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Included below is a press release regarding the Ferris State University Charter Schools Office. Further information is available by contacting Leah Nixon, assistant director of News Services.

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U.S. Department of Education recognizes Ferris charter school success

BIG RAPIDS – Ferris State University’s commitment to charter school excellence was highlighted in the U.S. Department of Education guide “Supporting Charter School Excellence Through Quality Authorizing: Innovations in Education.”

Ferris was one of eight charter school authorizers profiled in the report and was recognized for three main “Signs of Success,” including Ferris-authorized schools moved students from the lowest level of MEAP performance to the next highest level; Ferris-authorized schools made greater gains on state MEAP tests in reading and math in comparison to the local school district; and one Ferris-authorized charter school scored 100 percent proficient on the science MEAP test while three others had 75 percent or more students score proficiently in math, science or reading.

“Recognition of the Ferris State University Charter School Office by the U.S. Department of Education is an affirmation of our commitment to our mission of continuous quality improvement,” said Larry Wells, Ferris’ director of Charter Schools. “It also is evidence of the successful efforts of the FSU/CSO to provide quality oversight of the academies authorized by the Ferris Board of Trustees.”

Wells further added that Ferris’ inclusion is even more significant when compared to the other national charter school authorizers highlighted in the study.

“Keep in mind that the U.S. Department of Education looked at charter school authorizers all across our nation. FSU/CSO was one of eight authorizers recognized nationally by the U.S. Department of Education,” Wells said. “Most interesting, out of the eight authorizers recognized, the FSU/CSO was one of only two universities recognized among the eight.”

Ferris, which currently charters 16 schools statewide, is especially pleased about the report because of the significant role the University believes that charter schools play in local communities in giving options to families.

“Charter schools offer options and opportunities to a variety of students with diverse needs that may require educational programs and services beyond the historical norm,” Wells said. “Essentially, it is a matter of choice for families and children. Charter schools also represent

opportunities for educators and organizations to break the mold and establish schools that can try new approaches to teaching and learning.

“For some at-risk youth, charter schools represent a new start for a brighter future,” he added. “At the other end of the spectrum, charter schools provide opportunities for families to identify schools that are structured to address the educational needs of their children.”

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