

# news

APRIL 2025

“No rain, no flowers.”

-Huraki Murakami



## From the Top

Dear Board Members and Academy Leaders,

As the days get longer and the air warms (hopefully in the U.P.), we are excited to welcome the season of renewal and growth! Spring is not just a time for blooming flowers and sunny days—it's also a season of new opportunities, fresh ideas, and continued progress. In this edition of our newsletter, we're sharing exciting updates, upcoming events, and the strides we're making toward ensuring an enriching and supportive environment for our portfolio.

Whether you're a board member, school leader, educator, or community member, we hope this newsletter helps keep you informed and connected with everything happening in the LSSU CSO community. Let's embrace the season of growth together and look forward to the many exciting things ahead!

Chris Oshelski  
Executive Director



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# Board Member Recognition

Thank you for your time, energy, and commitment to your academy.  
The world needs more individuals like you who are willing to  
utilize their talents to improve educational options for the students in your  
community. We appreciate you.

-LSSU CSO Team



## Board Members with 5+ Years

**Steven Borich**

Advanced Technology Academy

**Dr. Janice Gilliland**

Advanced Technology Academy

**Deborah Veenstra**

iCademy Global

**Sandy Severn**

Ridge Park Scholars Academy

**Dr. Patricia Moesner**

WAY Detroit

## Board Members with 10+ Years

**Angeline Gardner**

American International Academy

**Lena Jankowiak**

Bay City Acadmey

**Jeffrey Derenzy**

Concord Academy Boyne

**Airlene Gross**

Detroit Service Learning Academy

**Jennifer Johnson**

Macomb Montessori Academy

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## Board Member Updates

- Applications for board member reappointments or new appointments are due by Friday, April 4th. Please be sure to have all documentation submitted to your field representative so that we can process and make the LSSU Board of Trustees agenda deadline. The only LSSU Board of Trustees meeting prior to term expirations will be held on May 16th, 2025.
- New and Expanding MDE form is due by Friday, April 11th, 2025 to the Charter Schools Office. Remember, if your academy is not expanding, you need to still return the form with a NOT Expanding box checked.
- Board Members--The Charter Schools Office is seeking possible topics for future professional development. Please submit your suggestions to your field representative.



# Charter Week Challenges

## Celebration Time

This year Charter Week will be celebrated on May 12th through the 16th. We will once again host a daily challenge on our LSSU CSO Facebook page with the chance to win a \$100 gift card with each challenge. Visit our FB page for details.

**Monday:** Show off your academy swag.

**Tuesday:** Show off your LSSU swag.

**Wednesday:** Create a poster that explains why your academy is so amazing.

**Thursday:** Post a picture of your students participating in any extracurricular activities.

**Friday:** Post a picture of your amazing academy leader.

We will also once again hold our Unsung Hero and Change Maker contests.

### What is an Unsung Hero?

An Unsung Hero may be a support staff, lunchroom worker, custodian, or volunteer who positively impacts your academy. This individual may not receive many accolades but makes a real difference in the lives of students and families. This may NOT be an individual serving in a leadership role, teacher, or board member. Here is the [link](#) to nominate an Unsung Hero.

### What is a Change Maker?

A Change Maker is an individual who is innovative, creative, goes above and beyond, and demonstrates tenacity when advocating for their academy students, families, and communities. This individual promotes positive change that improves student outcomes. Board members, teachers, administrators, and others will be considered for this award. Here is the [link](#) to nominate a Change Maker.



Charter Day  
@ the Capitol  
May 6



# -Summer Retreat-



“Everything good, everything magical, happens between the months of June and August.”

-Jenny Han

Lake Superior State University Charter Schools is partnering with Ferris State University Charter Schools to coordinate a summer leadership retreat. The retreat will be held on July 22nd and 23rd in Bay City, Michigan at the Doubletree Hotel and Conference Center. Attendees will include leadership teams from both authorizers. The keynote speaker will be Neil Ihde. Neil delivers topics that help organizations, teams, and individuals to increase their personal and professional effectiveness. To learn more about Neil, click [here](#).

The theme of the conference is Balanced Leadership. Attendees will experience a variety of sessions that center around caring for your self so that you avoid burnout. LSSU will cover the cost (for our academies) of one hotel room per site and one vehicle for mileage. To view a sneak peek of presenters, click [here](#). To register for the event, click [here](#). The deadline to register is May 23rd, 2025. We hope to see you there.

## School Support Updates

### Place Based Learning Opportunity 5th-8th Grade Teachers

#### 2025-26 Year Long Professional Learning

- June 23-25, 2025 Onsite: LSSU & EUP
- Yearlong implementation support & peer collaboration
- On site PBL experience in collaboration with Beth Christiansen Spring 2026
- Limited to 12 participants
- [Teacher Interest Form](#)



### Tap into Talent Peer Professional Learning 2025-26

Looking for facilitators for the following:

- Fall Book Study (6 weeks)
- January 21st Lunch & Learn Facilitator (one hour in length following leadership meeting)
- April 15th Lunch & Learn Facilitator (one hour in length following leadership meeting)

Please reach out to [tbell@lssu.edu](mailto:tbell@lssu.edu) if you are interested in facilitation.



# Art Center Programming

We are delighted to invite your students to a special theatrical event at the Arts Center at Lake Superior State University this spring! New Canon Theatre Co. proudly presents *An Iliad*, the acclaimed one-actor performance piece adapted by Lisa Peterson and Dylan O'Hare. This unique residency, featuring Dr. Patty Gallagher, Professor of Theatre at the University of California, Santa Cruz, is specifically designed for charter school students in grades 8-12.

The event will take place on Friday, April 25, 2025, and will include a 90-minute workshop in the morning, followed by a live performance of *An Iliad* in the afternoon. This opportunity is made possible through the 3% grant from Charter Schools, allowing students to experience a world-class theatrical event right here at LSSU.

## About An Iliad

*An Iliad* is a powerful and modern retelling of Homer's epic, exploring timeless themes of war, honor, and the human condition. Dr. Gallagher's solo performance brings the story to life with energy, passion, and emotional depth, making classical literature accessible and compelling for today's students. The performance will be enhanced by live original music composed and performed by Jake Sorgen on our Steinway piano, providing an immersive and unforgettable experience.

## Why Your Students Should Attend

This is an extraordinary opportunity for students to experience a professional theatre performance and educational workshop led by a renowned artist. Dr. Gallagher has performed *An Iliad* both on the West Coast and internationally, including in India. Her passion and expertise will provide students with a deeper understanding of storytelling, literature, and performance art. We strongly encourage charter schools to take advantage of this fully funded opportunity! Participation is limited to 30 students for the workshop, so early registration is recommended. The performance is open to a wider audience, and we welcome additional students to attend the afternoon session. To register your school, please fill out the following [\*\*google form\*\*](#), and we will connect with you as soon as we can. We would love for your students to be part of this inspiring and educational day.

We look forward to welcoming you and your students to the Arts Center for this remarkable event!

Kind Regards,  
Melissa St. John & Noah Lucé

## Event Schedule

10:00 AM – 11:30 AM

Workshop with Dr. Gallagher

11:30 AM – 12:30 PM

Lunch break

(students bring their own lunch)

12:30 PM – 2:00 PM

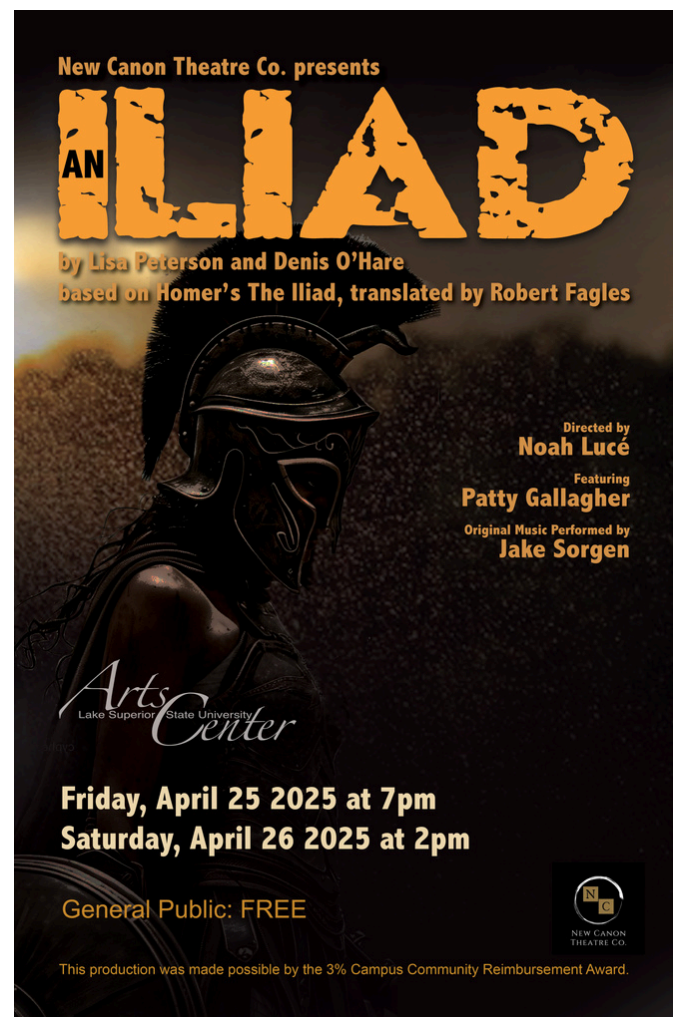
Live performance of *An Iliad*

2:05 PM – 2:30/45 PM

Q&A session w/

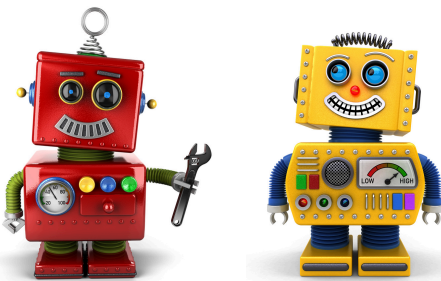
Dr. Gallagher & Noah Lucé

Content Warning: Discussions of war, death, mayhem, and dismemberment (historical to Greek mythology). Strong profanity (infrequent). References to Alcohol (infrequent).



# iCademy Global

Last weekend, our robotics team showcased incredible skill and determination at the St. Joseph District competition! We're thrilled to announce a strong 9th place finish out of 40 highly competitive teams. This achievement reflects the hard work and dedication poured in by every member and mentor. Adding to our success, our team led the 6th alliance with strategic prowess and collaborative spirit, demonstrating exceptional leadership under pressure. But the accolades didn't stop there! We are incredibly proud to have been awarded the prestigious Industrial Design Award sponsored by GM. "The Industrial Design Award sponsored by General Motors celebrates the team that demonstrates industrial design principles, striking a balance between form, function, and aesthetics. Creative design allowed quick adaptation to the ocean currents. Reinventing the WHEEL this team maintained reliable performance on the field. On the field these GLOBETROTTERS reliably navigate the reef." These results are a testament to our team's commitment to excellence and serve as a powerful motivator as we look forward to our next competition at GVSU March 21 and 22. Congratulations to everyone involved and thank you to our sponsors for your support to get us there.



Submitted by  
iCademy Global

## 10 REASONS WHY KIDS SHOULD LEARN ROBOTICS

Click [here](#) for full article

1. **Promotes creativity and critical thinking**
2. **Improves problem-solving skills**
3. **Helps develop coding skills**
4. **Helps develop 21<sup>st</sup> century skills**
5. **Explains math and science concepts in a practical manner**
6. **Promotes teamwork and collaboration**
7. **Encourages trying new ideas**
8. **Teaches how to handle and overcome failure**
9. **Promotes the development of motor skills**
10. **Builds confidence**





# Charlton Heston Academy

Submitted by Kale Schafer



Charlton Heston Academy is acing the first quarter of 2025. As the academy enters its thirteenth year of operation, the number thirteen is proving to be a lucky one for the Patriots. With a dedicated staff, thriving extracurriculars, and new leadership, the school continues to grow and excel. A key factor in this success has been the leadership of new superintendent Mark Church, whose positivity and support have contributed to staff retention and fostered a joyful atmosphere throughout the school.

The year began on a strong note with impressive staff retention, an outstanding football season, and the introduction of a new soccer team led by former professional player and former superintendent, Dave Patterson. The community has rallied around the school, as seen in the highly successful Homecoming parade organized by Graham Church and Sean Patterson.

A notable new addition this year is the TeeHee Team, founded by Kellie Love. Despite a modest budget, the staff club has made a significant impact by celebrating staff milestones and offering support during difficult times. Their introduction of secret staff spirit days has added a fun twist—Thanksgiving break kicked off with teachers arriving in full Christmas attire, much to the amusement (and confusion) of students.

Charlton Heston Academy continues to offer diverse and enriching extracurricular activities. The elementary flag football program, led by Coach Chris Palazzolo, remains a favorite among younger students. Meanwhile, Ann Marie John's Girls Empowerment Society is flourishing, providing 5th-grade girls with meaningful experiences such as visits to the Roscommon County Courthouse and a trip to the Nutcracker ballet at Interlochen. To support families balancing work and school schedules, the academy also provides daily after-school activities.

At the high school level, the National Honor Society, led by Nikki Ulrich, remains deeply engaged in community service, hosting blood drives and volunteering locally. Despite budget constraints requiring their annual trip to shift from Washington, D.C., to Lansing, the program continues to grow in membership and impact.

“Play gives children  
a chance to practice  
what they are learning.”  
-Fred Rogers

The arts are also thriving at Charlton Heston Academy. Upperclassmen, with the support of Danielle Mercier, revived the Art Club by welcoming middle schoolers into the program. The Drama Club, now in its eighth year, has maintained its reputation for excellence despite performing in various unconventional venues. Their 11th production, a stage adaptation of *The Outsiders* by S.E. Hinton, was met with rave reviews and played to a full house both nights. Director Kale Schafer is excited for their next season as club attendance has never been higher.



# Charlton Heston Academy Continued

Athletics have continued to shine throughout the year. The boys' varsity basketball team had a competitive season, culminating in a thrilling double-overtime district game. The wrestling team also saw success, with multiple athletes placing at districts and Jacob Clark qualifying for regionals.

As standardized testing approaches, teachers are confident in their students' readiness. Strong staff retention has fostered meaningful teacher-student relationships, allowing educators to tailor their instruction to students' interests and learning styles. In early childhood and elementary education, teachers are finding innovative ways to make foundational learning exciting, while high school educators are challenging students with new courses in creative writing, film analysis, and journalism—enhancing an already robust selection of electives.

This is to say nothing of the academy's thriving Career and Technical Education programs, which have been in operation for four years. 2024 marked the first year of the program's work placement opportunities for upperclassmen students, and our cosmetology and welding students continue to perform well in organized competition.

With a foundation of dedicated staff, engaged students, and a supportive community, Charlton Heston Academy is poised for continued success in 2025 and beyond.





# Testing Windows 2025-2026

## MEMO



**TO:** Academy Leaders/Testing Coordinators  
**FROM:** Julie Buchholtz, Academic Specialist  
**DATE:** March 27, 2025  
**RE:** 2025-2026 Testing Windows

### MESSAGE:

Dear Academy Leaders and Testing Coordinators,

The Testing Windows for the administration of the authorizer required NWEA MAP for the 2025-2026 will be as follows:

**Fall:** September 8- October 3

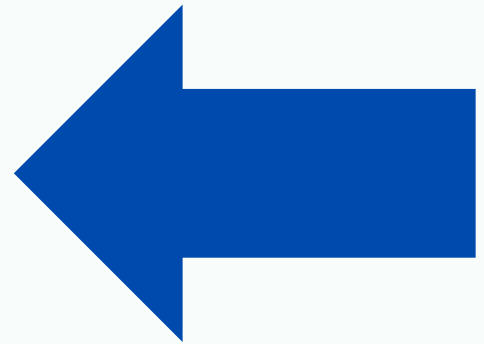
**Winter:** January 5- February 6

**Spring:** April 27- June 5

Remember, please do all that you can to abide by these windows. If you require a testing window modification, you must make a written request via email to Julie Buchholtz at [jhopper@lssu.edu](mailto:jhopper@lssu.edu). Thank you.



**Did you miss  
the memo?**



## Finance Corner

**Budget Revision Resolution**  
4/30/2025

**3rd Quarter Financial Statements**  
5/15/2025

**Budget Adopted Resolution**  
6/30/25



**Budget Public Hearing Notice**  
6/30/25

**Budget Timeline**  
6/30/25

**Budget Revision Resolution**  
6/30/2025

## Philosophy

*We believe in authorizing through the lens of an educator, realizing students are more than academic performance or financial incentives. True authorizing takes into account the whole child, whole academy, and whole community while recognizing the importance of increased performance and sustainability.*

## Mission

*To ensure quality oversight and support to our authorized charter academies resulting in students who are prepared for the next phase of life whether it be attending college, joining the military, or entering the workforce.*

## Vision

*We envision an educational system in Michigan that provides families with diverse educational opportunities that allow each child to flourish and find their place in the global community.*



# LSSU CSO Team

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