FERRIS STATE UNIVERSITY

Charter Schools Office

Detroit Delta Preparatory Academy for Social Justice

Mid-Contract Review

January 30-31, 2017

Ferris State University
Charter Schools Office

Report:	Mid-Contract Review Visitation
Academy:	Detroit Delta Preparatory Academy for Social Justice
Visitation Dates:	January 30-31, 2017

The visitation occurred at the Detroit Delta Academy Campus with four members on the Ferris State University Charter Schools Office (CSO) visitation team. The team had the opportunity to meet with and interview the school leadership team, two school board members and the School Improvement Team. The team was able to tour the facility and visit several classrooms to observe teaching and learning. We appreciate the open communication and transparency that was apparent with all we were able to interact with.

Visitation Findings

School Improvement Plan (SIP) and EdYes! School Systems Review	
Observations	Opportunities for Growth
School Improvement Plan (SIP) • Staff are well aware of the SIP, as well as its goals and efforts for improvement. • The goals are clearly identified in terms of student performance. • Interventions are designed within the SIP plan, and staff are aware of these interventions. • One of the strategies is to have ongoing professional development (much of which is done before school starts). • Instructional coaches are trained to support teachers. • You have monthly meetings during your early release days (Wednesday) to help teachers drill down to improve lesson plans and teaching.	**School Improvement Plan (SIP)** • It is important to develop and use a system/process to determine if interventions that have been implemented are producing student success. **Ed Yes! School Systems** • The pacing guides would be more helpful if they are better designed to set a clear outline for effective and necessary teaching and learning. • There seems to be a lack of evidence that shows student deliverables. Are the students producing quality work leading toward their academic success?

• There is a good partnership established with “Michigan Teaching Core” and University of Michigan Flint for attaining student teachers. • There is an emphasis on monitoring student attendance with a process to address students with too many absences. • When asked how your mission and vision are embedded in what you do your response was “we have a relentless determination to service all of our students”. • You indicated that one of your goals is to become a “destination/premier charter high school”. • You are providing extra help for students beyond the classroom. You have found this needs to be done during the lunch time because you have found it is difficult for students to attend after school because of transportation. The lunch sessions are well attended. **Ed Yes! School Systems** • It is evident that there are adequate instructional coaches for the student population. • There are ample training opportunities and resources for staff and coaches. • There are ample strategies in the SIP to support the SIP goals. • It seems to be a good practice that support services are divided between STEM learning goals and humanities learning goals. • The behavioral Interventionist; Coach Reeves, is well respected by students and staff. His work with the students to help them follow school rules and expectations is helpful and needed. • There is an emphasis on data analysis and interpretation. • The school leader holds monthly one-on-one meetings with each staff member to review their efforts to improve student learning. This is a very good practice. • The advisory class held each day is a good practice to help students set and work toward achieving personal goals.	• It is important to differentiate within the classroom if students are paying attention or fully engaged in the learning activities. It requires engagement to produce high level learning. • It is necessary to determine and ensure the fidelity of effective teaching and learning activities. It is helpful if the pre-determined classroom processes are used throughout the building. • It would be helpful to define standard expectations and procedures for the advisory sessions. • It is important to ensure that systems/processes expected to be in place in each classroom are implemented with fidelity and a process is in place to determine if these are helpful. • It is necessary to define and document your MTSS program. It should be clear how you will address the needs of students in each tier. • Continue your efforts to improve your common lesson plan format and use. Ensure they are aligned with pacing guides which are aligned with your defined curriculum and student learning outcomes. • It can be very helpful to review/check off learning objectives with the students that have been followed in a unit of learning so that students can see the importance of the learning objectives and also check to determine if they have learned. • Continue to put practices in place to help you reach your goal of becoming a “destination/premier charter school.”

Facilities Review

Observations	Opportunities for Growth
• A tour of your facility and classrooms showed a good effort to have a clean school. • Teachers have made good progress in making their classrooms more attractive. • The art work displayed was very good. • There is plenty of space for enrollment growth. • It appears that there is a good relationship with the building landlord which will be helpful to make improvements.	• Important to correct the heating/cooling system. • Important to upgrade and improve the security system. • Important to redo/improve bathrooms. Currently there are floor tiles missing and a need for improved hand washing units.

Academy Culture Review

Observations	Opportunities for Growth
• Students were very polite and respectful to each other, staff, and visitors. • The mentoring program "Original Girls" supported by the sorority appears to have a very positive impact. Continue your efforts to provide a similar program for the boys. • The opportunities for visual arts, dance, and music make a positive difference. • The emphasis on "AAA" (Academic, Arts, Athletics) is positive. • The community partnerships are helpful. It would be helpful to maintain a list and log of interactions with these partnerships.	• It appears that the level of communication between the ESP & Board, ESP & staff needs to be improved in order to reach higher levels of student success. It is important to understand each entities value to the academy, their roles, their respect, and help that can be expected. • It would be helpful for staff to receive professional development in "Culturally Responsive Teaching". • It is necessary to make improvements in each student's realization that they can and need to become outstanding scholars/students. This will help with improving attendance and student outcomes. • It would be helpful to define and expect standardized routines, expectations, and behaviors in all classrooms.

Mission Accomplishment

Observations	Opportunities for Growth
• Board members and staff indicate that their "mission, vision, and core values" drive what DDPA does every day. • The school leader indicates that she and her staff try each day to live the mission in how they treat and interact with each other and students.	• It would be helpful to develop a better display of the mission, vision and core values throughout the building. • Continue the effort to review the mission and vision statements to determine if they are currently relevant.

Website	
Observations	Opportunities for Growth
• A review of your website showed that you are providing essential information.	• Providing a link to your school policies would be helpful. • Providing a link to your curriculum, pacing guides, and/or class syllabuses would be helpful.

Academy Internal Review

Student Outcomes	
Observations	Opportunities for Growth
• The school leader is aware of student achievement outcomes. She is proud of growth yet understands the levels are still low and need to be improved. She recognizes that DDPA students' scores must exceed DPS's scores. • The school leader has a very good understanding of her staff and their needs. She works with staff to make improvements by holding one-on-one monthly meetings with each staff member. She keeps an updated portfolio of their teaching progress and uses the Equity evaluation process to ensure success. • The school leader worked with others to change the student schedules when it was determined that the block schedule was not working well. • The school leader is very aware of the need to improve student attendance. DDPA has implemented many processes in order to better track and follow up with absent students and parents. • The school leader recognizes the need to improve her staffs' culture. It is important to have compassion and see the good in each student. • When asked about data teams it was stated that your staff has a regular schedule for meeting. You have early release days on Wednesdays. The 1st Wednesday is for PLC meetings, the 2nd for data meetings, the 3rd for school culture meetings, and the 4th for committee meetings.	• Improve the use of a standardized lesson plan format using aligned skills as listed in pacing guides. • Continue to encourage schoolwide discussion and active engagement in school improvement activities. • Address the need for implementing schoolwide expectations for classroom routines; including an emphasis on student engagement. • Focus on the need to increase student outcomes through the use of best practices and quality instruction. • Continue to evaluate and reflect on system protocols to ensure effectiveness and impact on student achievement. • Work with ESP to establish a "culture of learning" that encourages intrinsic motivation through individual accountability and goal setting.

Governance and Leadership	
Observations	**Opportunities for Growth**
• The board is very dedicated to the students with a clear understanding of their learning and life needs. • The board subscribes to the National Charter Schools Institute Board Policies; allowing the board to assure that they have effective, best-practices policies in place to provide direction to the academy. • The board has a workable number of members and meet regularly to conduct academy business. • The board is working with Angie Irwin to help them understand their role. • The board attends many professional development opportunities proved by FSU. They find these to be very helpful. • The board is working to improve how they govern.	The Board should: • Continue to refine and understand their roles and responsibilities, as well as those of the ESP. • Direct, and expect others to effectively implement their expectations. • Develop an effective strategic plan. • Lead by example in promoting the academy's mission, vision and core values. These need to drive decisions. • Ask the right questions when reviewing student achievement. • Lead with facing the brutal facts regarding student achievement and then work to find appropriate solutions. • Make their policies more accessible.

Resources and Support Systems	
Observations	**Opportunities for Growth**
• The ESP provides for quality professional development for the staff. Some of this is done in the fall before school starts, some is provided to instructional coaches; who then provide trainings to staff. • Staffing needs are currently being met. • Instructional coaches are being provided to help staff members. Help is differentiated to meet the individual needs. • Help was provided to the staff to change the student schedule when it was determined that the block schedule was not working.	• Communicate with staff regarding the ESP's roles, responsibilities and the extent of services provided. • Clarify and improve accessibility to curriculum, pacing guides, and lesson plan documents and helpful tools. • Ensure that recruitment efforts continue to ensure that quality staff are in place.

CSO Review of Overall Performance for Detroit Delta Preparatory Academy for Social Justice (DDPA)

Contract Performance Report Review	
Observations	**Opportunities for Growth**
• 2014-15 compliance rate was 100% and 2015-16 rate was 99% • DDPA had a fund equity of 16% at the end of 2015-16	• SAT benchmark proficient scores were much lower (about 1/3!) of the composite district scores in both ELA and Math and the average of the total scores was only 789 • The percentage of funds spent on instruction was only 33% of budget, one of the lowest in CSO's portfolio while the percentage of dollars spent on business and administration was 29%, one of the highest rates
School Support Team (SST) Updates	
Observations	**Opportunities for Growth**
• Student behavior does not appear to be a barrier for learning	• Current compliance has slipped to 96% • Visitation reports indicate quality student created deliverables are limited, student engagement is low, and attendance remains an issue • The CSO is concerned about the level of Board involvement in the Academy Internal Review process • Visitors do not see the emphasis or results on the social justice theme • Although the overall appearance of classrooms has improved, the building maintenance and temperature control still needs attention

Overall Opportunities for Growth

- Board meeting visitors have noticed texting and distractions during the meetings. Outside communication should be minimized or eliminated.
- DDPA has had their Title I funds withheld. That concern, coupled with mismanagement of the Charter School Start-up Grant, indicates a problem with policies or procedures related to federal funding.
- The Board of Directors need to ask the right questions so they get accurate and complete answers, especially in the areas of academic performance, ESP procedures, and financial matters.

Current CSO Expectations in Consideration for Recommendation of Reauthorization. These are subject to change.

- DDPA's Top-to Bottom Ranking, when available, cannot be 0-4%.
- PSAT/SAT scores must be higher than their composite district scores and improving.
- DDPA must develop and successfully implement a comprehensive plan to increase daily attendance and decrease the time students are not in class.
- CSO representatives need to see more results from the emphasis on social justice.
- The CSO may have other academic and non-academic expectations as more information becomes available. All other contractual and policy standards must be met and maintained.

Signed_____
CSO Visitation Chair

Signed_____
CSO Associate Director