

This Strategic Plan with policies and processes re-enforces  
The Sponsoring Mission and Goals of Findlay City Schools.

**Findlay City Schools  
Community/Charter School Sponsor  
Strategic Plan  
2018-2019**

Findlay City Schools will adhere to the Principles for Quality Charter School Authorizers and **will maintain the Standards for Quality Charter School Authorizers as established by the National Association of Charter School Authorizers** and use these Principles and Standards as the backbone of its Strategic Plan for quality school sponsoring. (Note: the term Authorizer and Sponsor are interchangeable.)

Principles for Quality Charter School Authorizing

- Maintain High Standards
- Uphold School Autonomy
- Protect Student and Public Interests

Standards for Quality Charter School Authorizing

- Agency Commitment and Capacity
- Application Process and Decision Making
- Performance Contracting
- Ongoing Oversight and Evaluation
- Revocation and Renewal Decision Making

**Principles of Quality Charter School Authorizing**

Principle 1: Maintain High Standards

- Set high standards for approving charter school applications – at this time Findlay City Schools will only sponsor Findlay Digital Academy. Findlay City Schools is not accepting any new applications.
- Maintain high standards for schools it oversees. These high standards include evaluating the curriculum, personnel, and financial status of Findlay Digital Academy.

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They also include evaluating the health and safety standards. Additionally, student, staff and parent interests and well-being will be monitored.

- Oversee Findlay Digital Academy and establish that over time it meets the performance standards and targets on a range of measures and metrics set forth in the charter school/community school/sponsor contract.
- Close any school that fails to meet standards and targets set forth by Ohio Revised Code, Federal Law and by the sponsor contract.

### Principle 2: Uphold School Autonomy

- Honors and preserves core autonomies crucial to school success, including:
  - a. Governing board independence from the authorizer
  - b. Personnel
  - c. School vision and culture
  - d. Instructional programming, design, use of time
  - e. Budgeting
- Assumes responsibility not for the success or failure of individual schools, but for holding schools accountable for their performance.
- Minimizes administrative and compliance burdens on schools
- Focuses on holding schools accountable for outcomes rather than process

### Principle 3: Protect Student and Public Interests

- Makes the well-being and interests of students the fundamental value informing all the authorizer's actions and decisions.
- Holds Findlay Digital Academy accountable for fulfilling fundamental public education obligations to all students, which includes providing
  - a. Nonselective, nondiscriminatory access to all eligible students
  - b. Fair treatment in admissions and disciplinary actions for all students
  - c. Appropriate services for all students, including those with disabilities and English learners, in accordance with applicable law
- Ensures in its own work:
  - a. Ethical conduct
  - b. Focus on the mission of chartering high-quality schools
  - c. Clarity, consistency, and public transparency in authorizing policies, practices, and decisions
  - d. Effective and efficient public stewardship
  - e. Compliance with applicable laws and regulations
- Supports parents and students in being well-informed about the quality of education provided by Findlay Digital Academy and any other school that Findlay City Schools might sponsor in the future.

Findlay City Schools, as a sponsor, will oversee Findlay Digital Academy and working in partnership with Findlay Digital Academy will adhere to the Quality Practices as set forth in the Sponsor Quality Practices Rubric by the Ohio Department of Education. It will do likewise in regard to the Compliance Component and Academic Component of the Sponsor Evaluation process.

## **Standards for Quality Charter School Authorizing**

### Agency Commitment and Capacity

A quality authorizer engages in chartering as a means to foster excellent schools and offer school choice that meet identified needs, clearly prioritizes a commitment to excellence in education in authorizing practices, and creates organizational structures and commits human and financial resources necessary to conduct its authorizing duties effectively and efficiently.

The Findlay community in 2004 set up a task force to address the number of students who were being expelled or were dropping out of school. This task force had members from the Juvenile Court, Findlay City Schools, the Family Resource Center, Camp Fire USA and other community organizations. This task force felt that school choice should be offered to these students to address their life issues. Findlay City Schools took the leadership and became the sponsor of the Findlay Digital Academy that offers an on-line, continuous progress model of quality education. In 2014, Findlay Digital Academy was named the Charter School of the Year by the Ohio Alliance of Public Charter Schools. In November 2017 Findlay City School was rated as an Exemplary Sponsor by the State of Ohio Office of Community Schools.

Standard	As a Quality Authorizer Findlay City Schools as a Sponsor will...
<p><b>Planning and Commitment to Excellence</b></p> <p><b>Time Frame:</b></p> <p><b>September, December, March &amp; May Site Visits</b></p>	<p>Support and advance the purposes of charter school law.</p> <p>Ensure that the authorizer’s governing board, leadership, and staff understand and are committed to the three Core Principles of authorizing.</p> <p>Define external relationships and lines of authority to protect its authorizing functions from conflicts of interest and political influence.</p> <p>Implement policies, processes, and practices that streamline and systematize its work toward stated goals, and execute its duties efficiently while minimizing administrative burdens on schools.</p>

	<p>Evaluate its work regularly against national standards for quality authorizing and recognized effective practices, and develop and implement timely plans for improvement when it falls short. (Evaluation will be annually completed by the end of March.)</p> <p><b>Advanced Standards</b></p> <p>State a clear mission for quality authorizing.</p> <p>Articulate and implements an intentional strategic vision and plan for chartering, including clear priorities, goals, and time frames for achievement.</p> <p>Evaluate its work regularly against its chartering mission and strategic plan goals, and implements plans for improvement when falling short of its mission and strategic plan.</p> <p>Provide an annual public report on the authorizer’s progress and performance in meeting its strategic plan goals.</p>
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<p><b>Human Resources</b></p> <p><b>Time Frame:</b></p> <p><b>On-going</b></p>	<p>Enlist expertise and competent leadership for all areas essential to charter school oversight—including, but not limited to, education leadership; curriculum, instruction, and assessment; special education, English learners, and other diverse learning needs; performance management and accountability; law; finance; facilities; and nonprofit governance and management—through staff, contractual relationships, and/or intra- or inter-agency collaborations.</p> <p>Employ competent personnel at a staffing level appropriate and sufficient to carry out all authorizing responsibilities in accordance with national standards, and commensurate with the scale of the charter school portfolio.</p> <p>Provide for regular professional development for the Sponsor’s leadership and staff to achieve and maintain high standards of professional authorizing practice and to enable continual agency improvement. Provide professional development for School personnel.</p>
<p><b>Financial Resources</b></p> <p><b>Time Frame:</b></p> <p><b>Monthly</b></p>	<p>Determine the financial needs of the authorizing office and devote sufficient financial resources to fulfill its authorizing responsibilities in accordance with national standards and commensurate with the scale of the charter school portfolio.</p> <p>Structure its funding in a manner that avoids conflicts of interest, inducements, incentives, or disincentives that might compromise its judgment in charter approval and accountability decision making.</p> <p>Deploy funds effectively and efficiently with the public’s interests in mind.</p> <p>Oversee Findlay Digital Academy financial dealings on a monthly basis and insures that the school remains fiscally responsible and in line with Ohio Revised Code financial obligations.</p>

Application Process and Decision Making

A quality authorizer implements a comprehensive application process that includes clear application questions and guidance; follows fair, transparent procedures and rigorous criteria; and grants charters only to applicants who demonstrate strong capacity to establish and operate a quality charter school.

Standard	As a Quality Authorizer Findlay City Schools as a Sponsor will...
<p><b>Proposal Information, Questions, and Guidance</b></p> <p><b>Time Frame:</b></p> <p><b>Information and timeline on the sponsor website.</b></p>	<p>Issue a charter application information packet or request for proposals (RFP) that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- State any chartering priorities the authorizer may have established;</li> <li>- Articulate comprehensive application questions to elicit the information needed for rigorous evaluation of applicants’ plans and capacities; and</li> <li>- Provide clear guidance and requirements regarding application content and format, while explaining evaluation criteria.</li> </ul> <p>Welcome proposals from first-time charter applicants as well as existing school operators/replicators, while appropriately distinguishing between the two kinds of developers in proposal requirements and evaluation criteria.</p> <p>Encourage expansion and replication of charter schools that demonstrate success and capacity for growth.</p> <p>Is open to considering diverse educational philosophies and approaches, and expresses a commitment to serve students with diverse needs.</p> <p><b>Note: At this time, Findlay City Schools is not interested in sponsoring additional charter schools, and will only sponsor the one school – Findlay Digital Academy.</b></p>
<p><b>Fair, Transparent, Quality-Focused Procedures</b></p>	<p>Implement a charter application process that is open, well publicized, and transparent, and is organized around clear, realistic timelines.</p>

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<p><b>Time Frame:</b></p> <p><b>Information and timeline on the sponsor website.</b></p>	<p>Allow sufficient time for each stage of the application and pre-opening process to be carried out with quality and integrity.</p> <p>Explain how each stage of the application process is conducted and evaluated.</p> <p>Communicate chartering opportunities, processes, approval criteria, and decisions clearly to the public.</p> <p>Inform applicants of their rights and responsibilities and promptly notifies applicants of approval or denial, while explaining the factors that determined the decision.</p>
<p><b>Rigorous Approval Criteria</b></p> <p><b>Time Frame:</b></p> <p><b>Information and timeline on the sponsor website.</b></p>	<p>Require all applicants to present a clear and compelling mission, a quality educational program, a solid business plan, effective governance and management structures and systems, founding team members demonstrating diverse and necessary capabilities, and clear evidence of the applicant’s capacity to execute its plan successfully.</p> <p>Establish distinct requirements and criteria for applicants who are existing school operators or replicators.</p> <p>Establish distinct requirements and criteria for applicants proposing to contract with education service or management providers.</p> <p>Establish distinct requirements and criteria for applicants that propose to operate virtual or online charter schools.</p>
<p><b>Rigorous Decision Making</b></p> <p><b>Time Frame:</b></p> <p><b>Information and timeline on the sponsor website.</b></p>	<p>Grant charters only to applicants that have demonstrated competence and capacity to succeed in <i>all</i> aspects of the school, consistent with the stated approval criteria.</p> <p>Rigorously evaluates each application through thorough review of the written proposal, a substantive in-person interview with the applicant group, and other due diligence to examine the applicant’s experience and capacity, conducted by knowledgeable and competent evaluators.</p> <p>Engage, for both written application reviews and applicant interviews, highly competent teams of internal and external evaluators with relevant educational, organizational (governance and management), financial, and legal expertise, as well as thorough</p>

	<p>understanding of the essential principles of charter school autonomy and accountability.</p> <p>Provide orientation or training to application evaluators (including interviewers) to ensure consistent evaluation standards and practices, observance of essential protocols, and fair treatment of applicants.</p> <p>Ensure that the application-review process and decision making are free of conflicts of interest, and requires full disclosure of any potential or perceived conflicts of interest between reviewers or decision makers and applicants.</p>
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Performance Contracting

A quality authorizer executes contracts with charter schools that articulate the rights and responsibilities of each party regarding school autonomy, funding, administration and oversight, outcomes, measures for evaluating success or failure, performance consequences, and other material terms. The contract is an essential document, separate from the charter application, that establishes the legally binding agreement and terms under which the school will operate and be held accountable.

<b>Standards</b>	As a Quality Authorizer Findlay City Schools as a Sponsor will...
<p><b>Contract Term, Negotiation, and Execution</b></p> <p><b>Time Frame:</b></p> <p><b>Contract reviewed annually in December.</b></p>	<p>Execute a contract with a legally incorporated governing board independent of the authorizer.</p> <p>Grant charter contracts for a term of two/three years with periodic high-stakes review as spelled out in Ohio Revised Code and rules applied by the Ohio Department of Education.</p> <p>Define material terms of the contract.</p> <p>Ensure mutual understanding and acceptance of the terms of the contract by the schools’ governing authority prior to authorization or charter granting by the authorizing board.</p> <p>Allow and requires contract amendments for occasional material changes to a school’s plan or changes in law.</p>



<p><b>Rights and Responsibilities</b></p> <p>.</p> <p><b>Time Frame:</b></p> <p><b>March, May, September &amp; December Site Visits</b></p>	<p>State the rights and responsibilities of the school and the authorizer;</p> <p>State and respect the autonomies to which schools are entitled— based on statute, waiver, or authorizer policy— including those relating to the school’s authority over educational programming, staffing, budgeting, and scheduling;</p> <p>Define performance standards, criteria, and conditions for renewal, intervention, revocation, and non-renewal, while establishing the consequences for meeting or not meeting standards or conditions;</p> <p>State the statutory, regulatory, and procedural terms and conditions for the school’s operation;</p> <p>State reasonable pre-opening requirements or conditions for new schools to ensure that they meet all health, safety, and other legal requirements prior to opening and are prepared to open smoothly;</p> <p>Is in compliance with Ohio Revised Code</p> <p>State the responsibility and commitment of the school to adhere to essential public-education obligations, including admitting and serving all eligible students so long as space is available, and not expelling or counseling out students except pursuant to a legal discipline policy approved by the authorizer; and</p> <p>State the responsibilities of the school and the authorizer in the event of school closures.</p>

	<p>Ensure that any fee-based services that the authorizer provides are set forth in a services agreement that respects charter school autonomy and treats the charter school equitably compared to district schools, if applicable; and ensures that purchasing such services is explicitly not a condition of charter approval, continuation, or renewal.</p>
<p><b>Performance Standards</b></p> <p><b>Time Frame:</b></p> <p><b>Annual review of contract and school compliance in December.</b></p> <p><b>Monthly financial reviews.</b></p>	<p>Executes charter contracts that plainly:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Establish the performance standards under which schools will be evaluated, using objective and verifiable measures of student achievement as the primary measure of school quality, in the case of Dropout Prevent and Recovery schools Graduation Rates will be the major verifiable measure</li> <li>• Define clear, measurable, and attainable academic, financial, and organizational performance standards and targets that the school must meet as a condition of renewal, including but not limited to state and federal measures</li> <li>• Include expectations for appropriate access, education, support services, and outcomes for students with disabilities</li> <li>• Define the sources of academic data that will form the evidence base for ongoing and renewal evaluation, including state-mandated and other standardized assessments, student academic growth measures, internal assessments, qualitative reviews, and performance comparisons with other public schools in the district and state</li> <li>• Define the sources of financial data that will form the evidence base for ongoing renewal and evaluation, grounded in professional standards for sound financial operations and sustainability</li> <li>• Define the sources of organizational data that will form the evidence base for ongoing renewal and evaluation, focusing on fulfillment of legal obligations, fiduciary duties, and sound public stewardship</li> <li>• Include clear, measurable performance standards to judge the effectiveness of alternative schools, if applicable –</li> </ul>

	<p>requiring and appropriately weighting rigorous mission-specific performance measures and metrics that credibly demonstrate each school’s success in fulfilling its mission and serving its special population.</p>
<p><b>Provisions for Education Service or Management Contract (if applicable)</b></p>	<p>For any school that contracts with an external (third-party) provider for education design and operation or management, includes additional contractual provisions that ensure rigorous, independent contract oversight by the charter governing board and the school’s financial independence from the external provider.</p> <p>Reviews the proposed third-party contract as a condition of charter approval to ensure that it is consistent with applicable law, authorizer policy, and the public interest.</p>

Ongoing Oversight, Process and Evaluation

A quality authorizer conducts contract oversight that competently evaluates performance and monitors compliance; ensures schools’ legally entitled autonomy; protects student rights; informs intervention, revocation, and renewal decisions; and provides annual public reports on school performance.

<b>Standard</b>	As a Quality Authorizer Findlay City Schools as a Sponsor will...
<p><b>Performance Evaluation and Compliance Monitoring</b></p>	<p>Implement a comprehensive performance accountability and compliance monitoring system that is defined by the charter contract and provides the information necessary to make rigorous and standards-based renewal, revocation, and intervention decisions.</p> <p>Define and communicates to schools the process, methods, and timing of gathering and reporting school performance and compliance data.</p>

<p><b>Time Frame:</b></p> <p><b>September, December, March &amp; May Site Visits</b></p> <p><b>Unannounced Walk-Throughs of the school throughout the school year.</b></p> <p><b>Attendance at bimonthly Governing Authority Board meetings.</b></p>	<p>Implement an accountability system that effectively streamlines federal, state, and local performance expectations and compliance requirements while protecting schools’ legally entitled autonomy and minimizing schools’ administrative and reporting burdens.</p> <p>Provide clear technical guidance and/or professional development to schools as needed to ensure timely compliance with applicable rules and regulations.</p> <p>Visit each school as appropriate and necessary for collecting data that cannot be obtained otherwise and in accordance with the contract, while ensuring that the frequency, purposes, and methods of such visits respect school autonomy and avoid operational interference.</p> <p>Evaluate each school annually on its performance and progress toward meeting the standards and targets stated in the charter contract, including essential compliance requirements, and clearly communicate evaluation results to the school’s governing board and leadership.</p> <p>Require and review annual financial audits of schools, conducted by a qualified independent auditor.</p> <p>Communicate regularly with schools as needed, including both the school leaders and governing boards, and provides timely notice of contract violations or performance deficiencies. Provide an annual written report to each school, summarizing its performance and compliance to date and identifying areas of strength and areas needing improvement.</p> <p>Articulate and enforce stated consequences for failing to meet performance expectations or compliance requirements.</p> <p>Provide timely legal updates due to changes in federal and state law and assists with any necessary policies changes.</p>
<p><b>Respecting School Autonomy</b></p>	<p>Respect the school’s authority over its day-to-day operations.</p> <p>Collect information from the school in a manner that minimizes administrative burdens on the school, while ensuring that performance and compliance information is collected with</p>

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<p><b>Time Frame:</b></p> <p><b>September, December, March &amp; May Site Visits</b></p>	<p>sufficient detail and timeliness to protect student and public interests.</p> <p>Periodically review compliance requirements and evaluates the potential to increase school autonomy based on flexibility in the law, streamlining requirements, demonstrated school performance, or other considerations.</p> <p>Refrain from directing or participating in educational decisions or choices that are appropriately within a school’s purview under the charter law or contract.</p>
<p><b>Protecting Student Rights</b></p> <p><b>Time Frame:</b></p> <p><b>September, December, March &amp; May Site Visits</b></p> <p><b>Monthly enrollment and financial reviews.</b></p>	<p>Ensure that schools admit students through a random selection process that is open to all students, is publicly verifiable, and does not establish undue barriers to application (such as mandatory information meetings, mandated volunteer service, or parent contracts) that exclude students based on socioeconomic, family, or language background, prior academic performance, special education status, or parental involvement.</p> <p>Ensure that schools provide access and services to students with disabilities as required by applicable federal and state law, including compliance with student individualized education programs and Section 504 plans, facilities access, and educational opportunities</p> <p>Ensure clarity in the roles and responsibilities of all parties involved in serving students with disabilities</p> <p>Ensure that schools provide access to and appropriately sever other special populations of students, including English learners, homeless students, and gifted students, as required by federal and state law</p> <p>Ensure that schools’ student discipline policies and actions are legal and fair, and that no student is expelled or counseled out of a school outside of that process</p>
<p><b>Intervention</b></p>	<p>Establish and makes known to schools at the outset an intervention policy that states the general conditions that may</p>

<p><b>Time Frame: Procedure in place and will be implemented as needed.</b></p>	<p>trigger intervention and the types of actions and consequences that may ensue.</p> <p>Give schools clear, adequate, evidence-based, and timely notice of contract violations or performance deficiencies.</p> <p>Allow schools reasonable time and opportunity for remediation in non-emergency situations.</p> <p>Where intervention is needed, engages in intervention strategies that clearly preserve school autonomy and responsibility (identifying what the school must remedy without prescribing solutions). If problems are not remedied then Corrective Action, Probation, or Suspension and/or Termination might result.</p>
<p><b>Public Reporting Annual Report posted on website.</b></p>	<p>Produce an annual public report that provides clear, accurate performance data for the charter schools it oversees, reporting on individual school and overall portfolio performance according to the framework set forth in the charter contract.</p>

Revocation and Renewal Decisions Making

A quality authorizer designs and implements a transparent and rigorous process that uses comprehensive academic, financial, and operational performance data to make merit-based renewal decisions, and revokes charters when necessary to protect student and public interests.

<p><b>Standard</b></p>	<p>As a Quality Authorizer Findlay City Schools as a Sponsor will...</p>
<p><b>Revocation  Time Frame: Procedure in place and will be implemented as needed.</b></p>	<p>Revoke a charter during the charter term if there is clear evidence of extreme underperformance or violation of law or the public trust that imperils students or public funds.</p>
<p><b>Renewal Decisions Based on Merit and Inclusive Evidence</b></p>	<p>Base the renewal process and renewal decisions on thorough analyses of a comprehensive body of objective evidence defined by the performance framework in the charter contract.</p>

<p><b>Time Frame: Procedure in place and will be implemented as needed.</b></p>	<p>Grant renewal only to schools that have achieved the standards and targets stated in the charter contract, are organizationally and fiscally viable, and have been faithful to the terms of the contract and applicable law.</p> <p>Do not make renewal decisions, including granting probationary or short-term renewals, on the basis of political or community pressure or solely on promises of future improvement.</p>
<p><b>Cumulative Report and Renewal Application</b></p>	<p>Provide to each school, in advance of the renewal decision, a cumulative performance report that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Summarizes the school’s performance record over the charter term, and</li> <li>- States the authorizer’s summative findings concerning the school’s performance and its prospects for renewal.</li> </ul> <p>Require any school seeking renewal to apply for it through a renewal application, which provides the school a meaningful opportunity and reasonable time to respond to the cumulative report; to correct the record, if needed; and to present additional evidence regarding its performance.</p>
<p><b>Fair Transparent Process</b></p> <p><b>Time Frame: Procedure in place and will be implemented as needed.</b></p>	<p>Clearly communicate to schools the criteria for charter revocation, renewal, and non-renewal decisions that are consistent with the charter contract.</p> <p>Promptly notify each school of its renewal (or, if applicable, revocation) decision, including written explanation of the reasons for the decision.</p> <p>Promptly communicate renewal or revocation decisions to the school community and public within a time frame that allows parents and students to exercise choices for the coming school year.</p> <p>Explain in writing any available rights of legal or administrative appeal through which a school may challenge the authorizer’s decision.</p>

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	Regularly update and publishes the process for renewal decision making, including guidance regarding required content and format for renewal applications.
<b>Closure</b> <b>Time Frame:</b> <b>Procedure in place and will be implemented as needed.</b>	In the event of a school closure, oversee and work with the school governing board and leadership in carrying out a detailed closure protocol that ensures timely notification to parents; orderly transition of students and student records to new schools; and disposition of school funds, property, and assets in accordance with law.

Reference: National Association of Charter School Authorizers <http://qualitycharters.org/>

Appendices



## Findlay City Schools Sponsoring of Community Schools Strategic Plan, Policies & Processes

The Appendices on the following pages support the day-to-day operation of the Findlay City Schools 2016-17 Sponsoring Strategic Plan. The Appendices are as follows:

Appendix 1 Sponsor Strategic Plan – Improvement Process

Appendix 2 Sponsor Strategic Plan – Conflict of Interest Policy/Procedure

Appendix 3 Sponsor Strategic Plan – Academic Performance Monitoring Process

Appendix 4 Sponsor Strategic Plan – Intervention Process

Appendix 5 Sponsor Strategic Plan – Sponsoring Philosophy/Policy on Non-Renewals and/or Termination of an Ohio Community School

Appendix 6 Sponsor Strategic Plan – Technical Assistance Guidance/Process

Appendix 7 Sponsor Strategic Plan – Legal and Policy Updates Process

Appendix 8 Sponsor Strategic Plan –Monthly Enrollment & Financial Reviews Policy and Process

Appendix 9 Sponsor Strategic Plan – Sponsored School Professional Development Procedure

Appendix 10 Sponsor Strategic Plan – Sponsor Role Professional Development Procedure

Appendix 11 Sponsor Strategic Plan - Findlay City Schools on Sponsoring, Community School Management and Operations

Appendix 12 Sponsor Strategic Plan – School Closure Policy/Procedure

Appendix 1  
Sponsor Strategic Plan

Improvement Process

As a Sponsor, Findlay City Schools, will have a Sponsoring Improvement Plan in place and will evaluate progress being made toward meeting improvement goals and actions steps at least twice a year.

The Sponsor Goals will be discussed and reviewed at the Sponsor Oversight Committee meetings at least annually.

Using data from multiple sources (website, audits, sponsoring documents) the Sponsor Oversight Committee will conduct a self-evaluation of its rating as a sponsor. The committee will use the Findlay City Schools Community School Sponsor Self-Evaluation form based on the National Association of Charter School Authorizers Index of Essential Practices as its primary evaluation tool. The committee will also analyze progress made during the year on the Sponsor Improvement Plan.

Self-Evaluation will occur annually in April.

Appendix 2  
Sponsor Strategic Plan

Conflict of Interest Policy/Procedure

Should a Conflict of Interest occur between the Sponsor and the School, the following steps will be taken to resolve the conflict:

1. When a conflict is identified, the Sponsor Superintendent and School Superintendent will have an informal meeting to discuss the conflict and verbally reach agreement as to how to resolve the conflict.
2. If the verbal resolution does not prove to be adequate in resolving the issue, the School Superintendent will meet with the Sponsor Oversight Committee and an action plan to resolve the conflict will be written and mutually agreed upon.
3. If the written action plan proves not to resolve the issue, then the section in the Sponsor Contract Resolution of Disputes Between School and the Sponsor will be followed.
- 4.

Should a Conflict of Interest occur between a School and an External party, the following steps will be followed:

1. When a conflict is identified, the Sponsor Superintendent will have an informal meeting with the conflicted party to discuss the conflict and to verbally reach an agreement as to how to resolve the conflict.
2. If the verbal resolution does not prove to be adequate in resolving the issue, the School Superintendent will meet with the Sponsor Oversight Committee and an action plan to resolve the conflict will be written and mutually agreed upon with the conflicted party.
3. If the action plan is not followed or does not solve the problem, then litigation will be sought to resolve the issue.

The Sponsor Board of Education, the School Governing Authority, and the Sponsor Oversight Committee will annually sign Disclosure Forms.

Appendix 3  
Sponsor Strategic Plan

Academic Performance Monitoring Process

The Sponsor will use the following to monitor the academic performance of the School:

- Fall submission by the school of the School's Annual Report which includes the most recent report card for the school to the Sponsor Board of Education
- Adherence to the Legal Compliance Plan and Schedule & Protocols
- Quarterly announced formal Site Visits to the School using appropriate forms
- At least two informal impromptu Site Visits to the School
- Follow up letter to the School from the Sponsor of the formal and informal Site Visits that point out strengths/weaknesses
- Annual submission by the School to the Sponsor the Sponsor Contract High Stakes Review form
- Sponsor Representative attendance at School Governing Authority Board meetings at least three times a year
- Quarterly collection of Climate Data from the School
- Annual discussion at Sponsor Oversight Committee meeting of the School's academic performance and any necessary steps that might be needed
- Report sent to School Governing Authority annually in regard to the School's performance in the areas of academics, finances, legal and governance

Appendix 4  
Sponsor Strategic Plan

Intervention Process

Any negative issues/situations in regard to student safety/health, academic decline, financial difficulties, or improper governance will trigger Sponsor intervention in regard to the operation of the School.

The Sponsor Contract, Sponsor Strategic Plan and Legal Compliance Plan and Schedule & Protocols have been put in place to help guide the School to be in compliance with all local, state and federal policies/law/regulations.

If any major issues with student health/safety, academic decline, financial decline, or improper governance occur the Sponsor will immediately step in and take steps to rectify the issue.

If minor issues occur in student safety/health, academic decline, financial decline or governance, then the following steps will take place:

- The Sponsor Superintendent and School Superintendent will meet and verbally agree how to address the current Sponsor concern. A time frame will be agreed upon as to when the issue will be corrected.
- If the issue is not corrected in the agreed upon time, then a formal written Corrective Action Plan will be developed.
- If the Corrective Action Plan is not followed and appropriate targets achieved, then the Sponsor will follow the steps in Exhibit 8 Closing Process in the Sponsor Contract.

Appendix 5  
Sponsor Strategic Plan

Sponsoring Philosophy/Policy on Non-Renewals and/or Termination of an Ohio Community School

Termination of a Community School results in a permanent closure of a community school and a sponsor should take the loss of investment of public funds seriously and in balance with the loss of funds that may occur if the school is ultimately failing.

The District believes that termination of a contract with a community school should be in accordance with the statutorily allowable reasons of financial insecurity, educational performance deficiencies, health or safety reasons, breach of the community school contract or other good cause. The Sponsor looks also to the service that the school provides to students, the community interests, and the performance of the surrounding schools from the students' home districts, and the safety and progress of the students.

In an effort to maintain high quality among public schools, the Sponsor sets its procedures for non-renewal to be stringent, both assessing the three previous years of performance of a community school, and deciding whether the community school is in substantial compliance with its community school contract.

If a school applies to transfer to the Sponsor from another sponsor, the District will not take that school if (a) the previous sponsor non-renewed the school for educational or financial reasons, or (b) the school was non-renewed for other reasons that Findlay City Schools does not feel it cannot improve significantly through its own resources, technical assistance or expertise.

Although the District may take application for new schools, the general plan for the District is not to take on additional schools to sponsor unless it sees a dire need in the region that it feels will be fulfilled by a mission-based community school that can serve students in a manner that is unique, and which increases the opportunities for those students not otherwise being addressed.

In the event, that a school contract is terminated the Closing Procedures (Exhibit 8) outlined in the Sponsor Contract.

Appendix 6  
Sponsor Strategic Plan

Technical Assistance Guidance/Process

The Sponsor (Findlay City Schools) has an established process for determining the needs of its School and it conducts a needs assessment annually to determine what type of technical assistance the School needs.

The scope of technical assistance provided by the Sponsor to its sponsored community school, Findlay Digital Academy, covers all aspects of the School's programs. As the Sponsor, we make significant resources available relating to instruction, transportation, facilities, fiscal matters, legal compliance, and other areas relevant to the School's operations. In our capacity as a local school district, we regularly encounter significant curriculum, technology, human resources, and/or other legal compliance issues. Information we learn through our own operations benefits the School. Further, our affiliation with other governmental entities, including but not limited to Educational Service Centers, provides additional resources to address the School's needs as they arise.

The Sponsor administrators work directly with School staff regularly as needed. Given the close proximity of the facilities, the Sponsor regularly handles such issues in a one-on-one, as needed basis, and we have made it clear that School staff can contact us in person, by cell phone, or by email at any time.

The Sponsor holds regular meetings with the School to determine whether the School needs additional assistance. The Sponsor sends a representative to attend every School board meeting, and we include a report on the School in our own District board meetings sometimes as a formal agenda item and other times as an informal comment.

Some examples of technical assistance are as follows:

- Provide guidance regarding the handling of standardized test administration during the OGT and AIR assessments.
- Confer with School staff regarding FTE requirements based on the new requirements.
- Assist the School in preparing its application to providing career-technical education programming. School leadership attends all of the Millstream Career Tech Directors meetings.
- Provide contacts within the community to assist with School programs.
- Provide guidance related to public records requests.
- Assist with the Sheriff's Office to secure services.
- Provide guidance regarding new career advising and College Credit Plus requirements.
- Share space and resources in an efficient manner when needed
- Perform all site visits to ensure compliance with laws and the School's contract with the District.
- Respond to the School's needs for additional assistance as requested.

Appendix 7  
Sponsor Strategic Plan

Legal and Policy Updates Process

The Sponsor, Findlay City Schools, provides the School, Findlay Digital Academy, timely updates and information in regard to changes in law and policy. The Sponsor also provides at the minimum annual training to assist the School in understanding changes to rule and law that impact community school operation.

Legal Update Process

- The Sponsor routinely shares emails in regard to changes in law and/or legal seminars/conferences/training
- The Sponsor assists the School administration/staff in attending legal workshops/conferences/training
- The Sponsor has a School administrator attend the monthly Secondary Principals' Meetings where legal updates are routinely shared
- The Sponsor has a School administrator attend the Sponsor Ad Team meetings where law and policy updates are discussed
- The Sponsor invites the School personnel to attend any legal training offered to the Sponsor's staff
- The Sponsor Superintendent attends the Governing Authority Board meetings and updates the School in regard to changes in law or need to change policy
- The Sponsor along with School personnel at the Sponsor's invitation attend Ohio Department of Education meetings where community school law/compliance/issues are discussed
- The Sponsor encourages the School to contract with a law firm specializing in community school law to keep updated on needed policy changes

Legal Training Process

- The Sponsor trains the Governing Authority members and School Superintendent at the Governing Authority Board meetings as to the changes in law and policy – the Sponsor is a standing board agenda item
- The Sponsor monitors Governing Authority mandated annual training
- The Sponsor routinely shares emails in regard to changes in law and/or legal seminars/conferences/training
- The Sponsor assists the School administration/staff in attending legal workshops/conferences/training



Appendix 8  
Monthly Financial & Enrollment Reviews  
Policy and Process

Under R.C. 3314.023, the treasurer or representative of the community school sponsor will meet monthly with the governing authority treasurer of the school to review financial and enrollment records. A monthly face-to-face meeting by the treasurers will be held within the following month. For example, August reports will be reviewed in September. Upon receipt of these financial records, the Findlay City School treasurer or representative will conduct a review of the school's financial and enrollment records.

The school's treasurer will submit the following documents monthly to the sponsor treasurer:

- Bank Reconciliation
- Financial Report by Fund
- Checking Register Statement
- Summary Check Register

Also under the community school contract, the school Governing Authority and the school shall timely comply with all reasonable requests of the Sponsor, and allow the Sponsor to monitor the School operations.

The school's treasurer will be notified if a deadline is not met and/or if the reports submitted do not contain all of the data required and will be given the opportunity to submit the required data.

Once all documents are submitted to the sponsor's treasurer, s/he will submit a written analysis of the financial and enrollment data and arrange a face-to-face meeting with the school's treasurer to discuss the documents along with any necessary proactive recommendations for improvement.

In the event of an extended absence by either treasurer, that treasurer's respective Board will designate someone to fulfill the responsibility of the monthly review.

Additionally, the School will:

- submit the Five-Year Forecast to the Sponsor and the Ohio Department of Education at the appropriate times.
- Notify the Sponsor every time a student enrolls in the School
- Work with the Sponsor EMIS Coordinator to ensure that enrollment numbers are accurate.

The Sponsor Superintendent and Governing Authority Board members will be updated as to the financial health of the School and enrollment numbers at every Governing Authority Board meeting

Appendix 9  
Sponsor Strategic Plan

Sponsored School Professional Development Procedure

**Annual Overview of Professional Development Opportunities**

Each year, the Sponsor District (Findlay City Schools) shall provide the Sponsored School, Findlay Digital Academy with a list/brochure/emails of professional development opportunities. This list/brochure/emails are intended as an overview of professional development opportunities that will guide the Sponsored School, Findlay Digital Academy, in self-identifying professional development opportunities. Findlay Digital Academy staff is included in all professional development surveys offered to Sponsor School staff. There is **a minimum of three professional development opportunities offered to Findlay Digital Academy by Findlay City Schools annually.**

**Professional Development Opportunities Specific to Community Schools**

Each year, the Sponsor District will share all at least **one professional development opportunity to the Sponsored School that is specific to community schools.** Such opportunities can include, but are not limited to, state community school conferences, national community school conferences, or other affinity community school group conferences.

**Mandatory Training**

The Sponsor District provides the Sponsored School staff with mandatory training such as but not limited to Blood-borne Pathogen Exposure Prevention, Child Abuse, Health Emergencies.

**Targeted Professional Development**

Each year, the Sponsor District will obtain information about the Sponsored School needs. Information will be obtained based on a Needs Assessment. In a Needs Assessment, the District can ask the Sponsored School questions regarding areas of development that are needed. Findlay Digital Academy staff is included in all professional development surveys offered to Sponsor School staff.

Based on this needs assessment, the Sponsor District shall share or offer specific professional development opportunities to the Sponsored School and also include the Sponsored School staff opportunity to participate in all professional development offered by the Sponsor District.

### Potential Sources of Professional Development

The District has identified the following as potential sources of professional development opportunities.

1. Local professional development offered by the Sponsor District.
2. National Alliance for Public Charter Schools (“NAPCS”). NAPCS is a non-profit organization that supports the community school movement. NAPCS hosts an annual, national conference. NAPCS’ website may be accessed at: <http://www.publiccharters.org/>.
3. National Charter Schools Institute (“NCSI”). NCSI is an organization that provides services and other resources for charter schools. NCSI’s website may be accessed at: <https://nationalcharterschools.org/category/presentations/>.
4. National Charter Schools Resource Center (“NCSRC”). NCSRC is an organization that supports charter school development. NCSRC provides webinars and hosts conferences across the country. The NCSRC’s website may be accessed at: <https://www.charterschoolcenter.org/events>.
5. National Center for Special Education in Charter Schools (“NCSECS”). NCSECS has an organization dedicated to providing support for special education in community schools. NCSECS’ website may be accessed at: <http://www.ncsecs.org/>
6. Ohio Attorney General (“OAG”). The OAG offers Sunshine law training. The OAG’s website may be accessed at: <https://sunshinelaw.ohioattorneygeneral.gov/>.
7. Ohio Department of Education (“ODE”). The Ohio Department of Education offers professional development seminars and meetings on a regular basis. ODE has archived a number of its past presentations related to community schools. Presentations provided by ODE may be accessed at: <http://education.ohio.gov/Topics/Community-Schools/Guidance-Documents-Webinars-and-Presentations>.

Appendix 10  
Sponsor Strategic Plan

Sponsor Role Professional Development Procedure

**Annual Overview of Professional Development Opportunities**

Each year, the Sponsor District (Findlay City Schools) shall provide the Sponsor Oversight/Leadership Team, with a list/brochure/emails of professional development opportunities **related to sponsoring**. This list/brochure/emails are intended as an overview of professional development opportunities that will guide the Sponsored School, in helping the community school it sponsors (Findlay Digital Academy).

**Professional Development Opportunities Specific to Community Schools Sponsoring**

Each year, the Sponsor District will have at **least three members of the Sponsor Oversight/Leadership Team attend one professional development opportunity specific to community schools**. Such opportunities can include, but are not limited to, state community school conferences, national community school conferences, or other affinity community school group conferences.

**Targeted Professional Development**

Each year, the Sponsor District will obtain information about the Sponsor Oversight/Leadership Team professional development needs specific to community school sponsoring . Information will be obtained based on a Needs Assessment. In a Needs Assessment, the District can ask the Sponsor team questions regarding areas of development that are needed.

Based on this needs assessment, the Sponsor District shall offer specific professional development opportunities to the Sponsor Oversight/Leadership Team.

**Potential Sources of Professional Development**

The District has identified the following as potential sources of professional development opportunities.

1. Local professional development offered by the Sponsor District personnel.
2. National Alliance for Public Charter Schools (“NAPCS”). NAPCS is a non-profit organization that supports the community school movement. NAPCS hosts an annual, national conference. NAPCS’ website may be accessed at: <http://www.publiccharters.org/>.

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3. National Charter Schools Institute (“NCSI”). NCSI is an organization that provides services and other resources for charter schools. NCSI’s website may be accessed at: <https://nationalcharterschools.org/category/presentations/>.
4. National Charter Schools Resource Center (“NCSRC”). NCSRC is an organization that supports charter school development. NCSRC provides webinars and hosts conferences across the country. The NCSRC’s website may be accessed at: <https://www.charterschoolcenter.org/events>.
5. National Center for Special Education in Charter Schools (“NCSECS”). NCSECS has an organization dedicated to providing support for special education in community schools. NCSECS’ website may be accessed at: <http://www.ncsecs.org/>
6. Ohio Attorney General (“OAG”). The OAG offers Sunshine law training. The OAG’s website may be accessed at: <https://sunshinelaw.ohioattorneygeneral.gov/>.
7. Ohio Department of Education (“ODE”). The Ohio Department of Education offers professional development seminars and meetings on a regular basis. ODE has archived a number of its past presentations related to community schools. Presentations provided by ODE may be accessed at: <http://education.ohio.gov/Topics/Community-Schools/Guidance-Documents-Webinars-and-Presentations>.

Appendix 11

Findlay City Schools Policy on

Sponsoring, Community School Management and Operations

Pursuant to Ohio law, and pursuant to the contract for community school sponsorship between the Findlay City Schools and the Ohio Department of Education as a Sponsor of community schools in Ohio, is responsible for:

- monitoring and evaluating the compliance of Findlay City Schools-sponsored schools with all laws and rules applicable to the school;
- monitoring and evaluating the academic and fiscal performance and the organization and operation of the school;
- monitoring and evaluating the contractual commitments that the schools have made with the Findlay City Schools, and;
- providing technical assistance to Findlay City Schools-sponsored schools in complying with all laws and rules applicable to community schools.

Findlay City Schools will appoint a Sponsoring Oversight Committee to perform the responsibilities pursuant to the contract for community school sponsorship between the Findlay City Schools and the Ohio Department of Education as a Sponsor of community schools in Ohio. The Sponsoring Oversight Committee will meet at least eight times annually.

Findlay City Schools Sponsoring Mission Statement, Sponsoring Goals and Sponsoring Strategic Plan which is based upon the Standards for Quality Charter School Authorizers as established by the National Association of Charter School Authorizers will guide Findlay City Schools in oversight, assuring quality, evaluation and providing support to the community schools it sponsors. The Findlay City Schools Mission Statement, Sponsoring goals and Sponsoring Strategic Plan will be reviewed and updated annually during the first semester of the school year to assure continued sponsoring excellence.

The Findlay City Schools does not conduct functions associated with the day-to-day management or operations of its sponsored schools. Findlay City Schools encourages the Governing Authorities of schools that it sponsors to engage competent, experienced persons and/or organizations to handle such functions. Whether such persons or organizations are employees of the school, an Education Management Organization, or other school management organizations, any decision to employ or contract with such persons or organizations is the exclusively responsibility of the school's Governing Authority or a school leader responsible to that Governing Authority. Findlay City Schools is prepared to describe options and make recommendations upon request but it never requires, expects, or encourages a Findlay City Schools- sponsored school to employ any particular person or to engage the services of any particular school management organization or firm.

Appendix 12  
Sponsor Strategic Plan

School Closure Policy/Procedure

If the Sponsor at any time discovers the School has violated contractual obligations in terms of health and safety of the students, academic performance or financial obligations intervention will take place. If the School does not satisfactorily address the Corrective Action Plan(s) that have been put in place, then termination and closure will take place. This policy/procedure is intended to ensure the sponsored school's closure is consistent with the law, timely, and in line with quality practices.

Generally (but not limited to) the steps leading to termination and closure are:

- Probationary Corrective Action Plan
- Notice of Probation
- Notice of Suspension
- Notice of Termination
- Closure Proceedings

However, every situation is different and must be evaluated on an individual basis. Non-renewal of Sponsor Contract, Poor rating on Sponsor Evaluation, three years of Ineffective ratings on the Sponsor Evaluation or other circumstances can lead to the Termination/Closure Proceeding. All steps that lead to Termination or Closure will be fair and consistent with Ohio Revised Code, the Sponsor Contract, and the Sponsoring Strategic Plan, Policies and Processes. Circumstances and specific evidence that lead to Termination and Closure are clearly outlined in these documents. Site Visits Reports, Contract Renewal Application, monthly financial reviews, health and safety inspections, and other documentation will be used in Termination and Closure decisions. The School and Sponsor will work closely through each step of the process.

This School Closure Policy/Procedure, while comprehensive, does not address all laws regarding closure. The Sponsor recognizes its obligation to follow these laws, regardless of whether they are referenced in the Closing Procedure. The Sponsor will follow the closing guidance described in the Ohio Department of Education's "Community School Suspension and Closing Procedures, Community Schools Guidance Letter #2010-4, Update July, 2015, and any successors to said document ("Closing Guidance").

The School's Governing Authority, Management Company, and School Staff and Sponsor will work together to ensure a smooth closure process.

### Parent Notification

The Sponsor Superintendent will notify parents of students enrolled in sponsored schools that are closing of such school's impending closure. The written notice must provide assistance to the parents in finding a new school. The School will provide the Sponsor with current names and addresses of students who are enrolled in the school.

### School Records

The School staff will provide the Sponsor with all school records. The School will also provide each student enrolled with a current school transcript and any current Special Education documents. The School and Sponsor will follow the ODE Closing Guidance procedures.

### Disposition of School Funds and Assets

The Sponsor recognizes its duty in helping the School with its disposition of school funds and assets that is in accordance with Ohio Revised Code. The School and Sponsor will follow the ODE Closing Guidance procedures. The School Treasurer will work with the Sponsor Treasurer to ensure proper disposition of school funds and assets.



Sponsor Oversight/Leadership Team  
Roles & Responsibilities  
2018-2019

Individual	Position	Role in Sponsoring
Edward P. Kurt ekurt@fcs.org	Findlay City Schools Superintendent	Assist the Findlay Digital Academy with keeping current with changes in ORC and ODE procedures. Supervise the operation, <b>accountability</b> , quality and compliance of Findlay Digital Academy. Share expertise and guidance in areas of <b>law, governance, facilities</b> and <b>Dropout Prevention and Recovery education</b> .
Dr. Kathy Siebenaler-Wilson kathysw@fcsboard.fcs.org	Findlay City Schools Board Representative	Be the <b>liaison</b> between the Findlay Schools Board of Education and the Findlay Digital Academy Administration and Governing Authority. Assist with <b>governance</b> guidance. <b>Share Career Technical expertise</b> .
Troy Roth troth@fcs.org	Findlay City Schools Assistant Superintendent	Assist Findlay Digital Academy in providing best practices <b>professional development</b> , assist with <b>personnel</b> needs and supervise <b>special education</b> compliance.
Rich Steiner rsteiner@fcs.org	Director of Secondary Instruction	Assist Findlay Digital Academy in securing <b>curriculum/instructional practices</b> guidance that is aligned to the Ohio Academic Content Standards. Provide guidance <b>with assessment</b> preparation and administration and <b>professional development</b> .
Martin White mwhite@fcs.org	Director of Technology	Supervise the Findlay Digital Academy <b>technology</b> needs to make sure that they are current, operational and in line with the needs of an e-school.
Mike Barnhart mbarnhart@fcs.org	Findlay City Schools Treasurer	Monthly monitoring of the <b>financial</b> status and practices of Findlay Digital Academy.
Sandra White swhite@fcs.org	Program Coordinator	Assist Findlay City Schools with Sponsor oversight primarily in the area of School Compliance and sponsoring PD.

Sponsor Leadership Team Meeting Dates

August 6, 2018  
September 10, 2018  
October 8, 2018  
November 12, 2018  
December 10, 2018  
January 2019 TBD  
February 2019 TBD  
March 2019 TBD  
April 2019 TBD

May 2019 TBD  
June 2019 TBD  
July 2019 TBD

The Sponsor Leadership Team will monthly update the Findlay City Schools Board of Education of the status of the Findlay Digital Academy.

All meetings will be held at 5:15 PM. Rosemary Rooker, Findlay Digital Academy Superintendent will attend these meetings and provide academy updates.

The Oversight/Leadership Team has the right at its meetings to make minor changes to this document, to meet the requirements of the Sponsor Evaluatio