



# Findlay City Schools

2019 Broad Avenue, Findlay, Ohio 45840  
findlaycityschools.org

Phone: 419.427.5488

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April 6, 2020

Findlay Digital Academy Governing Authority Members  
Rosemary Rooker, Superintendent  
1219 West Main Cross, Suite 101  
Findlay, Ohio. 45840

Dear Governing Authority Members,

Annually Findlay City Schools as your sponsor submits a report to you on Findlay Digital Academy's progress toward meeting contractual goals. I have reviewed multiple years of data when pulling together this report. It is apparent from the 2019 School Report Card, High Stakes Review (submitted October, 2019), numerous site visits, attendance at Governing Authority meetings, the March 23, 2020 Data Analysis of Contractual Targets Performance Monitoring Checklist review and a variety of academy documents that Findlay Digital Academy is meeting the terms of the contract and the school is one of the higher performing community schools in the state.

Below I have listed what I feel are the strengths and weaknesses of the academy in the areas of Academics, Finance, and Operations/Organization/Governance. For the items of weakness, I have made some recommendations as to how those weaknesses possibly could be addressed. I am sure you will find other ways to address them as well. However, none of the weaknesses require a Corrective Action Plan as they are all areas where improvement can be made and not areas of neglect or non-compliance. Any institution, no matter how effectively it operates, can always find areas where improvements can be made.

## **Areas of Strengths in Academics**

- Findlay Digital Academy received an overall rating of "Meets Standards" on its 2019-2020 State Report Card.
- The High Stakes Review of 6 years of data conducted in October 2019 demonstrated that the academy:
  - Exceeded Standards in 4,5,6,7,8, year Graduation rates for the past six year.
  - Exceeded Standards in Combined Graduation rate and out preformed Similar Schools and all Dropout Recovery Schools for the past six years.
  - Has Met/Exceeded Standards in Closing the Gap for the past four years
  - Moved from two years of Met Standards in the Progress measure to Exceeds Standards.

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- Site visits have demonstrated that students are actively engaged with the curriculum and the Academic Coaches.
- Climate data collected through Student Surveys has Exceeded Standards for the past three years.
- Student Satisfaction has Exceeded Standards for the past three years.

## **Areas of Strengths in Finances**

- Findlay Digital Academy has ended the past six years with a Carry Over Budget, even though the school experienced some deficit spending.
- The Academy has been compliant in making payments in regards to the 2015-2016 clawback agreement with the Ohio Department of Education.
- Academy Treasurer and Sponsor Treasurer discuss monthly financial records and all are in order.
- Predicted Enrollment vs. Actual Enrollment has been on target for the past six years.
- The School has received audits without findings for the past six years.
- The number of students that have enrolled from neighboring districts has increased to 22% of the total enrollment.

## **Areas of Strength in Operational/Organizational/Governance Performance**

- Governing Authority Policy Book is up to date and in compliance with Ohio Revised Code.
- The Governing Authority meetings are held in accordance with policy and state law.
- A quorum is present at all Governing Authority meetings and this has been the case for the last six years.
- Governing Authority meetings are published in the newspaper and are listed on the School's website.
- Governing Authority meetings comply with Open Meeting Requirements.
- Governing Authority members receive Records and Sunshine training annually.
- Membership in the GRADS Coalition has helped the academy be proactive on legislative issues.
- Health inspections and fire inspections occur annually as required by Ohio Revised Code.
- Fire drills, Tornado drills, and Safety Drills occur as required by Ohio Revised Code
- The Emergency Operation Plan is updated annually.
- A Truancy Officer is in place and monitoring student attendance
- Site visits demonstrate that the School is clean safe and that students are actively engaged in learning.
- All teachers that are used through the curriculum provider are properly licensed.

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- All staff and Governing Authority members have current BCI and FBI checks
- All staff and Governing Authority members participate in appropriate professional development.

## **Areas of Weakness in Academics & Recommendations for Improvement**

- For the second year in a row, the school Did Not Meet standards on the report card in the area of Achievement (High School Test Passage Rate)
  - The percentage of students who met this standard increased from 2018 to 2019
  - Recommendation for Improvement: 1) Continue with the implementation of the new curriculum, 2) Continue to implement the action steps and follow researched based strategies as identified in the schools Improvement Plan
- Not all students are earning the required credits each academic year
  - Recommendations for Improvements: 1) Have Academic Coaches alert the Principal when students are behind in their academic pace of course/unit completions. 2) Principal/Guidance Counselor/Academic Coaches develop Learning Plans for identified students and meet with parents and students to review. Review and update these plans at the end of each academic quarter.

## **Areas of Weakness in Finances & Recommendations for Improvement**

- Not receiving full funding for each student enrolled
  - Recommendation for Improvements: 1) Closely monitor the student engagement data that is provided through the new curriculum and provide that information to students/parents regularly. 2) Use positive rewards program to help encourage an increase in student engagement. 3) Provide alternative opportunities for students to earn “time” for through offline learning activities.

## **Areas of Weakness in Operational/Organization/Governance Performance & Recommendations for Improvements**

- Mandatory Annual Governing Authority Professional Development:
  - Recommendation for Improvement: While Open Meetings and Records training transpires annually, it would be best to do this training at a fall Governing Authority Board meeting annually.
- There are no other recommendations at this time as the Governing Authority operates in accordance with ORC and the Operation and Organization of the School are effective.

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Findlay Digital Academy has well established policies, procedures and daily operations. The students are engaged, making progress and seem happy to be attending the academy. The extensive work that was put into the development and implementation of the Improvement Plan the School addressed the areas of weakness noted in the academic section of this report.

It has been a pleasure working with a Governing authority, academy administration and staff who are so committed to helping students that need a different model of education to meet their learning styles and needs. Findlay Digital Academy is in its second year of a three-year contract. Findlay Digital Academy is a very successful school, and were its Sponsor contract up for renewal this year, I would make the recommendation that the contract be renewed.

Sincerely,

Edward P. Kurt  
Findlay City Schools Superintendent

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