

# FERRIS STATE UNIVERSITY

## CHARTER SCHOOLS OFFICE

### January 2025 Board Communication

#### ❖ January is National School Board Recognition Month

Each January we celebrate **National School Board Recognition Month**, a time to shine a spotlight on the unsung heroes of our education system—our school board members. This observance, established to highlight the vital role school boards play in shaping the success of students, recognizes the dedication, leadership, and vision that school board members bring to our schools. Serving as the bridge between communities and schools, these public officials work tirelessly to uphold educational excellence, advocate for resources, and create policies that support students and educators alike. Their efforts ensure schools remain places of opportunity, growth, and inspiration for every child.

As we observe this important month, we extend our deepest gratitude to our school board members for their commitment to public education. Your dedication to guiding our schools, often during challenging times, is invaluable. From long hours spent in meetings to making tough decisions that impact students, teachers, and families, your leadership fosters the growth of our communities and ensures a brighter future for all. Thank you for your unwavering service, your vision for academic excellence, and your steadfast belief in the potential of every student. Your efforts make a profound difference, and we are truly grateful.

#### ❖ Ferris State University Board of Trustees 2025 Meeting Dates and Deadlines

FSU Board of Trustees Meeting Dates	Board Candidate Application Epicenter Deadline	Request for Charter Contract Amendment Deadline	CSO Deadline to Submit all BOT-related Documents
February 14, 2025	December 23, 2024*	January 6, 2025**	January 10, 2025
May 9, 2025	March 17, 2025*	March 31, 2025**	April 4, 2025
October 3, 2025	August 11, 2025*	August 25, 2025**	August 29, 2025
December 11, 2025	October 20, 2025*	November 3, 2025**	November 7, 2025

\* No later than this deadline, the Academy Board must formally recommend board candidate for appointment. Also, the candidate's application/conflict of interest questionnaire, resume and proof of US citizenship must be submitted in Epicenter.

\*\* No later than this deadline, the Academy Board must formally approve a Board Resolution for a Charter Contract Amendment. Also, the Academy Board must send the signed Board Resolution to the CSO Director for consideration.

## ❖ Virtual Board Professional Development Opportunities

The next webinar in our 2024-2025 board professional development series, [Board Governance Etiquette](#), will be on January 7<sup>th</sup> at 6pm. The topic will be [Bringing Order to Meetings](#). This session will include the importance of Roberts Rules of Order and how using this parliamentary procedure ensures consistency, efficiency and professionalism to your public board meetings.

On February 4, 2025 at 6pm will be an interactive Zoom session focused on the [Role of the Board Treasurer](#). It will bring board treasurers together to discuss their role and responsibilities to ensure the public funds the school receives are allocated, spent and reported properly. Since financial oversight is a critical function of the Board of Directors, all board members are encouraged to attend this session.

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](mailto: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](#)

## ❖ Important Epicenter Deadlines

January 1, 2025 – Certification of Constitution Day

January 1, 2025 – Certification of Constitutionally Protected Prayer

January 15, 2025 – Emergency Drills Report – WEB POSTING

January 31, 2025 – Budget 2<sup>nd</sup> Quarterly Financial Statement

March 17, 2025 – Board Candidate Application (for consideration at the 5/9/2025 FSU BOT meeting)

## ❖ Important Dates

January 7, 2025 – Board Professional Development Webinar

[Bringing Order to Meetings](#)

February 4, 2025 – Board Professional Development Virtual Interactive Session

[The Role of the Board Treasurer](#)

February 14, 2025 – FSU Board of Trustees meeting

## ❖ You've Got Mail

Please make sure to regularly check your inbox of the email address you provided to our office. Periodically we have important communication specifically targeted to individual board members or all board members, which may require a timely response. Also, your school leader, management company and/or Board President may send information to you via email. If you change your email address, please provide it to the school leader, management company, Board President and FSU Field Representative so we all have the most current contact information for you.

## ❖ 2024-2025 CSO Competitive Grant Program

The CSO received grant applications from 19 of the 20 FSU-authorized academies for the CSO Competitive Grant Program. While the program had a limit of \$400,000 to award, the CSO received a combined request amount of \$428, 212. Therefore, the CSO had to make decisions about how to distribute the funds in a fair and equitable manner. It was important to the CSO that each applicant receive a portion of the grant. Below is the breakdown of grant awards.

In December 2024 the CSO processed a supplemental payment in the award amount, prior to the normal State Aid payment at the end of December. By June 30, 2025 the academy is required to submit in Epicenter verification and certification that the award amount was spent on its intended purpose, as well as present this information to the Board of Directors at a public meeting prior to submission in Epicenter.

Academy	Award Amount	Intended Purpose
Battle Creek Montessori Academy	\$9,000	Information Technology Equipment
Benton Harbor Charter School Academy	\$9,000	Safety and Security
Blended Learning Academies Credit Recovery High School	\$7,286	Support Robotics Program
Bridge Academy	\$24,000	Safety and Security
Clara B. Ford Academy	\$25,000	Support Staff in Their Educational Pursuits
Creative Technologies Academy	\$25,000	Library for Elementary School, Collapsible Choir Risers and Classroom Desks, Chairs and Whiteboards
Hope Academy of West Michigan	\$25,000	Safety and Security
Hope of Detroit Academy	\$25,000	Sensory Seating and Supports
Huron Academy	\$25,000	Staff Professional Development
Joy Preparatory Academy	\$20,000	Supplemental Curriculum Licenses and School Improvement Stipends
Lighthouse Academy	\$18,490	Cost of Subscriptions for Non-ML Learners
Marshall Academy	\$22,398	Safety and Security
Michigan Collegiate	\$25,000	Educational Field Trips
Muskegon Montessori Academy for Environmental Change	\$25,000	Sturgeon in the Classroom Project and Interactive Smartboards
New Bedford Academy	\$25,000	Safety and Security and Extra-curricular Clubs and Sports
Northridge Academy	\$25,000	Bleachers
Pittsfield Acres Academy	\$20,000	Enhancements for Sensory Room and Diversity Library
Red Oak Academy	\$20,000	Student Lockers and Playground Project
Voyageur Academy	\$24,000	CTE Tools and Equipment

## ❖ 2023-2024 CSO Annual Report and Authorizer Accountability Report

The 2023-2024 CSO Annual Report has been published and shared with Ferris State University leadership and other stakeholders. Besides summarizing information about the CSO, the report provides important facts about each of the academies in our portfolio. Below is a link to the report.

[2023-2024 Charter Schools Office Annual Report](#)

Also, the CSO has submitted the Authorizer Accountability Report to the FSU Vice President for Governmental and External Affairs, who will submit it to the State of Michigan as required by law. Below is a link to the report.

[2024 Ferris State University Report on Authorizing](#)

## ❖ CSO Website

The Charter Schools Office has made significant changes to its official website this year. Those changes will be explained below. The CSO website can be accessed using this link:

<https://www.ferris.edu/charterschools/>

### Authorized Schools Section

Each academy has a homepage in the Authorized Schools section. Each homepage has the following information:

1. Date established
2. Reauthorization and contract expiration date
3. Name of Educational Service Provider (ESP)
4. Grades served
5. Mission statement
6. Contact information
7. A copy of the current contract
8. A copy of the most recent Contract Performance Report (CPR)
9. A copy of the most recent ESP Agreement
10. Link to a Reports/Performance Data page, which is a catalog of reports created for each academy
11. Link to the ESP's website
12. Link to the academy's website

### Resources Section

The resources section has been divided into four subsections.

#### 1. Academy Application Materials

##### a. This section includes:

- i. Announcement that the CSO is accepting new applications
- ii. Instructions for submitting a new application
- iii. A copy of the application packet

#### 2. Academy Board of Directors Resources

##### a. This section includes:

- i. A collection of previous **Board Communications**
- ii. A quick reference of **Roberts Rules of Order**
- iii. A copy of the **Board of Directors Application**
- iv. A copy of the **Conflict of Interest Form**
- v. A copy of the **Open Meetings Act**
- vi. A copy of the **Open Meetings Act Handbook**

#### 3. Newsletters Section

- a. This section includes a collection of newsletters published by the CSO

#### 4. Reports Section

- a. This section includes an organized collection of annual reports published by the CSO

## ❖ **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 #3 Operations:**

- Are the board's policies and procedures working effectively? Are any changes needed to improve the board's functioning, and if so, what might those changes be?
- How is the board maintaining a presence and active involvement in the school community?
- Does the school have a plan, within the next two months, to finalize the school calendar for the following year?
- As the school enters staff recruitment season, how is the board ensuring that any staff who manage hiring decisions are fully aware of certification requirements for teachers?

## ❖ **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.