



THE  
AUTISM  
ACADEMY  
OF  
LEARNING

# 2021 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 located in our vocational room; a section of the room is set up as an apartment. 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.

- *Pre-Vocational & Vocational Training*

Students, 14 and over, have the opportunity to travel off site to the Cornerstone Church and Toledo Sports Center for vocational training. At each location, students learn valuable skills while performing vocational tasks in real life situations. These activities set our students up for the future, and will allow them to one day gain meaningful employment as adults. Our students also engage in pre-vocational training at the school, performing job duties with the assistance of classroom and vocational staff.



- [Adaptive Aquatics](#)

All students have the opportunity to benefit from the aquatics training at the Collingwood Center. There, our students participate in an adaptive aquatics program. Each classroom participates in programming at least once per month (sometimes twice when scheduling permits), and are fully engaged by instructors at the center, as well as classroom staff from the school.



- [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.

- [Snoezelen Rooms](#)

Located in the exercise room, our two "Snoezelen Rooms" provide individualized multi-sensory experiences for our students. They consist of adaptive lighting, textures, sounds and scents which allow the student to relax and focus. Research has shown that individuals with autism can benefit greatly from a sensory rich environment. The Snoezelen Rooms provide our students with a non-directive sensory experience that encourages the student to explore their sensory environment!

- [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,

Jim Jones  
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

Scott Bylow – *Vice President*  
Robert Schwartz

**Principal**  
Jim Jones

**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 94.00%**

**Classroom**

Classroom size	4.7	94%
Staff to student ratio	4.7	94%
Teacher knowledge of education and autism	4.7	94%
Classroom aides knowledge of education and autism	4.8	95%
Professionalism of staff	4.8	95%
Receiving updates on student progress	4.8	96%
<b>Total</b>	<b>4.75 / 5</b>	<b>95%</b>

**IEP Process**

Feel respected as an IEP team member	4.9	98%
Scheduling accommodations for IEP meeting	4.9	98%
Updates on IEP goal progression	4.8	95%
Receive answers to question I have about IEP	4.9	98%
<b>Total</b>	<b>4.87 / 5</b>	<b>98%</b>

**Therapeutic Services**

OT addresses my students sensory needs	4.7	94%
SLP addresses my students communication needs	4.7	94%
I can see progress on OT objectives	4.4	88%
I can see progress on speech objectives	4.7	94%
<b>Total</b>	<b>4.63 / 5</b>	<b>93%</b>

**Administration**

Professionalism of administrative staff	4.8	96%
Receive answers to questions from Director of Ed.	4.7	95%
Receive answers to questions from the Principal	4.7	97%
<b>Total</b>	<b>4.75 / 5</b>	<b>95%</b>

**Transportation**

Arriving on time	4.7	94%
Communication is clear regarding changes or problems	4.7	94%
Professionalism of Driver	4.7	94%
Professionalism of Rider	4.7	94%
<b>Total</b>	<b>4.7 / 5</b>	<b>94%</b>

**Safety**

The classroom setting is safe	4.8	95%
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	4.7	95%
<b>Total</b>	<b>4.7 / 5</b>	<b>94%</b>

**Parent & Caregiver Input:**

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

- Truly concerned about the needs of the student.
- The small scale of the school, good communication, professionalism and staff.
- The staff really care about the students!
- Compassion and understanding.
- One to one assistance with 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 sponsor for The Autism Academy of Learning during the 2020-2021 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.

### School Demographics (as of 08/01/21)

Grade Levels Served	K – 12
Days / Hours of Instruction	208 / 1,144
Number of Students	48
Attendance Rate	82.00% (State requirement is 93%)
Caucasian	41%
African American	41%
Multiracial	15%
Hispanic	3%
Economically Disadvantaged	48.0%
Administrative Staff	4
<i>Principal, Director of Education</i>	
<i>Office Manager, Vocational Coordinator</i>	
Certified Staff	10
<i>Teachers</i>	
<i>Speech / Language Pathologist</i>	
Classified Staff	25
<i>Teacher Aides, Lead Van Driver</i>	
Purchased Services Staff	4
<i>OT, COTA, SLP</i>	
Teachers with a Bachelors Degree	100%
Teachers with a Masters Degree	44%
Core Academic Subject Elementary and Secondary School Classes Taught by Properly Certified / Licensed Teachers	100%
Adequate Yearly Progress	Met

## Assessment Data

Alternate Assessment	School Average
Grade 3	
ELA	486
Math	445
Grade 4	
ELA	526
Math	514
Grade 5	
ELA	425
Math	275
Science	438
Grade 6	
ELA	477
Math	469
Grade 7	
ELA	477
Math	465
Grade 8	
ELA	468
Math	452
Grade 10	
ELA	435
Math	384
Social Studies	354
Science	286
Standard Assessment	School Average
Grade 3	
ELA	613
Math	624
Grade 8	
ELA	652
Math	663

## Contractual and Academic Goals

Due to Covid-19, the school was tracked in 4 non-academic areas in Contract Attachment 11.6 by our sponsor (The Educational Service Center of Lake Erie West). The Autism Academy received a met goal rating in 3 out of the 4 areas. 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. In order 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 80% of the students of the Autism Academy of Learning showed progress on their academic goals.

**Auditor Statement:** In our opinion, the financial statements referred to above present fairly, in all material respects, the financial position of the Autism Academy of Learning, Lucas County, Ohio, as of June 30, 2020, and the changes in its 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 14, 2021*

## Financial Highlights

Key financial highlights for 2020 are as follows:

- In total, net assets were( \$1,719,107) at June 30 2020.
- The Academy had operating revenues of \$1,577,925 and operating expenses of \$1,931,259 for fiscal year 2020. The total change in net position for the fiscal year was an decrease of \$(144,487).

## Financial Statements

### STATEMENT OF NET POSITION JUNE 30, 2020

#### Assets:

##### Current assets

Cash and cash equivalents	\$ 421,073
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##### Receivables:

Intergovernmental	79,851
Other Assets	<u>7,305</u>

<i>Total current assets</i>	508,229
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##### Non-current assets

OPEB Assets	55,885
Capital assets, net of accumulated depreciation	<u>80,874</u>

<b>Total assets</b>	<b><u>136,759</u></b>
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#### Liabilities:

##### Current liabilities

Accounts payable	-
Accrued Expenses	1,378
Withholding payable	28,042

<i>Total current liabilities</i>	29,420
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Non-current liabilities:	2,235,923
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<b>Total liabilities</b>	<b><u>2,265,343</u></b>
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#### Net position:

Net investment in capital assets	80,874
Unrestricted	<u>(1,799,981)</u>

**Total net position**

**(1,719,107)**

STATEMENT OF REVENUES, EXPENSES AND CHANGES IN NET POSITION  
FOR THE FISCAL YEAR ENDED JUNE 30, 2020

**Operating revenues**

State Aid	\$	1,561,040
Miscellaneous		16,885
<i>Total operating revenues</i>		<b><u>1,577,925</u></b>

**Operating expenses**

Salaries and wages		1,088,939
Fringe benefits		238,095
Purchased services		488,734
Materials and supplies		52,009
Other		34,533
Depreciation		<u>28,949</u>
<i>Total operating expenses</i>		<b><u>1,931,259</u></b>

**Non-operating revenues (expenses)**

Federal and state operating grants		208,847
Contributions and Donations		-
<i>Total non-operating revenues (expenses)</i>		<b><u>208,847</u></b>
<i>Change in net position</i>		(144,487)
<i>Net assets at beginning of year</i>		<b><u>(1,574,620)</u></b>
<i>Net assets at end of year</i>		<b><u>(1,719,107)</u></b>

STATEMENT OF CASH FLOWS  
FOR THE FISCAL YEAR ENDED JUNE 30, 2020

**Cash flows from operating activities:**

Cash received from state foundation	\$	1,561,040
Cash received from other operations		16,885
Cash payments for salaries and wages		(1,088,939)
Cash payments for fringe benefits		(198,368)
Cash payments to suppliers for goods and services		(615,787)

<i>Net cash used in operating activities</i>	<u><b>(325,169)</b></u>
<b>Cash flows from noncapital financing activities:</b>	
Federal and state operating grants	185,265
<i>Net cash provided by noncapital financing activities</i>	<u><b>63,161</b></u>
<b>Cash flows from investment activities:</b>	
Purchase of Assets	(63,161)
<b>Reconciliation of operating loss to net cash used in operating activities:</b>	
Operating loss	(353,334)
Adjustments:	
Depreciation	28,949
Changes in Assets, Liabilities, and Deferred Inflows and Outflows:	
Decrease in Receivables	9,720
Increase in Other Assets	(1,805)
Decrease in Deferred Outflows	121,717
Increase in Deferred Inflows	45,139
Increase in Net Pension Liability	84,300
Increase in Withholding Payable	15,827
Decrease in Accrued Expenses	(46,014)
Decrease in Accounts Payable	(18,239)
<i>Net cash used in operating activities</i>	<u><b>\$ (325,169)</b></u>