of evidence, graphics, etc.). The quality of the answers, not the quantity, is your goal. You will need to review and reflect on past performance and objectively determine current plans and improvements.

Before your team begins to answer the questions in this document, they need to review your School Improvement Process including your Michigan Integrated Continuous Improvement Process (MICIP) documents, your local building/district improvement procedures, Strategic Plans, specific building goals, Contract Performance Report, and any other relevant supporting documents. Strategies to support or bolster efforts in the categories are also appropriate to include in your responses and should be based on documentation.

The completed Internal Review should be submitted to the CSO, via Epicenter, by the date determined in collaboration with the Review Chair (two weeks prior to the visitation). The submission must be a discussion item at a Board of Directors meeting and include the signature of the board president assuring that the full board had a chance to review. Questions regarding the review process or the *Academy Internal Review* document should be directed to CSO Review Chair, Jim Scholten, via email (JamesScholten@ferris.edu) or phone (616) 430-0891.

1. Prior Mid-Contract or Reauthorization Review

After your last Mid-Contract or Reauthorization Review, you received a Final Report, which included a section titled “Opportunities for Growth”. **Briefly list** the “Opportunities for Growth” you addressed and connected activities, procedures, or policies that have been initiated.

One opportunity for growth was to work with a marketing or tech firm to assist with online advertising. We collaborated with Buckeye on an e-campaign throughout 2022 and into 2023, but didn’t have much response. We are also collaborating with Jordan Sheffler to redesign our website, and then to increase traffic to the site and to our Facebook page. Another suggestion was that we need to close the gap on state assessments between NBA and our composite district. To address that, we spent last year evaluating new reading curricular tools and adopted a reading program based on recent research and published by Curriculum Associates (the makers of i-Ready Assessments). Additionally, we’ve spent the last year and a half working on long-term strategic plans to increase enrollment, and have advertised aggressively in Monroe, but are also considering moving to an alternate location.

2. Academic Progress (Pillar #1)

Academic Data

Based on the team’s review of your current academic assessment data, identify 3-5 areas of strength and 3-5 areas of improvement. For each area of improvement, list at least one current initiative that addresses that area (if available).

Strengths: 1) Students’ Reading Achievement last year on NWEA increased from the 32nd percentile in the Fall to the 39th percentile in the Spring. 2) This Fall, our NWEA schoolwide achievement score in Reading began at the 45th percentile. 3) Although we only have access to one grade level, the number of our students who have tested as Advanced or Proficient in both Math and Reading is back to pre-pandemic levels.

Areas of improvement: 1) Although our Reading Achievement on NWEA did increase, it was only up 7 percentile points. We’ve adopted a new, more comprehensive ELA program to address the lack of growth in Reading. 2) Math has typically been the academy’s strongest subject, but this year the growth was less than previous years. This year we have put a focus on fact mastery, use of manipulatives, and elimination of redundant math websites. 3) Students reading

Curriculum, Instruction, and Interventions

- a. Briefly describe Tier I instruction at your academy (curriculum, lesson planning, in-class support to students, etc.).

Students are taught in small groups, with a center based approach for both ELA and Math. Teachers in grades K-4 will be using a new reading program that is more comprehensive, Magnetic Reading. Students in grades 5-8 will use Ready Reading but will also have access to Power Up, a program designed to reach those students who are reading below grade level. Both programs offer an online toolbox for teachers that contain slideshows, videos, center activities, and activities for below, at, or above grade level. Additionally, students have access to a support platform called Freckle that utilizes a preliminary diagnostic test to determine the needs in each child's education. The program sets students up with lessons and practice for each area where they need support. For math, the school also utilizes Ready Math, which has the same supports as their reading program. Additionally, they use Freckle for math facts mastery and to practice any concepts they need support with. Freckle offers Science and Social Studies content as well, and teachers use it in addition to TCI social studies textbooks, and online science texts at GoOpenMichigan.org.

Teachers and paraprofessionals will work with students as a "center" if they need to see the lesson again or need more practice to master the presented concepts. Students work in cooperative learning groups during some of these centers, both gaining insight from others and sharing their own insights as well. Students have access to manipulatives to help solidify complicated concepts, and often complete projects as a way of showing what they know.

- b. What school-wide instructional initiatives are occurring in your academy? What evidence do you have of their effectiveness?

Direct instruction occurs daily in both ELA and Math. This is a research-based strategy that gives teachers the opportunity to catch what concepts students are struggling with in order to give them clarification. This type of strategy seems to be more effective in mathematics, where our students have continued to grow for the last 5 years. Additionally, having another adult in the room in the form of a paraprofessional has been helpful in redirecting students who might get off-task, reinforcing concepts learned previously, and answering questions. Paraprofessionals give teachers more time to spend with students who need more intensive interventions.

- c. How is the school meeting the needs of at-risk students and special education students? Describe your intervention structure and programs. What evidence do you have that your intervention system is working?

All students' academic progress is followed closely throughout the year, particularly on NWEA assessments in the fall, winter, and spring. Students in grade K-3 who perform significantly below grade level are given an Individual Reading Improvement Plan to support them in specific areas both in class and at home. Students in higher grade levels who score poorly are scheduled to work with paraprofessionals.

or teachers in small groups on specific topics. The above-mentioned programs offer specific activities to support struggling students with each grade level concept. At risk students are also monitored through assessments and classwork to ensure they're progressing expectedly. When struggles are detected, those students spend more time working with teachers in their specific area of struggle. Sometimes that involves the support of online programs like Khan Academy, but often just requires a new way of presenting the information. Special education students are monitored closely, as well, in order to identify struggles before testing. Teachers provide all accommodations listed in each student's IEP, but also consults with the Special Education teacher and family for more suggestions if current strategies aren't working. At risk and special education students often have more time scheduled in small group instruction or with a paraprofessional, have first access to after school tutoring and summer school. Teachers also consult with other teachers for strategies that have proven effective in prior years. Our Special Education students are growing more than general education students on NWEA assessments each year, so it seems that this plan is working for that population. We are seeing similar growth in at-risk students whose parents agree to additional services like tutoring and summer school.

MICIP & Strategic Planning

- a. Briefly describe your continuous improvement process and involvement of stakeholders.

Staff analyze data from both M-STEP/PSAT and NWEA scores. Particular attention is given to groups of students who score significantly above or below other groups of students, who don't show as much progress, or who belong to special groups like at-risk or special ed students. Goals are set for the school to move growth and proficiency forward for all groups of students. Additionally, tools that were used prior to those test scores are evaluated by teachers and administrators. New products, tools, and/or strategies are researched and considered, often for a full year before a decision is made to switch, and to select the new tool, program, or strategy to replace it.

- b. What did you learn about your academy from the "Data Analysis" and "Setting Goals" process within MICIP?

Although we're seeing a lot of growth every year, we're not seeing the proficiency that should be associated with it. In changing our goals from a growth perspective to a proficiency perspective, we're hoping to see an improvement in both areas.

- c. Highlight any specific strategies or activities you would like the CSO Review Team to observe or look for during their visit. What impact have they had on student growth and/or achievement?

We have worked to streamline the tools used in classrooms to eliminate the “fluff” present in many educational games. Teachers will be utilizing the many tools available in Magnetic Reading, including the phonics pieces we’ve been missing, Ready’s Teacher Toolbox in both ELA and math, and more individualized practice on the Freckle app. As this streamlining is fairly new, we’re hoping to see significant growth and proficiency in both reading and math as students and teachers focus on program fidelity.

3. Fiscal Solvency (Pillar #4)

List your main financial challenges and any current activities that address the concerns. Also include any current or long-term projects or purchases involving a substantial increase in expenditures (examples: curriculum purchase, facility improvements, purchase of technology, etc.).

Our overall financial challenge is growth. The building is landlocked and very close to Ohio. Enrollment has not rebounded to pre-Covid numbers. Once students come to New Bedford Academy, they tend to stay. Families have many opportunities to connect with the staff through school events, and there seems to be a strong bond. Our challenge is getting families to take a look at the school in the first place. This year we have added GSRP, which will help attract students and families earlier and built our Kindergarten enrollment numbers. We are also researching the feasibility of moving to a more centralized location. Our fund balance is strong, and we continue to look for ways to add to the bottom line. We are taking advantage of additional categorical revenue offered from the State of Michigan. This year we are applying for 23g for afterschool programming. The principal has done an excellent job finding small grants to fund additional building activities. We will continue to work with her to add grant revenue from outside sources. Overall, the outlook for New Bedford Academy is good. Their academic performance and personal attention to families make them very marketable, and with a strong fund balance, the school has some room to build.

4. Operations (Pillar #3), Compliance & Governance (Pillar#4)

Staff Retention

Describe teacher and administrator retention. Is the Academy operating with current staff shortages? Are there any incentives in place to retain current staff? Are there any other staff issues that are barriers to the educational environment?

Currently the Academy is fully staffed, however recruitment of staff is becoming more difficult. This year in addition to standard raises the academy offered retention bonuses and increased salaries \$5,000 across the board. The academy plans to continue incentives as the budget allows. Additionally, the academy has sponsored staff for the alternative certification programs offered through various entities to build its own teacher corp.

Board/ESP Relationship

What is the quality of the relationship between the Board and the Educational Service provider?

The relationship between the board and ESP is strong and has good communication throughout the year. They work collaboratively on a number of issues that concern the school such as finance, student recruitment and initiatives to improve instruction. In addition to monthly meetings the board and ESP meet for strategic meetings and in committees to work on areas of school improvement.

Strengths & Areas for Improvement

List the strengths of your current organizational (board, management company, building administration) leadership procedures and personnel. List areas for improvement in the organization.

The main strength of the leadership team is communication between all of the parties and a recognition of the shared goals and objectives for the school. Conversations regarding areas of concern or strengths are open and constructive. Board members and the school principal are active in school activities and attending events off campus that promote the school. The board also works with the ESP attending training opportunities, engaging in financial research, and making themselves available whenever needed. The Board members ask questions and hold school leadership and the management company accountable for enrollment, fiscal solvency, student growth and proficiency, and parent/student satisfaction. Problems are addressed immediately as a group and expectations are clear among all parties. Areas for improvement include replacing board members quicker and improving the schools marketing and student recruitment efforts.

SIGNATURE PAGE

Stakeholder Involvement

List all academy team members who assisted with the completion of this document. Chairperson will sign to attest that all names gave input to the *Academy Internal Review* document.

Debi Pyles
Print Name

Director of Compliance and Operations
Title

Angela Rudolph
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Dr. Jeff Hamlin
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Superintendent
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Dr. Amanda Magnuson
Print Name

Asst. Superintendent
Title

Amanda Magnuson
Chairperson Signature

10/17/2023
Date

Board of Directors Review

Date of Board Meeting Review 10/17/2023

I attest that the full Board of Directors was given the opportunity to review the *Academy Internal Review* document prior to submission to the Ferris State University Charter Schools Office.

Board President Name: TIM ROTHMAN

T. Rothman
Signature

10/17/2023
Date