



Findlay Digital Academy

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Dear Chairman Blessing,

I am contacting you today with concerns regarding HB 87. My name is Rosemary Rooker and I am the Superintendent of Findlay Digital Academy which is a highly successful Dropout Prevention and Credit Recovery School.

Our student population comes to us for a variety of reasons: students may be behind in credits, they may be expectant/new mothers, students who have not been successful in a traditional approach will turn to us, or when the traditional school turns them away for age or other reasons. It is very understandable that the traditional school would not want a 20-year old on probation in the same classroom as a 14-year old freshman. Due to a variety of at-risk factors (health and mental issues, having babies, being involved in the court system, et cetera) many of our students are struggling to, and many times do not, complete the required 920 hours of seat-time during the school year, which has become the basis for our funding. This is happening even though their Instructional Coach contacts them weekly, our Family Engagement Coordinator makes home visits as needed, and our staff develops individualized Learning Plans. The academy expends a great deal of time, energy and resources to turn things around and help our students be successful and earn their high school diploma.

We understand the language in HB 2, and realize why the state claws back funds, even though we don't agree with that provision in the law. However, it is the double standard put forward in HB 87 that we find disturbing and quite unfair. Findlay Digital Academy will have funds clawed back even though we have spent time and resources on our students, and then the traditional district will be given those funds for students it has never enrolled and/or provided any type of education or services. Additionally, the academy then is required to claw back from the sponsor a percentage of the sponsorship fee. The effect of this system will continue to pit the traditional school districts against community schools in an already contentious climate. It all is a very convoluted and involved system that sets a double standard.

I would like to suggest putting HB 87 on hold until there has been time to really study the FTE funding system and work out a claw back system that is simple, fair and does not pit community schools against traditional schools.

If you have any additional questions or concerns, I would be happy to meet with you to discuss further. Thank you for your consideration on this crucial issue.

Sincerely,

Rosemary Rooker