

Findlay City Schools Sponsorship Annual Report

Findlay Digital Academy

2022-2023

Class of 2023



FINDLAY
DIGITAL ACADEMY
Where Learning Fits You™



FINDLAY DIGITAL ACADEMY

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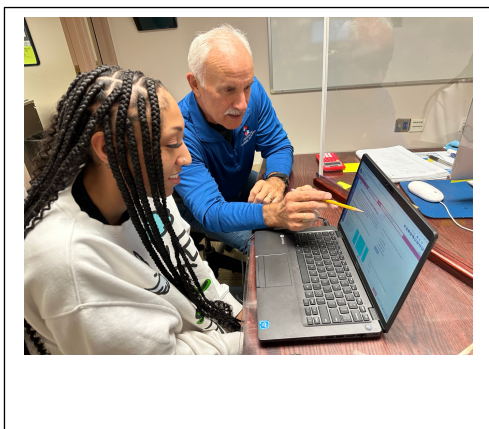
Findlay Digital Academy History & Curriculum

The Findlay community and Findlay City School District board and administrators in 2003-2004 responded to their concern in regard to the number of students who were dropping out of school or on the verge of dropping out of school by forming a task force to study this dropout concern. Findlay City School District personnel and members from the community, which included the Hancock County Juvenile Court, Family Resource Center, Camp Fire USA, the Hancock County ADAMHS board, the Hancock County Educational Service Center, and others met throughout 2003-2004 to explore, select and put into place an educational delivery option to address the dropout concern. It was decided that offering an online learning opportunity that was totally flexible, provided tutoring, and a support system would be the best option. Through the task force's efforts, Findlay City Schools (Sponsor) was awarded a federal grant to become the sponsor of an online community school. Findlay Digital Academy (School) opened its doors in January 2005 with a student enrollment of 35 and has expanded to where it now serves over 200+ students every school year with an average fulltime enrollment of 150 students. During the 2022-2023 school year, 92 students graduated from the Academy....87 were traditional school age and 5 were students enrolled in the 22+ Adult High School Diploma Program.

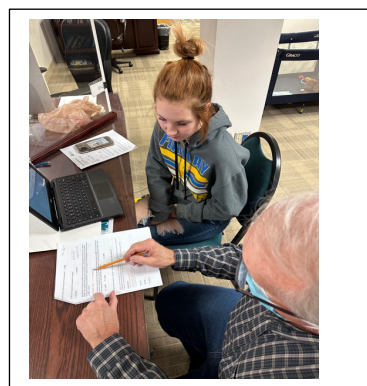
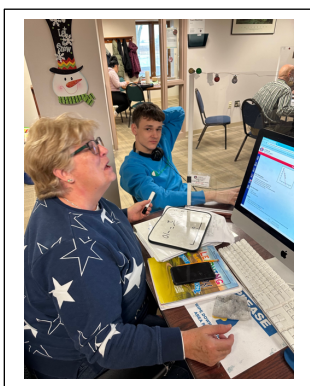
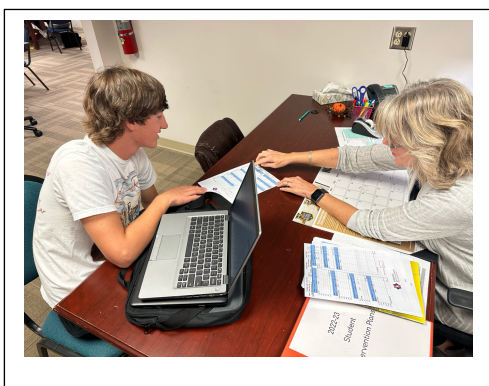
Findlay Digital Academy's curriculum has expanded to not only offer the online curriculum, but students can also choose to participate in Career Technical Programs at Millstream Career Center and/or take college

classes through the College Credit Plus program. During 2022-2023, 15 students participated in Millstream Career Center programs and 6 students were enrolled in college courses.

The online curriculum is available to the students 24/7. It is an individualized continuous progress model of education that sets high expectations for every student. This online curriculum is aligned with the Ohio Academic Content Standards. Each course has a certified online teacher that the student can contact via email, texting, or skyping for assistance. Additionally, Findlay Digital Academy offers a lab setting that is staffed with licensed teachers and it is open Monday through Thursday from 10:00 AM - 4:00 PM to offer one-on-one tutoring. Each student is assigned an Instructional Coach who makes weekly contact with the student and/or parent. Students are expected to work 26 hours a week on their school assignments and complete at least one credit per quarter.



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Sponsor Mission & Leadership

Findlay City Schools Sponsoring Mission

Findlay City Schools, as a Community School Sponsor, is dedicated to “Educating and Empowering for Life,” those students enrolled in the school(s) it sponsors.

Findlay City Schools Sponsoring Goals (Based on the National Association of Charter School Authorizers Index of Essential Practices)

- Annually at the beginning of each new school year assign sponsor staff to oversee and assist Findlay Digital Academy, the only school the district sponsors.
- Provide technology support on an on-going basis as needed by the sponsored school.
- Dedicate time and financial resources to ensure the successful operation of the sponsored school.
- Conduct site visits throughout the year to make sure quality practices are taking place within the sponsored school structure in regard to academics, governance, finance and legal compliance.

The following boards and team members will supervise to make sure that both the mission and goals of the sponsor and the academy are met:

Findlay City Schools Board Members

- Matt Cooper, President – mcooper@fcsboard.findlaycityschools.org
- Laura Eier- Vice President- leier@fcsboard.findlaycityschools.org
- Kathy Siebenaler Wilson, President - kathysw@fcsboard.findlaycityschools.org
- Susan Russel, Vice President– srussel@fcsboard.findlaycityschools.org
- Chris Aldrich - caldrich@fcsboard.findlaycityschools.org



Findlay Digital Academy Governing Authority Board Members

- Kimberly Bash, President – kbash@findlaycityschools.org
- Dr. Edie Wannemacher, Vice President – ewannemacher@findlaycityschools.org
- Melissa LaRocco – mlarocco@findlaycityschools.org
- Bill O. Miller – bmiller@findlaycityschools.org
- Zachary Thomas- zthomas@findlaycityschools.org

Sponsoring Oversight/Leadership Team Members & Roles

Individual	Position	Role in Sponsoring
Krista Miller kmiller@findlaycityschools.org	Findlay City Schools Interim Superintendent	Assist the Findlay Digital Academy with keeping current with changes in ORC and ODE procedures. Supervise the operation, accountability , quality and compliance of Findlay Digital Academy. Share expertise and guidance in areas of law, governance, facilities and Dropout Prevention and Recovery education .
Dr. Kathy Siebenaler Wilson kathysw@fcsboard.fcs.org	Findlay City Schools Board Representative	Be the liaison between the Findlay Schools Board of Education and the Findlay Digital Academy Administration and Governing Authority. Assist with governance guidance. Share Career Technical expertise .
Katie Abbott kabbott@findlaycityschools.org	Director of Whole Child and Secondary Instruction	Assist Findlay Digital Academy in securing curriculum/instructional practices guidance that is aligned to the Ohio Academic Content Standards. Provide guidance with assessment preparation and administration and professional development .
Martin White mwhite@fcs.org	Director of Technology	Supervise the Findlay Digital Academy technology needs to make sure that they are current, operational and in line with the needs of an e-school.
Pam Harrington pharrington@findlaycityschools.org	Findlay City Schools Treasurer	Monthly monitoring of the financial status and practices of Findlay Digital Academy.

Findlay Digital Academy Academic Performance

Findlay Digital Academy is a Dropout Prevention and Recovery School.

The best indicator that Findlay City Schools can use for Findlay Digital Academy's academic performance is the academy's state report card data analyzed over a three-year period. Due to the Governor's mandated school building closures for COVID-19, Graduation Rates were the only measures provided for 2020-2021 school year. Based upon the analysis of the Ohio Department of Education's data Findlay Digital Academy's results are as follows:

Report Card Rating		
2020-2021	2021-2022	2022-2023
Not Rated	Exceeds Standards	Exceeds Standards

Combined Graduation Rating – 4, 5, 6, 7, 8 Year Rates		
2020-2021	2021-2022	2022-2023
78.2% Exceeds	76.8% Exceeds	77.9% Exceeds

4-Year Graduation Rate		
2020-2021	2021-2022	2022-2023
67.1% Exceeds	61.2% Exceeds	81.0% Exceeds

Gap Closing		
2020-2021	2021-2022	2022-2023
Not Rated	Exceeds	Exceeds

High School Test Passage Rate		
2020-2021	2021-2022	2022-2023
Not Rated	Exceeds	Exceeds

Findlay Digital Academy Enrollment served over 250 students during the 2022-2023 year from 15 area school districts including: Ada, Arcadia, Arlington, Bluffton, Cory-Rawson, Elmwood, Findlay City, Fostoria, Hardin Northern, Liberty-Benton, McComb, North Baltimore, Riverdale, Van Buren, and Vanlue .

HIGH STAKES REVIEW

Annually, the Sponsor has the school submit a High Stakes Review which is spelled out in Exhibit 5 of the Sponsor Contract that is in effect until June 30, 2024. Data from the High Stakes Review is shown below:

Combined Graduation Rate		
	Findlay Digital Academy	All Dropout Recovery Programs
2022-2023	77.9%	43.7%
2021-2022	76.8%	<43%
2020-2021	78.2%	<40%

Attendance Rate				
	Overall	Economically Disadvantaged	Male	Female
2022-2023	87.2%	85.3%	88.3%	86.1%
2021-2022	87.7%	86.5%	88.2%	87.3%
2020-2021	84.6%	83.3%	85.7%	83.8%

Governance			
	Required Six Meetings Held	Quorum Present at all Meetings	Governing Authority Participated in Training Required by Law (ORC) and Contract
2022-2023	Yes	Yes	Yes
2021-2022	Yes	Yes	Yes
2020-2021	Yes	Yes	Yes

Operational Performance	
	Site Visits Verified School & Board in Compliance with ORC
2022-2023	Yes
2021-2022	Yes
2020-2021	Yes

Fiscal Performance/Financial Viability		
	Carry Over Balance	Audits
2022-2023	1,384,676	Clean Audit
2021-2022	1,407,352	Clean Audit
2020-2021	\$1,441,196	Clean Audit

Based upon site visits, constant review of report card data, High Stakes Reviews, and discussions with staff, students and parents, Findlay City Schools, as the sponsor of Findlay Digital Academy, finds the academy to be rated as **EXCEEDS STANDARDS** in Academic Performance and definitely meets compliance indicators in this area. Findlay City Schools is proud of the academy's academic success.

Legal Performance

Findlay Digital Academy contracts with Pepple & Waggoner, Ltd., for legal support. Findlay City Schools contracts with Scott Scriven and Wahoff Law Firm for its legal services. Findlay Digital Academy has met all legal obligations outlined in the Sponsor Contract and has filed all required documents with the Ohio Department of Education. All of the Findlay Digital Academy Governing Authority Board Members have signed Ethics and Conflict of Interest forms and these forms are on file in the Findlay Digital Academy office. All Governing Authority members have received training in open records and the Sunshine laws annually. All Governing Authority Board meetings are published in the local newspaper and are posted on the Findlay Digital Academy webpage. The Findlay City Schools Superintendent or his designee attends all Findlay Digital Academy Governing Authority meetings.

Findlay City Schools, as the Sponsor for Findlay Digital Academy, works with the academy to make sure that it is in compliance with all the provisions of the Ohio Revised Code. The state's annual Sponsor Evaluation System rates the Sponsor in the areas of Quality Practices and Sponsor Compliance and rates the School in terms of Academic Achievement and Compliance with Ohio Revised Code. Because Findlay City Schools has achieved an Exemplary/Effective rating for the past three years, the sponsor will not be rated again until 2023-2024 school year. The areas of Academic, Compliance and Quality are combined for an overall Sponsor Rating.

Sponsor Evaluation Overall Ratings Scores

2018-2019	2019-2020	2020-21	2021-22	2022-2023
Effective	Exempted- COVID	Exempted COVID	NR	NR

Sponsor Evaluation Quality Rating Scores

2018-2019	2019-2020	2020-21	2021-22	2022-2023
Meets	Exempted- COVID	Exempted COVID	NR	NR

Sponsor Evaluation Compliance Rating Scores

2018-2019	2019-2020	2020-21	2021-22	2022-2023
Exemplary	Exempted- COVID	Exempted COVID	NR	NR

Academic Rating

2018-2019	2019-2020	2020-21	2021-22	2022-2023
Meets	Exempted- COVID	Exempted COVID	Exceeds	Exceeds

In the area of Legal Performance, Findlay City Schools finds that Findlay Digital Academy

Meets Standards

HB 2 that became law in February 2015 mandated that all sponsors be evaluated on all laws set forth in the Ohio Revised Code. An extensive sponsor Evaluation Rubric was developed by the Ohio Department of Education. Only five of the 65 sponsors in the state were rated as effective. The rest were rated as poor or ineffective. In 2016-2017 only three Sponsors were rated as Exemplary, Findlay City Schools being one of those Exemplary Sponsors. The 2017-2018 Sponsor Evaluation results reported Findlay City Schools as one of three sponsors to receive an exemplary rating. The 2018-2019 results resulted with Findlay City Schools rated as being an Effective sponsor. **Due to Findlay City Schools achieving an Exemplary/Effective rating for the three consecutive years and with the two years exempted due to COVID, the sponsor will not be rated again until 2023-2024 school year.**

Organization/Operation/Governance Performance

Findlay Digital Academy was formed through the sponsorship of Findlay City Schools in 2004. It was established as an alternative for those students for whom the traditional model of school was not meeting their needs. Findlay Digital Academy is a Dropout Prevention and Recovery school that serves students in grades 9-12 who live in Findlay City School District. During the 2017-18 school year the academy expanded its enrollment borders to include students who attend adjacent school districts. During the 2018-2019 school year the academy expanded its enrollment even further to include students who attend 15 surrounding school districts.

During the 2022-2023 school year the Findlay Digital Academy Governing Authority Board met for special board meetings on March 1, 2023 and May 11, 2023. Special meetings are held on an as needed basis. The Findlay Digital Academy Governing Authority met on August 4, 2022, October 6, 2022, December 5, 2022, February 7, 2023, and April 6, 2023 in regular board meetings to fulfill the required meetings during a year. All board meetings are open and are announced in the local newspaper, The Courier, and meeting dates are posted on the Findlay Digital Academy website. The board abides by all the provisions in Ohio Revised Code governing public meetings. The Governing Authority Board Members represent a large cross section of the community and come to the board with a heart for the student population that Findlay Digital Academy serves. Findlay Digital Academy maintains an up-to-date Findlay Digital Academy Governing Authority Policy book that can be found on its webpage. All required board meeting minutes are available on the Academy's webpage, along with the annual reports and report card data.

At the December 5, 2022 Governing Authority meeting, the Governing Authority participated in training on Sunshine Law - Public Records and Open Meetings presented by Brian J. DeSantis, Esq.

The tables below summarize the Governing Authority's compliance with the provisions of the Sponsor Contract:

Governance			
	Required Meetings Held	Quorum Present at all Meetings	Governing Authority Participated in Training Required by Law (ORC) and Contract
2022-2023	Yes	Yes	Yes
2021-2022	Yes	Yes	Yes
2020-2021	Yes	Yes	Yes

Operational Performance	
	Site Visits Verified School & Board in Compliance with ORC
2022-2023	Yes
2021-2022	Yes
2020-2021	Yes

Monthly financial communications were shared during the 2022-2023 school year between the Findlay City Schools treasurer, Pam Harrington, and Findlay Digital Academy's treasurer, Stephen Earnest. These monthly communications included financial reports with analysis of: Bank Reconciliation, Financial Report by Fund, Checking Register Statement, Summary Check Register and Credit Card Statements.

The Findlay Digital Academy Governing Authority Board hired Rosemary Rooker, who holds a current State of Ohio Superintendent's license, as the Superintendent/Executive Director, and Stephen Earnest, who holds a current State of Ohio Treasurer's license, as the Treasurer of Findlay Digital Academy. The Academy hired Michael Brand, who holds a current State of Ohio Principal's license. All Academy personnel are hired through purchased service agreements with either Findlay City Schools, Hancock County Educational Service Center or Goal Digital Academy.

Findlay Digital Academy is located in offices rented from the TLB Corporate Center and is located at 1219 West Main Cross, Suite 101, Findlay, Ohio. The academy office is open for tutoring of students Monday through Thursday, from 10:00 AM – 4:00 PM. The online curriculum is available to students 24/7.

Findlay City Schools is compliant with its obligations as outlined in the Sponsor Contract. Those obligations from the Sponsor Contract are as follows:

Article V. Responsibilities of the SPONSOR

- Throughout the Term, the SPONSOR shall support the SCHOOL's establishment and operation by converting to the SCHOOL's use certain resources previously utilized by the SPONSOR, including but not limited to portions of the SPONSOR's facilities, staff, equipment, instructional materials, curriculum, and educational strategy, as determined to be appropriate by the SPONSOR in the SPONSOR's sole discretion.
- Assessment and Accountability as required by section 3314.03(D) of the Ohio Revised Code, the SPONSOR's duties shall include all duties pursuant to the written agreement entered into with the Ohio Department of Education under division (B) of section 3314.015 of the Revised Code and shall include the following:
 - Monitor the SCHOOL's compliance with all laws applicable to the SCHOOL and with the terms of this Successor Contract;
 - Monitor and evaluate the academic and fiscal performance and the organization and operation of the SCHOOL on at least an annual basis;
 - Report on an annual basis the results of the evaluation conducted under subparagraph (2) immediately above to the Department of Education and to the parents of students enrolled in the SCHOOL;
 - Provide technical assistance to the SCHOOL in complying with laws applicable to the SCHOOL and terms of this Successor Contract;
 - Take steps to intervene in the SCHOOL's operation to correct problems in the SCHOOL's overall performance, declare the SCHOOL to be on probationary status pursuant to section 3314.073 of the Ohio Revised Code, suspend the operation of the SCHOOL pursuant to section 3314.072 of the Ohio Revised Code, or terminate this Successor Contract pursuant to section 3314.07 of the Ohio Revised Code as determined necessary by the SPONSOR;
 - Have in place a plan of action to be undertaken in the event the SCHOOL experiences financial difficulties or closes prior to the end of a school year.
 - Provide in writing the annual assurances for the SCHOOL no later than ten (10) business days prior to the opening of the SCHOOL, as required by R.C. Section 3314.19.
 - A representative of the SPONSOR shall meet with the Board of Directors or Treasurer of the SCHOOL and shall review the financial and enrollment records of the SCHOOL at least once every month at a mutually agreeable date and time, as required by Section 3314.023 of the Ohio Revised Code. Prior to or during that meeting, the SCHOOL shall furnish copies of all relevant financial and enrollment records to the SPONSOR, Operator (if applicable), Board of Directors, and the SCHOOL's treasurer. Not later than ten (10) calendar days after each review meeting, the SPONSOR shall provide the Board of Directors and the SCHOOL's treasurer with a written report regarding the review.
 - The SCHOOL will comply with sections 3302.04 and 3302.041 of the Revised Code, except that any action

required to be taken by a school district pursuant to those sections shall be taken by the SPONSOR. However, the SPONSOR shall not be required to take any action described in division (F) of section 3302.04 of the Revised Code.

Findlay City Schools has met these obligations in the following ways (However, this list is not all inclusive due to the great support Findlay City Schools gives to the Academy).

- Site visits,
- Provides professional development as appropriate;
- Provides technical support,
- Review of financial and records of the academy monthly,
- Completing Opening Assurances in accordance with the law,
- Findlay City Schools leadership attends professional development on sponsoring,
- Provides an annual report to the school and its parents,
- Sponsor Oversight/Leadership Team meets to address the Academy's progress and needs.

Overall Findlay City Schools rates Findlay Digital Academy as **Meets Standards** in the areas of Organization, Operation and Governance.

Fiscal Performance

Findlay Digital Academy ended June 2023 with a General Fund surplus of \$1,607,648.00. Findlay Digital Academy income consists of State Foundation Funding, Federal Grants, Federal Title Funds, Casino Revenue and interest on investments. See below the multiple year detailed information below in regard to income and expenditures:

INCOME

Source	2020-2021	2021-2022	2022-2023
State Foundation	\$982,623.00	\$932,222.00	\$1,151,904.00
Casino Revenue	\$6,634.00	9,130.00	9,649.00
Federal Title Grants	\$149,624.00	\$126,342.00	205,997.00
State Grants	\$38,500.00	Not Available	Not Available
Interest/Misc	\$27,846.00	\$10,471.00	\$91,318.00
Total	\$1,205,227.00	\$1,078,165	\$1,458,868.00

EXPENDITURES

Year	2020-2021	2021-2022	2022-2023
Instructional Services	\$408,607	\$333,891	\$348,837
Instructional Coaches	120,091	206,400	222,202
Admin/Fiscal Services	297,441	317,172	310,069
Facility Rent	52,712	82,059	102,225
Legal Fees	15,436	12,352	19,162
Supplies	28,467	66,059	78,173
EMIS Services	10,943	-	-
Professional Development	1,055	-	-
Misc Expenses	0	-	-
Technology	61,421	72,127	72,254
Audit	6,082	-	-
Curriculum	198,222	209,400	254,625
Advertising	5,526	2,336	26,081
Total Expenditures	1,206,003	1,301,491	1,433,628

Twice a year the Findlay Digital Academy Governing Authority Board approves the 5-Year Forecast and the 5- Year Forecast is then submitted to the Ohio Department of Education through Epicenter and it is also submitted to the Findlay City Schools Treasurer, Pam Harrington and Findlay City Schools Interim Superintendent, Krista Crates Miller. The 5-Year Forecasts are additionally shared with the Findlay City Schools Board of Education.

While Findlay Digital Academy has operated with a slight deficit in recent years, in FY '23 Findlay Digital Academy generated \$233,000 in additional surplus by utilizing the Federal ARP Grant. This along with the strong carry-over has generated a surplus equal to 409 Days Cash. Thus, FDA is in a very sound financial position. Additionally, the school has increased service area, sought grants and alternative funding to ensure that the school will not be operating in deficit in the future.

Fiscal Performance/Financial Viability		
	Carry Over Balance	Audits
2020-2021	\$1,409,404	Clean Audit
2019-2020	\$1,441,196	Clean Audit
2018-2019	\$1,476,102	Clean Audit
2017-2018	\$1,341,314	Clean Audit (Auditor no longer awarding Auditor of State Awards to Community Schools)

Findlay Digital Academy had a fiscal audit performed in 2023 and received a clean audit report. The academy has always had clean audits and has received Auditor of the State Awards in the years that the Auditor was giving such awards to community schools.

Findlay Digital Academy Treasurer, Stephen Earnest, submits monthly enrollment and financial reports to Pam Harrington, the Findlay City Schools Treasurer. Monthly financial information that was shared included: Bank Reconciliations, Financial Reports by Fund, Checking Register Statements, Summary Check Register and Credit Card Statements.

The Findlay Digital Academy treasurer, Steven Earnest holds a current State of Ohio Treasurer License and is bonded.

Based on monthly reports, the 5-Year Forecasts, audit reports, multiple years of data and day-to-day interaction with the School, the Sponsor, **Findlay City Schools finds Findlay Digital Academy to be Meets Standards in Fiscal Performance.**

School Strengths & Weaknesses

Strengths:

- Graduation Rate – the Academy provides the support and appropriate curriculum that enables many at-risk students to earn a high school diploma. The Academy outperforms similar schools in the state in the areas of combined graduation rates and all other cohort years.
- The Governing Authority Board members represent a wide-base of the community and are community leaders. Most members have served five or more years on the Board.
- Governing Authority Board meetings are held on a regular basis and are in compliance with O.R.C.
- The Academy has a strong carryover budget with 409 true-days cash
- Because of the positive ratings over the last three years that were rated on the Sponsor Evaluation Rubric, the sponsor will not need to participate in a Sponsor Evaluation until the 2023-2024 school year.
- Expanding enrollment area to a total of fifteen adjacent districts in 2017-2018 is providing help for more at-risk students and strengthening the financial base of the school.
- Due to HB 123, Findlay Digital Academy has been included in a three-year pilot program through the Ohio Department of Education that provides for funding through a three-tiered method in place of only being funded through “hours” completed by students. This hybrid funding method has been included in the state budget bill approved by the governor to be effective during the 2023-2024 school year.

Weaknesses:

- The School was operating in deficit spending during fiscal years '21 & '22 school year.
- The School should continue to put strategies in place to address chronic absences.

2022-2023 Plans for Correcting Areas of Weakness:

Test Passage Improvement Plans

- Instructional Coaches are closely monitoring student progress with the available monitoring system embedded in the new curriculum. Through this monitoring, coaches are able to identify/develop when students may need an Individual Learning Plan to help prepare them for the End of Course tests.
- Opportunity for remediation and intervention in all tested areas will be provided to all students prior to End of Course exams.

Financial Health Improvement Plans

- In response to HB 123, Findlay Digital Academy has put several strategies in place in an effort to increase the potential benefits of the three- tiered funding pilot program.
- Marketing measures have been put into place to promote the academy in surrounding school districts.
- Incentives for increasing student engagement have been implemented.
- The time tracking system embedded in the curriculum allows for close monitoring of time on task. This system aligns with the requirements set forth by the Ohio Department of Education for monitoring learning opportunities provided and completed that result in a more accurate final FTE count.

Sponsor Summary Rating of Findlay Digital Academy

Based on the data presented in this report, site visits, and other sources, Findlay City Schools finds Findlay Digital Academy to **Meet or Exceed Standards in all areas.**

AREA	SCORE
Academic Performance	Exceeds Standards
Legal Performance	Meets Standards
Organization/Operation/Governance Performance	Meets Standards
Fiscal Performance	Meets Standards
Summary of Performance	Meets Standards

Findlay City Schools Board of Education is pleased with Findlay Digital Academy's performance in all areas. The sponsor operated this school year in the third year of a three-year agreement. During the 2020-2021 school year, the Sponsor renewed the Sponsor Contract with the School based on the School's performance data. The agreement runs from July 1, 2021 through June 30, 2024. This annual report was presented and approved by the Findlay City Schools Board of Education at their meeting on October 16, 2023.

Ms. Laura Eier
Findlay City Schools Board President

Dr. Andy Hatton
Findlay City Schools Superintendent