

news

SEPTEMBER 2025

**“As long as autumn lasts, I shall not have hands, canvas,
and colors enough to paint the beautiful things that I see.”**

-Vincent Van Gogh

From the Top

Dear Board Members and Academy Leaders,

As the vibrant colors of fall begin to appear across the Upper Peninsula, we are excited to welcome the start of another promising school year. The LSSU Charter Schools Office is proud to support our school leaders, educators, students, and communities as we embark on this new academic journey together.

In July, we were thrilled to partner with Ferris State University in Bay City to co-host our annual leadership summit which brought together school leaders from across the state. The event offered a valuable opportunity for networking, professional development, and sharing best practices in charter school leadership. We thank all who attended and contributed to the summit's success, and we look forward to continuing these important conversations throughout the year.

Looking ahead, we are pleased to offer a special charter student outreach opportunity. Students in 10th–12th grade are invited to come to campus to attend Great Lake State Weekend to be held on October 23rd–24th. Attendees will have the opportunity to experience life on campus, engage with faculty and staff, and explore the possibilities that higher education offers. It's a wonderful chance for students to begin envisioning their future. For more information, please contact Tammy Bell tbell@lssu.edu at the Charter Schools Office.

As always, we remain committed to supporting our partner schools and helping every student thrive. Here's to a safe, successful, and inspiring school year ahead!

Warm regards,

Chris Oshelski

Executive Director



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-Leadership Retreat-

On July 22-23, 2025, the Lake Superior State University Charter Schools and Ferris State University Charter Schools Offices hosted their first joint Leadership Retreat in Bay City, Michigan. Over 100 educators and leaders gathered at the DoubleTree by Hilton for a dynamic two-day event themed "Balanced Leadership, Balanced You."

The retreat featured keynote speakers, breakout sessions, and interactive workshops focused on leadership development and personal well-being. Attendees shared insights, built connections, and engaged in meaningful discussions to support balanced, effective leadership.

Special thanks to Tricia Coonan of Mitten Educational Management for coordinating and personally catering the social hour, and to the event's generous sponsors:

- Midwest Management Group
- CS Partners
- Integrity Educational Services
- The Romine Group
- Mitten Educational Management
- Choice Schools

The DoubleTree staff provided outstanding hospitality, and entertainment by the Bay City Theatre Program and Voyageur Academy Dancers added a vibrant touch. This successful retreat marked a new chapter of collaboration and community among Michigan's charter school leaders, with more to come.

-by Julie Buchholtz



2025-26 Board Professional Development

Virtual Sessions

*To register for virtual sessions, look for an email from Angie Irwin.

September 9: Navigating your Role as a New Board Member

October 14: Leading with Purpose: Mission Driven Decision-Making

November 11: Strategic Oversight vs Micromanagement

December 9: Data-Driven Governance for Student Achievement

January 13: Ensuring Effective Financial Oversight

February 10: Growth Planning: Expanding Impact, Not just Enrollment

March 10: Evaluating Contracts: Tools for Accountability

April 14: Strengthening Governance and Management/School Leader Partnerships

May 12: Strengthening School Board/Authorizer Partnerships

In-Person Regional Sessions

October 9: Welcome to Charter School Board Service

October 23: Leading with Purpose: Roles of the Board President and Vice President

October 28: Charter School Board/Authorizer Partnerships

-Note-

In-person regional sessions will be held from 4:30-7:45 p.m., meal to be served for participants, location in Southeast Michigan TBD

Look for an email from Rebecca Clawson to register.
rclawson@lssu.edu

-Finance Updates-

Finance Tasks

September 30

FY2026 1st Quarter Budget Amendment

November 1

FY2025 Financial Audit

FY2025 Letter to Those Charged w/ Governance

FY2025 FID Submission

November 14

FY2026 1st Quarter Financial Statements



“A penny saved is a penny got.”

-Benjamin Franklin



“I find that the harder I work,
the more luck I seem to have.”

Thomas Jefferson

2025-2026

NWEA Testing Windows

Fall

September 8- October 3

Winter

January 5- February 6

Spring

April 27- June 5

*If you require a modification from the authorizer, you must make a request to Julie Buchholtz at jhopper@lssu.edu.

Charter School Guarantee Letter

We are partnering with the LSSU Admissions Office to ensure that graduating seniors in our charter academies are informed about LSSU's Charter Guarantee.

Under this initiative, any student graduating from an LSSU authorized Charter Academy is guaranteed admission to LSSU. Additionally, these students are eligible for targeted financial aid support.

Once students receive their letter, they will be instructed to follow a link to complete the application process. Thank you for your support in ensuring our students are aware of and can benefit from this opportunity.



**WELCOME
TO
LSSU**

Great Lake State Weekend



Please reach out with questions about the event to Tammy at tbell@lssu.edu and questions about transportation support to Chris at coshelski@lssu.edu.

**REGISTRATION CLOSES
ON
SEPTEMBER 26TH**



Great Lake State Weekend = Great Fun!

2025-2026 Leadership Meetings

September 17

October 15

November 19

*Lunch & Learn
w/ Shanina Draughn*

January 21

February 18

March 18

April 15

*Lunch & Learn
w/ Angela Gilbert*

May 20

-ANNOUNCEMENT-

Monthly leadership meetings are a mandatory requirement from your authorizer. Attendees do not have to be leaders and may be appointed by their leader to attend. Attendees of the leadership meetings learn about important updates and information from their authorizer while having the opportunity to network with other attendees. Thank you in advance for your consistent attendance.

**"A GOOD LEADER
INSPIRES STUDENTS TO
LEARN, TEACHERS TO
EXCEL, AND THE
COMMUNITY TO
SUPPORT,"**

-DR. STEVEN JOHNSON



Concurrent Enrollment

PSYC 259 Psychopathology

Offered in **Spring 2026**, this course will be taught synchronously by Dr. Searight.



Psychopathology provides a systematic examination of the identification, symptoms, causes, and treatments of psychological disorders, such as Major Depressive Disorder, Schizophrenia, and Anxiety Disorders, among others.

The course carries three credits and may be applied as elective credit or to meet requirements within degree programs in Behavioral Sciences, Forensic Chemistry, and Criminal Justice, as well as toward the Psychology minor.

Students interested in Health Science careers will find the course relevant. For students receiving the TIP scholarship, the course also fulfills requirements for the Associate of Arts in General Studies with a concentration in Behavioral Sciences.



**INTERESTED IN ADDITIONAL COURSES
FOR SPRING 2026?**

**PLEASE SHARE YOUR IDEAS WITH
TAMMY OR CHRIS BY MID-SEPTEMBER.**

Marzano's New Art & Science of Teaching: Improving Teacher Development

Date(s): October 1, November 5, December 3

Time: 10:00 A.M. - 12:00 P.M.

Register by September 24, 2025



NWEA- MAP Growth Applying Reports for Leaders

October 14, 4:00 - 6:00 PM

Register by Sept 30th

Navigating Special Education: A Strategic Roundtable for School Leaders

Session 1: Session One: Applying and Understanding LRE

Date(s): Oct 8, Nov 12, Jan 14, Feb 11, March 11

Time: 10:00 AM - 11:30 AM

Register by October 1, 2025



NWEA- MAP Growth Applying Reports for Teachers

October 21, 4:00 - 6:00 PM

Register by October 7, 2025





The Lake Superior State University Charter Schools newsletter is published quarterly in the months of September, January, April, and July.

Each academy is assigned a specific month to be featured. This is an academy's opportunity to highlight something positive about their academy. You may still submit an article outside of this window, space permitting, we will include it. We like to show off our amazing academies.

Charters are innovative and creative. Don't be shy....shout out your academy, students, and staff.

Please email all submissions in Word format to jhopper@lssu.edu. Pictures encouraged.

Compliance Corner

- Please be sure to check out your Epicenter Tasks weekly to keep a high “on-time” and accuracy percentage. Remember these percentages directly influence your compliance grant.
- Compliance grant applications will be sent out in mid-September.
- The Annual Governance Memo will be sent in September.
- All board member's Oath of Office will now be uploaded into Epicenter.
- The LSSU Charter Schools has two academies up for reauthorization for the 2025-2026 school year. If you have any questions about this process, please reach out to our office at 906-635-2121.

-New NWEA Norms

Northwest Evaluation Assessment, the testing company who created the Measures of Academic Progress (MAP) has updated their achievement norms. Academies authorized by LSSU are required to assess their 2nd-8th graders in the fall, winter, and spring using the MAP. This is a good time to revisit your academies authorized required educational goals.

Measure 1: NWEA MAP Student Growth

The median Student Conditional Growth Percentile will be at 50.

Measure 2: NWEA MAP Student Achievement

Cohort students: students who have attended an academy for three or more consecutive years.

Non-cohort students: students who have attended an academy for less than three consecutive years.

- 1. The median scale score of cohort students will be greater than that of non-cohort students.*
- 2. Cohort students will reach the achievement targets determined by the norm study.*

**These targets have just been updated and will go into effect for the 2025-2026 school year.*

Measure 3: State and Federal Accountability

The academy will satisfy state and federal accountability requirements regarding state assessments.

Measure 4: Academy Specific Goals

These are goals unique to each academy and are encouraged but not required.

To learn more about the updated norms, please click on the links below:

https://doc-14-a0-apps-viewer.googleusercontent.com/viewer/secure/pdf/lbbrl42urvorfne4qs755l5eug0qab3v/idso4dql3t6jpa44895nrn92dj14v55f/1755105525000/gmail/13138414742509382801/ACFrOgAAy6ODcl4Pyp4ei9j9TwV6-wyxta7_WFna8VeHacprt0HzHBycq9Af-NpLs-KnaOgsSQuRXOcSNCQ9zotlqFEDcQpcdCCVD1OgldxFKUnMaUYqwPJv1fa2ScxVYRIPJ3HNI3A8Ls_wlpmMjlnTtkOLk_vOVMM8Nu91j1w==?print=true&nonce=hgknoi8s6t7hk&user=13138414742509382801&hash=eq4bd59q6p8hvl4dch8o6ksrov3k8odk

<https://www.nwea.org/blog/2025/whats-new-in-the-2025-map-growth-norms/>

Good News Corner

Congratulations goes out to Lyric Travis, a senior at American International Academy in the City of Inkster, Michigan and a life science researcher in Ecotek Lab. Lyric recently completed her second year of hands-on research in cell biology at Wayne State University. This summer she worked with researchers in the Mott Center Human Growth and Development-Perinatology Research facility to examine the impact of stress on human embryo development. Lyric presented her work at the 2025 BCAP Research Symposium on August 18. She is the only student in the City of Inkster to secure a paid biomedical research position in the BCAP Program this summer.

As a result of her commitment, Lyric has qualified to participate in the 2026 Michigan Regional Junior Science Symposium and the 2026 M2P2 Program. She also has an opportunity to work as a co-op student during the current school year at Gennex, a genetics startup research company. Kudos goes out to Lyric's family for supporting her throughout the summer internship. If you know of other young people in Inkster that are interested in a career in medicine or who would like to do STEM research in another area, please let me know. The opportunities for academic college scholarships and internships are significant.

Submitted by Keith Young
Ecotek Lab



Lyric Travis, Senior
American International Academy



**"SHE (LYRIC) IS THE ONLY STUDENT IN THE CITY OF INKSTER TO
SECURE A PAID BIOMEDICAL RESEARCH POSITION IN THE BCAP
PROGRAM THIS SUMMER."**

-KEITH YOUNG

Service Learning District

Summer Discovery: A Season of Learning, Creativity, and New Beginnings

The sun was already climbing over the rooftops when buses began rolling up to the Service Learning School District campuses. By 8 a.m., the aroma of hot breakfast drifted from the cafeteria, laughter spilled into the hallways, and classrooms buzzed with the energy of students ready to start another day of Summer Discovery, a program that turned the long days of July into something extraordinary.

This summer, the Service Learning School District proudly concluded its 5-week Summer Discovery Program, a free, full-day educational experience that blends academic rigor with creativity, life skills, and real-world opportunities. Designed to serve the unique needs of every learner, the program ensured that no student was left without a path forward.

Funded through United Way for Southeastern Michigan, the Service Learning School District's three campuses became hubs of opportunity: Redford Service Learning Academy for honors students in Pre-K through 8th grade, Oak Park Service Learning Academy for our special needs population, and Detroit Service Learning Academy for credit recovery students determined to strengthen their academic footing before the fall.

From the very first day, it was clear: this wasn't ordinary summer school. Mornings were laser-focused on the building blocks of success, reading and math, delivered in ways that sparked understanding and built confidence. By noon, the rhythm shifted. Lunch trays clattered, conversations rose, and classrooms transformed into spaces of pure creativity and discovery. Students recorded podcasts, stitched vibrant fabrics in sewing class, simmered sauces in cooking lessons, and captured striking images in photography. In the Fresh Nation Media class, the air crackled with energy as students stepped behind the mic and in front of the camera, producing their own news segments and learning the fast-paced art of storytelling.

Fridays were the crown jewel of the week. Field trip buses rolled out to museums, parks, and cultural centers—each trip a living classroom that broadened horizons and connected learning to the world beyond school walls.

For 8th-grade students, the program unlocked something more: paid summer positions. These young leaders assisted teachers, supported enrichment classes, and served as role models for younger students, earning extra money while gaining valuable work experience.

Service Learning District *Continued*

Ask the students, and they'll tell you what it meant to them. Destiny Johnson, a bright-eyed 7th grader at Detroit Service Learning Academy, said, "I loved the sewing class and learning how to make my own clothes. It made me feel creative and confident, but I also got better at math because of the way the teachers explained it. Summer Discovery made me excited to come to school."

Staff echoed that sentiment. Summer Discovery Coordinator Mrs. Nwankwo explained, "This program is more than just summer school—it's a launchpad for success. We're preparing students academically, socially, and emotionally, while giving them experiences that build confidence and curiosity."

ELA teacher Ms. Sole smiled when recalling her students' progress: "I saw students grow tremendously in their reading and writing. The smaller class sizes and hands-on activities gave them a chance to shine in ways we don't always see during the regular school year."

By the time the last field trip bus returned on the final Friday, there was a shared understanding: this summer had changed things. Summer Discovery didn't just fill students' days; it filled them with possibility, purpose, and pride. The Service Learning School District had once again proven that with the right support, every student's summer can be a season of growth and new possibilities.

By V. Felder



Charlton Heston Academy

The Kickoff of an Exciting Year (After a Busy Summer) 😊

This summer, Charlton Heston Academy (CHA) saw an incredible turnout with 150 students participating in summer school from July 7th to August 7th. The program offered students a chance to engage with a variety of Career and Technical programs such as cosmetology, automotive studies, building trades, and welding, while also receiving targeted academic interventions.

The 2025-2026 school year at CHA commenced on a high note during the week of August 18th, featuring a comprehensive professional development week for staff, complete with inspiring guest speakers and valuable training sessions. The first day of school for students was August 25th, marking another successful beginning. Notably, this year marks the second consecutive year that CHA boasts a 100% retention rate of its teaching staff, a testament to the dedication and passion of its educators.

As autumn unfolds, CHA is excited to introduce a variety of after-school programs, including a new flag football program for students in grades one through six. Additional offerings include art club, puzzle club, Lego builders club, retro games, and after-school tutoring. For grades seven through twelve, students can participate in Dungeons & Dragons sessions, along with traditional sports such as basketball, football, volleyball, cross country, soccer, and cheerleading. Students will also have the opportunity to audition for the upcoming fall theatre production of “Charlie and the Chocolate Factory.”

In a unique educational initiative, fourth grade teacher, Ms. Juno, is launching the “Salmon in the Classroom” program. Partnering with the Department of Natural Resources, she will bring two hundred Chinook salmon into the classroom, allowing students to observe their growth and development firsthand. Under Ms. Juno’s guidance, students will care for the salmon throughout the year while learning about their ecosystems and the importance of environmental stewardship.

The program will culminate in a special event at the end of the year, where students will release the salmon back into the wild, a meaningful way to connect knowledge with action.

Charlon Heston Academy is poised for an engaging and impactful school year ahead!

Submitted by Katrice Church, Virtual Coordinator



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.

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