

# Annual Report on the Office of School Sponsorship



July 1, 2023 – June 30, 2024



**Department of  
Education &  
Workforce**

School Sponsorship

# Office of School Sponsorship Annual Report

## Executive Summary

Ohio Revised Code Section 3314.029 requires the Ohio Department of Education and Workforce to issue an annual report on its Office of School Sponsorship to the Ohio General Assembly and Governor Mike DeWine that includes information about the community schools taking part in the program and their compliance with the law. Most recently, **77% of sponsored traditional schools** met state expectations for performance and received overall ratings of three stars or better on the traditional Ohio School Report Cards. **One hundred percent of sponsored dropout prevention and recovery schools** received overall ratings of “Meets Standards” or “Exceeds Standards” on the Dropout Prevention and Recovery Report Cards.

### VISION

The Office of School Sponsorship’s vision is for Ohio students to have access to a high-quality, publicly funded educational program that meets the needs of the whole student.

### MISSION

The mission of the office is to provide oversight and accountability and to inform and empower sponsored schools so they can successfully provide a high-quality education to Ohio’s students.

### CORE VALUES

**WHOLE STUDENT** – Schools sponsored by the Office of School Sponsorship are committed to developing the whole student. The Office of School Sponsorship has an unwavering commitment to academics, as well as a focus on student wellness.

**EDUCATIONAL EQUITY** – Schools sponsored by the Office of School Sponsorship are committed to improving educational outcomes for all students, particularly those who have traditionally been underserved and are most impacted by achievement and opportunity gaps.

**QUALITY SCHOOLS & QUALITY PRACTICES** – Just as schools are expected to maintain high standards and continuous improvement, the Office of School Sponsorship authorizing program is committed to upholding rigorous standards and continually evaluates and improves policies and practices to ensure quality.

## Introduction to the Office of School Sponsorship

Ohio law established the Office of School Sponsorship to perform sponsorship duties for Department-sponsored community schools. This unique office within the state agency has dual roles – the first one is to operate as a state regulator and the second is to execute the duties of a community school sponsor.

As a regulator, the Office of School Sponsorship is required to adhere to community school law, as well as the policies and procedures established by the Department. This includes assuming sponsorship of schools when a decision is made by the Department to terminate a sponsor’s ability to sponsor schools. When this occurs, the Office of School Sponsorship immediately acts as the school’s sponsor, accepting the terms of the existing community school contract between the school and the previous sponsor with limited understanding of current building, academic, and/or funding conditions. The Office of School Sponsorship focuses on turning around these assumed schools so students are attending a quality school option.

The Office of School Sponsorship may take applications for new schools, continue to sponsor existing schools, and assume sponsorship of additional schools any time during the school year. The Office of School Sponsorship has focused on providing monitoring, oversight, technical assistance, and support to existing sponsored schools and as a school turnaround specialist for transfer schools as they are welcomed into its portfolio. During the 2023-2024 school year, the Office of School Sponsorship provided oversight, monitoring, and technical assistance to 26 sponsored schools.

### MISSION OF THE OFFICE OF SCHOOL SPONSORSHIP

The Office of School Sponsorship’s daily efforts of providing oversight, monitoring, and technical assistance to the governing boards and school leadership in support of building-level efforts reflect the office’s

mission, vision, philosophy, and core values to remain student-focused and promote equity, partnership, and quality schools.

## Performance of the Office of School Sponsorship

Ohio sponsors are evaluated by the Department in three equally weighted areas: academic performance, compliance, and quality practices. Sponsors that are rated effective or higher for three consecutive years are subject to being evaluated once every three years. The Office of School Sponsorship was rated effective for three consecutive years and is now subject to review once every three years.

Over the past year, the Department-sponsored schools have shown improvement in overall academics and especially in early literacy following the COVID-19 pandemic. Ten of the 13 sponsored traditional schools received an overall rating of three stars (meets standards) or higher on the Ohio School Report Card, and all 13 sponsored dropout prevention and recovery schools received a “Meets Standards” or “Exceeds Standards” on the Ohio Dropout Prevention and Recovery Report Card. The Office of School Sponsorship continues to work with its portfolio of schools to ensure that each school is a quality school of choice in its community.

### SPONSORED SCHOOL DEMOGRAPHICS

The Office of School Sponsorship provides oversight and monitoring to a diverse portfolio of schools including elementary schools, high schools, dropout prevention and recovery schools, and blended learning models across the state. This portfolio features a mix of online and brick-and-mortar schools. Each school fills a need in the community through a school-specific mission. Highlights from the Office of School Sponsorship’s community school portfolio include:

- Department-sponsored schools are located throughout the state in both challenged and non-challenged districts, Big 8 urban districts, and rural farming and mining communities.
- Schools are designed for meeting specific needs of Ohio’s workforce – specialties include culinary arts, building construction, welding, gas and oil, and digital technologies.
- Schools are planned to mirror the communities they serve, reflecting the unique ethnic and cultural makeup of the community in which each school is located.
- Schools are dedicated to meeting the needs of the whole child, including trauma-informed practices and specialized programs to meet the needs of autistic and special needs students.
- Schools are established with strong partnerships with local community and civic organizations.

### Philosophy

The Office of School Sponsorship believes it is important that its actions, interactions, and communications come from the mindset of serving children.

It is a priority for the Office of School Sponsorship to be knowledgeable and informed of challenges and opportunities for schools. The office strives to educate itself and provide technical assistance to sponsored schools.

The Office of School Sponsorship provides oversight and accountability while empowering schools with information, tools, and resources to:

- Build strong leaders
- Make data-driven decisions at the school level
- Ensure fiscal and organizational compliance

The Office of School Sponsorship monitors and evaluates its sponsored schools through many activities, including:

- Attendance at monthly governing authority meetings
- Attendance at finance committee meetings
- Review of monthly financial reports
- Review of student assessment data
- On-site visits to the schools, including health and safety walk-throughs, compliance visits, classroom observations, school leadership team meetings, and file reviews
- Professional development and technical assistance
- Review and monitoring of contract, state, and federal law compliance, including educational program, finance, organization, and operational requirements

Another area of focus for the Office of School Sponsorship is ensuring that schools provide appropriate support and education to students with disabilities. During the 2022-2023 school year, over 91% of students taught in schools within the Office of School Sponsorship’s portfolio were economically disadvantaged.

The following chart shows student demographics of the Office of School Sponsorship’s sponsored schools compared to statewide traditional public and community schools:

	<b>Economic Disadvantagement FY 2024 (Percent of Enrollment)</b>	<b>Students with Disabilities FY 2024 (Percent of Enrollment)</b>
<b>OSS Community Schools</b>	91.8%	18.3%
<b>All Community Schools</b>	80.8%	17.9%
<b>Public Districts</b>	48.1%	16.3%
<b>Public District and All Community Schools</b>	50.4%	16.4%

## **SPONSORED SCHOOL PERFORMANCE**

All Ohio community school sponsors must fulfill annual sponsor reporting requirements specified by [ORC 3314.03\(D\)\(3\)](#), [ORC 3314.03\(A\)\(11\)\(g\)](#), and [Ohio Administrative Code 3301-102-05](#).

Each community school sponsor must monitor and evaluate the academic and fiscal performance, organizational and operational performance, and legal compliance of each community school it sponsors. A report of school performance is to be created and submitted to stakeholders each year. This written report is a summation of the performance of schools sponsored by the Office of School Sponsorship during the 2023-2024 school year.

The Office of School Sponsorship is required by Ohio law to monitor and ensure compliance with all applicable laws and rules. The Office of School Sponsorship reviews each school’s policies and procedures throughout the school year and ensures the governing authority of each school reviews and approves policies as needed. In addition, the Office of School Sponsorship conducts site visits during the school year to ensure each school implements its policies and procedures with fidelity and complies with all laws and rules.

The Office of School Sponsorship used its performance framework to monitor and evaluate academic school performance targets and metrics, fiscal indicators, organization and operations indicators, and overall compliance indicator ratings. In addition, as part of the quality sponsorship goals, the Office of School Sponsorship evaluates schools’ academic programs and implementation of the curriculum across grade bands and ensures schools implement any required academic improvement plans with fidelity.

### **ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE**

The Office of School Sponsorship, like all Ohio sponsors, is required by ORC 3314.03 to evaluate its sponsored schools on performance measures as indicated in the Ohio School Report Cards issued by the Department. The Office of School Sponsorship evaluated school Performance Index scores, achievement indicators met, graduation rate, local assessments, and other metrics as reported in the school’s report cards in 2022-2023.

Overall, sponsored schools show continued improvement and continue to move toward pre-pandemic performance. With a significant emphasis on early literacy and the Science of Reading, the sponsored schools are progressing toward meeting and exceeding assessment standards by achieving or moving toward three stars or higher on the

Achievement rating. Chronic absenteeism in sponsored schools is decreasing as the schools focus on early intervention and student engagement.

Ohio Sponsored Schools Meeting or Exceeding State Standards 2023-2024**		
Ashland County Community Academy	Franklinton High School	SMART Academy
Beacon Academy	Global Village Academy	Steel Academy
Beacon Hill Academy	Greater Summit County Early Learning Center	T2 Honors Academy
Cincinnati College Preparatory Academy	Liberty Preparatory School	The Unlimited Classroom dba Valley Virtual Remote Learning Academy
Coshocton Opportunity School	Mahoning County High School	Utica Shale Academy
Dayton Business Technology High School	Par Excellence dba Par Excellence STEM Academy	West Central Learning Academy II
Discovery Academy	Rittman Academy	
Eagle Learning Center	Schnee Learning Center	

\*\*Schools receiving overall ratings of three stars or higher on the Ohio School Report Cards or receiving Meets Standards or Exceeds Standards on the Dropout Prevention and Recovery Report Cards.

### ORGANIZATION, OPERATION, AND LEGAL COMPLIANCE

The Office of School Sponsorship works with sponsored schools to ensure compliance with rule and law. During the 2023-2024 school year, schools participated in several on-site visits with Office of School Sponsorship leadership and staff who conducted file reviews, classroom observations, and compliance assessments. Additionally, the Office of School Sponsorship provided workshops, training, and leadership development opportunities throughout the year.

The Office of School Sponsorship staff also attend board meetings and committee meetings and review governing authority documentation and compliance reports throughout the year. Timely record submissions were received, and technical assistance and support were provided as needed to ensure compliance in the areas of organization, operation, and legal compliance. The Office of School Sponsorship provided access to training for board members and a yearlong leadership development program for principals. Sponsored schools have worked diligently throughout the 2023-2024 school year to meet compliance requirements, as well as operational and organizational standards.

### FISCAL PERFORMANCE

The Office of School Sponsorship works closely with school leaders, fiscal officers, and board members. Office staff conduct monthly fiscal reviews, attend board meetings, participate in pre- and post-audit conferences, and provide needed technical support and assistance to schools. Fiscal review ratings are based on monthly board meeting reporting, financial committee and report reviews, fiscal performance, and annual audit performance.

### 2023-2024 SUMMARY

The schools sponsored by the Office of School Sponsorship have made huge strides in improving their academic, fiscal, operational, compliance, and overall performance during the 2023-2024 school year.

The Office of School Sponsorship is pleased to report that its schools continue to improve and show growth in performance. On the 2023-2024 traditional report cards, the Office of School Sponsorship sponsored seven schools

with ratings of four stars or higher. The Office of School Sponsorship also sponsored 13 dropout prevention and recovery schools, of which 12 schools received overall ratings of “Exceeds Standards” and one school received an overall rating of “Meets Standards.” In addition, the Office of School Sponsorship sponsored a total of four schools designated as “Quality Community Schools,” and receive Quality Community School Support Grant funds under Ohio law.

The Office of School Sponsorship continues to improve standard operating procedures and the tools and resources used to provide technical assistance, training, and development to sponsored schools. The office’s continued focus on academic improvement is evident in the performance of its portfolio of schools. Many schools are showing improvements in the Achievement, Progress, and Early Literacy components of the Ohio School Report Cards. A total of 88% of sponsored schools are performing at or above state standards. As previously noted, the Office of School Sponsorship received a rating of “Exceeds Standards” in compliance and “Meets Standards” in quality practices for its last evaluation cycle. The Office of School Sponsorship continues to work with its portfolio of schools to ensure each school is a quality school choice in its community.

## Listing of Sponsored Schools

**A+ Arts Academy:** *(Columbus)* This Columbus elementary school actively promotes academics through the infusion of the arts and encourages all students to strive for excellence in all aspects of life.

**A+ Children’s Academy:** *(Columbus)* Serving elementary students, A+ Children’s Academy cultivates a passion for learning in all students by engaging in a standards-based, integrated curriculum that addresses students’ social, emotional, academic, and cognitive needs.

**Ashland County Community Academy:** *(Ashland)* The school serves an at-risk population of dropout prevention and recovery students in the Ashland area and offers opportunities for students to recover credits, learn welding skills, and prepare to enter the workforce or continue to earn advanced degrees.

**Beacon Academy:** *(Canton)* An elementary school serving kindergarten through eighth grade in the Canton area, the school has a strong connection with the Canton community and involves families in the support and education of their children.

**Beacon Hill Academy:** *(Dundee)* This school in Wayne County primarily serves Amish students in grades 7 through 12. The school implements a rigorous academic program to ensure students leaving school for religious purposes after eighth grade are reading at the 10th-grade level or higher and have similar math proficiency.

**Cincinnati College Preparatory Academy:** *(Cincinnati)* This kindergarten through grade 12 school focuses on holistic programming and a rigorous academic program to ensure its graduates are college and career ready. The school was identified as a “Quality Community School” based on the 2022-2023 Ohio School Report Cards, receiving four stars on the Progress measure and having a higher Performance Index than Cincinnati Public Schools for the past two years.

**Coshocton Opportunity School:** *(Coshocton)* The school serves an at-risk population of dropout prevention and recovery students. It operates during late afternoon and early evening hours to provide a supportive environment for students balancing work, family, and earning their high school diplomas.

**Dayton Business Technology High School:** *(Dayton)* This high school serves an at-risk population of dropout prevention and recovery students in the Dayton area and offers students opportunities to recover credits, learn business skills, and prepare to enter the workforce or continue working toward advanced degrees.

**Discovery Academy:** *(Toledo)* This elementary school focuses on quality academic programs for all students. This project-based learning school includes an autism program to ensure all students receive a quality education. The school has been consistently designated a “Quality Community School” under Ohio law since the 2018-2019 report cards.

**Eagle Learning Center:** *(Oregon)* A high school serving at-risk dropout prevention and recovery students in the Oregon and Toledo area, Eagle Learning Center focuses on engaging its students by offering day and evening hours during which students earn credits and their high school diplomas.

**Global Village Academy:** *(Parma)* An elementary school with one of the highest-rated report cards in the state, Global Village Academy primarily serves migrant families in Parma, with a focus on academic excellence and student achievement. The school received the “Overall A” school award for a second year and has been identified as a “Quality Community School” under Ohio law since the 2018-2019 report cards.

**Greater Summit County Early Learning Center:** *(Akron)* An elementary school focusing on student achievement and individualized learning, students at Greater Summit County Early Learning Center are challenged to present their lessons to their parents and community members throughout the school year.

**Franklinton High School:** *(Columbus)* (Transferred sponsorship to the Office of School Sponsorship in January 2023). This high-performing dropout prevention and recovery school allows students to recover credits while offering a rigorous academic program. Many of the graduating students received scholarships to attend four-year colleges and universities. The school has had a higher Performance Index than Columbus City School District for the past two school years.

**Liberty Preparatory School:** *(Smithville)* The school serves an at-risk population of dropout prevention and recovery students in the Wayne County area and provides opportunities for students to recover credits while preparing to enter the workforce.

**Mahoning County High School:** *(Youngstown)* Situated in Youngstown, Mahoning County High School serves primarily at-risk students who have been involved in the juvenile justice system. The school strives to create a safe culture and climate for students while providing post-high school options.

**Par Excellence Academy:** *(Newark)* Located in Newark, this elementary school starts each day with 90 minutes of reading. The school’s unique approach to individualized and outdoor learning has created one of the fastest growing community schools in the area.

**Rittman Academy:** *(Rittman)* A small high school serving at-risk students in a rural setting, Rittman Academy is a dropout prevention and recovery high school assisting students with credit recovery and earning their high school diplomas.

**Schnee Learning Center:** *(Cuyahoga Falls)* A small dropout prevention and recovery high school in Cuyahoga Falls, Schnee Learning Center assists students with recovering credits and earning their high school diplomas. Schnee Learning Center shows students they can succeed in postsecondary education or military service.

**SMART Academy:** *(Cleveland)* An elementary school in the Cleveland Metropolitan areas serving grades kindergarten through 5. SMART Academy has a focus on early literacy and preparing students as they enter middle school.

**Steel Academy:** (*Akron*) A dropout prevention and recovery middle and high school serving students in grades 7 through 12, Steel Academy incorporates steel drumming into its curriculum.

**T2 Honors Academy:** (*Warrensville*) Focused on individualized learning and college preparation, T2 Honors Academy requires students to understand social issues that impact their community while providing a rigorous curriculum.

**The Unlimited Classroom dba Valley Virtual Remote Learning Academy:** (*Youngstown*) An online dropout prevention and recovery school serving at-risk students in the Youngstown area, the school incorporates in-person tutoring sessions with its online program to provide a well-rounded experience for students.

**Utica Shale Academy:** (*Salineville*) This unique school serves at-risk high school students in Columbiana County, integrating trade credentials and employability skills into the academic program. The school partners with industries in the areas to provide students with real-world experiences.

**West Central Learning Academy II:** (*Lima*) Serving high school grades, West Central Learning Academy II focuses on providing a safe, flexible, blended learning environment for students to learn at their own pace. The school received an “Exceeds Standards” rating for its academic performance.

**Youngstown Community School:** (*Youngstown*) Focusing on academics and community involvement, Youngstown Community School is truly embedded in the community. The school works to achieve academic excellence while preparing students for high school.