

Annual Report on

Ohio

Community  
Schools



JULY 1, 2021 - JUNE 30, 2022

2021 - 2022

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2021-2022

# Executive Summary

Ohio has a long history of providing quality educational opportunities for students. Among the options available to Ohio families are public community schools.

Designed to operate independently of a traditional school district, approved community school sponsors authorize Ohio community schools. During the 2021-2022 school year, 19 sponsoring organizations authorized 324 community schools enrolling more than 115,000 students.

All community schools receive a state-issued Ohio School Report Card. Schools which primarily serve students enrolled in a dropout prevention and recovery program receive a specifically designed report card. In contrast, all other community schools receive the same report card as traditional, district-operated schools. Key findings reflected in this 2021-2022 report on dropout recovery schools include:

- Ninety-five percent of dropout recovery community schools met or exceeded overall standards versus 83% for the 2018-2019 school year.
- Ninety-nine percent of dropout recovery community schools received a Progress rating (seven schools were not rated) of met or exceeded standards versus 70% for the 2018-2019 school year.
- Six dropout recovery community schools received a rating of exceeds standards for all components and the overall rating versus zero for the 2018-2019 school year.

The many changes to the 2021-2022 traditional Ohio School Report Cards make year-over-year comparisons challenging; however, 69% of community schools received a Progress rating of three stars or better (roughly equivalent to a grade of C or better) for the 2021-2022 school year versus 49% for the 2018-2019 school year.

Annual evaluation of community school sponsors continues. All community school sponsors received a rating of effective or exemplary.

Accountability continues to be a priority for the community school sector. After suspension of the closure requirement during the pandemic, Ohio community schools are again subject to closure due to poor academic performance, and the Ohio Auditor of State found no community schools were unauditable.

Although there is a lingering impact from the COVID pandemic, approximately half of all community school operators received a rating of three stars, the equivalent of a grade of "C" or better.

The number of community schools receiving grants through the Quality Community School Support Grant continues to grow. Eligible schools must meet performance standards, demonstrate better overall achievement than the districts in which they are located or be new schools approved to replicate higher-performing schools. The General Assembly increased funding for the grant program from \$30 million in Fiscal Year 2021 to \$54 million in Fiscal Year 2022.

# Introduction

Each year, the Ohio Department of Education’s Office of Community Schools releases a report on the state’s public community schools — also called “charter schools” in many states. As required by state law, the Department provides this annual report to the Governor, Speaker of the Ohio House of Representatives, President of the Ohio Senate and the respective Chairpersons of the House and Senate committees principally responsible for primary and secondary education.

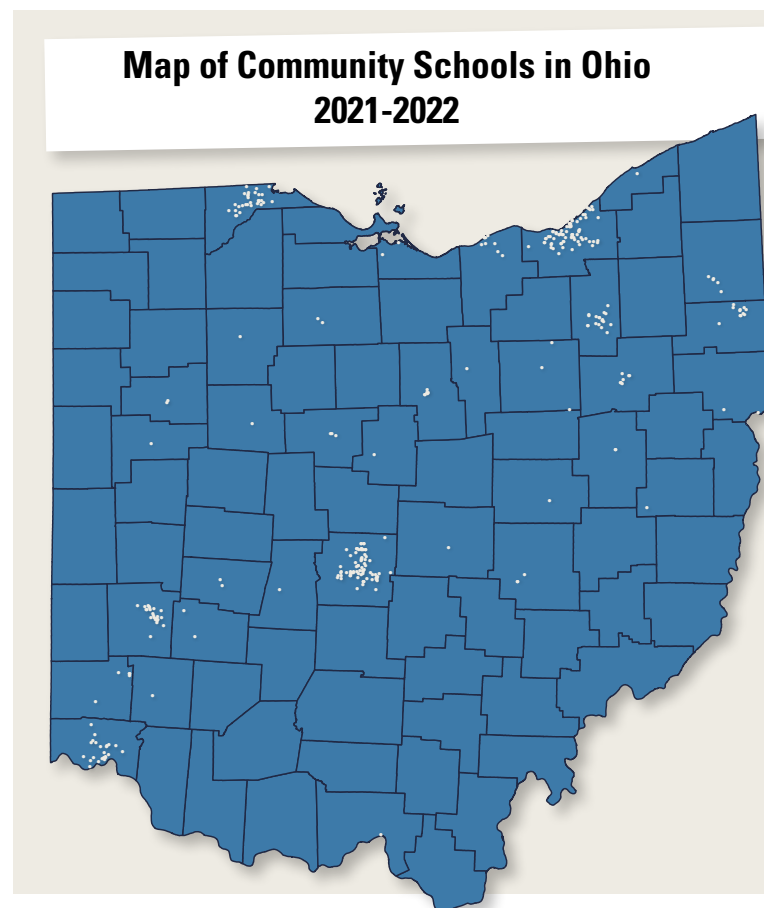
This report addresses the performance of Ohio’s community schools in five key areas:

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

Unlike traditional public schools, community schools operate independently of school districts. Instead, community schools operate under the authorization of a sponsoring organization. Restricted by law to educationally oriented organizations, community school sponsors approve a school’s education plan and set clear academic, fiscal and operational performance expectations. The Department supports the community school sector by providing technical assistance to community schools and sponsors and administers a comprehensive sponsor evaluation and improvement system.

Ohio’s community schools offer additional choices for families seeking nontraditional, K-12 public educational settings for their children. Community schools are public, nonprofit and nonsectarian schools that receive state and federal funds but no revenue from local property taxes. Community schools receive school Ohio School Report Cards issued by the Department, are subject to annual financial audits completed by the Auditor of State or a private accounting firm, and comply with open meetings and public records statutes. Unlike traditional public schools, a community school can be closed by its sponsor for failure to meet the expectations outlined in its contract or for poor academic performance as defined in state law.

Ohio’s community schools offer a variety of instructional delivery models and specialized school programs, including serving at-risk students. Types of community schools include language immersion, programs for students who have or are at risk of dropping out of school, expeditionary, visual and performing arts, STE(A)M, programs serving students with special needs, workforce readiness and general education. In addition, Ohio community schools include online schools, site-based schools (also referred to as “brick-and-mortar” schools) and schools offering blended learning models.





**SPOTLIGHT:****Middletown Preparatory  
and Fitness Academy**

*Middletown Preparatory and Fitness Academy was established in 2002 and is celebrating its 21st school year along with Performance Academies. This academic and fitness institution is dedicated to nurturing the intellectual and physical growth of each student. The school's mission is to prepare students in grades K-8 for success in high school and beyond.*

*Performance Academies stress the values of academics, as well as lifelong health and fitness, to address the needs of the whole child in an extended school day environment. Performance Academies provide a self-described "back-to-basics curriculum" that includes two hours of English language arts, 1.5 hours of mathematics, and one hour of science and social studies each day. The curriculum also includes daily character education lessons. All Performance Academies schools also teach students to take care of their physical health in addition to their mental well-being. Using the Ohio Model Curriculum, schools provide 1.25 hours of physical fitness every day. The fitness program builds character, teamwork, skills, self-esteem and physical health. Middletown Preparatory and Fitness Academy also pairs each of its eighth-grade students with a high school, as the vision is to be among the most sought-after middle schools in each of the regions served while preparing students for high school and beyond.*

# Community School Structure and Governance

## Oversight of Community School Sponsors

The Department 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.

The comprehensive sponsor evaluation system results in component and overall ratings for each sponsor. Currently, all 19 community school sponsors have an overall rating of effective or exemplary. Details of the evaluation system are available on the [Community Schools Sponsor Evaluations Tools webpage](#), and each sponsor's ratings for the 2021-2022 school year are available on the [Overall Sponsor Ratings webpage](#).

Ohio law requires each community school sponsor, with limited statutory exceptions, to operate under a written agreement with the Department. The sponsor's prior-year evaluation results heavily influence the Department's agreement with the sponsor. Each agreement stipulates the portion of the state where a sponsor may oversee community schools, the duration of the agreement with the Department and whether a sponsor may add community schools to its portfolio.

## Forming a Community School

Opening a community school in Ohio requires involvement from several entities. The process begins when one or more individuals develop a concept and plan for a community school. The individuals involved in the planning process are referred to as developers. Each group of developers must find a sponsor that approves the school's comprehensive plan and agrees to authorize the community school. Only approved sponsors with effective or exemplary evaluation ratings can authorize new schools.

If a sponsor approves, the developer enters into a contract under [Ohio law](#) with the sponsor that identifies expectations for the community school. When entering into the contract with a sponsor, representatives of the community school form a governing authority, which acts similarly to a local board of education of a traditional school district.

Before 2022, startup community schools, which are schools not sponsored by a school district, educational service center or joint vocational school district, could only open in a “challenged” school district. Today, community schools may open and operate in any school district in the state.

The community school governing authority may contract with a nonprofit or for-profit organization, known as a community school operator, to handle some of the daily operations of the school. Community school operators may offer a range of services, including one or two selected administrative activities, such as curriculum or data collection and reporting or a more comprehensive “turn-key” option.

## Types of Community Schools

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

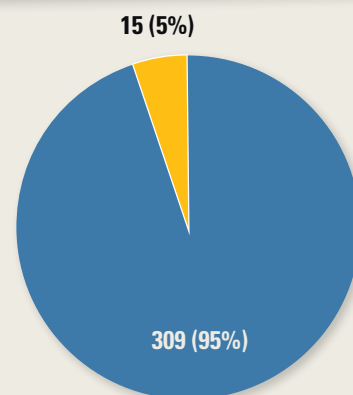
1. Either a site-based school (this includes a school utilizing a blended learning model) or online; and
2. Either a general education school, a school serving primarily students with special needs,, or a school primarily enrolling students in a dropout prevention and recovery program; and
3. Either a startup school or a conversion school, as defined in state law. Startup community schools are new schools. Conversion schools are “converted” in facilities owned or controlled by educational service centers or school districts. Unlike startup schools, conversion schools always have been permitted to operate anywhere in the state.

## Instructional Delivery

In a site-based community school, sometimes called a brick-and-mortar school, students receive instruction from a teacher working in the school building. A site-based community school also may use a blended learning model in which students receive instruction from the teacher and 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 must comply with state statutory criteria for blended learning.

An online or 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 in-person classroom instruction.

**Percentage of Community Schools  
by Site-Based and eSchool**



Site-Based

eSchool

## Curriculum and Specialized Programs

Many of Ohio's community schools offer a general education curriculum, but a growing number of community schools specialize in serving students with specific educational needs. Ohio law recognizes two types of community school designations based on the characteristics of the students served. These designations apply to schools that primarily serve either students with individualized education programs (IEPs) receiving special education services or students at risk of dropping out of school or who previously dropped out of school in a dropout prevention and recovery program. During the 2021-22 school year, seventy-eight community schools received the dropout recovery designation and thirty community schools primarily served students with disabilities.

To be designated as a special education school, more than half of a community school's enrolled students must have active IEPs. Though these schools may fall under the identical designation, they can be very different, with some only serving students with certain diagnoses, such as students with specific learning disabilities or students on the autism spectrum. Like all public schools in Ohio, community schools primarily serving students with IEPs receive Ohio School Report Cards. However, a community school primarily serving students with disabilities is exempt from [Ohio's automatic closure law](#).

Schools with the dropout prevention and recovery designation play an essential and growing part in Ohio's community school sector.

A community school may apply to receive designation as a dropout prevention and recovery school 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% 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.

Community schools with the dropout prevention and recovery designation receive a state-issued report card and are subject to closure due to poor performance.

## SPOTLIGHT:

### Greater Ohio Virtual School



**Greater Ohio  
Virtual School**

*As a result of the pandemic, the Greater Ohio Virtual School (GOVS) saw a need to open a Student Center for its students. GOVS has been able to open and maintain a "home base" for students using COVID relief funds in one of the wings at the Warren County Educational Service Center's Western Row Elementary Facility in Mason, Ohio. This is a place for students to come for tutoring, resources, guidance, or just hang out and do work. The school hopes to increase student engagement numbers by using this facility while offering students more support and resources than in the past.*

*Additionally, the Greater Ohio Virtual School created new positions using federal relief funds to help students work toward their diplomas. These positions include a resource coordinator, behavioral intervention specialist, additional guidance counselor and academic coaches to increase the ability of the school to meet the needs of the entire student beyond the basic academic requirements. GOVS says it has seen great improvement among its students following the addition of these staff members.*

# Academic Performance

## Traditional School Report Card

The Ohio Department of Education uses data reported by districts and schools to analyze performance in several categories. Recent legislation made several changes to the traditional school and district Ohio School Report Cards that took effect with the 2021-2022 school year. The Department collects data that are compiled and organized into six components. The components for 2021-2022 include:

### Achievement

This component represents whether student performance on state tests met established thresholds and how well students performed on state tests overall.

### Early Literacy

This component measures reading improvement and proficiency for students in kindergarten through third grade.

### Graduation

This component looks at the four-year adjusted cohort graduation rate and the five-year adjusted cohort graduation rate.

### Progress

This component looks at the academic growth all students are making based on their past performances.

### Gap Closing

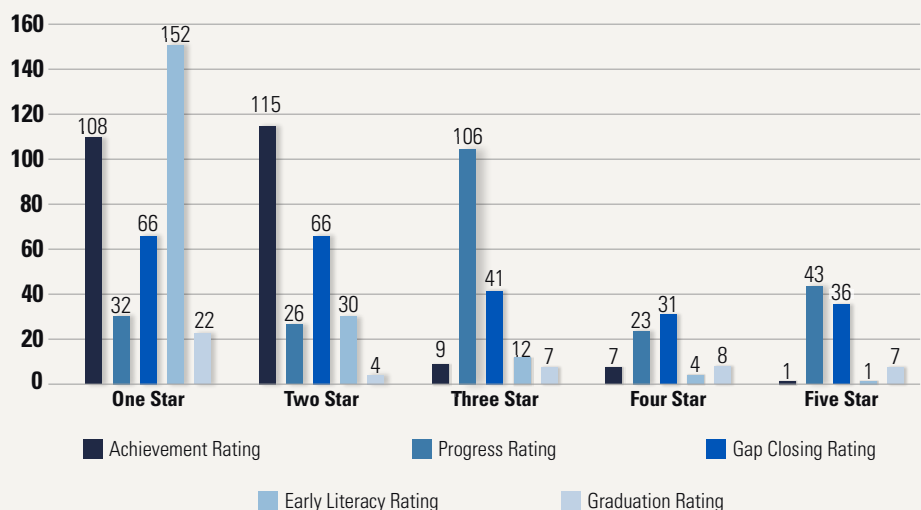
This component measures the reduction in educational gaps between student subgroups.

The College, Career, Workforce and Military Readiness Component will join the report card for the 2024-2025 school year.

All report card components receive 1-5-star ratings based on performance. More detailed information on the traditional school and district report cards is available in the [Guide to 2022 Ohio School Report Cards](#).

Although the changes to the general school report card make comparisons difficult, there are positive trends when comparing pre-pandemic results from the 2018-2019 school year and the more recent 2021-2022 results:

**2021-2022 Community School Report Card Ratings**



- Sixty-nine percent of community schools received a Progress rating of three stars or better (equivalent to a grade of C or better) for the 2021-2022 school year versus 49% for the 2018-2019 school year;
- Forty-five percent of community schools received a Gap Closing rating of three stars or better (equivalent to a grade of C or better) for the 2021-2022 school year versus 41% for the 2018-2019 school year.



## Dropout Prevention and Recovery Report Cards

Community schools that serve a majority of their students through dropout prevention and recovery programs receive the Dropout Prevention and Recovery Report Card. These schools receive a rating of Exceeds Standards, Meets Standards or Does Not Meet Standards for each report card component as well as an overall rating. More detailed information is available in the [technical documentation for the Dropout Prevention and Recovery Report Card](#).

### Achievement Component

This rating reports the percentage of students who passed or met the cumulative performance score on all applicable tests required for high school graduation.

### Progress Component

This rating is the school's academic growth for its students in math and reading. Progress looks at the growth all students are making.

### Gap Closing Component

This rating shows how well schools are meeting the performance expectations for all populations of students in English language arts, math, graduation and English language proficiency improvement.

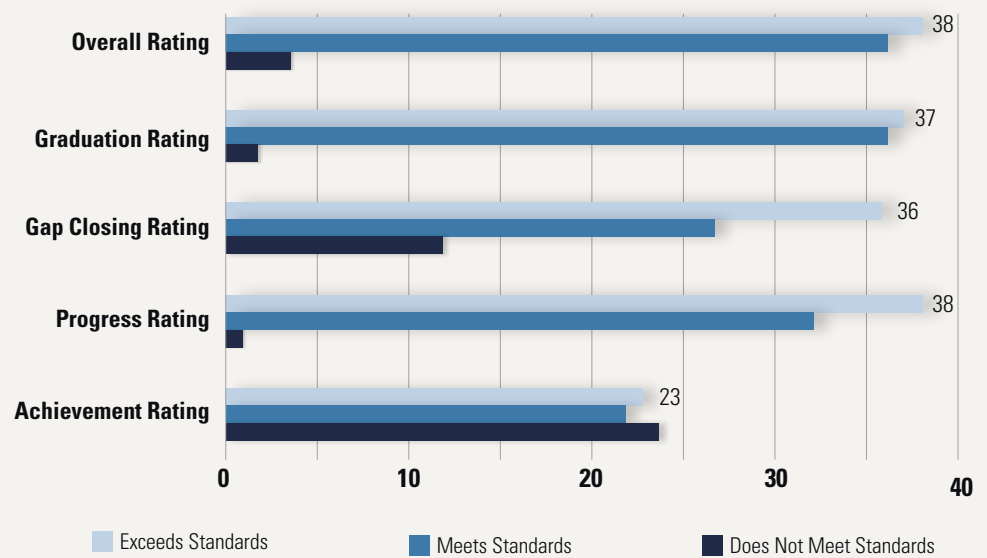
### Graduation

This rating reports the number of students graduating from the school in four, five, six, seven or eight years. Schools receiving the Dropout Prevention and Recovery

Report Card have seen significant improvement over the last several years despite challenges related to the COVID pandemic:

- Ninety-five percent of dropout recovery community schools met or exceeded overall standards versus 83% for the 2018-2019 school year;
- Ninety-nine percent of dropout recovery community schools received a Progress rating (seven schools were not rated) of met or exceeded standards versus 70% for the 2018-2019 school year;
- Six dropout recovery community schools received a rating of exceeds standards for all components and the overall rating versus zero schools for the 2018-2019 school year.

### 2021-2022 Dropout Recovery Report Card Results



**SPOTLIGHT:**

**Horizon Science Academy Columbus Primary**



Founded in 2018, Horizon Science Academy Columbus Primary is a public charter school that serves roughly 475 students across grades K-2. Horizon Science Academy Columbus Primary provides its students with an education rich in math, science and technology focused on preparing students to become bold inquirers, problem-solvers and ethical leaders who are skill-ready for postsecondary education to meet the challenges of a competitive global workforce.

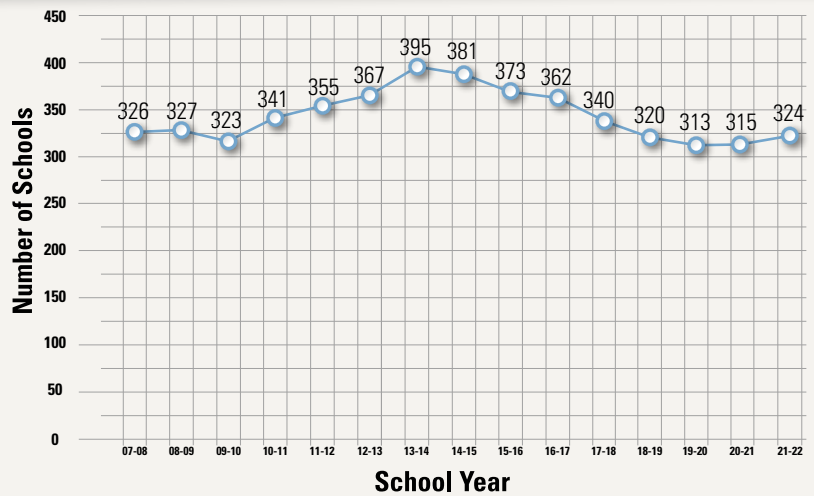
The school has a culture built on a common set of values; student, teacher and parent accountability; and high expectations that result in high levels of student achievement. Administrators, teachers and families have high expectations of students and students have high expectations of their teachers.

Horizon Science Academy Columbus Primary is operated by Concept Schools. The mission of the school is to provide a safe and enriching learning environment where the whole student is nurtured and developed. Teachers and administrators pledge to support the academic and emotional well-being of each and every student. Students will leave the school prepared with skills and knowledge that will give them advantages throughout their future educational and life experiences.

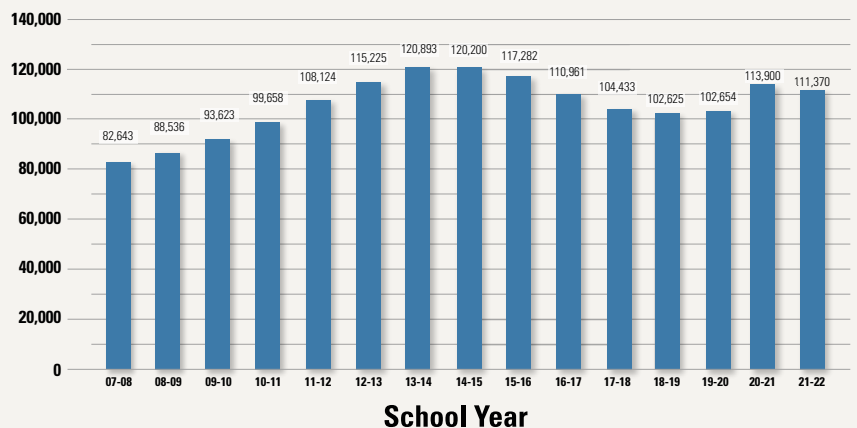
# School Operations and Accountability

The 2021-2022 school year marked Ohio's 24th year of community school operations. Beginning in 1998 with 15 community schools authorized by two sponsors, community school enrollment peaked in the 2013-2014 school year before dropping off. The trend reversed throughout the COVID pandemic as enrollment ticked upward. During the 2021-2022 school year, 19 sponsors authorized the operation of 324 community schools serving 115,937 students, or 111,370 full-time equivalent students.

**Number of Community Schools:**  
2007-2008 to 2021-2022



**Enrollment in Community Schools:**  
2007-2008 to 2021-2022



## Governing Authority Membership

Governing authority members play an important role in providing oversight of a community school. Functioning like a district board of education, governing authorities adopt the school budget, develop school policies and procedures, and may contract for services on behalf of the school. Ohio law bars any individual employed by a school district or educational service center from serving on the governing authority of a community school sponsored by that district or an 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.

## Automatic Closure

Ensuring school quality is a goal for the community school sector. In addition to sponsors closing schools due to failure to meet performance requirements included in the sponsor-school contract, Ohio has one of the most rigorous requirements in the nation for closing community schools based on poor performance. Community schools that fail to meet state performance requirements within five years may be subject to closure. During the first two years of operation, academic performance measured by the Ohio School Report Cards is not subject to the automatic closure statute. However, after the initial two years of operation, schools that demonstrate three consecutive years of poor performance automatically are closed as an operation of law. Additional details about automatic closure law are found in [Ohio law](#).

To increase transparency, the Department annually publishes the following:

- 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;
- A list of sponsors that may not sponsor new schools.

## Changing Sponsors

To prevent poor-performing community schools from regularly switching sponsors, a practice 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 for the Performance Index score or a rating of less than three stars on the Achievement Component and a grade of D or F or a rating of less than three stars for the Progress component must receive approval from the Department before changing sponsors. A community school that operated 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.

## Operator Performance

Some community schools contract with a management organization or operator to help manage the school's day-to-day operations. An operator works under an agreement 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, a school district or an educational service center. The contract between a community school's governing authority and its operator also details the school's arrangement for specific services, including curriculum development, staffing, facilities management, technology, marketing, training and development, and financial services.

The Department also annually issues a performance report for each community school operator based on its school's performance the previous year. Ratings and performance details for community school operators are available on the Department's [Community Schools webpage](#).



# Community School Sponsor Performance

Accountability for community school sponsors is equally demanding. Any sponsor that receives an “ineffective” overall rating cannot sponsor any new or additional community schools, and the sponsor is subject to a quality improvement plan. In addition, any sponsor that receives a “poor” rating or three consecutive “ineffective” ratings is subject to revocation of its sponsorship authority. An appeals process is available to sponsors subject to revocation of their sponsorship authority.

The sponsor evaluation system assists the Department in its oversight of sponsors and helps increase the quality of sponsor practices. The evaluation framework includes three equally weighted components, including:

- Academic performance of schools in a sponsor’s portfolio based on Ohio School Report Card measures;
- Sponsor and schools’ compliance with laws and administrative rules;
- The sponsor’s adherence to quality practices.

With the help of independent, outside vendors, the Department calculates ratings individually for a sponsor’s academic performance, legal compliance and quality practices components and then calculates an overall rating based on the rating of each evaluation component. All Ohio community school sponsors have ratings of effective or exemplary. Data and overall and component ratings for the 2021-2022 sponsor evaluation are available on the [Department’s website](#).

## SPOTLIGHT:

### The Autism Academy of Learning



*The Autism Academy of Learning provides a unique school experience, with the mission of serving children diagnosed with autism spectrum disorder (ASD). The school was founded in 2001 by a group of parents of students with autism who wanted an alternative to traditional schools in the Toledo area. The founders desired a supportive environment focused on tailoring academic and vocational services to the unique needs of each student. The school’s administration, educators and specially trained instructional teachers come together to provide effective programming for these children. The school employs a number of strategies and educational methods to assist staff in providing effective educational programs for students with ASD. The school focuses its efforts on providing custom-tailored educational and vocational experiences for each student, working to decrease challenging behaviors with a focus on skill acquisition through instruction, services and supports, as outlined in each student’s Individualized Education Program (IEP).*

*The school’s staff work collaboratively to determine the specific communication needs of each individual student and develop a program collectively. The school’s programming utilizes multiple approaches to increase student communication, such as Augmentative (Continued on page 14)*

## Academic Component

The Academic Performance component of a sponsor's evaluation combines academic performance data from all schools in the sponsor's portfolio. The Academic Performance component uses data obtained from Ohio School Report Cards to ensure consistent, comparable results.

The Academic Performance component calculation excludes schools operating fewer than two full school years and community schools primarily serving students with IEPs. The performance of all other community schools, including e-schools and dropout prevention and recovery schools are included when calculating the Academic Component rating.

## Legal Compliance Component

Community school sponsors have primary responsibility for schools' compliance with all laws and administrative rules. Each sponsor must certify that each of the schools it sponsors adheres to Ohio laws and administrative rules, with compliance subject to Department verification. To assist sponsors, the Department annually publishes a list of applicable laws and administrative rules with which schools must comply.

The Legal Compliance component of the sponsor evaluation includes a review of the sponsor's compliance with applicable laws and administrative rules, as well as the compliance of each school they sponsor.

The Department also reviews each sponsor's adherence to the requirement to provide technical assistance to its sponsored schools. Ohio is the only state that reviews a sponsor's technical support of its schools.

## SPOTLIGHT:

### The Autism Academy of Learning

*(Continued from page 13)*

*and Alternative Communication (AAC) in conjunction with speech and language therapy. The classrooms incorporate visual aids, such as daily schedules and social stories (tailored for each child by varying their complexity), to ensure all students are provided with accessible classrooms. The school's programming also incorporates the option for students age 14 or older to participate in either in-house or off-campus vocational training, in conjunction with community liaisons. The main focus is on daily living, social and occupational skills training for students of transition-age, as a large percentage of the school's student population transition from school to a supervised workplace, day program and/or supported independent living environment.*

*The success of the school's program can be largely attributed to the dedication of the director and staff. The mindset and goal of the school has always been to raise each student's standard of living. The Autism Academy of Learning is sponsored by the ESC of Lake Erie West, an exemplary-rated sponsor.*

## Quality Practices Review

The Department reviews each sponsor's practices against quality standards based on principles developed by the National Association of Charter School Authorizers.

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 considering applications, application reviewers and their training, and the application decision-making process.
- Performance contracting
  - This area evaluates the sponsor's contracting processes, school performance standards, the community school accountability framework, terms for renewal and non-renewal, and terms and processes for amendments and modifications to the contract.
- Oversight and evaluation of community schools
  - This area evaluates the sponsor's oversight system, including financial and enrollment reviews, 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 and sponsor requirements in rule and law
  - 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.

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 can take advantage of incentives, including no limit on the number of schools they can sponsor or where a community school can be located.

# Financial Condition

## Financial Audits

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 annually that review accounts, financial reports and records to ensure compliance with state and federal laws, regulations and accounting principles.

If an audit shows misuse, improper accounting for public funds collection or public property misappropriation, the Ohio Attorney General and the Department take legal action to resolve the issues. The Auditor of State shares audits with school sponsors for their review and follow up if needed. The auditor gives a community school with records that are insufficient 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. The Auditor of State notifies the sponsor in writing if any school they sponsor is found to have unauditible records and posts the notification on the Auditor of State’s website.

The sponsor of an unauditible community school can only enter into contracts with other community schools once the auditor completes a successful financial audit of the school.

Ohio law also requires a new community 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. These funds ensure that funds are available for a final financial audit.

Copies of community school financial audits are published and available on the [Auditor of State’s website](#).

## 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. In addition, sponsors annually verify 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, operates the school, or is an employee of the school. The Auditor of State verifies these during the regular audit of the school’s financial records.

The sponsor representative also meets with the school’s governing authority or fiscal officer at least monthly to review financial and enrollment records. 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. These regular reviews allow sponsors to monitor a school’s short-term performance and long-term financial viability.

Financial oversight extends to reporting the detail of operators’ expenditures. For example, when the cost of services provided by a community school operator or management company totals more than 20 percent of the annual gross revenues of a school, the operator must provide detailed accounting information, including the nature and costs of the services provided to the community school. This information becomes part of the community school’s annual financial audit.



# Support for High-Performing Community Schools

## Charter Schools Program Grant

Through a federal Charter Schools Program Grant, Ohio is expanding opportunities for its most disadvantaged students to succeed by increasing the number of high-performing, site-based community schools.

Awarded to the Ohio Department of Education in 2015, the Charter School Program (CSP) grant provides both planning and implementation grants for new and expanding community schools. All applicants for CSP grants must conform to the federal definition of a public charter school in the Elementary and Secondary Education Act. Each applicant must plan or implement a high-performing, site-based general education school. Schools with the dropout prevention and recovery designation and e-schools are not eligible for CSP grants.

To ensure oversight and transparency throughout the grant process, the Department created a Grant Implementation Advisory Committee representing key Ohio stakeholders. The committee reviews and comments on 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.

FY2022-2023 will be the concluding year for the CSP subgrant competition and awards.

Find [additional information and a list of all grant recipients](#).

## 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 the first round of awards held in 2016, eight community schools received grants totaling more than \$17 million. In Round Two, an additional \$4 million was awarded to four high-performing community schools. In fiscal year 2023, an additional \$11,964,764 in grant funds is available.

Proposed projects must demonstrate that the grant funds will increase the supply of seats in high-performing schools, serve 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 the 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.

## SPOTLIGHT:

## Global Village Academy



*Established to meet the needs of the Parma community, Global Village Academy is in the heart of Ukrainian Village and a true K-8 community school. The school reflects the traditions and family focus of Ukrainian Village. This year, the school not only welcomed back its returning students but also creatively managed its space to accommodate additional students, including refugees from the war in Ukraine. The school also employs teachers from Ukraine.*

*The school uses a full English language immersion approach. Students who are English learners and students with native fluency in English learn together in the classroom and listen intently as the teacher slowly repeats the instructions and uses actions and props to assist with comprehension. Partnering with peers who have command of the English language, spending time with English learner tutors and supportive staff, and engaging in peer modeling, the students thrive academically and feel comfortable with the English language in just a few short months.*

*Global Village is a high-quality community school with a four- and five-star rating in Achievement, Progress and Gap Closing. It is dedicated to using its evidenced-based curriculum with fidelity, continually monitoring student data and providing educator support and instructional training to staff. However, its commitment doesn't end with academics. The school and staff are committed to serving the needs of the community and students as they deal with the trauma of war and separation from family members.*

## Quality Community School Support Grant

The Quality Community School Support Grant provides additional funding to high-poverty community schools that meet criteria established by the General Assembly. Community schools meeting eligibility criteria can receive \$1,750 in each fiscal year for each pupil identified as economically disadvantaged and \$1,000 in each fiscal year for each other enrolled student. Payments for each fiscal year are calculated using the final adjusted full-time equivalent number of students enrolled in the community school for the prior fiscal year. If the school is in its first year of operation, the payment is calculated using the adjusted full-time equivalent number of students enrolled in the school for the current fiscal year as of the payment date. The Department makes grant payments to each school meeting the grant criteria in January.

Community schools with sponsors rated effective or exemplary can meet eligibility criteria in one of three ways:

- New schools with a high-performing out-of-state operator that serves at least 50% economically disadvantaged students across all the operator's schools may be eligible for the grant;
- New schools replicating existing high-performing community schools may be eligible for the grant;
- Existing community schools, with or without an operator, are eligible for the grant if the school's Performance Index exceeds that of the district in which the community school is located for two consecutive years, the school's Progress rating on the report card is four stars or better and economically disadvantaged students comprise a majority of the school's total enrollment.

The Ohio General Assembly appropriated \$30 million per fiscal year for the Quality Community School Support Grant in Fiscal Years 2020 and 2021. With more schools qualifying each year, the total appropriation available for Fiscal Year 2022 was raised to \$54 million.

Find more information about the grant on the [Quality Community School Support Fund webpage](#).

# Legislative History of Community Schools

During each session since Ohio established community schools more than 23 years ago, the General Assembly has made legislative changes to the program. View the [complete list of community school legislation](#) enacted over this time. This includes legislative summaries that trace the changes by legislative session and bill number.