



April 24, 2014

[REDACTED]

RE: [REDACTED]

Dear Academy Board:

As you know, the relationship between Central Michigan University ("University") and [REDACTED] ("Academy") began in [REDACTED] when the University Board of Trustees ("University Board") issued the Academy Board a four (4) year Charter Contract ("Contract") to organize and operate a Michigan public school academy that would provide families in the [REDACTED] community with a quality educational option for their children.

The Academy's Contract, like all Contracts issued by the University, contains student achievement goals, along with legal and operational conditions that the Academy agreed to follow and fulfill. Since its inception, the Academy has faced academic struggles that continued well beyond its initial start-up. In a letter dated December 17, 2009, the University reiterated the serious concerns it raised during the Academy's reauthorization in 2008-2009 regarding the academic, fiscal, management and organizational affairs of the Academy and its ability to remain viable and deliver a quality educational program for its students. That letter stated that if the Academy was unable to demonstrate significant, sustainable progress in addressing these concerns, the University would not be in a position to continue chartering the Academy beyond the Charter Contract's expiration date of June 30, 2010. At that time, a Michigan Department of Education publication ranking all public schools by proficiency and growth based on the performance on the MEAP test placed the Academy in the [REDACTED]% of all public schools and [REDACTED] out of 204 charter schools. The Center noted, then, that if the Academy's ranking declined further, it could be in danger of being identified as a "persistently low achieving" school as defined in the state's (then) new education reform law passed in January, 2010. The Academy Board took action; it evaluated its management and operations and set a new strategic direction. The Center and the Academy Board discussed the importance of the Academy Board ensuring that the new management and organizational structure delivered a quality educational program resulting in improved academic achievement.

Since that time, the Academy Board and the Academy's new Educational Service Provider ("ESP") have worked together to establish a new operational and educational structure, obtain a facility conducive to teaching and learning, and increase enrollment. In 2012-2013, the ESP retained a new principal. The 2012-2013 MEAP results demonstrated an overall decline from 2011 and the Academy ranked in the [REDACTED]% of all public schools on the MDE's 2013 Top to Bottom Ranking. Most importantly, the Academy's performance on the academic achievement goal contained in the Contract declined. In Reading, the percentage of students enrolled for three or more years that met the college readiness benchmarks outlined in the Contract decreased from [REDACTED]% in 2011 to [REDACTED]% in 2013. In Math, the percentage of students enrolled for three or more years that met the college readiness benchmarks decreased from [REDACTED]% in 2011 to [REDACTED]% in 2013. However, the Academy's students demonstrated significant growth from fall to spring on the Performance Series test, and it was hoped that this growth was an indication of improved delivery of instruction which would result in continued improvement.

The Academy purchased and renovated a new facility and moved operations in September, 2013. The Academy also added the 7th grade and gained approximately 90 additional students. In a letter dated November, 2013, the University noted that the Academy had completed its strategic re-design and was now in a position where it must demonstrate that it has focused all of its efforts on the delivery and support of a quality educational program that meets the needs of the students it serves. The correspondence stated that the University's decision concerning reauthorization beyond June 30, 2014, was dependent upon the Academy's ability to demonstrate measurable progress towards improving academic outcomes and the capacity to sustain improved performance in the future. A component of the Center's assessment of the Academy's capacity for sustained improvement included the Educational Program Review conducted in January, 2014. The review team found a lack of a comprehensive curriculum, and limited evidence of high quality instruction. The review team also found that the Academy had not put in place structures or processes for monitoring curriculum or instructional planning. In addition, the Academy's academic performance has unfortunately continued to decline. On the 2013 MEAP math and reading tests, the Academy underperformed its Composite Resident District on all ten tests administered by the Academy.

The University's assessment of an Academy's performance remains based upon three core questions:

1. Is the Academy's academic program successful?
2. Is the Academy's organization viable?
3. Is the Academy demonstrating good faith in following the terms of its charter and applicable law?

An honest assessment of these questions finds that the Academy is not fulfilling the terms and conditions of its Contract and is failing to consistently deliver a quality educational program to its students. Over the past thirteen years, the University has made over 300 site visits to meet with the Academy Board, staff, and advisors to clarify roles and responsibilities and help the Academy understand its legal, contractual, academic, financial, and facility obligations. In addition, the University has provided opportunities for orientation and training programs for board members, and supported the Academy Board with its policy development efforts. The Center also provided support to Academy staff, such as training, oversight, and analysis for Performance Series testing, as well as facilitating with other matters such as the state required MEAP.

In summary, the Academy has failed to fulfill the terms and conditions of its Contract and is failing to consistently deliver a quality educational program and meet its student achievement goals. The Academy's poor academic results over several years, combined with its inability to demonstrate significant and sustainable improvements, has forced the University to conclude that it would be in the best interest of the students and the public if the University does not issue a new contract allowing [REDACTED] to operate as a public school academy when its current Contract expires June 30, 2014.

While this is a difficult decision, the University is committed to holding schools it authorizes accountable and cannot justify authorizing a school that is unable to consistently deliver a quality educational program and meet its student achievement goals. We believe this action is in the best interest of the Academy's students, their families and the community.

Please know the University is dedicated to helping ensure as smooth a transition as possible for the Academy's students. The Center has contracted with an entity that can provide transition information to both staff and students. If the Board chooses to utilize this service, the cost will be funded by the Center. We will be contacting [REDACTED] to inform them of our decision so that information regarding application and enrollment procedures can be gathered and provided to families as they select a new school for their children.

The Academy now faces the challenge of completing this school year in the best possible manner and maintaining an orderly school environment where teaching and learning can occur. Please know that the University is committed to supporting the Academy's ability to finish the year and meet the academic needs of

