

FERRIS STATE UNIVERSITY

CHARTER SCHOOLS OFFICE

Review Type: Mid-Contract

Academy Name: Northridge Academy

Date: December 14, 2022

The Review occurred virtually with 3 members on the Ferris State University Charter Schools Office (CSO) Review team. The team met with, and interviewed, the School Leadership Team and Governing Board members. We appreciate the open communication and transparency from the academy team.

Onsite Review Findings

Pillar #1: Academic Progress

- Are classroom interactions cooperative and conducive to learning? Is there a structure approach to managing student behavior throughout the school?
- Do teacher provide clear learning goals leading to purposeful instruction?
- Are a variety of instructional strategies materials used to meet diverse needs?
- Is the learning environment structured and time maximized for learning? Do leaders and teachers share the responsibility for creating a learning environment that supports all students?
- Are students given the opportunity to develop higher order thinking skills?
- Has the school identified growth initiatives that appropriately address the needs of their student population?
- Does the school prioritize continuous improvement and monitor progress toward goals?
- Is there evidence of a positive school climate focused on student learning?

Areas of Strength	Opportunities for Growth
<u>Culture</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• There is a culture of high expectations, encouragement, and positive self-talk, e.g., morning meetings, daily affirmation, affirmation stations, journaling, etc.• Acts of kindness and positive behavior are celebrated via class dojo, punch card incentives, etc.• PBIS protocols are embedded and have led to improved behaviors over the years. Having an on-staff Behavior Coordinator and Social Worker has added additional layers of student support.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Continue efforts to get teaching staff certified. Consider looking into additional supports to assist staff in pursuing alternative pathways or MTTC (Michigan Test for Teacher Certification) tutoring.• Continue efforts to develop culturally responsive classrooms.

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Staff input is welcomed and valued. They describe a supportive community based on relationship-building and open communication. • Partnerships with GISD have provided access to beneficial opportunities such as Math4Flint and After School Programming. • Community partnerships (Priceless Dreams, Mott Middle College, Sigma Zeta, local churches, etc.) have provided support and opportunities for students and families. <p><u>Instruction</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There are systemwide practices embedded schoolwide - sequence of instruction, formative assessments, Success for All, etc. • Staff report a data-rich culture with extensive use of assessments e.g., Focal Point, AimsWeb, NWEA, M-Step/PSAT practice, IXL, Khan Academy, etc. • Data (outcomes, perception, process) is continually analyzed and used to drive planning, data teams, centers, and interventions. • Instructional coaches are consistently visible. They conduct frequent walkthroughs, lesson plan reviews, and individual weekly teacher meetings. • There is an elevated level of staff collaboration and communication. Dialogue related to supporting student needs, guide planning and MTSS/RTI mobility. 	
<p><u>Pillar #2: Fiscal Solvency</u></p> <p>○ Does the academy demonstrate fiscal responsibility, responsiveness, and sustainability?</p>	
Areas of Strength	Opportunities for Growth
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increases in enrollment have been instrumental in adding to the stability of finances and increase in fund balance. • Seek out partnerships that often result in additional funding. • Disciplined in expenditures of funds. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue efforts to establish a salary schedule that is consistent with local school districts. • Continue efforts to increase enrollment.

Pillar #3: Operations

- Do school leaders and members of the Board of Directors effectively manage the academy's operations?
- Are there systems that make the school sustainable, even with teacher or principal turnover?

Areas of Strength	Opportunities for Growth
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• School Leaders and board members have an incredibly positive relationship, and open communication with Leona Group.• There are financial incentives to attract and retain staff.• The grounds and facilities are well maintained. There is new playground equipment.• The leadership transition was smooth and effective.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Continue to focus on teacher retention and the development of systems that make the school sustainable, even with teacher or principal turnover.

Pillar #4: Compliance & Governance

- Does the academy comply with all applicable laws and regulations?
- Does the academy comply with all contractual obligations as outlined in the charter contract?
- Does the Board of Directors provide competent stewardship and oversight of the academy?

Areas of Strength	Opportunities for Growth
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Northridge has a veteran board with knowledge of, and experience in, educational administration and fiscal solvency.• The board has a positive working relationship with school leaders and Leona Group. They describe efficient oversight of operations and fiscal solvency.• Board member subcommittees and monthly preparedness contribute to fast, efficient meetings focused on prioritized issues.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Work to achieve 100% on-time compliance.• Continue efforts to develop a written strategic plan in alignment with the mission, vision, and core values.

Contract Performance Report(s) Review

Pillar	Areas of Strength	Opportunities for Growth
Pillar #1: Academic Progress	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Northridge Academy met both educational contractual goals for 2021-22: academic growth & student achievement. The academy met or exceeded the following academic targets which inform the goals: 58 on the MDE growth index, scored above the 50th percentile on the school conditional growth percentile on NWEA in both math and reading, 47.79 on the MDE overall school index, and outperformed their composite district on state assessments in ELA and math. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Proficiency growth on the state assessment should be an area of focus, especially in the area of math. Pre-COVID, the academy had 23% of students proficient in math. The academy should make returning to this level a goal for the end of the current contract.
Pillar #2: Fiscal Solvency	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Northridge Academy was designated as “Fiscally Stable” according to the last two Audited Fiscal Performance & Accountability Scorecards produced by the Ferris CSO. For both 2020-21 and 2021-22, the academy met standards for current ratio, change in fund balance, and debt-to-asset ratio. The academy currently has a healthy 21% fund balance compared to revenue. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> None at this time.
Pillar #3: Operations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> None. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> None.
Pillar #4: Compliance & Governance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Board attendance above the Ferris portfolio average. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Northridge Academy reported less than 100% compliant for the last two years. The expectation is 100% compliance. Work on filling vacant board positions if the academy stays as a 5-member board.

Dr. Christopher White



Associate Director

Ferris State University Charter Schools Office