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Innovation Brings Visitors to Charlotte High School

Over the last two weeks, Charlotte High School hosted two different groups interested in learning about innovative teaching and learning practices used in the school. The first, on Friday, 1/13, was from a group of teachers, counselors, and administrators from Whiteland Community High School in Indiana, while the second, on Wednesday, 1/18, was from the Michigan Department of Education's Office of Education Improvement and Innovation.

The group from Indiana was interested in learning about CHS's standards based grading practices, as well as how instruction looks in a system focused on learning standards. They had the opportunity to talk with students and staff, and they spent time observing CHS's practices in action in the classroom. The group was very impressed with the school, the students, the staff, and the program. Charlotte High School is a recognized leader in the area and state in its work on grading and instruction, and as the visit clearly illustrates, it is gaining some national attention as well.

The second visit, from the Michigan Department of Education, was a little closer to home, but the Office of Educational Improvement and Innovation was interested in the unique and innovative way that CHS schedules and supports freshmen and sophomores. Based on the idea that all students learn at different paces and have different needs, the freshman and sophomore academy model that CHS uses allows students to learn the standards in ways that fit them best. Rather than operating in a traditional system, which relies on set schedules, the academy model allows student learning to dictate the pace of the coursework. It also creates a sense of belonging, reducing behavior issues as academic success increases. The representatives from MDE were very pleased with the visit, and praised CHS for its forward thinking and ability to respond to its students' needs.

Charlotte Public Schools has much to offer its students and families. Whether it is the Flight Club, the band, choir and arts programs, marked improvements in student achievement on standardized tests, college and advanced placement offerings, college and career preparation, athletics, robotics, or any other of the vast and varied successes and programs that the district has to offer, Charlotte schools are serving the families of the community with outstanding academic and interscholastic opportunities. These visits by others in the education field over the last two weeks was a great way to show off all of

this outstanding work, and the staff and students of CHS certainly represented the school, district, and community with pride.