

April 2025 Board Communication

❖ 2025-2026 Budget

As a board responsibility, financial oversight is second only to student achievement in importance. Boards have an obligation to ensure that school leaders and/or management companies have competently and effectively managed the school's finances. It is that time of the year when schools begin to develop their budget for the next year.

Michigan law requires a public school's budget to be presented, discussed, sought public comment and adopted at a public meeting. This is called a budget hearing and it can take place within a regular school board meeting. The public must be given notice of the hearing by publication in a local newspaper at least 6 days prior to the budget hearing. The notice must include the date, time and place of the hearing and shall state where the proposed budget is available for public inspection prior to the budget hearing.

Typically, school boards schedule their budget hearing in May or June. With that said, board members should receive the proposed 2025-2026 budget far enough in advance of the scheduled budget hearing to permit time for them to review and understand it, frame meaningful questions and negotiate changes, if appropriate. Best practices also include comparing the proposed budget with past budgets to understand the school's income and expense trends. The careful planning and strategic allocation of resources is critical to the success of your school.

Before July 7th of each school fiscal year, each school district is required to submit their annual budget to CEPI (Center for Educational Performance and Information). Also, the State School Aid Act requires the annual budget, and any amendments, to be posted within 15 days of board adoption on the Michigan's Budget Transparency Icon on the school's website. Budgets and its amendments must be detailed at the function level with beginning and ending fund balances.

❖ Board of Directors Question Toolbox

The Ferris State University Charter Schools Office is happy to provide you with a few questions to help further your conversations this month. The question focus could come from one or more of our four School Support Pillars: Academics, Fiscal, Operations, and Compliance.

Please note that this is meant as a reference, some items may not apply to all schools, and that there are many questions a board member may choose to ask. If you have questions, please reach out to your Field Representative or the Ferris State University Charter Schools Office.

We will focus on Pillar #2 Fiscal:

- Has the board received, reviewed and approved the 3rd quarter financial statements due April 30th in Epicenter?
- Has the board treasurer and/or board finance committee received a draft budget for the next fiscal year?

- Has the board treasurer and/or board finance committee provided feedback on next year's budget and does it align with the priorities that were previously established by the board and school leadership?
- What was the spring student count? Was there a substantial change from the fall student count?
- What contracts/agreements are set to expire on/before June 30th? Where are we in the process to secure new contracts/agreements? Does the contract/agreement require the review of the CSO Director?

❖ Important Epicenter Deadlines

April 2, 2025 – Student Count
 April 30, 2025 – Budget - 3rd Quarter Financial Statements
 May 1, 2025 – Notion of Open Enrollment Certification of Completion

❖ Important Dates

April 1, 2025 – Board Professional Development Webinar
[Cultivation Relationships as Part of Good Governance](#)
 May 6, 2025 – Board Professional Development Webinar
[Navigating Your Role as a New Board Member – Part II](#)
 May 9, 2025 – Ferris State University Board of Trustees meeting

❖ Consent Agenda Within the Regular Board Agenda

If efficiency is important to your Board, then a consent agenda should be utilized. In Robert's Rules of Order, a consent agenda, also known as a consent calendar, is a list of routine items that are non-controversial and can be approved in one motion. This saves time by reducing the need for multiple motions and discussions.

Items appear on the consent agenda only if all board members agree. If any item that a member believes needs discussion then it should be removed from the consent agenda and placed on the regular agenda. Board Presidents should provide an opportunity for members to ask questions about consent items before proceeding with the motion, support and vote.

Items that may be included in the consent agenda are:

- Approval of today's board meeting agenda
- Approval of last month's proposed meeting minutes
- Correspondence
- Reports that are for informational purposes only

The key to successful use of consent agenda items is to provide those documents to the board members in the board packet well in advance of the meeting. This allows board members ample time to read and analyze the information in order to make informed decisions.

❖ Virtual Board Professional Development Opportunities

The next virtual session in our 2024-2025 board professional development series, *Board Governance Etiquette*, will be on April 1st at 6pm. The topic will be *Cultivating Relationships as Part of Good Governance*. In your board role and in cooperation with the legal structure under which you operate as a board, there are many relationships to understand, acknowledge and cultivate. This includes the relationship between the board and authorizer, the board and management company, the board and the Michigan Department of Education, etc. This session will outline these roles and discuss how respectful, trusting and transparent relationships with all critical stakeholders will aid in the success of your governance operations and the school over which you govern.

The 2024-2025 board professional development series will conclude with its final virtual session on May 6th at 6pm. This interactive session will be *Navigating Your Role as a New Board Member: Part II*. Novice board members are encouraged to participate and share their experiences in their first chapter of serving on a school board. Also, dialogue amongst attendees is encouraged to share knowledge and experiences about the role and responsibilities of the board.

Board members look for an email invitation from AirWin Educational Services with registration information for both sessions.

In case you missed previous virtual board professional development sessions below are links to the recordings. If you would like a copy of a presentation or handouts, please contact Sharon Hopper at SharonHopper@ferris.edu.

[Navigating Your Role as a New Board Member: Part 1](#)

[Why Can't We All Just Get Along](#)

[Establishing a Positive Board Culture](#)

[Bringing Order to Meetings](#)

[A Practical Guide to Becoming a GREAT School Board Member](#)

[Acquainting Yourself with Board Policy](#)

❖ Any Questions?

You may contact your FSU Field Representative or Sharon Hopper if you have any questions regarding this Board Communication. Important and/or urgent information that cannot wait until the next Board Communication will be sent to you by email.