# The Fairborn Digital Academy

# Annual Report

For

2012-2013

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**Our Mission Statement**

The Fairborn Digital Academy values individual differences and provides an alternative education to the traditional brick and mortar school for personal and academic excellence of at risk students.

# Dear Parents/Guardians and Students,

The Fairborn Digital Academy (FDA) is sponsored by the Fairborn City Schools and officially opened its doors on November 14th, 2002. Our primary purpose is to offer the highest quality online educational program available. Each year we evaluate our student progress and make revisions in our program to provide each student with the best opportunity to be successful.

This year we are offering distinct programs for high school students: FAST (Fairborn Accelerated Student Team), FIRST (Fairborn Intensive Recovery Student Team), PSEO-Advanced Study Program and our Dual Credit (Credit Flex) Program. We will be using a variety of online courseware: A+, Gradpoint, Study Island, and Sinclair Community College to individualize student courses as much as possible. We will pay for one ACT college entrance exam.

We had 213 students enrolled during this past year and had an average FTE of 0.65 compared to 204 with an average FTE of 0.64 in the previous school year. We had 44 graduates last year. We graduate students as soon as they complete FDA and State requirements. As a high school serving grades 9-12 our students take the Ohio Graduation Tests. We had 100% of our students take the OGTs. We continue to expect that 100% of our students will be tested in the 2013-2014 school year. FDA accountability coaches and directors provided students with tutoring the students for the Ohio Graduation Tests. They also made personal contact with each student to provide reminders of the dates and our Black Lane site was used for the testing. We will use this method again for the 2013-2014 school year. The FDA student attendance rate improved last year meeting the State goal of at least 90%. We will strive to have the State goal of at least 90% attendance for the 2013-2014 school year.

In 2010-2011 we were ranked as Effective, achieving 9 of 12 indicators with a PI of 95.6%. As a dropout recovery school, we are not going to be part of the LRC for this year. The office of community schools has not yet released results for the new standards. As a school that serves for many as a dropout prevention program we have a difficult time meeting the State’s graduation requirement of 90%. FDA will continue to strive to see our students graduate. For the 2010-2011 school year we added additional assessments, DORA for reading and DOMA for math to improve our ability to provide intervention in these important areas. We are going to use the Performance Series State approved assessments from GlobalScholars for reading, language arts, science and math for assessment this year. This year we are using the (FIRST) program to target high school dropouts in Fairborn and in the surrounding area. These credit deficient high school students will now have an additional opportunity to receive the required number of credits they need to graduate. We use a variety of online courseware, but feature A+ for our FAST student program. FIRST students come to Black Lane twice weekly for assistance in completing their course work successfully. We work with Sinclair Community College to provide our dual credit flex program. This allows a student who is a high achiever to receive up to as two years of college credits. We use Nike+ and online courseware to provide PE for our students. The Nike program is used to improve the health of our students. We have two treadmills to allow for PE students to walk inside in inclement weather. Additional curriculum again has been added and all of our contracted certified coaches are rated by the State as Highly Qualified. Each accountability coach (teacher) has no more than 20 students and their objective is to see that each student will complete at least five credits this year. Our student accountability coaches work with their students to establish this goal as well as their graduation and after graduation plan. They contact parents/guardians weekly to review student progress towards meeting these goals.

Black Lane Elementary is used as our office, orientation center, intervention location, and service center. For the eighth year we had an intervention lab at the Black Lane Elementary building open to all of our students for tutoring help. This past school year we hired additional interventionists to work with our students and we continued to expand our intervention hours. Our counselors, accountability coaches and our principal identified students that need assistance this past year. They will do this again this year.

We at FDA believe that parents play a critical role in the education of their children. We appreciate the support they have already given by the decision to enroll their children in FDA and the follow up educational support they have provided their children and our staff. We will send out by mail quarterly progress reports. This year we are open from 8:30-4:30 Monday through Friday. In addition this year as we did last year the accountability coaches have the ability to schedule additional time each with their students in our labs for individualized or small group assistance.

We have Verizon wireless to allow our students wireless access anywhere to do their work. This year we continue with 4Glte netbooks for our students to improve their accessibility to the Internet.

## NOW AND THE FUTURE

We provide a year round school calendar. This approach allows our students the greatest learning flexibility, as student progress is one of our highest priorities. One challenge is to provide counseling and intervention on a year round basis compared to the traditional nine month calendar. FDA has contracted a full time facilitator for our FAST and FIRST programs and one of their roles was that of intervention coordinator. This position is again in place for this year. This year we will have an accountability coach for every 20 students in our programs. Last year we had seven part time accountability coaches working with our FIRST students and eight accountability coaches assigned to our FAST students to provide tutoring and guidance. We have nine accountability coaches for our FIRST program and 8 accountability coaches for our FAST program to start this school year. We have also, given our counselor the responsibility for being our family service coordinator. She will conduct small group meetings and individual parent/student meetings as well as surveying all parents and students.

Last year we started a small group class for Algebra II. Part of the new Ohio graduation requirements is that every student will complete four years of math, including Algebra II. In this class, students completed a whole year of Algebra II during a semester by coming in one day a week to work with our accountability coaches. We will continue with this course for this year.

This year we will be piloting a new program based on an individual learning plan for every student. Using data from the GlobalScholar assessments, accountability coaches and the guidance counselor will meet with students and their parent/guardian twice a year to develop goals to help the students achieve academic growth. This aligns with the new state evaluation of drop-out/credit recovery schools in achieving academic growth for every student.

Should you have questions regarding this report, please contact our Principal Erik Tritsch or Executive Director Robert Grimshaw at 937-879-0511.

# *Section One – Academic Program*

The new common core standards serve as the basis for FDA’s curriculum. FDA is part of the State’s Race to the Top program and is actively involved in implementing the changes required by that program. The rational for this process is to insure that our students are prepared for the state and national testing as well as being prepared for postgraduate work. We continue seeking to improve our online courses by making them more differentiated each year. Most of our course work is contracted through A+. In addition after through evaluation using the same standards we selected the Gradpoint and Sinclair Community College courses.

Due to the fact that our students work online, the fit between the number of standards and the instructional hours is fairly straightforward. The standards are aligned to the students’ online lessons. As they progressed through the curriculum, they met both the hourly requirements through regular attendance, participation in chats and discussions, completion of assignments, and ongoing assessment by staff.

One of the goals is to allow our students to move forward at their own pace. The FDA learning environment allows students and coaches to engage in both asynchronous and synchronous interactions. Following instruction and completion of work, the student progresses onto the next unit. We have mandatory intervention as additional support for students who are in jeopardy of not being successful in FDA and thus, may drop out of school all together. Our drop out rate decreased as a result of this program. This year we are expanding our intervention hours and number of tutors. Also, as stated we are adding accountability coaches for individualized student assistance. Our accountability coaches and tutors are at our Black Lane office and will be available for face-to-face meetings with our other FDA students.

Starting in 2004 -2005 we introduced a year round school calendar. This approach allows our students the greatest learning flexibility. The amount of instructional time for our students is 180 days. The student and parent chose which 180 days that the student would attend. Most of our FDA students decided on the traditional calendar mid August to late May for the 2012-2013 school year. The same trend has continued for this year.

### Our Core Principles and Goals for 2012-2013

##### Core Principles

1. No student will be placed in a high stakes state mandated testing situation until the student has the skills and understandings to be successful.
2. In FDA, time is the variable, and the outcome is constant.
3. Mastery learning is critical to student success and achievement.

##### Goals

* Class level goal setting will be replaced by individual goal setting strategies. What does this statement mean? Once assessment and placement of the student is complete, students will work with their parents and accountability coach to determine learning goals each year.
* Students will progress only when they have reached at least mastery level of 70%. Included in this process will be the opportunity to redo assignments the in order to reach the mastery level.
* By following this continuous progress model that is tied to state standards and mastery of those standards, the resultant should be passage of high stakes state mandated tests and improved achievement.

#### Explanation of Qualification Levels

The following levels of qualification will be used for coursework that is Satisfactory and for assessments for the FDA’s FIRST program.

* A - The student has a complete and detailed understanding of the information important to the topic, AND the student can perform the skills and processes important to the topic fluently. (**Demonstrated a deep understanding of lesson concepts**)
* B - The student has an understanding of the information important to the topic but not in great detail, AND the student can perform the skills or processes important to the topic. (**Demonstrated an adequate understanding of lesson concepts**)
* C - The student has some misconceptions or is missing some information important to the topic but still has a basic understanding of the topic, AND can perform a rough approximation of the skills and processes. (**Demonstrated a basic understanding of lesson concepts**)

We use a Pass/Fail system with our FAST students. This allows for credit recovery to occur for our students that are more then two grade levels behind their cohort.

Formative feedback is given through coursework assignments. Summative feedback is given in regards to the approved assessments.

The factor that will make this process so effective is that students and parents have an accountability coach contacting them weekly.

These goals will remain the same for the 2013-2014 school year.

# *Section Two – Financial Reporting*

Below is visual and narrative information regarding FDA’s finances

FY2013 Receipts

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| EMIS |  |  | 1800 |
| ADM |  |  | 894474 |
| IDEA |  |  | 40171 |
| Title I |  |  | 68858 |
| Other Title |  |  | 10351 |
| Interest/Miscellaneous | | | 6599 |
| Casino |  |  | 2849 |
|  |  |  |  |
| Total |  |  | 1025102 |

FY2013 Expenditures



## Total Receipts and Expenditures for FY13

**Beginning balance** $561,095

## Receipts: $ Expenditures: $ Balance: $

$1,025,102 $1,058,197 $528,000

**Forecasting**

We expect, based upon results and what is occurring throughout the state that our enrollment may continue to grow, but funding for eschools may be reduced. Our five-year forecast is to Fiscal Year 2017 and depicts these trends. It is based on a slight increase in enrollment and a slight drop in funding. It is an appendix to this document.

# *Section Three – Faithfulness to the School’s Contract*

## Attendance

Student attendance was a critical emphasis, and we continued to refine what attendance meant in a distance-learning environment. Since students had the opportunity to “attend” school 7 days a week, 24 hours a day, documentation of their activities and contacts with their accountability coach was critical. We believe this was and is one of our strengths.

Students were considered “attending” if they did the following each week: had contact with their accountability coaches in a meaningful way, completed assignments, participated in online classroom related discussions, or accessed their classroom environment. We improved to a 90%+ attendance rate. We want it to be this again to be a priority.

This is the information we received concerning the contacted staffing we used through TRECA and Fairborn City Schools. Rarely was a sick day necessary because of the flexibility of scheduling office hours. In reality many of our accountability coaches worked nights and weekends. Thus, the traditional absence model did not adequately measure staff attendance rates for our school. Using the traditional model, our rate was again extremely high at 98+%.

## Assessment Results

## One of the biggest challenges is to determine how to keep our students performing in an online environment. To meet this challenge, we continually work on ways to improve contact with our students. One of the most difficult issues we face is the level of student transience. This factor impacts our state testing results.

The contracting of counseling and intervention services continues to improve our transience issue and the testing results. We had 100% of our students take the OGT. We want to be sure that this continues and that we will continue to have 100%. Our contracted accountability coaches worked with these students. To ensure that our students have the ability to perform well in these achievement tests we started a mandatory intervention program for the 2005-06 school year. We continue to upgrade and improve this program.

## Parent and Community Involvement

FDA strongly encouraged parents and guardians to be actively involved in their child’s education. Each student was required to attend an orientation in the accompaniment of at least one parent/guardian to begin the school year. During this introduction to our online school, both students and adults were guided through a hands-on demonstration of how our school works, how students participate in their classes, and how to communicate with their accountability coaches. This year we are changing our orientation to better start our students in the online environment. We expect this to have an impact on the success of students enrolled with us. The student’s assigned accountability coach contacts the parent/guardian each week to communicate the weekly progress of their child. This year we will continue with our accountability coaches the responsibility of home visits to meet with parents and students.

Quarterly reports were mailed to homes. This year we will again be sending by mail quarterly progress reports. We will also being having meetings each semester with the parent/guardian, student, accountability coach, and guidance counselor as part of the Individual Learning Plan.

Our Black Lane office will be open from 8:30 to 4:30 Monday through Friday. We will be open till 7:00 PM on Mondays and Wednesdays this year as well.

We provided for two parent accountability coach open house days for the 2012-2013 school year. We added a parent organization supervisor and surveyed all parents. We will do that again this year.

## Safe and Orderly Environment

Being mostly an online school required us to address safety issues in a different way. We have to deal with cyber issues such as inappropriate materials and emails. Thus, safety is a critical part of the FDA student environment. The provided student computers are specifically designed to work in a “closed” environment, yet allowed access to the many resources presented through the Internet. All student communication takes place within the school. Students were not permitted to receive email from non-school entities. Web sites were monitored by software that was installed on each machine. Social opportunities were developed through monitored online chats and discussion boards such as Schoology. Providing a safe online environment was and continues to be a priority. As we also had FIRST students and other brick and mortar school activities at our location and we have addressed safety issues at Black Lane. We have security, custodial, and evacuation procedures in place.

As in any school, there are students who abuse the privileges they are afforded. This took a variety of avenues including such actions as inappropriate language when communicating with other students and teachers. All students and parent/guardians signed an *Acceptable Use Policy* when they participated in their FDA orientations. This policy stated that they agreed to follow guidelines of appropriate use of the hardware and software. FDA also has adopted a bullying policy. Should students violate these policies, procedures are in place to restrict their access to specific aspects of the school. Their actions can result in suspension from school by turning off access. The FDA’s Executive Director and Principal work closely with students and parents when such situations arise. All disciplinary action was documented for future reference if needed. Last year we had no bullying incident.

While there are many reasons that students and parents choose to participate in an online school, we know from parent feedback that one is the desire for a safer environment than experienced in the previous school. We worked hard to meet those expectations for a safe school.

## Collegiality and Professionalism

We believe this face-to-face interaction is critical to our success. Our accountability coaches schedule parent/student meetings and make numerous contacts with each of their assigned students each week. Our contracted staff had online access to many support structures including conferences, discussion boards, and administrative email support.

TDA and Fairborn City Schools supported our contracted staff by providing participation in the Local Professional Development Committee, and support of certification and license renewal and upgrading. Our staff was involved in discussions regarding curriculum expectations, aligning the curriculum to the new common core standards as required by the Ohio Department of Education, and enhancing student support structures. We are part of Ohio’s Race to the Top and have had members of our contracted staff attend all activities and meetings related to this program.

## FDA contracts for all staff through TRECA DA or Fairborn City Schools and these ensure that all are highly skilled.

## Planning

In closing, our Board of Directors and Officers are committed to the following for 2013-2014:

We will continue to improve the courseware that our students use to meet the common core standards.

We will continue to examine hardware and software for dependability. (The hardware/software issues greatly impact curriculum delivery and student success.) We have upgraded to 4g net books for this year. We have added cell phone service for accountability coaches to contact their students.

Because of the diversity of our population and our commitment to provide the best online education, we will continue to modify program, delivery, and instruction in order to increase student achievement and to prepare them for the world of work and a democratic society.

FDA Board of Directors have decided that:

We will hire additional intervention tutors and accountability coaches through Fairborn City Schools and Montgomery County ESC for our online students that will meet face to face with our students during mandatory intervention. Again for the 2013-2014 school year any student that needs assistance can come to our lab at Black Lane for help any time during our Monday- Friday from 8:30 to 4:30. On Monday and Wednesdays we will be open till 7:00 PM. We believe that our students need extra help beyond online instruction to be successful.

We continue to provide more local support service for the technology by contracting services through Verizon, MDECA and the Fairborn City Schools. These are necessary to ensure that our online students continue to have uninterrupted access to their school.

We will hire additional personnel as our numbers increase.

For our students to move more quickly and effectively through their coursework we have replaced desktop computers with wireless laptops, 4G netbooks or iMACs.

The Local Report Card for FDA is available at our 700 Black Lane office in Fairborn and on the website [www.ode.state.oh.us](http://www.ode.state.oh.us)

The Audit Report for Fiscal Year 2012 had no unresolved issues and a copy of the report is available at the Office of Federal and State Grants Management in the Center of School Finance at ODE and at our 700 Black Lane office.