

FERRIS STATE UNIVERSITY

CHARTER SCHOOLS OFFICE

Review Type: Reauthorization

Academy Name: Northridge Academy

Date(s): November 14 & 15, 2024

FINAL REPORT

The Review occurred at Northridge Academy with 6 members on the Ferris State University Charter Schools Office (CSO) Review team: Chris Loiselle – Director, Peg Baker – Associate Director, Beth Taylor – School Support Specialist, Sharon Hopper – Compliance & Governance Specialist, Susan Wakefield – Field Representative, and Jim Scholten – Reauthorization Review Chairperson. The team had the opportunity to meet with, and interview, multiple stakeholder groups, including the School Leadership Team, Governing Board members, teachers, and parents. The team was able to visit 6 classrooms to observe teaching and learning. The team had a discussion with the building leader focused on current operations. We appreciate the open communication and transparency from the academy team.

Onsite Review Findings

Pillar #1: Academic Progress <ul style="list-style-type: none">○ Are classroom interactions cooperative and conducive to learning? Is there a structure approach to managing student behavior throughout the school?○ Do teachers 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
Academic Progress: Behavior Management <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Programs (Chill program, mindfulness strategies) designed to give students’ a voice.• NRA Family – Prioritize strong relationships, Students have staff cell numbers, Staff is available, Students want to please staff.• Convey this a safe place.• Leader in Me language, Use of common language.• Classroom DOJO.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Continue the programs that teach and support appropriate social-emotional growth.• Look for an opportunity to reinstate Springboard- (Parent Literacy training.)

- All teachers have specific students “assigned” to them.
- Positivity inherent in PBIS, affirmations, PRIDE matrix etc.
- Strong focus on growth and test scores.

Approach to Instruction

- Common sequence: Do now, intro, instruction, wrap.
- Bell-to Bell teaching.
- Agendas for all Tiers, Scaffold lessons.
- Tier groups based on assessment data.
- Resource rich.
- Data walls.
- High student expectations are clear – on-time, prepared, engaged.

Mastery of Skills

- Center-based hands-on instruction.
- Formative assessments.
- Use of built-in curricular questions.
- Ensuring equity in classroom.

Support for Struggling Students

- Continual teacher support – Instructional Coaching.
- Early release to allow for teacher training.
- IXL in all four cores, Study Island.
- Intervention groups set based on fall NWEA data.
- Investing time in students outside the classroom.
- After-school tutoring groups.
- After-school sports.
- Mental health professionals lead social skills groups.

Additional Support for Student Learning

- New effort to increase parent volunteers.
- PBIS celebration every month.
- Daily School Wide Morning Meetings.
- Parent surveys to get feedback.
- Parent Meetings – provided list of resources for academics and mental health.
- Springboard – Early Literacy Parent Program.
- Frequent two-way communication with parents: in-person contacts, texts, calls, newsletters, and emails.

Academic Program Improvement

- Literacy Grant – for more training in Wit and Wisdom.
- On-boarding for new teachers includes training.
- Literacy Essentials on-line training for Instructional Coaches.
- Instructional Coaches model in classrooms.
- Lesson Plans with intentionality and structure.
- Useful PD for teachers – NWEA, Wit & Wisdom, etc.
- Established Growth Mindset.


Assessment Purpose <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Teachers use NWEA data to adjust teaching. Leaders establish goals for students. Focal Point Assessment – narrow focus with higher order questions. 	
Pillar #2: Fiscal Solvency <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Does the academy demonstrate fiscal responsibility, responsiveness, and sustainability? 	
Areas of Strength	Opportunities for Growth
Financial Sustainability <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Budget developed with financial manager at Leona Group. No purchase without financial manager approval. Leaders directly involved with budget development. Strong fund equity. Growing student enrollment. 	Develop a long-term facilities management plan that includes the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Plans to refurbish units to accommodate growth. Consider a gym separate from cafeteria use – lunchroom addition. Consider borrowing money for renovations.
Pillar #3: Operations <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 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
Operations <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Bonuses for teacher retention. Recognition and Awards for teacher retention. Efforts to build staff sense of belonging. Consistent monitoring of staff and student attendance. Teachers send monthly newsletters. Teachers contact 5 parents a week. Special Ed monitored and recorded through TLG – student logs related to IEPs. Consistent messaging from all stakeholders regarding Northridge expectations in the classroom, hallways, and throughout all programming is evident. All adults tied to Northridge know and follow the expectations. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continue to celebrate the work of all staff. Share positive school feedback with all staff. Look at implementing additional team building activities for all staff to learn more about each other. Continue to research the potential of adding a GSRP or Young 5 program.
Pillar #4: Compliance & Governance <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 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
Compliance & Governance <ul style="list-style-type: none"> All academic assessment results, strengths and weaknesses are shared with the board during meetings. Reports to board regarding plans for academic improvements. Monthly financial reports at all board meetings. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Board should develop a long-term facility improvement plan now, knowing that the building will be paid off in 1-2 years and given continued increases in enrollment. Annually conduct a formal Board Self Evaluation – FSU can provide a template. Annually conduct a formal ESP Evaluation – FSU can provide a template.

- Any unusual expenditures explained in detail – check register reviewed.
- Strategic Planning meeting November 22.
- Student focused decisions.
- ESP evaluation – board demonstrates full independence.
- Board has significant stability and longevity.
- Board has experience and knowledge in finance and education.
- Board members regularly attend meetings and actively participate.
- Board helps with school leadership development to ensure smooth transitions in leadership occur.

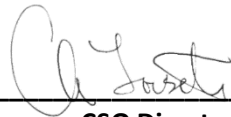
Contract Performance Report(s) Review and Financial Scorecard

Pillar	Areas of Strength	Opportunities for Growth
Pillar #1: Academic Progress	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Northridge Academy has met both educational contractual goals for 2021-22 and 2022-2023 school year. • For the 2023-2024 school year they have been identified as a Tier I school qualifying for universal support. • The academy has met or exceeded the following Growth goal targets for three consecutive years: The school Growth Index (waiting on score), the 50th percentile on the school conditional growth percentile on NWEA in both Math and Reading. • The academy has met or exceeded the following Proficiency goal targets for three consecutive years: The Overall School Index (waiting on score) and has outperformed their composite district on state assessments in ELA. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • While the academy is experiencing adequate growth to close the gap in reading and math, they need to continue to focus on their students that are struggling to reach grade level norms on the NWEA tests in both reading and math.
Pillar #2: Fiscal Solvency	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Academy meets all Fiscal Support Indicators and has been verified as Fiscally Stable as of the 2023-24 Audited Financial Statements. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • None noted
Pillar #3: Operations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Academy has strong building culture, and consistent classroom expectations. Board meeting effectiveness is high, and retention of members is high. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The 2022-23 safety checklist shows some concerns about safety • The current facility can adequately support 300 students, but given enrollment growth, a long-term facility plan is encouraged
Pillar #4: Compliance & Governance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The 2022-23 Compliance Support Indicators show that in most areas (Staff Certification, Insurance Coverage, Epicenter On-time compliance, and State non-compliance notifications) are all meeting or exceeding requirements. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Epicenter Submission Accuracy was 'approaching' in 2022-23 but is at 100% for 2023-24

Signed



CSO Review Chair



CSO Director