

FERRIS STATE UNIVERSITY

CHARTER SCHOOLS OFFICE

Review Type: Virtual Mid-Contract

Academy Name: Pittsfield Acres Academy

Date(s): February 4, 2025

FINAL REPORT

The Review occurred virtually with Pittsfield Acres Academy and included 5 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, and Jim Scholten – Reauthorization Review Chairperson and Field Representative. The team met with and interviewed multiple stakeholder groups, including the School Leadership Team and Governing Board members. The team discussed 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

- 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
<ul style="list-style-type: none">● Behavior Management<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ PBIS and CHAMPS practiced in every classroom.○ Expectations are covered in each lesson, and students know what is expected of them and how to ask for help.○ Teachers have autonomy to decide which incentives they will offer in their classroom.○ Support from the office and Ms. Baker is offered when the situation calls for it.○ Restorative practices and positive reinforcement are the first steps when students struggle with their behavior.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● Continue to look for expanded MLL supports.● Continue to monitor and find ways to support the higher achieving students for growth.

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Monthly school wide assembly for character trait awards. Each month has a different trait. Teachers select students that embody the trait, and they get celebrated at the assembly. ○ Constant communication between parents and teachers via Class Dojo. Ms. Baker is also in communication with parents when the situation calls for it. ● After School Events <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ After school events to interact with the community and increase enrollment. ○ Annual math night in which each grade level hosts a table with math games that students can enjoy with their parents. ○ Annual ELA night. ○ Curriculum night to explain PAA's curriculum to parents. This event provides advice for how parents can support their students. ○ STEAM program in partnership with Pittsfield Township Parks and Rec ○ Coffee and Conversation with Ms. Baker. This event provides advice for how parents can support their students. ● Support for Struggling Students <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ PAA has a small group of students that are monitored because they are struggling to make academic progress. Each of these students have an MTSS profile. ○ Teacher observations to determine which students need extra help. ○ 40-minute remediation time block is built into each teacher's schedule (WIN Time). ○ 50% of the school population is considered MLL, and PAA has a new MLL coach that supports students and teachers in the classroom. ○ Students that are new to the country and need the most support are taken out of the classroom and assisted in small groups. ● Academic Program Improvement <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Bi-weekly data teams meeting. ○ PAA teachers partner with grade level partners at GEE sister schools. ○ MTSS meetings every six weeks. ○ ESGI program for progress monitoring. ● Ms. Baker's experience as a teacher allows her to understand the curriculum offered to students and be an effective instructional leader for her staff. She has cultivated a strong learning environment and sense of community. 	
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
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Management Company financial support <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ GEE created mailers for PAA and has pinpointed which families in the community. have children in grades K-5. ○ GEE supplies money for gift card incentives. ○ GEE assists with online marketing by placing ads. ○ GEE is in constant communication regarding PAA's needs. ● Community <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Community members know about PAA and refer students to the academy. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Enrollment growth is necessary to become financially sustainable – continue connecting with the community and drawing potential enrollments to the school through expanding and building local connections. ● Debt mitigation strategy – the school continues to build debt with the management company to cover operating costs. As enrollment improves this should be mitigated, but the debt load may hamper

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Ramadan event in which community vendors will be brought into the academy and the school will raise money. ○ Building tours offered to parents. ○ Referral incentive offered to families of current students. ○ Online marketing via Facebook and Instagram. ● Management Company support and knowledge is strong. 	<p>expansion plans as enrollment increases. Evaluate this with the management company and board annually.</p>
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
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Staff <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ GEE is effective at posting available jobs across the internet. ○ Ms. Baker conducts all interviews and is clear with her expectations. She looks for passionate teachers that want to be at PAA. ○ GEE conducts background checks and ensures that teachers are qualified instructors. ○ GEE offers training and tutoring to teachers that need to pass their MTTC tests. ○ GEE offers teachers opportunities to continue with their education. ○ PAA is currently fully staffed. ● Building <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Close relationships with maintenance crew. ○ Enter all maintenance and building requests into an online system. GEE responds quickly and sends different crews when needed. ○ GEE provides support for building maintenance. ● Culture <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Ms. Baker and the teachers are outside the school and classrooms every day with smiles on their faces. ○ Interactions with parents during drop-off and pick-up times. ○ The students react positively to the CHAMPS program. ○ Daily morning announcements that go over monthly character traits and recognize student accomplishments. ○ Initiatives throughout the school year that reward student behavior and attendance. ○ Restorative practices included in every classroom. ○ Students can share thoughts and feelings in the classroom every day, which has built trust. ○ Communication used to try and resolve issues in-house. ● GEE Support <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Helped PAA create safety manual and create ways to handle each system. ○ GEE has ensured that PAA has all necessary safety supplies. ○ Alice training given to PAA staff. ○ GEE tells PAA what needs to be covered and gives them support in securing training. ○ GEE has scheduled for PAA to have their water plan implemented by 2026. ○ GEE provides support and checks and balances. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Consider hiring additional teaching staff and/or paraprofessional as enrollment expands or needs increase (ex. MLL student population). ● Continue to monitor safety plans and water management plan. ● Continue to monitor and adjust professional development to support needs as they arise. ● Continue to support new staff in obtaining certification (ex. MTTC support).

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?

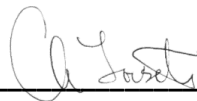
Areas of Strength	Opportunities for Growth
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Ms. Baker covers the Strategic Plan in her principals' meeting every month. In these meetings, the board hears about data teams meetings, MLL, curriculum, newly piloted programs, professional development offered to teachers, community events, monthly character traits and how students are performing, and building updates.• The PAA board has a member that is knowledgeable about finances.• The PAA board has a member that is knowledgeable about education.• Monthly finances given to board members before meeting and during the meeting board members can ask questions.• GEE does a great job of meeting and exceeding CSO compliance requirements.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Board and school leadership collaborate on strategic planning. Solidify and incorporate discussion of the strategic plan and any goals into board meetings.• Complete a board self-assessment that FSU can administer for the board.• Complete an ESP evaluation that FSU can administer for the board.• Need commitment from all board members to attend and participate in all board meetings.• Fill the vacancy on the Board.

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">• Students in grades 2-8 exceed their overall School Conditional Growth Percentile target in both reading and math on the NWEA assessment.• The school is exceeding their Growth Accountability Index target and their Overall Growth Index target as published by the state.• Students are performing at an elevated level compared to their composite resident district.• Students are meeting achievement goals on their Math NWEA.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Continue to focus on student achievement on the NWEA reading test.
Pillar #2: Fiscal Solvency	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• 	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Enrollment slowly increasing.• Debt load.
Pillar #3: Operations	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Meets most operations indicators.	
Pillar #4: Compliance & Governance	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Exceeds most compliance indicators.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Low attendance of board members at board meetings has led to cancelled board meetings due to lack of quorum.

Signed


CSO Review Chair



CSO Associate Director