

History of CTA

In 1996, Dr. DeWayne Coxon began doing research as to the feasibility of developing a charter school in Cedar Springs. Facilities, partially approved by the State Fire Marshall for educational purposes, were available. After making several contacts, a decision was made to write a proposal.

In 1997, DeWayne and another community leader, Niels Andersen, wrote a proposal to Grand Valley State University where it appeared a charter might be granted. As it turned out, there were not enough charters available and GVSU recommended that the CTA proposal be submitted to Ferris State University. FSU was particularly interested in having one or more of their charter schools open a high school, so they agreed that if DeWayne and Niels were willing to begin with grades 7-12, that they would grant the charter.

Once again, a decision was made to rewrite the proposal and curriculum for those grades and in May 1998, FSU notified DeWayne Coxon that a charter would be granted under the condition that 120 students were enrolled by fall. Otherwise, there would be a need to wait one year which affected the approval by the State Fire Marshall. A team was quickly assembled who began a marketing campaign and advertised for qualified staff.

Since there was no management company, funds were made available through individuals to purchase equipment, computers, textbooks, and furniture besides office supplies and other necessary miscellaneous items. This caused some anxiety because the condition still existed that 120 students had to enroll in order to enter into agreement with Ferris State University.

Thankfully, 122 students enrolled, the conditions were met, a contract for a charter was signed, and school began in late August 1998.

Since then the Academy has grown to 300+ students (near capacity). Twenty certified teachers and fourteen other employees work together to meet the high academic standards expected by the State, by Ferris State University, and by the CTA Board. Facilities have been renovated and new facilities have been built, and the Academy is now positioned to be an excellent “school of choice” serving up to nineteen school districts at any one time.

Most recently, the Ferris State University Board of Trustees approved the reauthorization of the Academy’s charter for another five years through June 30, 2019. The University’s Charter School Office conducted an intensive reauthorization review in September of 2013 in anticipation of the expiring contract of June 30, 2014. A written report of that review was issued in March of 2014. The report includes evaluations of the Academy’s Strategic Planning, Mission, Vision, and Core Values, Governance, School Improvement, Financial Viability, and School Culture. The Academy achieved an

overall score of 466.2 points out of 500 (93.24%) and was categorized as “**Exceeds Standards.**” A copy of the Reauthorization Review is available for review at the Academy’s central office at 350 Pine Street, Cedar Springs, Michigan.

The Ferris State University Board of Trustees approved the reauthorization of the Academy’s charter this spring and the Academy received its new contract at the end of June, 2014. “I am pleased with our school’s evaluation under rigorous accountability standards. With recent media reports that paint schools in a negative light I think it is important for our community to know that it is served by a public school academy that is transparent, focused on continuous improvement, and is a partner with the community in the educational process,” said Dan George, CTA School Leader. “I do not view our school as a competitor to traditional public schools. We are a partner with the other schools in our area. We all want the same things – a better education for our children and a better community for them to live in. I am blessed to have a wonderful staff, and I’m blessed with friends and colleagues in other schools that partner with us to serve children.”