

PRACTITIONERS

PROFESSORS

2022-2023  
GRAND VALLEY STATE UNIVERSITY

# CHARTER SCHOOLS OFFICE

ANNUAL REPORT

COMMUNITY

POLICYMAKERS

# READY FOR WHATEVER IS NEXT

At Grand Valley, next is opportunity and innovation. Next is global, connecting and uniting us. It's local, shaping the spaces in which we work and live. It's a commitment to progress. Next is where minds are free to imagine what could be. At GVSU, next is now. And whatever's next, we will empower our students, our communities, and our partners to reach higher to get there.



**21,648**

STUDENTS

**300+**

AREAS OF  
STUDY

**4**

CAMPUSES

[gvsu.edu/next](https://gvsu.edu/next)





**4** INTRODUCTION

PRACTITIONERS **7**

**15** PROFESSORS

POLICYMAKERS **21**

**28** COMMUNITY

OUR TEAM **34**





**Philomena V. Mantella, Ph.D.**  
*President*

Dear friends,

It is with great enthusiasm that we share the latest updates on Grand Valley's portfolio of charter public schools, which truly stands unparalleled in Michigan. With 80 schools serving more than 35,000 learners across Michigan, our portfolio is unmatched in its diversity and impact.

In this year's report, you'll witness the power of collaboration and innovation as we bring together the best of Grand Valley's talent and resources to create equitable, high-impact solutions for K-12 learners and educators. Discover how our new partnerships have sparked groundbreaking practices, governance models, and professional education, opening up exciting opportunities for both Grand Valley and K-12 learners.

But that's not all — our reach extends even further through dynamic community partnerships that magnify our results across Michigan. Together, we are breaking barriers and empowering learners to achieve their academic and professional goals.

The evidence of our impact is clear: record numbers of students from our charter public high schools have chosen Grand Valley for their next educational journey. And our teachers and adult learners are embracing new pathways for career development like never before.

We sincerely hope that you find great enjoyment in reading about our progress in providing an empowering educational experience for a growing number of learners. We also hope that our accomplishments inspire you to join us on this remarkable journey. Together, GVSU can continue making a profound difference in the lives of countless Michigan learners and communities.

With heartfelt appreciation for your ongoing support,

**Philomena Mantella, Ph.D.**  
President  
Grand Valley State University

**Don Cooper**  
Assistant Vice President for  
Charter Schools



## Mission

Grand Valley State University authorizes charter public schools to join together professors, practitioners, policymakers, and communities (3P+C) in new ways to solve problems in education.

## Vision

We strive to be the model university authorizer by accessing the university's collective resources and diversity to contribute to the enrichment and constant improvement of all Grand Valley State University-authorized schools.

## Values

At Grand Valley State University's Charter Schools Office, the primary focus is understanding complex problems in the GVSU network of schools, facilitating the design of solutions, and advancing remarkable change in teaching and learning. Our mission, vision, and strategic outcomes reflect the university's five core values. These core values provide a foundation and framework for all of the Charter Schools Office's decision-making processes:

- Inquiry
- Inclusive and Equitable Community
- Integrity
- Innovation
- International Perspectives



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Grand Valley State University  
creates new ways to connect  
teachers and school leaders  
in its charter public schools to  
innovate for kids.

# PRACTITIONERS



# LEADING NATIONAL RESEARCH INTO CHARTER SCHOOL AUTHORIZATION BY COLLEGES AND UNIVERSITIES

One of Grand Valley's core values is inquiry. Active scholarship helps solve problems in public education and catalyzes innovation. Inquiry into our authorizing practices and those of other higher education institutions (HEI) throughout the nation helps us learn, grow, and create new oversight and support practices that ensure better results for kids.

Grand Valley launched the inquiry into HEI authorizing practices in partnership with colleges and universities from 12 other states to participate in the first-ever national study of HEI authorizing. The research was conducted by the National Association of Charter School Authorizers

(NACSA), and it examined how and what HEIs contribute to the charter school landscape. The report contains information from authorizing professionals who oversee 81% of the charter schools that HEIs authorize nationally, including details about the policy landscape, unique challenges and tensions faced by HEIs, and the benefits for colleges and universities that engage in authorizing.

Research like this helps GVSU and fellow HEI authorizers improve practices and refine policies to accomplish two goals: how to best put to work the resources of their institutions to better support teaching and learning in the schools each charters, and how to create new opportunities for college and university students to engage in chartered schools to directly affect K-12 education. It also helps HEIs that are considering whether to become authorizers more fully understand the impact authorizing can have prior to engaging in chartering.



For the full report, please visit  
[gvsu.edu/cso/nacsa](https://gvsu.edu/cso/nacsa)



## RESEARCHING ACTIONABLE IMPROVEMENTS TO TEACHING AND LEARNING

At Grand Valley, we recognize that better solutions for kids are created through consistent inquiry into current practices. From there we make adjustments that amplify what is working while tapping into new opportunities for growth. The outcomes this process leads to is why we value active questioning in our work, as well as in every effort our schools undertake to improve teaching and learning.

The GVSU CSO first furthered its understanding of the COVID-19 impact through the continuation of research launched in the 2020-2021 school year. The study, conducted by the independent research group Basis Policy Research, sought to quantify the lasting effects of the pandemic on students and within Grand Valley's charter public schools.



**Matt Missias, Ph.D.,  
presenting at  
MWERA**

**The outcomes this process leads to is why we value active questioning in our work, as well as in every effort our schools undertake to improve teaching and learning.**

The results have provided key insights into the past three years of instruction.

Students made larger achievement gains in 2022 than 2021 and provided some evidence that learning was rebounding.

However, Black and Latinx students experienced large declines and may benefit from additional targeted support to further close achievement gaps.

Representatives from the CSO and Basis presented these findings at the 44th Annual Meeting of the Midwestern

Educational Research Association

(MWERA) in Cincinnati, Ohio.

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## UNCOVERING ACTIONABLE IMPROVEMENTS FOR TEACHING AND LEARNING

Also, the CSO's research produced findings related to early career teacher retention in the charter school sector and how authorizers played a key role.

In the spring of 2023, members of the CSO team traveled to Chicago for the 2023 Annual Meeting of the American Educational Research Association to share what was learned with other researchers.

Lastly, the CSO's team of school support specialists and others wrote a joint chapter on how authorizers can intentionally help mid-career principals implement educational best practices in charter public schools.

The necessity for continuous learning

helps the GVSU CSO and its schools identify action items that could rapidly address the most pressing needs for students and educators. It also gives the CSO an opportunity to share new knowledge with practitioners across the country, expanding the impact stemming from such deep learning.

**Continuous learning helps the GVSU CSO and its schools identify action items that could rapidly address the most pressing needs for students and educators.**

To see all CSO research reports, please visit [gvsu.edu/cso/research](https://gvsu.edu/cso/research)



**Basis Policy Research's Kiel McQueen, Ph.D., presents at the 2023 AERA Annual Meeting**

## HELPING EDUCATORS QUICKLY TURN RESEARCH INTO RESULTS

Inquiry is at the heart of identifying promising practices in public education. Making research results easily accessible to practitioners to reflect on and learn from is what turns these promising practices into best practices. However, recent research conducted by the CSO indicates that many teachers do not feel they have the time for such reflection and planning, creating a barrier in putting current research results to use to improve teaching and learning.

The GVSU CSO partnered with Venessa Keesler, Ph.D., to address the issue through a video series called “Research in Action.” As an education expert and former deputy superintendent at the Michigan Department of Education, Keesler designed the series to give educators advice on some of the best research-based practices being used in schools. Teachers and school leaders can watch the videos to get a top-line overview of the leading research in the field related to items like pandemic recovery and instructional coaching.



Venessa Keesler, Ph.D.

...high-quality inquiry requires committing time to deeply reflect upon the adjustments that can be made to drive improvements.

Efficient solutions like these give teachers a clearer path to effective, proven strategies that they can quickly implement into their instruction plan, allowing them to make impactful adjustments without sacrificing time from supporting their students.

Visit [gvsu.edu/cso/lakerlessons](https://gvsu.edu/cso/lakerlessons) to see the “Research in Action” series.



## EMPOWERING MORE TEACHERS TO LEAD WITH INNOVATION

Innovation in education comes from empowering those who are closest to kids — teachers — with the ability to lead the charge and create a more responsive learning environment. Sparking this type of innovation is at the heart of the charter schools idea. It's also why the GVSU CSO works to give each GVSU-authorized charter school more resources to further transform into “teacher-powered schools.”

Teacher-powered schools are places where educator teams can collaborate with administrators to have autonomy and authority to make more meaningful decisions at their school in areas that directly impact student success. It's a shared leadership model that is designed to meet the unique needs of a school's staff and students.

During the 2022-2023 year, the GVSU CSO partnered with Education Evolving, an organization committed to helping schools move closer to becoming teacher-powered. Education Evolving worked with a community of 300 teacher-powered public schools in more than half of the nation to show them how to use a teacher-powered framework and design structures for long-term teacher empowerment.

The teacher-powered framework creates a professional partnership between teachers and administrators. Through greater empowerment, this partnership gets results for kids, not from the top down, but from the ground up. And it elevates professionalism by offering pathways for professional advancement without leaving the classroom, amplifying teachers' voices, and fostering professional learning communities.



**Amy Junge**  
Education Evolving



**Sarah Giddings**  
Education Evolving



**Wendy Salcedo-Fierro**  
Education Evolving

## BRINGING TOGETHER LEADERS TO IMPROVE COLLEGE PATHWAYS



Barry Hall II, Ed.D.

Some of the best resources that teachers and school leaders have available to them are Michigan's public universities. At GVSU, not only do faculty and staff aim to launch Laker students into well-lived lives, but they also use the university's collective talent and diversity to support K-12 learners and the teachers who are preparing those learners to successfully transition to college.

As a part of that endeavor, the CSO helped host the 14th Annual Michigan Pre-College and Youth Outreach Conference, making it the first time the conference had been held at Grand Valley. CSO team member Barry

Hall II, Ed.D., was part of the conference steering committee and joined colleagues from Grand Valley and other Michigan higher education


institutions to lead sessions for more than 200 educators. Attendees walked away with new resources and strategies for connecting with students, broadening college access, and talking with students and families about difficult topics.

Investing in more collaboration opportunities between K-12 educators and higher education professionals creates a unified front for uncovering innovative solutions. In doing so, public education professionals are better equipped to work together to implement ideas that lead to better student outcomes.



PCC Conference  
GVSU Group



A photograph of two women, one with long blonde hair and glasses, the other with dark hair and glasses, looking at a book together. The image is overlaid with a semi-transparent orange filter. The woman on the right is holding the book and pointing at it. The woman on the left is looking at the book with interest.

The Grand Valley  
State University  
Charter Schools  
Office is the nexus  
where K-12 education  
and higher education  
professionals unite.

▶ **PROFESSORS**



## IMPROVING FOOD ALLERGY AWARENESS IN K-12 SCHOOLS

One of the GVSU CSO's goals is to continuously broaden the symbiotic relationship the university has with the public schools that it charters. By helping faculty and staff connect with schools, new opportunities arise for partnerships that help the GVSU community advance inquiry and create changes in classrooms that can improve student safety and success.

During the 2022-2023 school year, the GVSU CSO partnered with the GVSU School of Interdisciplinary Health to examine food allergy awareness in K-12 schools, especially as food allergies are becoming a much more significant challenge in school environments. The goal was to understand teacher and administrator knowledge and perceptions of food allergies, anaphylaxis, and food allergy safety and management.

Jennifer Ford, M.A., RDN, the program director and assistant professor for the Master of Science in clinical dietetics program, worked with clinical dietetic graduate students Jordyn Rademacher, Alexander Karasinski, and Kyleigh Rodriguez to invite educators from GVSU-authorized charter public schools to participate in a quantitative exploratory study on the topic.



**Jennifer Ford**

**Respondents indicated a strong desire for more education around food allergies.**

A total of 159 educators participated in the survey.

Among survey respondents:

- 63% taught preschool or elementary school, 14% taught middle school, and 23% taught high school.
- 9% of the teachers/administrators had been diagnosed with a food allergy themselves.
- There was no significant difference in food allergy knowledge level between grade levels taught.

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## IMPROVING FOOD ALLERGY AWARENESS IN K-12 SCHOOLS

According to Ford and the students, results from the survey showed where an impact can be made to help more educators in its charter public schools prevent and manage food allergy reactions. Many respondents indicated that additional guidance on developing procedures and plans would be helpful, while others expressed the need for more information on how to best handle a student's food allergy emergency.

In general, respondents of all types indicated a desire for more education around food allergies, such as:

- Recognizing and responding to anaphylaxis
- Keeping students safe and included
- Food allergy fundamentals



To meet this need, additional clinical dietetic graduate students will carry out this research by promoting food allergy awareness, providing food allergy education and training, and access to epinephrine (EpiPen) at GVSU Charter Schools during the 2023-2024 school year.

Research partnerships like this exemplify one of the biggest benefits higher education institutions can expect when they decide to authorize charter public schools. It shows how GVSU's charter public schools can grow by utilizing the university's collective resources to quickly explore and address areas for improvement. Such partnerships also give school leaders reliable data that can offer clear, actionable solutions that best meet the needs of each student and family.





## DEVELOPING STEWARDS OF OUR STATE

Helping students grow into good citizens and good neighbors means teaching them the importance of being great stewards of common resources, public spaces, and cultural heritage.

This year, the CSO explored a new avenue for student enrichment by examining ways to encourage volunteerism in GVSU-authorized charter public schools through stewardship of our state's public places.

The CSO partnered with faculty from the GVSU Department of Hospitality and Tourism Management to pilot a volunteer experience for high school students. The partnership was developed alongside Michigan Cares for Tourism, a 100% volunteer-driven organization where tourism professionals work together to restore historic, cultural, and natural attractions around Michigan.

The goal of the partnership is to use restoration projects as learning spaces while helping students acquire the volunteer hours they need to graduate. For example, students from Byron Center Charter School visited Holland State Park and Muskegon State Park to learn about invasive species and restore park grounds. They worked alongside Grand Valley faculty, staff, and students, as well as local business leaders, dedicated to helping the students grow.

In the end, the K-12 students get an incredible experience while learning how important it is to maintain their community and its vital resources. Partnerships like this highlight what is possible through cross-department collaboration that is focused on enriching future generations of Michigan citizens.



**Patty Janes, Ph.D., professor  
of hospitality, tourism, and  
management at GVSU**



## INTRODUCING STUDENT REPORTING LABS

New growth opportunities for students come from innovative, interdisciplinary collaboration that allows students to both study a subject and apply their knowledge on real-world projects. To that end, the CSO worked alongside faculty and staff members this year from GVSU's School of Communications, the College of Education and Community Innovation (CECI), and WGVU Public Media to introduce a program called Student Reporting Labs (SRL) to GVSU-authorized charter schools.

Student Reporting Labs is a national PBS program that uses a journalism-based curriculum to help students develop skills around digital media, critical thinking, and communication. Students who participate in SRL get the chance to explore topics they are curious about while telling their story through original news reports. In addition, the SRL partnership through Grand Valley enhances the program in a way that gives extra benefits to the schools and students who participate. When a classroom utilizes GVSU SRL, students also get additional support from undergraduate students at Grand Valley.



**Kristyn Bomberg, WGVU  
Educational Services Manager**

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## STUDENT REPORTING LABS



**James Ford,**  
assistant professor  
of multimedia  
journalism



**Eric Harvey,**  
Ph.D., associate  
professor of  
multimedia  
journalism



**Beomkyu Choi,**  
Ph.D., assistant  
professor of  
educational  
technology

Here's how it works: A classroom that wants to participate in GVSU SRL will have a teaching apprentice from CECI assigned to the classroom for the year. Not only is this person trained in SRL, but they are also there to support everyday learning alongside the classroom teacher.

A multimedia journalism student from Grand Valley is also assigned to the class to assist with the technical aspects of SRL like video recording, audio, editing, and story development.

The program will launch at the start of the 2023-2024 school year and, ultimately, everybody stands to win through the partnership. K-12 learners hone skills that will help them succeed to and through college, Grand Valley learners get to build their own skills in a professional setting, and the GVSU-authorized charter schools participating in the program get access to resources that support technology and staffing needs.

SRL offers transformational learning through video journalism, inspiring students to find their voice and engage in their communities.

## BUILDING PATHWAYS TO EQUITABLE EDUCATION

Creating more equitable learning communities requires organizations to challenge current structures and systems, and then work to modify them to ensure diversity and inclusion are core elements. That is why the GVSU CSO utilizes the collective resources and diversity of the university to help Grand Valley charter public schools move closer to this goal.

The GVSU CSO worked with university colleagues through the GVSU Inclusion and Equity Institute to offer K-12 educators multiple professional education series distinctly designed to improve diversity, equity, and inclusion in schools. One of the series was led by Chasity Bailey-Fakhoury, Ph.D., and Lisa Rene Norris, members of Grand Valley's College of Education and Community Innovation. Their series helped school leaders build the critical foundation needed to truly enact proven equity leadership practices.

Another series was co-led by Callie Youngman, a DEI project coordinator at Grand Valley. Callie and her fellow presenters trained teachers and school leaders on how to use a DEI lens to improve staff hiring and retention practices, as well as meet staffing needs in the moment.

As Grand Valley aspires to be a national model for equity and inclusion, the GVSU CSO has the same aspirations for the public schools the university charters. Persistent dedication to equity is key to helping more kids access resources for success.



**Chasity Bailey-  
Fakhoury, Ph.D.**



**Lisa Rene  
Norris**



**Callie  
Youngman**





Schools thrive when everyone involved — teachers, school leaders, board members, and public officials — shares expectations and works toward common goals for kids. The Grand Valley State University Charter Schools Office works to align policies among all stakeholders.

# POLICYMAKERS



## EQUIPPING BOARD MEMBERS TO LEAD WITH INTEGRITY

Being a successful public leader stems from the ability to lead with a civic-focused mindset and govern with a high degree of integrity. To that end, the GVSU CSO hosted the inaugural Charter Board Presidents' Leadership Retreat in the spring of 2023.

Held in partnership with the Gerald R. Ford Presidential Foundation, the retreat drew on the life and leadership of President Ford as a model for board presidents to consider when improving their governance capacity. The retreat pushed participants to think well beyond the technical aspects of their roles and dive deep into how to set a firm direction toward strategic goals.



**Jeff Polet, Ph.D.**



**Kerry Sautner, Ed.D.**

Board presidents received guidance from some of the top experts on governance in the state and nation. Jeff Polet, Ph.D., and Gleaves Whitney of the Gerald R. Ford Presidential Foundation shared some of the history and philosophy behind Ford's leadership style. Former Democratic State Senator Buzz Thomas and GVSU's Greg Warsen, Ph.D., led participants in a discussion on the importance of civic engagement and civility in governance activities. This was followed by a conversation on deliberation and decision-making, led by two members of the National Constitution Center in Philadelphia, Kerry Sautner, Ed.D., and Sarah Harris.

Attendees also had the chance to explore the museum to examine artifacts related to those key leadership moments in Ford's life.

This type of event guides public school boards to operate with a civic spirit that embraces contributions from everyone and encourages board presidents to create such an environment by exploring good governance in both theory and practice. More importantly, it furthers the CSO's commitment to help increase governing capacity across public schools chartered by GVSU and support board members as they exercise the responsibilities entrusted to them by the university's Board of Trustees.



**Charter school  
board leaders**

## WELCOMING NEW ADDITIONS TO THE CHARTER SCHOOL ADVISORY COMMITTEE

Before any action item related to charter schools is voted upon by the GVSU Board of Trustees, it is thoroughly examined by the Charter School Advisory Committee. The seven-person committee, comprised of people within and outside of the university, is an intentional, additional level of accountability designed to ensure the utmost alignment between GVSU-authorized charter public schools, the CSO, and the board.

This year, two new members joined the Charter School Advisory Committee. The first new member is GVSU Trustee Elizabeth Emmitt, who currently serves as the board's vice chair and is part of the Finance and Audit Committee. Trustee Emmitt also served as an advisor to Spectrum Health (now Corewell Health) and was the deputy chief of staff for former Michigan Governor Rick Snyder.



**Elizabeth  
Emmitt**

The other new member is Scott Jenkins, the strategy director for state policy at the Lumina



**Scott Jenkins**

Foundation. Jenkins has an extensive background in institutional, state, and federal policy development, and he served as education policy director to two governors: John Engler of Michigan and Indiana's Mitch Daniels. He also served in the U.S. Department of Education.

The CSO values the expertise and guidance that Jenkins and Trustee Emmitt bring to the committee and is excited to work alongside them in years to come.

## STRENGTHENING BOARD RELATIONSHIPS THROUGH BOARD PRESIDENT GUIDANCE

One of the ways that Grand Valley helps its charter public schools achieve their mission and vision is by fostering close relationships with the dedicated community members who serve on the schools' governing boards. The CSO has long seen its board members as partners and understands that meeting their leadership needs can ultimately clear more paths for creating high-quality education opportunities. This is done, in part, through the CSO's commitment to the Charter Board President's Advisory Committee.

The Charter Board President's Advisory Committee was initially established to enhance communication between Grand Valley's school board partners and the CSO, ultimately leading to more successful collaboration. Input from the inaugural committee helped the CSO introduce new supports for board members, including:

- ▶ Creation of GVSU Virtual Board Training Series and topics boards wanted to cover
- ▶ Restructuring of how and when boards could receive legislative updates
- ▶ Implementation of annual board member survey
- ▶ Expansion of board member recognition awards

Thanks to such efforts, the CSO has seen marked improvement in board member satisfaction over the last three years, with nearly 97% of board members saying they were satisfied with Grand Valley as their authorizer in 2022-2023.

The CSO is eager to continue the committee's work as it welcomes the next wave of board presidents who will serve in the new term.

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## STRENGTHENING BOARD RELATIONSHIPS THROUGH BOARD PRESIDENT GUIDANCE

**Thank you to the following board members  
who served on the inaugural Charter Board  
President's Advisory Committee**

**Andy Alt**  
West Michigan  
Academy of Arts  
and Academics

**Jathan Austin**  
William C. Abney  
Academy

**Kristin Beltzer**  
PrepNet Virtual  
Academy

**Andy DeVries**  
Grand River  
Preparatory  
High School

**Amanda Igra**  
Old Mission  
Peninsula School

**Matt Jones**  
Chandler  
Woods Charter  
Academy

**Ted Lang**  
Canton  
Preparatory  
High School

**Dale Mowry**  
Excel Charter  
Academy

**Asaline Scott**  
Muskegon  
Covenant  
Academy

**Dennis Simpson**  
Oakland  
Academy

**Peter Stickney**  
Legacy Charter  
Academy





## INCREASING THE ACADEMIC GRANT WHILE ALSO ENHANCING ACCOUNTABILITY

One of the ways that the GVSU CSO annually rewards academically successful schools is through the Academic Grant. This grant is an opportunity for schools to earn up to \$20 per student through a combination of meeting certain academic targets and their board members participating in training to increase their capacity govern.

Beginning with the 2022-2023 school year, the CSO increased the total award amount that schools can earn to \$30 per student. While the academic portion of the grant was adjusted to promote better alignment with the educational goals in the charter contract, a key addition was made related to require schools to meet the CSO's compliance reporting and fiscal viability expectations to receive the full grant award. These two items are essential elements of a well-stewarded school that provide a foundation for a successful educational program. Schools that are unable to meet one or both expectations risk having a portion of the grant funds they would have received withheld.

Adding such expectations also have an impact beyond the scope of the grant. It encourages school boards and leadership to consider what can be done to be great stewards of their schools. This stewardship will help each school be prepared to deliver results for kids both now, and into the future.

### Changes to the Academic Grant for 2022-2023



**Total award  
increased from  
\$20 per pupil to  
\$30 per pupil**



**Better aligns  
educational  
goals with  
the charter  
contract**



**Withholds  
grant funds if  
school does  
not meet their  
compliance  
or fiscal  
expectations**

# CELEBRATING THE NATION'S FIRST CHARTER SCHOOL LAW WITH THE PIONEERING LEGISLATOR WHO LED ITS PASSAGE

At the core of the charter public school movement is the belief that great ideas should be embraced and replicated so more people can reap their benefits. It is what motivated legislators in Minnesota to fight for a new opportunity for public education, ultimately paving the way for the state to open the first charter school in America on September 7, 1992.



**Ember  
Reichgott Junge**


Grand Valley community followed by a discussion about the past, present, and future of the charter movement with a panel of education innovators from around Michigan.

More than 12 million K-12 students across the U.S. have attended a charter school thanks to Reichgott Junge's pioneering leadership. Her work is inspiring and a reminder of the life-changing opportunities that are possible when leaders look toward innovation to support family needs.

Thirty years later, in October 2022, the CSO had the pleasure of celebrating this milestone alongside Ember Reichgott Junge, the former Minnesota state senator and author of the first charter school law in the nation. The CSO hosted Reichgott Junge for a visit to Grand Rapids so she could learn how the charter idea had grown and evolved in Michigan. During her visit, she met with dozens of current charter school students, teachers, and advocates. Her visit culminated in a public

presentation for charter board members, school leaders, and the





# CHARTER SCHOOLS ALUMNI SCHOLARSHIP

[su.edu/cso/charteralum](http://su.edu/cso/charteralum)

The Grand Valley  
State University  
Charter Schools Office  
strengthens and  
expands relationships  
between the university,  
its charter public  
schools, and the  
communities  
they serve.

▶ **COMMUNITY**

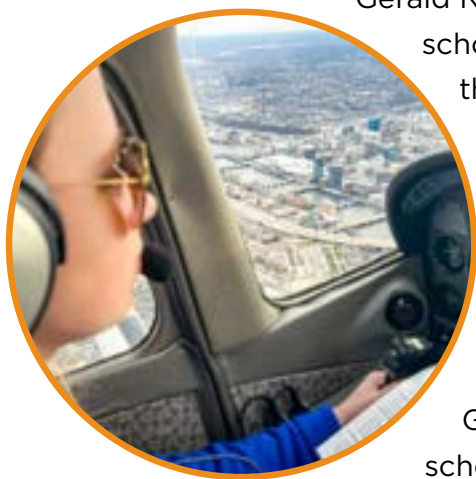


## ADDING MORE INNOVATORS TO THE GVSU CHARTER PORTFOLIO

Grand Valley advances excellence alongside others who share our forward-thinking vision. It was in that spirit that GVSU approved the authorization of West Michigan Aviation Academy (WMAA), Gerald Dawkins Academy, and GEE Compass Academy.

WMAA is a high school located on the campus of

Gerald R. Ford International Airport. The school serves more than 600 students through its state-of-the-art facilities and curriculum and is one of the only high schools in the nation where students can earn a private pilot's license. Based on Spring 2022 SAT results, WMAA has the highest percentage of students who demonstrated college readiness in Kent County and fourth highest in the state.



Gerald Dawkins Academy is a K-5 school scheduled to open in fall 2023 to offer families a learning environment focused on

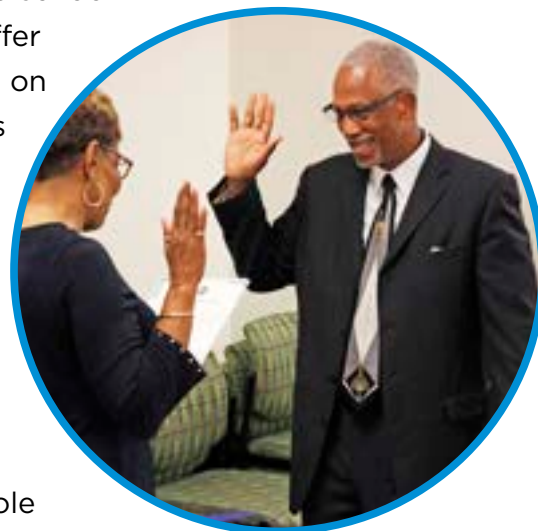
literacy. Located in southeast Grand Rapids, the school has partnered with the Center for Sound Literacy Foundation. It plans to incorporate the foundation's successful reading intervention model to ensure more kids are proficient in reading when they reach third grade.

GEE Compass Academy is a K-12 cyber charter school scheduled to open in fall 2023. Building upon the success of other schools in the Global Educational Excellence network, GEE Compass is committed to educating the whole child in an equitable and culturally responsive way using its evidence-based and standards-aligned curriculum.

These schools are examples of how charter public education can rapidly transform to meet the collective needs of students, families, and local organizations, ultimately contributing to the sustained growth of the community.



**WMAA students**



**Swearing in  
Jerry McComb, board  
president of Gerald  
Dawkins Academy**

## DRIVING ENROLLMENT THROUGH A COMMITMENT TO STUDENT RELATIONSHIPS

Since its founding, GVSU has been an institution where learners can pursue their passions and find their purpose. The GVSU CSO works to further that mission by being present where it mattered to show future generations of students that GVSU cares about their college and career goals.

During the 2022-2023 year, the CSO's Charter-through-College team was back in schools and communities to host numerous informational events for families who were thinking about college options. Thanks to such work, there is growing evidence that Grand Valley is a primary destination for more and more



**Students  
from  
Grand River  
Preparatory  
High School  
visit GVSU**

# 50%

**increase in applications to GVSU  
from students in GVSU  
charter schools**

students enrolled in our schools. When compared to 2021-2022, applications received from students in GVSU-authorized charter schools had increased 50% and the number of students admitted to GVSU had increased 27% by the end of this school year.

# 27%

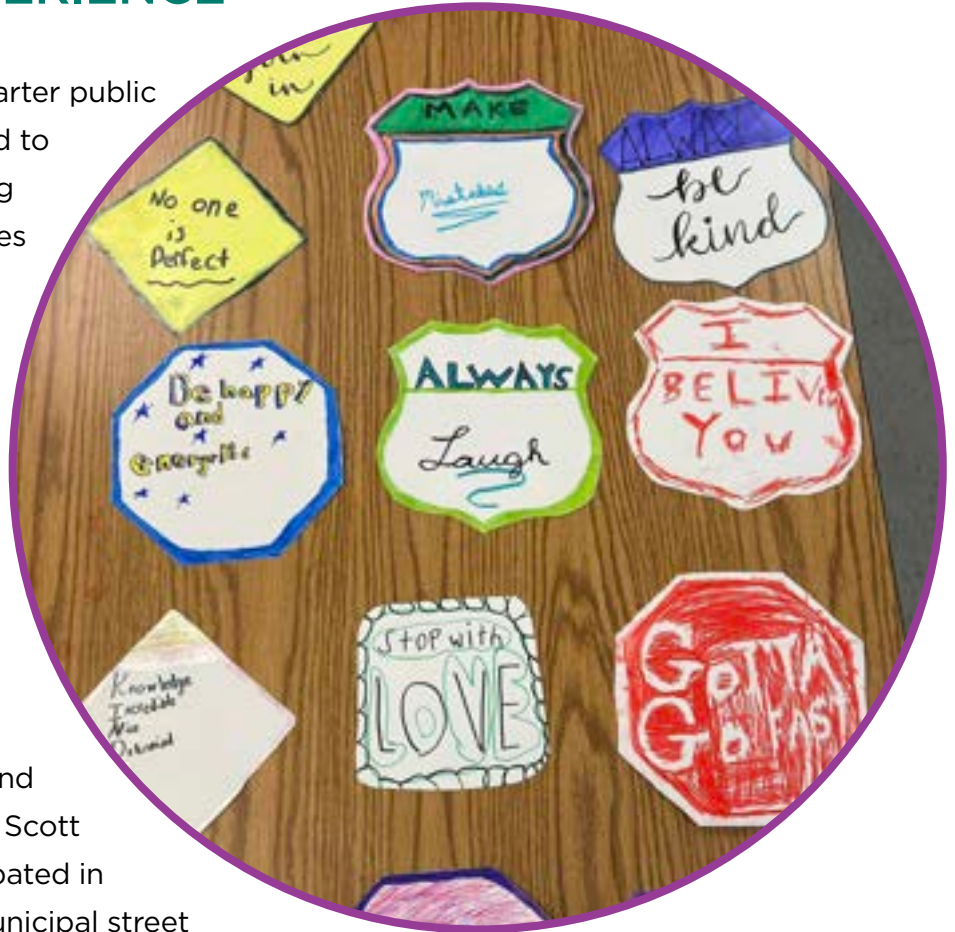
**increase in students from  
GVSU charter schools  
admitted to Grand Valley**

It is not uncommon to hear Grand Valley undergraduates say that those early connection points made a difference when they were choosing colleges. To them, it showed there was a university that was truly dedicated to their individual needs and well-being, and there would be an entire community ready to embrace and support them.

## CONNECTING CLASSROOMS TO THE ARTPRIZE EXPERIENCE

As a university that authorizes charter public schools, Grand Valley is positioned to support K-12 teaching and learning through a unique array of resources and experiences that we can bring to the schools we charter. Historically the GVSU CSO has done this, in part, by finding new ways for students to connect to ArtPrize, an annual international art competition held in Grand Rapids.

This year, the CSO worked with the GVSU Art Gallery to provide schools with a classroom lesson and activity inspired by ArtPrize artist Scott Froschauer. Students who participated in the activity critically examined municipal street signs and other visual language in their community, exploring the impact these signs have on day-to-day life. They then created their own signs with personalized messages and designs, just like Froschauer does with his art. By the time



ArtPrize 2022 concluded, more than 1,100 students from 14 different schools had participated in the activity.

For more than a decade, ArtPrize and art education has been a way for the GVSU CSO to show students that they are part of larger, global communities. Programs like this support classroom instruction while also giving students new opportunities to learn from people with a diverse range of knowledge and backgrounds.

**1,100**  
students received art materials from GVSU CSO





## STRENGTHENING BONDS BETWEEN THE UNIVERSITY AND FELLOW LAKERS

Grand Valley has long viewed the charter public schools that it authorizes as partners in developing lifelong learners. That commitment is at the core of building an educational community that makes people proud to be connected to GVSU.

Throughout the year, the CSO hosted new networking events to build more relationships with students, staff, alumni, and others while celebrating the campus community. During GVSU's Family Weekend, the CSO held an ice cream social to meet with charter high school alumni and their friends and family. More than 100 people attended the inaugural event to learn more about specific supports GVSU provides to its charter high school alumni, as well as to design their own GVSU memorabilia for the football game later that day. The CSO then replicated the event during GVSU's Homecoming, mingling with alumni and other visitors over cider and donuts as they toured campus.

The CSO strives to ensure that each touchpoint it creates also unites people around the possibilities that can be found at GVSU, whether those are pathways to groundbreaking initiatives or solutions that meet individual needs. It is in those moments that people feel a sense of belonging and a desire to be a Laker.





## CREATING A NETWORK-WIDE SCHOOL CHOICE CELEBRATION

Every January, GVSU-authorized charter public schools are encouraged to join other schools across the state and country for National School Choice Week (NSCW).

It's a time where students, parents, teachers, and community members come together to let others know they appreciate the opportunity they have to find schools that best fit their needs.

This year, the GVSU CSO worked alongside the national NSCW team to develop a celebratory event that all GVSU-authorized charter schools could participate in at the same time. The NSCW team sent each school a celebration kit that included branded wristbands, signs, stickers, and more. The CSO then coordinated a day for schools to use the kit's materials for a network-wide social media celebration. On January 24, 2023, schools filled up social media feeds with photos and videos showing why school choice mattered to them.

The GVSU network celebration was just one of the 25,000 celebrations that occurred nationwide. More importantly, it gave GVSU charter school communities the chance to see that the passion they have for school choice is part of a much larger community of public education advocates.



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*At Grand Valley State University, we empower learners in their pursuits, professions, and purpose. The university enriches society through excellent teaching, active scholarship, advancement of equity, and public service.*

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