



2024 Annual Report

The Autism Academy of Learning
110 Arco Drive
Toledo, OH 43607

A LETTER FROM THE PRINCIPAL

I would like to take this opportunity to thank each of you: parents, children, staff, members of the Board, for creating a place where our students not only thrive, but receive the care and attention they so desperately deserve. We have become as successful as we are through the hard work and dedication of those among us who believe that every child should learn, that every child deserves care and respect, and that we will be the difference makers. The AAL has provided academic and vocational training since its inception in 2001. The school continues to grow and prosper through the work of caring, creative and compassionate staff. We look forward to many more years of providing services for children with autism spectrum diagnoses.

We believe that every child deserves a free and individualized education. To that end, we have developed and evolved into a community that educates the child utilizing a holistic approach. Our purpose, our reason for existing, is to engage children with autism within a community that fosters growth and support through care and education. Our goal has always been to raise each student's standard of living. This goal is accomplished through the following programs and activities:

Quality Programming – Our students benefit not only from enriching classroom experiences, but also from opportunities that stretch outside of the classroom. We engage our students in the following:

- *Life Skills Training*

Our Life Skills area is in our vocational room; a section of the room is set up to resemble an apartment setting. We have all of the amenities of home as we have created a place where students learn daily living skills in an effort to allow every student to become independent in activities of daily living.

- *Sensory Room*

Our building is equipped with a sensory Room, on our main floor. The sensory room provides the students with activities to address individual sensory needs. Such activities include swings, therapy balls, scooter and balance boards, weighted blankets, foam blocks, exercise equipment and other various multisensory items. The concept of sensory awareness is driven by our therapy team, which includes our Speech and Language Pathologists; however, our student's sensory needs are primarily addressed by our team of Occupational Therapists, who also maintain sensory diets for our students. We look forward to improvements to the sensory room in the upcoming school year as part of the recent grant the school received through the Greater Toledo Community Foundation!



- *Continuous Professional Development*

AAL continues to utilize an individualized professional development program for ongoing staff training needs through the use of the Autism Pro online training program in conjunction with independent study, reading, in-service training, and research training activities. Staff is required to complete a specified number of training hours per month. New staff members receive orientation classes within their first week of employment concerning educational and behavioral information pertaining to working with individuals with autism. In addition, staff is encouraged to engage in professional development training programs offered within the surrounding Toledo-area.



Curriculum Implementation – Our standards at the AAL are very high. Per the State of Ohio, we are responsible for educating our students according to the curriculum standards set forth by the Ohio Department of Education. Accordingly, we are also bound to the state mandated grade level testing, which occurs in grades 3 – 8, and grade 10. Our teachers develop and implement their lessons according to state benchmarks and standards, which are then differentiated and adjusted according to each student's specific needs and ability levels. To further assist our teachers, we have recently purchased a curriculum by the name of Unique Learning Systems. Unique Learning Systems takes the state of Ohio standards of education, differentiates them amongst specific lessons and topics, and implements them throughout grades kindergarten – 12. We also focus on the following areas:

- *Behavior Planning and Management*

One important focus for our student population is effective behavior management utilizing the least restrictive methods and behavioral modification techniques. Understanding the function of an individual's engagement in challenging behaviors is paramount for the effective treatment and management of behavioral issues. Providing crisis management procedures and routine behavior management techniques will assist each student in reaching their potential and will increase their overall quality of life.



- *Goal Setting*

Every student served at the school as an IEP developed with input by the family, individual and team. Our goal is to maintain a positive, working relationship with each parent as the family is the driving factor of the IEP Team. As we receive key information from parents and families, we also

coordinate with therapists and staff to develop a plan comprised of specific goals and objectives (the IEP), in order to allow each student access to the curriculum and moreover, the ability to lead a productive life.

- *Student Visioning*

During the process of establishing goals for each student, we also make it a priority to cast a vision for where we see each student throughout each stage in their lives. It is our distinct purpose to provide a positive and proactive environment that aids and supports our students throughout each life stage. To that end, it becomes important to discuss where we see each student in the future –



this is achieved through the IEP team. However, this process is not only restricted to the IEP process; everything we do in the school is centered upon coming along side each student to take them to a standard of living they would not otherwise have been able to achieve on their own. This process takes collaboration with parents and family, teachers and staff, as well as the community. This process takes vision, and it is the vision of the Autism Academy of Learning *to promote a higher quality of life, and the realization of the full intellectual and social development of students with autism spectrum disorder.*

It is our purpose to serve as a resource for families and students. Our staff and officers of the AAL are dedicated to provide quality care and intervention for every one of our students and we can only accomplish that goal through collaboration. We are here to better the lives of the students we serve. Please, feel free to contact us and let us know how best we can serve you.

Sincerely,

Mark Lafferty
Principal

FOUNDERS OF THE AUTISM ACADEMY OF LEARNING

Jim Beeson
Lou Curcio
Laurie Forgette

Erika Harris
Carol Holmes
Prentis Holmes

Sandy Jacobs
Sam Scamardo
Sharon Scamardo

CURRENT GOVERNING BOARD OF THE AUTISM ACADEMY OF LEARNING

James Sworden – *President*
Sommer Clayborne – *Secretary*
Eric Yaks

Eric Yacks – *Vice President*
Kimberly Johnson

Principal
Mark Lafferty

Director of Education
Amanda Richards

Mission

The Autism Academy of Learning is a year-round, public school with programming designed around the needs of students with autism spectrum disorder.

Vision

The Autism Academy of Learning is structured to provide every student with autism spectrum disorder an appropriate foundation in the areas of academics, behavior, daily living skills, vocational skills and independence. Our goal is to promote a higher quality of life, and the realization of the full intellectual and social development of students with autism spectrum disorder.

Core Values

We believe:

1. Autism spectrum disorder is a developmental disability but does not define the individual.
2. Autism spectrum disorder is a medically diagnosed condition, but the treatment of choice is an educational model.
3. That a year-round school curriculum best provides for the developmental needs of children with autism spectrum disorder.
4. That a seamless environment that eliminates the need for transition from school to school promotes continuity of program services.
5. Vocational education and life skills are paramount to the development of individuals with autism spectrum disorder.

We believe that individuals with autism spectrum disorder:

- Give reason for celebration by their individual accomplishments.
- Can best believe in themselves by others believing in them.

- Are to be challenged with appropriate expectations.
- Are to be treated in a manner that contributes to high self-esteem.
- Demonstrate that behavior has a purpose, and we must strive to interpret the communicative intent of the child.
- Benefit from learning through a spectrum of learning philosophies rather than one specific treatment methodology.
- Deserve respect and recognition of their diversity.
- Can best be served when parents, families, schools, and the community act as partners in the educational process.

What Parents/Correspondents Say About the AAL

Recently our parents and correspondents were asked to participate in a survey of the school, its staff, and programs. Parents were asked to rate the school and its various components on a scale of 1 – 5 (1 strongly disagree; 5 strongly agree). Results are listed below:

Overall Satisfaction 95.68%

Classroom

Classroom size	4.8	96%
Staff to student ratio	4.6	93%
Teacher knowledge of education and autism	4.8	96%
Classroom aides knowledge of education and autism	4.8	96%
Professionalism of staff	4.8	96%
Receiving updates on student progress	4.9	98%
Total	4.8 / 5	95%

IEP Process

Feel respected as an IEP team member	4.8	96%
Scheduling accommodations for IEP meeting	4.9	98%
Updates on IEP goal progression	4.9	98%
Receive answers to question I have about IEP	4.9	98%
Total	4.9 / 5	97%

Therapeutic Services

OT addresses my students sensory needs	4.5	90%
SLP addresses my students communication needs	4.5	90%
I can see progress on OT objectives	4.4	88%
I can see progress on speech objectives	4.5	90%
Total	4.48 / 5	90%

Administration

Professionalism of administrative staff	4.9	98%
Receive answers to questions from Director of Ed.	4.9	98%
Receive answers to questions from the Principal	4.9	98%

Total	4.9 / 5	98%
<u>Transportation</u>		
Arriving on time	4.9	98%
Communication is clear regarding changes or problems	4.9	98%
Professionalism of Driver	4.9	98%
Professionalism of Rider	4.9	98%
Total	4.9 / 5	98%
<u>Safety</u>		
The classroom setting is safe	4.9	98%
The building as a whole is a safe environment	4.9	98%
The surrounding area where the school is located is safe	4.7	94%
The vans are safe for student transportation	4.9	98%
Total	4.85 / 5	97%

Parent & Caregiver Input:

Parents and caregivers also added comments at the end of the survey, these included the following:

- Staff are very patient with my child.
- Everyone is so helpful with our student!
- Your faculty and staff make AAL a good school.
- Everyone really seems to care about the students!

Sponsor's Legal Compliance Assessment:

Sponsor's Legal Compliance Assessment Ohio Revised Code (ORD) 3314.03 (D)(2) specifies that the sponsor of the school must "monitor and evaluate the academic and fiscal performance and the organization and operation of the community school on at least an annual basis." In addition, under ORC 3314.03 (D)(3), the sponsor must "report on an annual basis the results of the evaluation conducted under division (D)(2) of this section to the department of education and to the parents of students enrolled in the community school".

The Educational Service Center of Lake Erie West (ESCLEW) served as a sponsor for The Autism Academy of Learning during the 2023-2024 school year. ESCLEW monitored the school's academic and fiscal performance, as well as organization and operation of the school, and determined that the school was overall compliant with all laws and rules.

School Demographics (as of 09/04/24)

Grade Levels Served	K – 12
Days / Hours of Instruction	206 / 1,133
Number of Students	53
Attendance Rate	89% (State requirement is 93%)
Caucasian	44%
African American	40%
Multiracial	15%
Asian	1%
Economically Disadvantaged	77.0%

Administrative Staff Principal, Director of Education, Transportation Coordinator Office Manager, Vocational Coordinator	5
Certified Staff Teachers Speech / Language Pathologist	10
Classified Staff Teacher Aides, Lead Van Driver	16
Purchased Services Staff OT, COTA, SLP	4
Teachers with a Bachelors Degree	100%
Teachers with a Masters Degree	33%
Core Academic Subject Elementary and Secondary School Classes Taught by Properly Certified / Licensed Teachers	100%
Adequate Yearly Progress	Met

Assessment Data

Alternate Assessment

Grade 4		
	ELA	479
	Math	484
Grade 5		
	ELA	346
	Math	327
	Science	394
Grade 6		
	ELA	461
	Math	468
Grade 7		
	ELA	436
	Math	370
Grade 8		
	ELA	417
	Math	414
	Science	448
Grade 10		
	ELA	449
	Math	471
	Science	404
	Social Studies	432

Standard Assessment

Grade 4		
	ELA	663
	Math	646
Grade 5		
	ELA	650
	Math	659
	Science	585

Contractual and Academic Goals

The school uses the Brigance assessment to evaluate student progress over the course of the year. Unlike most schools, The Autism Academy uses this assessment all year long and not just during certain times of the school year. The Brigance is used to develop goals for the students for their new IEPs. To assess the progress that is made off of the goals developed by using the Brigance the school examines progress reports every 12 weeks to evaluate the progress students are making on those goals. Over the past year 87% of the students of the Autism Academy of Learning showed progress on their academic goals.

Performance Accountability Framework Overview (Contract Attachment 11.6)

Areas of Strength

The Autism Academy of Learning demonstrates remarkable strengths in various areas. They demonstrate flexibility and innovation by adapting and adjusting templates to fit the diverse needs of its students, ensuring that each child receives personalized support. The school's organized files reflect a commitment to efficiency and professionalism, ensuring that important information is readily accessible. Moreover, strong communication with families fosters a sense of community and collaboration. Additionally, the school celebrates the success of its students, recognizing and applauding their achievements in meaningful ways, further enhancing the positive and supportive atmosphere at The Autism Academy of Learning.

In the area of special education, The Autism Academy of Learning demonstrates significant strengths in both the Evaluation Team Report (ETR) and Individualized Education Program (IEP) processes. The ETR process excels with active parent participation and the involvement of a qualified group of professionals, ensuring comprehensive evaluations and informed decisions. In the IEP, the goals are well-defined, and the amount and frequency of Specially Designed Instruction (SDI) are clear, promoting effective support for students. Modifications and support for school personnel are well-structured, enhancing the implementation of strategies. The justification for alternate assessments is thorough, and the meticulous documentation practices contribute to accurate tracking of student progress. Furthermore, considerations for the Least Restrictive Environment (LRE) ensure that students receive education in the most inclusive settings possible.

Areas for Improvement

At Autism Academy of Learning, there is a need to improve the retention of paraprofessionals to ensure consistent support for students and teachers. The school is also actively seeking to hire new intervention specialists to address the diverse needs of its student population. Efforts to expand and strengthen the Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (PBIS) program are ongoing, with the goal of fostering a positive and inclusive school culture. Additionally, the administration is exploring options for implementing a locally administered norm-referenced assessment to better track student progress and inform instruction. To enhance the overall educational experience, the school is continuously searching for a comprehensive core curriculum that aligns with current educational standards. By focusing on these areas, The Autism Academy of Learning aims to create a more supportive and effective learning environment for all students.

In the area of special education, The Autism Academy of Learning has identified several areas for growth in its Evaluation Team Report (ETR) and Individualized Education Program (IEP) processes. In the ETR, improvements are needed to align interventions with the checklist guide and ensure all areas from the planning form are addressed comprehensively. Enhancing the summary and clear description of educational needs, as well as the implications for instruction, to include all areas from the planning form is essential. Additionally, incorporating a statement about how the disability affects progress in the general education curriculum will provide greater clarity. In the IEP, it's important to avoid using the same transition plan goals each year and ensure that Present Levels of Performance (PLOPs) logically connect from the PLOP to the same-age peer comparison and then to the goal. Goals should be more specific and measurable. For Specially

Designed Instruction (SDI), specifying the location as only one area, or using a term like 'school environment' for related services, will enhance clarity and effectiveness. Addressing these areas will further strengthen the support services provided by the Academy.

Ohio School Report Card

Districts and schools receive an overall rating of 1 to 5 stars in half-star increments. The overall rating is comprised of five rated components. The College, Career, Workforce and Military Readiness Component is report only and does not contribute to the overall rating on the 2023 Ohio School Report Cards.

AAL received a rating of 1. AAL's student population consists solely of students with disabilities serviced through Individualized Education Plans. Current state report card indicators are not configured to adequately rate and review student populations such as AAL.

Achievement

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

Performance Index = 0.0%

Progress

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

No Score Given

Gap Closing

The Gap Closing Component is a measure of the reduction in educational gaps for student subgroups.

Annual Performance Goals – 0.0%

Graduation

The Graduation Component is a measure of the four-year adjusted cohort graduation rate and the five-year adjusted cohort graduation rate.

Graduation Rates – This school is not evaluated for graduation rate because there are not enough students in the graduating class.

Early Literacy

The Early Literacy Component is a measure of reading improvement and proficiency for students in kindergarten through third grade.

Improving K-3 Literacy – NC

Third Grade Reading Proficiency – NC

Promotion to Fourth Grade – NC

College, Career, Workforce and Military Readiness

This component looks at how well-prepared Ohio's students are for future opportunities, whether training in a technical field or preparing for work or college.

Students who are Ready – NC

Annual Report Summary-Unaudited For the Year Ending June 20, 2024

Revenues

State Source	2,014,509
Federal Source	221,144
Local Source	5,901

<u>Total Revenues</u>	2,241,554
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Expenses

Salaries & Wages	1,180,384
Employee Benefits	205,304
Purchased Services	610,870
Supplies & Materials	50,198
Capital Outlay	76,400
Other Expenses	76,400

<u>Total Expenses</u>	2,123,156
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During the fall of 2024 an audit of the school's financial records for the year ended June 30, 2024 will be completed. The audit report should be available during the winter at the above address and on the Auditor of State's website: www.auditor.state.oh.us.

Auditor Statement: In our opinion, the accompanying financial statements referred to above present fairly, in all material respects, the respective financial position of the Autism Academy of Learning, Lucas County, Ohio as of June 30, 2023, and the changes in financial position and its cash flows for the year then ended in accordance with the accounting principles generally accepted in the United States of America.

Auditor of State, Keith Faber, April 1, 2024

Financial Highlights

Key Financial Highlights for the Academy for the 2022-2023 school year are as follows:

- Total Assets decreased \$116,880.
- Total Liabilities increased \$430,175.
- Total Net Position decreased \$140,546.
- Total Operating and Non-Operating revenues were \$1,963,759. Total Operating and Non-operating expenses were \$2,104,305.

Financial Statements

STATEMENT OF NET POSITION JUNE 30, 2023

Assets:

Current assets:

Cash and cash equivalents	\$ 82,044
Intergovernmental Receivable	122,716
Other Assets	<u>53,166</u>
Total Current Assets	257,926

Non-current assets:

Net OPEB Asset	92,514
Capital Assets, net of Accumulated Depreciation	<u>581,002</u>
Total non-Current Assets	673,516

Total Assets	931,442
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Deferred Outflows of Resources:

Pension (STRS & SERS)	339,638
OPEB (STRS & SERS)	<u>104,584</u>
Total Deferred Outflows of Resources	444,222

Liabilities:

Current Liabilities:

Accounts payable	100,783
Withholding Payable	10,161
Advances Payable	185,739
Current Portion of Long Term Debt	<u>83,346</u>
Total Current Liabilities	380,029

Noncurrent Liabilities:

Nonrecurrent Portion of Long-Term Debt	526,147
Net OPEB Liability	1,508,001
Net Pension Liability	<u>192,809</u>
Total Noncurrent Liabilities	2,226,957

Total Liabilities	2,606,986
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Deferred Inflows of Resources:

Pension (STRS & SERS)	300,147
OPEB (STRS & SERS)	<u>441,325</u>
Total Deferred Inflows of Resources	741,472

Net position:

Invested in Capital Assets	(28,491)
Unrestricted Net Position (Unrestricted)	<u>(1,944,303)</u>
Total Net Position (Deficit)	\$ (1,972,794)

STATEMENT OF REVENUES, EXPENSES AND CHANGES IN NET POSITION
FOR THE FISCAL YEAR ENDED JUNE 30, 2023

Operating revenues

State Aid	\$ 1,688,852
Miscellaneous	<u>11,596</u>
Total Operating Revenues	<u>1,700,448</u>

Operating expenses

Salaries	1,039,558
Fringe Benefits	(18,448)
Purchased Services	797,815
Depreciation	116,397
Supplies	92,224
Other Operating Expenses	<u>14,356</u>

Total Operating Expenses	<u>2,041,902</u>
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Operating Loss	(341,454)
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Non-Operating Revenues and (Expenses)

Federal and State Restricted Grants	219,444
Lease Interest Expense	(48,966)
Interest Expense	(13,437)
Interest Income	1,008
Federal and State Restricted Grants	<u>262,303</u>
Net Non-operating Revenues and (Expenses)	200,908

Change in Net Position	(140,546)
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Net (Deficit) Position Beginning of Year	<u>(1,832,248)</u>
Net (Deficit) Position End of Year	\$ (1,972,794)

STATEMENT OF CASH FLOWS
FOR THE FISCAL YEAR ENDED JUNE 30, 2023

Cash Flows from Operating Activities

State Aid Receipts	\$ 1,688,852
Miscellaneous	11,596
Cash Payments to Employees for Services	(1,039,558)
Cash Payments for Employee Benefits	(185,864)
Cash Payments to Suppliers for Goods and Services	<u>(820,350)</u>

Net Cash Used For Operating Activities (345,324)

Cash Flows from Noncapital Financing Activities

Federal and State Grant Receipts	235,490
Advances from Charter Asset Management	413,437
Repayments to Charter Asset Management	(227,697)
Cost of Funding to Charter Asset Management	(13,437)
Interest Income	<u>1,008</u>

Net Cash Provided By Noncapital Financing Activities 331,005

Cash Flows from Capital and Related Financing Activities

Van Interest Payments	(745)
Van Principal Payments	(2,530)
Lease Interest Payments	(48,966)
Lease Principal Payments	<u>(71,560)</u>
Net Cash Used for Capital and related Financing Activities	(123,801)

Net Increase in Cash and Cash Equivalents (138,120)

Cash and Cash Equivalents – Beginning of Year	<u>220,164</u>
Cash and Cash Equivalents – End of Year	\$ 82,044