

FERRIS STATE UNIVERSITY

CHARTER SCHOOLS OFFICE

February 2025 Board Communication

❖ Closed Session

The Michigan Open Meetings Act allows a closed session during an open meeting, but only for specific purposes (see limited list below). If one is needed, there would need to be an agenda item titled *Closed Session*.

In the open meeting a board member makes a motion to go into a closed session specifically citing one or more permissible purposes for a closed session. The motion is seconded and then a roll call vote. A 2/3 vote is required to call a closed session. Record in the regular meeting minutes start and stop time of closed session as well as cite the permissible purpose of the meeting. Once the closed session is done a board member makes a motion to go back into the open meeting, then seconded and voted on.

Any vote on matters discussed in the closed session must occur in the open meeting. For example, in closed session the details around a student's discipline are discussed and voted on. Then when the Board returns to the open meeting a board member makes a motion to discipline student number #123456789, seconded and voted on, but no details are shared.

Staff and others may join the Board in a closed session because the Board may rely upon others for assistance or information. For example, the Board may invite a school leader to a closed session when that person may have details about a student's behavior, prior interactions, etc.

The OMA requires a separate set of meeting minutes to be taken in the closed session. These minutes are only furnished to the board members, not the public which includes Epicenter and school staff. A board member's dissemination of closed session minutes to the public is a violation of the OMA and risks include criminal prosecution and civil penalties. Closed session minutes may be destroyed one year and one day after approval of the minutes of the regular meeting at which the closed session occurred.

Limited Purposes For Closed Session During An Open Meeting

- To consider the dismissal, suspension or disciplining of, or to hear complaints or charges brought against, or to consider a periodic personnel evaluation of, a public officer, employee, staff member or individual agent ***if the named person requests a closed hearing.***
- For strategy and negotiation sessions connect with the negotiation of a collective bargaining agreement ***if either negotiating party requests a closed hearing.***
- To consider the dismissal, suspension, or disciplining of a student ***if the student or student's parent or guardian requests a closed hearing.***
- To consider the purchase or lease of real property up to the time an option to purchase or lease that real property is obtained.
- To consult with an attorney regarding trial or settlement strategy in connection with specific pending litigation, ***but only if*** an open meeting would have a detrimental financial effect on the litigating or settlement position of the public body.
- To review and consider the contents of an application for employment or appointment to a public office ***if the candidate request that the application remain confidential.***
- To consider material exempt from discussion or disclosure by state or federal statute.
- To consider security planning to address existing threats or prevent threats to the safety of the students and staff.

❖ Important Epicenter Deadline

February 15, 2025 – Annual Education Report

❖ Important Dates

February 4, 2025 – Board Professional Development Webinar

[The Role of the Board Treasurer](#)

February 12, 2025 – Michigan Student Count Day

February 14, 2025 – Ferris State University Board of Trustees meeting

March 4, 2025 – Board Professional Development Webinar

[Acquainting Yourselves with Board Policy](#)

❖ Open Enrollment

This is a good time of the year for boards to review, and update, if necessary, their academy's open enrollment and lottery process.

Before the open enrollment period begins the school leader and board need to set enrollment maximums by building or grade level(s). Maximums can be stated as either the total number of available slots per grade/building or the current number of openings per grade/building (subtract current enrollees from total maximum number per grade/building). These grade/building maximums should be posted on the academy's website.

Michigan law states that the open enrollment period must be for the duration of at least 2 weeks and that the enrollment times include some evening and weekend times. It further states that the academy makes a reasonable effort to advertise its enrollment period. This is accomplished by placing an advertisement in the local newspaper. The advertisement should also state the enrollment maximums and that the board has the ability to change the maximum enrollment numbers per grade/building based on potential enrollees, available staff and facility limitations.

A public school academy cannot pick and choose which students to enroll, but may give enrollment priority to 1 or more of the following:

- the new enrollee is a sibling of a currently enrolled student at the academy,
- the new enrollee has a parent employed at the academy,
- the new enrollee has a parent on the Board of Directors of the academy and
- the new enrollee is a transfer from another academy that has a matriculation agreement with the academy.

When the open enrollment period ends the school leader and board must determine if the number of new enrollees exceed the open slots in a grade, combination of grades, building or district. If the number of new enrollees does not exceed the number of open slots, no lottery is needed. However, if the number of new enrollees during the open enrollment period exceeds the number of open slots, a lottery must be scheduled and held within 2 weeks of the close of the open enrollment period. The above described enrollees get enrollment priority, as stipulated by Michigan law, and do not need to be placed into the lottery procedure. If a lottery is needed school leaders must contact their FSU CSO Field Representative with the date, time and location of the lottery.

Other open enrollment information and the lottery procedure can be found in the Charter Contract, Schedule 7, Sections e and f.

❖ Virtual Board Professional Development Opportunities

The next virtual session in our 2024-2025 board professional development series, *Board Governance Etiquette*, will be on February 4th at 6pm. The topic will be *The Role of the Board Treasurer*. This will be an interactive Zoom session bringing together board treasurers to share best practices when it comes to the board's fiscal responsibilities. School boards must ensure the public funds the school receives are allocated, spent and reported properly. Since financial oversight is a critical function of the board, all board members are encouraged to attend this session.

Mark your calendar for March 4th at 6pm for *Acquainting Yourself with Board Policies*. This webinar will highlight the role board policies play in effective governance. Adopting and following board policies are an essential role of a public school 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](#)

Recently the CSO Director Chris Loiselle was the keynote speaker at a management company sponsored board retreat where he discussed board governance. Below is a link to a recording of his presentation.

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

❖ 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 #1 Academic and Pillar #2 Fiscal:

- Based on midyear benchmark assessments, how is the school performing against its accountability plan and internal strategic plan goals for the year?
- What does the school's data indicate about its strengths and areas for improvement? How do these strengths and weaknesses reflect the ways in which the board has allocated resources, and how may the board want to adjust resources going forward?

- (For high schools) how is your school performing at preparing all students to meet graduation requirements?
- What was the spring student count? Was there a substantial change from the fall student count?
- What contracts are set to expire on/before June 30th? Has the board designated someone on the board to review, and someone in school leadership to negotiate expiring contracts?
- When is the finance committee expecting to receive a draft budget for the next fiscal year?

❖ **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.