



Annual Report on

Ohio Community Schools

JULY 1, 2020 - JUNE 30, 2021



2020 - 2021

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December 27, 2021

The Honorable Mike DeWine
Governor of Ohio
77 South High Street, 30th Floor
Columbus, Ohio 43215

RE: 2020-2021 Annual Report on Ohio Community Schools

Dear Governor DeWine:

I am pleased to offer you the Ohio Department of Education's 19th Annual Report on Community Schools Operating in Ohio. [Ohio law](#) requires the Department to submit this report each year to the governor, speaker of the House of Representatives, president of the Senate and chairpersons of the House and Senate committees principally responsible for education matters.

During the 2020-2021 school year, more than 113,900 students attended Ohio community schools — about 6.8 percent of the total public school enrollment in our state. This report will help Ohio citizens understand the operation, role and general performance of community schools in Ohio's public education system.

Due to the impact of the coronavirus, several elements found in previous years' reports (particularly in the area of academic performance) will not appear in the report. This should not diminish any perception of the performance of community schools as they continue to find ways to support students during the pandemic. Several tables and graphs help illustrate the facts contained in this report. You also will find links to related pages on the Department's website. To view the tables and the accompanying narrative, please [click here](#).

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Stephanie K. Siddens". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Stephanie K. Siddens, Ph.D.
Interim Superintendent of Public Instruction
Ohio Department of Education

2020-2021

Executive Summary

Annual Report on Community Schools Operating in Ohio

Ohio supports quality educational opportunities for all students in both traditional districts and community schools and continues working to ensure its students have access to high-quality options. All Ohio schools should be safe, conducive to learning and accountable for the success of their students. Where these options are limited or nonexistent, Ohio makes opportunities available to develop new, high-quality community schools.

During the 2020-2021 school year, the community school sector experienced unprecedented challenges. Community schools and their sponsors had to adjust their practices amidst a global pandemic to continue serving students. The Ohio Department of Education continues its efforts to improve the community school sector through oversight of sponsors, technical assistance to stakeholders and targeted support for community schools. The continued growth by Ohio's community schools is a testament to the work of all stakeholders within Ohio's charter school sector.

School year 2020-2021 marked the second year funds were distributed under the Quality Community School Support fund. This fund established in House Bill 166 earmarked \$30 million in state aid to community schools receiving the designation as a Community School of Quality. Based on a ruling from the Ohio Supreme Court, additional schools were deemed eligible to qualify under the Quality Community School Support fund. The Department received approval from the Controlling Board to increase appropriation to pay the additional schools the same prorated amount, increasing the total appropriation to \$32,655,309.78. In total, 99 community schools received support from this legislative earmark for the 2020-2021 school year and received payment in January 2020. (More information can be found on pages 19-20.)

The Department secured approval under flexibility provided by the *Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA)* to allow community schools seeking to expand to apply for Charter Schools Program funding. This funding previously was available only for community schools that were opening for the first time and planning to implement high-performing educational models. The Department awarded one expansion subgrant to existing high-quality community schools and five subgrants to newly opening community schools.

2020-2021

Annual Report

Ohio Community Schools

Introduction

Each year, the Ohio Department of Education releases an annual report on its public community schools — called charter schools in many states. As required by state law, this annual report addresses the performance of Ohio’s community schools in five areas:

1. Effectiveness of academic programs;
2. School operations;
3. Performance of sponsors;
4. Legal compliance; and
5. Financial condition.

A community school may operate only under the oversight of a sponsor approved by the Department. Restricted by law to educationally oriented organizations, community school sponsors are responsible for approving their schools’ education plans and setting clear expectations for academic, fiscal and operational performance. The Department helps ensure a high-quality community school sector by providing technical assistance to community schools and sponsors, as well as administering a comprehensive sponsor evaluation and improvement system.

Ohio Community Schools



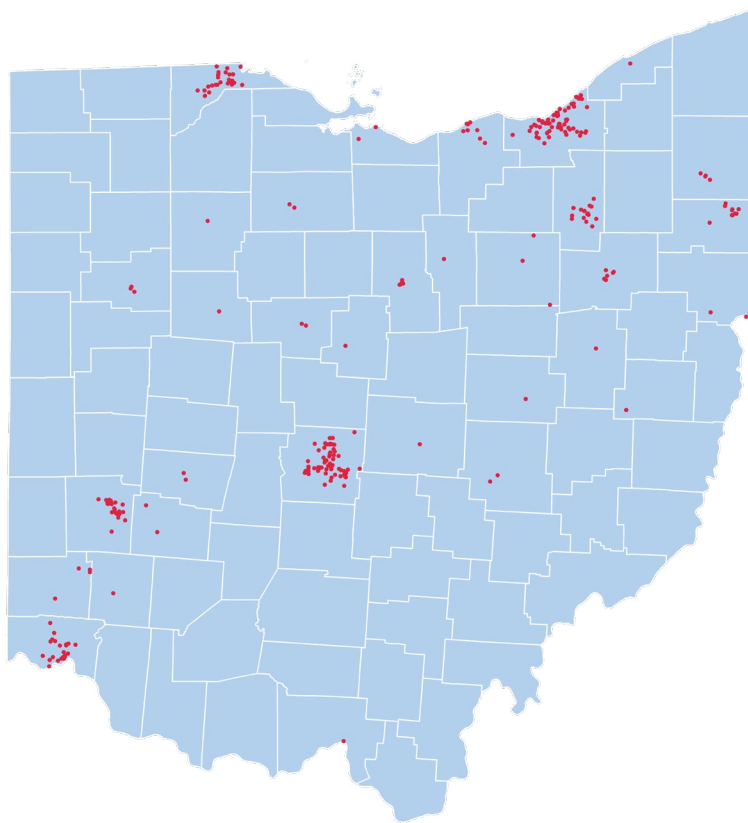
The Basics

Community Schools in 2020-2021

Ohio’s community schools offer additional choices for families seeking nontraditional, K-12 public educational settings for their children. These learning institutions are public, nonprofit, nonreligious schools that receive state and federal funds but are independent of traditional school districts. By law, each Ohio community school must offer a learning environment in which all its students can make academic progress each school year. This means the school must ensure quality instruction and the academic services and interventions its students require to succeed. A sponsor can close a school for not meeting the expectations outlined in its contract.

Figure 1

Map of Community Schools in Ohio: 2020-2021



2020-2021: Ohio Community Schools by County

Allen..... 3	Franklin 77	Lorain 9	Scioto 1
Ashland..... 1	Greene 2	Lucas 29	Seneca 2
Butler 5	Hamilton 22	Mahoning 10	Stark..... 7
Clark..... 2	Hancock 1	Marion 3	Summit..... 18
Columbiana 2	Hardin 1	Montgomery 22	Trumbull 5
Coshocton 1	Harrison 1	Morrow 1	Tuscarawas..... 2
Cuyahoga 72	Lake..... 1	Muskingum 3	Warren..... 1
Erie..... 2	Licking..... 1	Richland..... 5	Wayne..... 3

Figure 1 displays the locations of the 315 community schools operating in Ohio.

Community Schools and Enrollment

Figure 2

Full-Time Equivalent (FTE) of Community Schools: 2007-2008 to 2020-2021

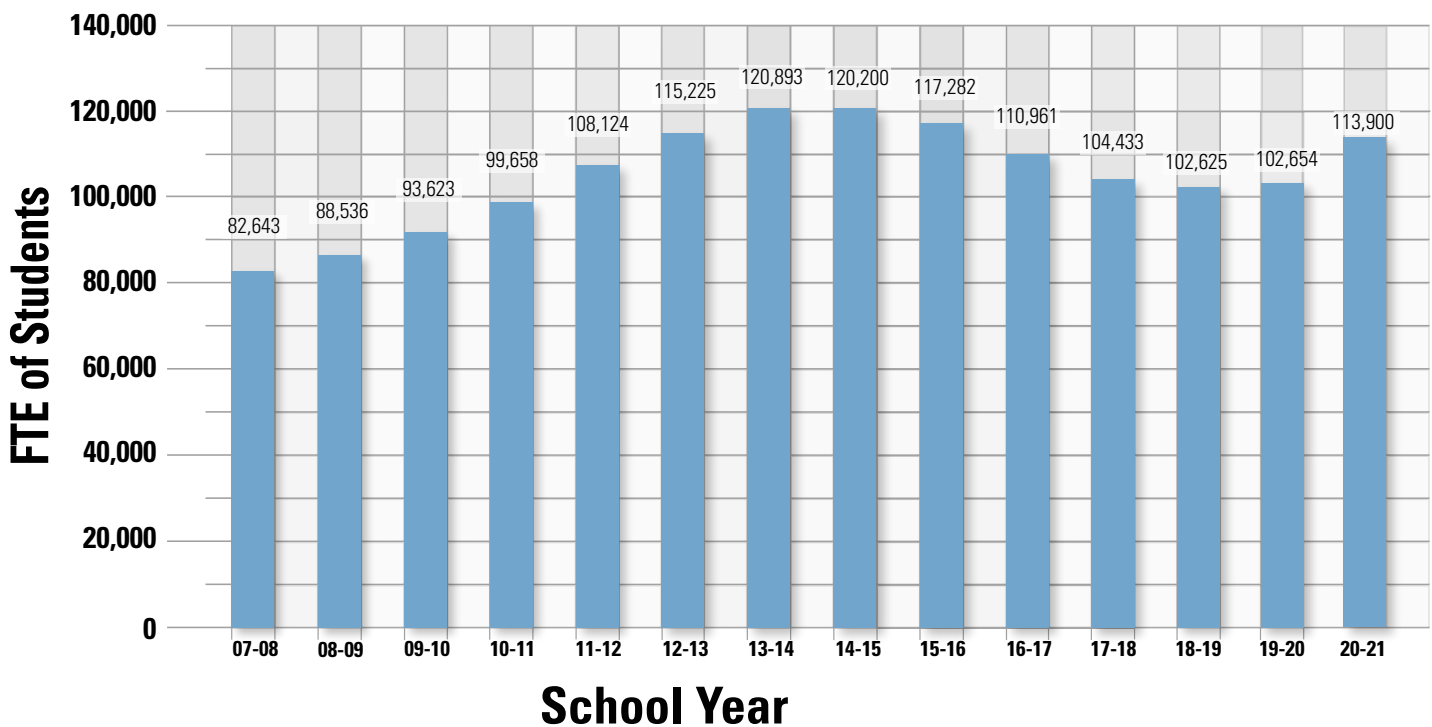


Figure 2 reports the enrollment of full-time equivalent (FTE) students in Ohio community schools. It shows that enrollment in the state's community schools has declined since the 2013-2014 school year, with an increase in 2020-2021. Data Source: 2020-2021 community school [payment reports](#), subject to adjustment based on the final FTE reconciliation.

Figure 3

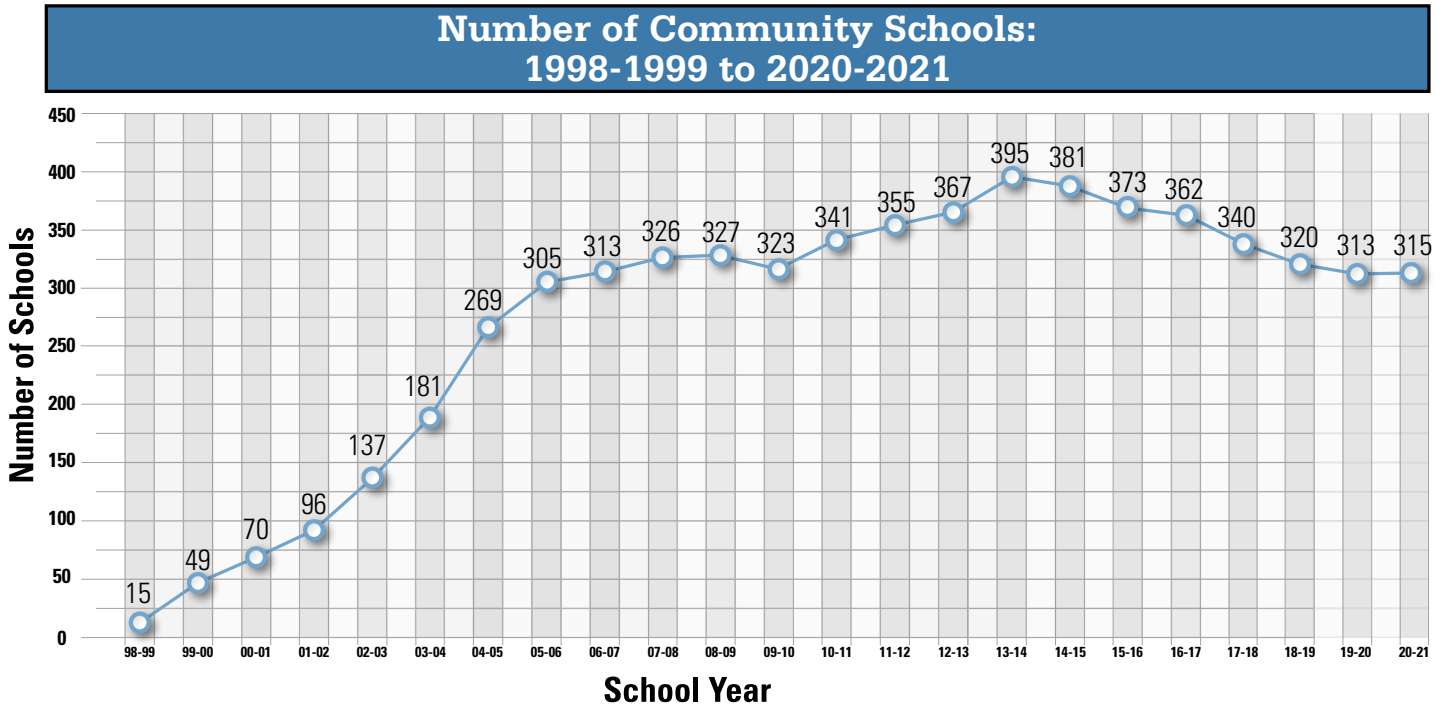


Figure 3 shows a general upward trend in the number of community schools operating in Ohio over time, with a decline beginning in the 2014-2015 school year. Data Source: 2020-2021 Ohio School Report Cards.

Forming Community Schools

Opening a community school in Ohio requires the involvement of several entities. The process begins when one or more individuals develop a concept and plan for a community school. They become the **community school developers**. Each developer must find a **sponsor** that approves the plan and agrees to open the community school. Ohio has a network of sponsors approved by the Department.

The developer enters a contract with the sponsor that clearly identifies expectations for the community school. When the parties enter the contract, representatives of the community school form a **governing authority**, which acts similarly to a local board of education for a traditional school district.

The community school governing authority and sponsor also may decide to contract with a **community school operator**, which can be a nonprofit or for-profit organization. The operator, which often is a community school management company, manages the school's daily operations.

Legal Compliance – Overseeing Community Schools

A sponsor ensures a community school adheres to its contract and makes important decisions affecting the school, such as whether to renew the school's contract. The sponsor also provides ongoing oversight and technical assistance to ensure the school is complying with state and federal laws.

Key oversight activities include:

- Making an annual pre-opening visit and at least two in-session visits to confirm the school is complying with legal requirements in areas such as school safety and teacher licensure and providing special education services. The sponsor also may offer technical assistance in a broad range of areas;
- Meeting monthly with the school's governing authority to review school enrollment and finances and provide a written financial report;
- Reporting its review of the school's academic and fiscal performance, legal compliance and operation to the Department, school and students' families.

Community schools are subject to an annual financial audit conducted through the Auditor of State's office. Copies of community school financial audits are available on the [Auditor of State's website](#). More information about this is available on **page 23**.

Overseeing Community School Sponsors

The Department carefully oversees and evaluates community school sponsors and provides technical assistance to sponsors through its Office of Community Schools.

Ohio law directs the Department to evaluate each community school sponsor annually on three components:

- Academic performance of students in the sponsor's schools;
- Compliance with state and federal laws; and
- Quality of practices.

This [comprehensive evaluation system](#) results in a rating for each sponsor. See **page 25** for details on how the Department oversees community school sponsors and data from the 2020-2021 sponsor evaluations.

[Ohio law](#) requires each community school sponsor, with limited statutory exceptions, to operate under a written agreement with the Department. The results of the sponsor's prior-year evaluation factor heavily into the Department's agreement with the sponsor. Each agreement stipulates the communities in which a sponsor may oversee community schools, the duration of the agreement and whether a sponsor may add community schools to its portfolio.

Ensuring Community School Operator Quality

Each November, the Department publishes an annual report on each operator that reflects student performance in the schools managed by that operator.

Types of Community Schools and Programs

Ohio classifies each community school in three ways — instructional delivery, curriculum and type. Each community school is:

1. Either a site-based school (this includes a school offering both face-to-face and web-based instruction) or an e-school;
2. A general education school, a special education school, or a dropout prevention and recovery program. In recent years, the Department has classified a handful of schools as both special education community schools and dropout prevention and recovery programs;
3. Either a [startup school or a conversion school](#), as defined in state law.

Instructional Delivery: Site-based or E-school

Site-based School

In a site-based community school, sometimes called a brick-and-mortar school, students receive instruction led by a teacher working on-site. A site-based community school also may use a blended learning model in which students receive instruction both from the teacher and through online sources. A community school seeking to use a blended learning model must receive approval from its sponsor and file a declaration with the Department. The contract between the school's governing authority and sponsor also must comply with state statutory criteria for blended learning. A site-based community school's contract must identify all methods of instructional delivery and include them in the school's education plan, as well as its performance and accountability plan.

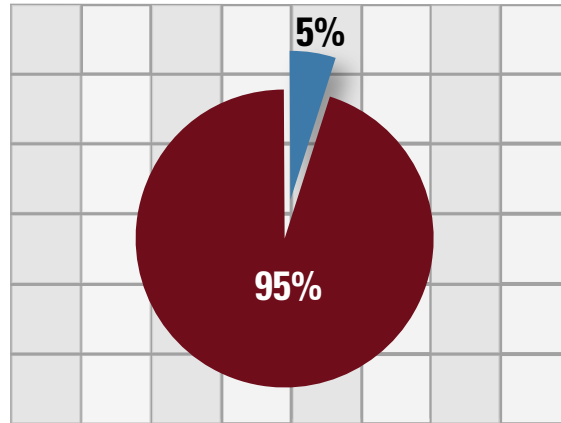
E-school

An e-school is a community school in which students work primarily on non-classroom-based learning opportunities provided via the internet or another computer-based instructional method not reliant on classroom instruction.

A student in either a site-based community school or an e-school must meet the same graduation requirements as other public school students in Ohio.

Figure 4

Percentage of Community Schools by Site-based and E-school: 2020-2021

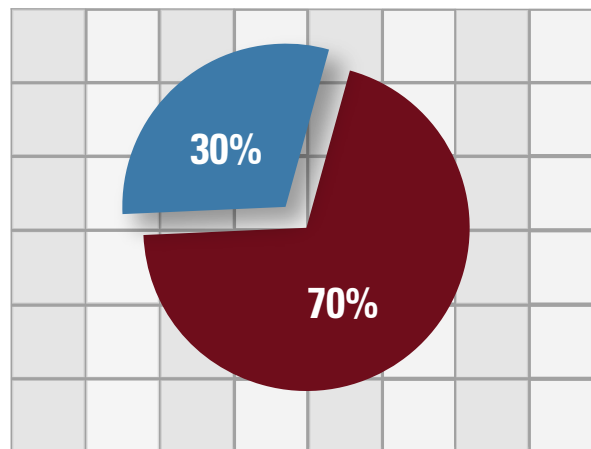


E-school (15 Schools) **Site-Based (300 Schools)**

Figure 4 shows that, by far, most community schools operating in Ohio in the 2020-2021 school year were site-based.

Figure 5

Community School Enrollment by Site-based and E-school: 2020-2021



E-school (34,131 Enrolled) **Site-Based (80,238 Enrolled)**

Figure 5 shows that more than two-thirds of Ohio community school students were enrolled in site-based schools during the 2020-2021 school year. Data Source: 2020-2021 Ohio School Report Cards.

Curriculum: General Education, Special Education or Dropout Prevention and Recovery Program

Most of Ohio’s community schools offer general education curriculum, but some serve students with specific educational needs.

Special Education School and/or Dropout Prevention and Recovery Program

Ohio law specifies two special community school designations based on the characteristics of a school’s students. These are schools that primarily serve students receiving special education or students enrolled in dropout prevention and recovery programs.

In a special education community school, more than half of the students are on individualized education programs (IEPs). This type of school receives a graded Ohio School Report Card, like all public schools in Ohio. However, a community school primarily serving students with disabilities is exempt under state law from automatic closure due to low academic performance.

A community school may apply to receive a Dropout Prevention and Recovery Report Card if it meets either of these criteria:

1. Operates a drug recovery program in cooperation with a court; or
2. Operates a dropout prevention and recovery program and enrolls more than 50 percent of its students in that program, as verified by the Department.

In addition to Ohio’s high school end-of-course tests and other state assessments, a dropout prevention and recovery program must administer a nationally normed test in reading and mathematics, approved by the Department, that documents student academic progress. Community schools that meet all requirements can receive Dropout Prevention and Recovery Report Cards in place of the traditional Ohio School Report Cards.

Figure 6

Student Enrollment by Curriculum Type

Type	School Count	% of Total Community Schools	Students Enrolled	% of Total Community School Enrollment
General Education	213	67.62%	98,625	86.23%
Special Education*	30	9.52%	2,930	2.56%
Dropout Prevention & Recovery	72	22.86%	12,814	11.21%
Total	315	100%	114,369	100%

*Excludes dropout prevention and recovery programs. Data Source: 2020-2021 Ohio School Report Cards.

Figure 6 indicates that a majority of Ohio community school students attended general education community schools. Almost 14 percent of community school students attended special education community schools or dropout prevention and recovery programs.

Type: Startup or Conversion Schools

Conversion School

A public school district, joint vocational school district or educational service center may convert all or parts of an existing facility into what is called a “conversion” community school. Per Ohio law, the school is independent of the district and overseen by a sponsor. Conversion community schools can be located in any Ohio public school district.

Startup School

A startup community school may open only in a public school district that Ohio has designated as “Challenged.” Under Ohio law, Challenged districts include, but are not limited to:

- Akron, Canton, Cincinnati, Cleveland, Columbus, Dayton, Toledo and Youngstown, because these urban districts serve high numbers of economically disadvantaged students;
- School districts designated by the state as being in Academic Emergency or Academic Watch status – in other words, generally having low student achievement;
- School districts that receive grades of D or F on the Performance Index and F’s on report card measures that show student knowledge growth in math and reading over time; and
- The lowest 5 percent of districts in the state’s Performance Index score rankings.

Ohio Community Schools



Academic Performance

Effectiveness of Academic Performance

Every Ohio community school is subject to the state's accountability system and receives an Ohio School Report Card annually. Each community school's sponsor uses information from the school's report card, as well as other performance measures contained in its contract with the school to evaluate the school's effectiveness.

2020-2021 Ohio School Report Cards

The state's education community experienced unprecedented impacts during the 2020-2021 school year due to the COVID-19 pandemic. While the Department did not publish letter grades on the Ohio School Report Cards for the 2020-2021 school year, the Department, in partnership with The Ohio State University (OSU), sought to learn about how the pandemic had affected student learning. The results of the [OSU study](#) showed a decline in student performance across all grade levels and subjects, with the most severe drops among traditionally underserved student subgroups. Learning loss in brick and mortar community schools generally mirrored traditional public schools, with community schools fairing somewhat better for certain grade levels.

The study also found students with more access to in-person instruction demonstrated less learning loss compared to peers participating in hybrid or fully remote instruction. It is important to remember the 2020-2021 school year did not present perfect conditions for remote education. Students, families and educators faced a wide array of additional challenges, while adjusting to teaching and learning through an education delivery model that was entirely new to many. However, in the long term, remote learning can represent an effective tool in developing flexible and personalized learning opportunities for students. For this reason, it is worth continuing to develop, understand and improve upon effective strategies for remote education.

Ohio Community Schools



Operations

Community School Operations 2020-2021

The 2020-2021 school year marked the 23rd year of community school operations in Ohio. Beginning in 1998 with 15 community schools authorized by two sponsors, Ohio's community school portfolio includes 315 schools and 20 sponsors.

Governing Authority Membership

Ohio law reduces conflicts of interest in community school operation by barring any community school governing authority member who is employed by a school district or educational service center from serving on the governing authority of a community school sponsored by that district or educational service center. The law also prohibits a community school governing authority member from being a member of a school district board of education and vice versa.

Ensuring School Quality Closure for Poor Academic and Fiscal Performance

Ohio has one of the most rigorous requirements in the nation for closing community schools based on poor performance. See [details of the law here](#).

To increase transparency, the Department publishes on its website:

- The name of each community school closed during the year and the reason each school closed;
- Each entity that applied to be a sponsor, along with the entity's application and most recent evaluation;
- Sponsor ratings; and
- A list of sponsors that may not sponsor new schools.

Ohio Revised Code 3314.35 and 3314.351 establish criteria that, if met for three consecutive years, requires closure of the community school. The Ohio General Assembly passed emergency legislation that excluded the results from the 2019-2020 report card from consideration when determining if a school met the criteria for a third consecutive year. Additionally, House Bill 110 included language excluding the report cards from the 2020-2021 school year and established a new starting point beginning with the 2021-2022 school year for evaluating if a community school meets the criteria in this statute. For all these reasons, no community school met the criteria in 2021.

Accountability Regarding Sponsors

To prevent poor-performing community schools from regularly switching sponsors, a practice commonly known as "sponsor hopping," Ohio law prohibits these schools from changing sponsors without the Department's approval. A community school that received a grade of D or F on the Performance Index score and an overall grade of D or F on the Progress component must receive approval from the Department before changing sponsors. A community school that operates a dropout prevention and recovery program and received a rating of "Does Not Meet Standards" for the annual student growth measure and combined graduation rates also must obtain the Department's approval before changing sponsors. During the 2020-2021 school year, two community schools requested to change sponsors. The Department approved the request for both schools based on the new sponsor and school's plan to improve educational outcomes for students.

Annual Performance Report for Community School Operators

Many community schools choose to contract with operators to manage their daily operations. An operator works under a contract with the school's governing authority and acts similarly to the central office of a traditional school district.

A community school operator can be a for-profit or nonprofit organization, as well as a school district or educational service center. The operator's contract retains the operator's right to terminate its affiliation with the school if the school fails to meet quality standards. The contract between a community school's governing authority and its operator also details the school's arrangement for services that may include curriculum development, staffing, facilities management, technology, marketing, training and development, and treasurer and financial services.

The state's education community experience unprecedented impacts during the 2020-2021 school year due to the coronavirus pandemic. The Ohio General Assembly passed emergency legislation that excluded academic performance from the sponsor evaluation process. As a result, no academic performance or ratings appear on the operator performance reports. The annual performance reports for each community school operator include student demographic, staff and expenditure per-pupil data.

Grant Opportunities for Community Schools

Charter Schools Program Grant

Through a federal Charter Schools Program grant, Ohio is supporting the opening of high-performing and expansion of high-quality, site-based community schools to provide more opportunities for its most disadvantaged students to succeed at meeting their educational needs.

To be eligible for a Charter Schools Program grant, which covers planning, implementation and expansion, applicants must conform to the federal definition of a public charter school in the Elementary and Secondary Education Act. Each applicant must plan, implement or expand a high-performing, high-quality, site-based general education school, defined by the Department as one where students receive instruction primarily under the supervision of teachers in physical classroom settings. Dropout prevention and recovery programs and e-schools are not eligible for Charter Schools Program grants. For the first time, through flexibility provided by ESSA, the Department held a subgrant competition for community schools. To be eligible to apply, schools had to meet the definition of high-performing and/or high-quality aligned to ESSA requirements. These schools were trying to increase enrollment by adding a grade level, adding three or more education programs or courses in core academic subject areas beyond the original school performance educational plan or adding a facility consistent with that described in [Ohio law](#).

To ensure oversight and transparency throughout the grant process, the Department created a CSP Grant Advisory Committee representing key Ohio stakeholders. The committee reviews and provides feedback on CSP grant-related documents and reports and receives regular updates on the status of grant activities. Details about committee membership are available in the [committee's governance document](#).

The Department received 17 subgrantee applications and awarded 11 Charter Schools Program grants for the 2020-2021 school year. Central Point Preparatory Academy received an Implementation Year 1 grant of \$350,000, Cornerstone Academy received an Expansion Year 1 grant of \$350,000, Huber Heights Preparatory Academy received an Implementation Year 2 grant of \$198,357, North Columbus Preparatory Academy received an Implementation Year 2 grant of \$219,000, and Kenmore Preparatory Academy and Capital Collegiate Preparatory Academy each received Implementation Year 2 grants of \$250,000. Northwest Ohio Classical Academy, ReGeneration Bond Hill, Arts & College Preparatory Academy, Citizens Academy Southeast, Westside Academy and Northwest Ohio Classical Academy each received Continuation Year 2 grants of \$250,000 for the 2020-2021 school year. Each of these schools is overseen by a sponsor that received an overall rating of Effective on its most recent community school sponsor evaluation. This is a requirement for all new community schools opening or expanding in Ohio.

[See more here](#) on Charter Schools Program grant eligibility.

School IRN	School Name	CSP Subgrant Type	Award Amount
019199	Central Point Preparatory Academy	Implementation Year I	\$350,000
133439	Cornerstone Academy Community School	Expansion Year I	\$350,000
017537	Capital Collegiate Preparatory Academy	Implementation Year II	\$250,000
017535	Huber Heights Preparatory Academy dba Parma Academy	Implementation Year II	\$198,375
017536	Kenmore Preparatory Academy dba Toledo Preparatory Academy	Implementation Year II	\$250,000
017538	North Columbus Preparatory Academy	Implementation Year II	\$219,000
143610	Arts & College Preparatory Academy	Expansion Year II	\$250,000
015261	Citizens Academy Southeast	Expansion Year II	\$250,000
017498	Northwest Ohio Classical Academy	Implementation Year II	\$250,000
017490	ReGeneration Bond Hill	Implementation Year II	\$250,000
000875	Westside Academy	Expansion Year II	\$250,000

Community School Classroom Facilities Grant

The Ohio General Assembly created the [Community School Classroom Facilities Grant](#) in 2015 to help schools purchase, construct, reconstruct, renovate, remodel or expand classroom facilities. Lawmakers appropriated \$25 million for the program. In 2016, the first round, eight community schools received grants totaling more than \$17 million. In 2017-2018, round two grants awarded an additional \$4 million to four high-performing community schools.

Proposed projects must demonstrate the grant funds will increase the supply of seats in high-performing schools, service specific unmet student needs through community school education, and show innovation in design and potential as a successful, replicable school model.

The overall project cost for schools receiving the grants can include professional design and construction fees, facility construction, fixtures, furniture, equipment and certain other expenses. These schools also must show they have secured non-state resources equal to at least 50 percent of the project cost.

The Department and Ohio Facilities Construction Commission worked together to develop eligibility guidelines for the grant, application criteria and a timeline for a second round of grants. To be eligible for this grant, a community school must meet the definition of high quality, as outlined in the [grant guidelines](#). In the 2020-2021 school year, the Ohio Facilities Construction Commission did offer a Round 3 competition. However, due to the financial impact of the coronavirus pandemic on state agencies, Round 3 of the competition was canceled and no schools were awarded. The commission is working to release a new competition in the coming years.

Quality Community School Support Fund

The Ohio General Assembly created the [Quality Community School Support](#) fund to commit an additional \$30 million each fiscal year of the biennium budget to each community school designated as a Community School of Quality. Under the program, qualified community schools can receive up to \$1,750 each fiscal year for each pupil identified as economically disadvantaged and up to \$1,000 each fiscal year for all others. A community school could receive the designation one of three ways:

Criteria 1: The community school meets all the following criteria:

- The school's sponsor was rated Exemplary or Effective on the sponsor's most recent evaluation conducted under section 3314.06 of the Revised Code;
- The school received a higher Performance Index score than the school district in which the school is located on the two most recent Ohio School Report Cards issued for the school under section 3302.03 of the Revised Code;

- The school received an overall grade of A or B for the Value-Added progress dimension on the most recent report card issued for the school under section 3302.03 of the Revised Code or is a school described under division (A)(4) of section 3314.35 of the Revised Code and did not receive a grade for the Value-Added progress dimension on the most recent report card;
- At least 50 percent of the students enrolled in the school are economically disadvantaged, as determined by the Department.

Criteria 2: The community school meets all the following criteria:

- The school's sponsor was rated Exemplary or Effective on the sponsor's most recent evaluation conducted under section 3314.016 of the Revised Code;
- The school is in its first year of operation or the school opened as a kindergarten school and has added one grade per year and has been in operation for fewer than four school years;
- The school is replicating an operational and instructional model used by a community school described in division (B)(1) of this section;
- List of community schools potentially eligible under these criteria.

Criteria 3: The community school meets all the following criteria:

- The school's sponsor was rated Exemplary or Effective on the sponsor's most recent evaluation conducted under section 3314.016 of the Revised Code;
- The school contracts with an operator that operates schools in other states and meets at least one of the following criteria:
 - Has operated a school that received a grant funded through the federal Charter Schools Program established under 20 U.S.C. 7221 or received funding from the Charter School Growth Fund; or
 - Meets all of the following criteria:
 - One of the operator's schools in another state performed better than the school district in which the school is located, as determined by the Department;
 - At least 50 percent of the total number of students enrolled in all of the operator's schools are economically disadvantaged, as determined by the Department;
 - The operator is in good standing in all states where it operates schools;
 - The Department has determined the operator does not have any financial viability issues that would prevent it from effectively operating a community school in Ohio.
- The school is in its first year of operation.

In addition to the 62 designated schools from the 2019-2020 school year, 23 community schools meet the academic requirements under Criteria 1. To determine eligibility for a community school under Criteria 2, the Department developed a Request for Information to be completed by the school. The Department received seven Requests for Information under Criteria 2 and designated **six community schools** as meeting the criteria. To determine eligibility for a community school under Criteria 3, the Department developed a Request for Information to be completed by the operator of a community school. The Department did not receive a Request for Information under Criteria 3 during the 2020-2021 school year. Based upon the ruling from the Ohio Supreme Court, the Department granted the designation as a Community School of Quality to an additional eight schools, bringing the total of funded schools to 99 for the 2020-2021 school year. After approval from the Controlling Board to increase appropriation a total of \$32,665,309.78 was distributed to the designated schools, providing additional financial support to 30,560 students across the 99 schools.

Ohio Community Schools



Financial Condition

Financial Condition of Community Schools

The Department works closely with the Ohio Auditor of State to ensure school financial accountability in community schools. The Ohio Auditor of State performs financial audits every year that review accounts, financial reports, records and files to determine if community schools have complied with state and federal laws, regulations and accounting principles.

If an audit shows misuse, improper accounting for collection of public funds or misappropriation of public property, the Ohio Attorney General and Ohio Department of Education take legal action to resolve the issues. The Auditor of State regularly shares audits with school sponsors for their review and follow-up, if needed. These audits are posted on the Auditor of State's [website](#). The auditor gives a community school whose records are not in sufficient condition for auditing 90 days to bring its records into an "auditable" condition. If the school does not do so, it may lose all state and federal funding.

To help ensure audit costs are covered if a new community school closes, [Ohio law](#) also requires a new school to post a bond of \$50,000 with the Auditor of State, deposit cash in the amount of \$50,000 with the Auditor of State or provide a written guarantee of payment up to \$50,000.

Each community school must disclose its financial data through reports to the Department and its sponsor. The sponsor uses this data to review the school's ongoing financial condition and inform contract renewal decisions. The sponsor's financial review focuses on standards for sound financial operations and sustainability. This allows auditors and the sponsor to monitor a school's short-term performance and long-term financial viability.

The sponsor representative also meets with the governing authority or fiscal officer of the school at least monthly to review financial and enrollment records.

When the cost of services provided by a community school operator or management company totals more than 20 percent of annual gross revenues of a school, the operator must provide detailed accounting information, including the nature and costs of the services it provides to the community school.

The School Sponsor's Role in Financial Accountability

A sponsor monitors all aspects of a school's fiscal performance. Ohio law calls for a community school sponsor to communicate with the Auditor of State and for the auditor to include the sponsor during any audit exit conference to discuss a community school's financial audit or financial and enrollment records. A sponsor must verify annually that the Auditor of State did not issue findings for recovery against a person who proposes to create a community school, serves on the governing authority or operates the school. The sponsor also must verify annually that the Auditor of State did not issue findings against any employee of a community school who is responsible for fiscal operations or authorized to spend money on the school's behalf. The sponsor also must give a detailed accounting of expenditures by the operator. The Auditor of State verifies these during the regular audit of the school's financial records.

If the Auditor of State finds a community school's financial data to be poorly kept and, therefore, unauditible, the Auditor of State must notify the sponsor in writing. The Auditor of State's office also must notify the school and the Department and post the notification on the Auditor of State's website.

The sponsor of an unauditible community school cannot enter into contracts with additional community school governing authorities until the auditor completes a successful financial audit of the school.

Ohio Community Schools



Performance of Sponsors

Sponsor Evaluation System

To help ensure accountability and quality in Ohio's community school system, the Department conducts yearly evaluations of sponsors.

The sponsor evaluation system assists the Department in its oversight of sponsors and helps increase the quality of sponsor practices. The evaluation framework is made up of three equally weighted components.

The three components of the evaluation system are:

- **Academic Performance component** – Academic performance of schools in a sponsor's portfolio based on Ohio School Report Cards measures;
- **Compliance with Laws and Rules component** – Sponsor and schools' compliance with laws and administrative rules; and
- **Quality Practice component** – The sponsor's adherence to quality practices.

All three components are scored on a common scale (0-4 points) to allow for simple calculations. Sponsors receive points for each component that, when added together, provide one of the following summative ratings: Exemplary, Effective, Ineffective or Poor.

Ohio law includes a set of incentives for sponsors rated Exemplary, as well as a set of consequences for sponsors rated Ineffective and Poor. For example, a sponsor rated Exemplary for two consecutive years is able to take advantage of incentives, including receiving a longer term on its contract with the Department.

House Bill 166 of the 133rd General Assembly implemented a change to the sponsor evaluation by excluding any sponsor that had been rated Effective or Exemplary for three consecutive years to only be evaluated by the Department once every three years. In total, of the 20 entities serving as sponsors of community schools, 13 were exempt from the sponsor evaluation for 2020-2021 school year.

Similar to the 2019-2020 sponsor evaluation, the 2020-2021 sponsor evaluation did not include the Academic component. Only the Quality Practices and Compliance components were evaluated. While the 2019-2020 sponsor evaluation did not have ratings for the Quality Practices and Compliance components and did not have overall sponsor ratings, the 2020-2021 sponsor evaluation issued overall sponsor ratings as well as ratings for the Quality Practices and Compliance components.

While the 2020-2021 sponsor evaluation resulted in ratings, the ratings did not count toward any penalties or sanctions for sponsors. In addition, the 2020-2021 ratings cannot be used as the means through which a sponsor becomes eligible for any incentives. Therefore, the overall ratings for 2020-2021, and the ratings for the Quality Practices and Compliance components are report only.

The Three Components of the Sponsor Evaluation

The Department, with the help of independent, outside vendors, calculates ratings individually for a sponsor's academic performance, legal compliance and quality practices components, then calculates an overall rating from the component ratings. See a full description of the computation [here](#).

Academic Performance Review

The Ohio General Assembly passed legislation that excluded the Academic Performance component from the sponsor evaluation process for 2020-2021.

Compliance Monitoring Review

Consistent with [Ohio law](#), the Department reviews whether each sponsor is complying with all laws and rules applying to community schools and community school sponsorship. The sponsor must certify it has adhered to laws and rules, and this is subject to Department verification.

2020-2021 Sponsor Evaluation Ratings – Compliance Component	
Compliance Component - Points Received	Number of Sponsors by Points
4	7
3	0
2	0
1	0
0	0

Quality Practice Review

The Department reviews each sponsor’s practices against quality standards based on principles developed by the National Association of Charter School Authorizers. The Department also reviews each sponsor’s adherence to the legal requirement to provide technical assistance to its sponsored schools.

The Quality Practice Review focuses on six critical areas of practice:

- **Organizational commitment and capacity** – This area evaluates sponsorship capacity, internal processes for improvement, sponsor resources and the sponsor’s roles and responsibilities.
- **Community school application process and decision-making** – This area evaluates the sponsor’s application process, rigorous criteria for all applications, application reviewers and their training, and the application decision-making process.
- **Performance contracting** – This area evaluates the sponsor and community school contract performance measures, terms for renewal and non-renewal, and terms and processes for amendments and modifications.
- **Oversight and evaluation of community schools** – This area evaluates the sponsor’s system of oversight, including financial, enrollment and on-site reviews; the process for monitoring the community schools’ academic performance, intervention guidance and action taken by the sponsor; and yearly reports on the community schools’ performance.
- **Contract termination and renewal decision-making** – This area evaluates the sponsor’s renewal application and renewal and non-renewal decisions, including notification, contract termination and school closure processes.
- **Technical assistance** – This area evaluates the technical assistance and legal updates a sponsor provides to its community schools, professional development for schools and the relationships with the schools’ governing authorities.

2020-2021 Sponsor Evaluation Results – Quality Component	
Quality Component - Points Received	Number of Sponsors by Points
4	3
3	1
2	2
1	1
0	0

2020-2021 Community Schools Overall Sponsor Ratings

Sponsor IRN	Sponsor Name	Overall Rating/ Points		Academic Performance Rating/Points		Compliance Rating/ Points		Quality Practices Rating/Points	
062893	Bowling Green State University	NR	NR	NR	NR	NR	NR	NR	NR
000862	Buckeye Community Hope Foundation	NR	NR	NR	NR	NR	NR	NR	NR
043786	Cleveland Municipal	NR	NR	NR	NR	NR	NR	NR	NR
007991	Educational Resource Consultants of Ohio	Effective	6	NR	NR	Exceeds Expectations	4	Progressing Toward Standards	2
046938	ESC of Central Ohio	Exemplary	8	NR	NR	Exceeds Expectations	4	Exceeds Standards	4
048199	ESC of Lake Erie West	NR	NR	NR	NR	NR	NR	NR	NR
043968	Fairborn City	Effective	5	NR	NR	Exceeds Expectations	4	Below Standards	1
043984	Findlay City	NR	NR	NR	NR	NR	NR	NR	NR
046805	Margaretta Local	Exemplary	7	NR	NR	Exceeds Expectations	4	Meets Standards	3
048850	Maysville Local	Effective	6	NR	NR	Exceeds Expectations	4	Progressing Toward Standards	2
123521	Mid-Ohio ESC	NR	NR	NR	NR	NR	NR	NR	NR
044487	New Philadelphia City	Exemplary	8	NR	NR	Exceeds Expectations	4	Exceeds Standards	4
123257	North Central Ohio ESC	NR	NR	NR	NR	NR	NR	NR	NR
012931	Office of School Sponsorship	NR	NR	NR	NR	NR	NR	NR	NR
016998	Ohio Council of Community Schools	Exemplary	8	NR	NR	Exceeds Expectations	4	Exceeds Standards	4
008316	Richland Academy	NR	NR	NR	NR	NR	NR	NR	NR
083246	St Aloysius Orphanage	NR	NR	NR	NR	NR	NR	NR	NR
000821	Thomas B. Fordham Foundation	NR	NR	NR	NR	NR	NR	NR	NR
065268	Tri-Rivers	NR	NR	NR	NR	NR	NR	NR	NR
045179	Zanesville City	NR	NR	NR	NR	NR	NR	NR	NR

* Per the exemptions stated in Ohio Revised Code 3314.016(B)(7)(b), 13 of the 20 active community school sponsors in Ohio were exempted from the 2020-2021 sponsor evaluation.

** The Ohio General Assembly passed legislation that excluded the Academic Performance component from the 2020-2021 sponsor evaluation. As a result, the scores for the Compliance and Quality Practices components are published as report only. The maximum number of overall points a sponsor can receive is eight.

Ohio Community Schools



Legislation

Legislative History of Community Schools

During each session since Ohio established community schools 20 years ago, the General Assembly has made legislative changes to the program. A complete list of community school legislation enacted over this time is available on the [Department's website](#). This includes legislative summaries that trace the changes by year, legislative session and bill number.



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