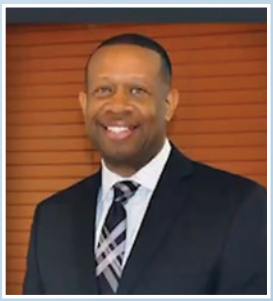
# 2024-2025 Quality Profile

## A Note From the Superintendent



I'm honored and excited to join Finneytown Schools as your superintendent. I'm a naturally curious leader, and over the coming months, you'll see me in classrooms, at events, and around the community asking a lot of questions. My goal is to listen and learn so we can appreciate our strengths: together while developing partnerships with the community to keep Finneytown moving in a positive direction.

Each year brings new opportunities to grow, and this past year was no exception. As you'll see throughout this Quality Profile, our students and staff continue to make us proud — in the classroom, on the field, on the stage, and in the community.

We launched a new strategic plan that sets a clear direction for the future, and we made real progress in the first year: strengthening partnerships, supporting staff, and improving our facilities with student safety at the center. From academic achievement and arts recognition to wellness efforts and expanded career learning, this report captures what makes Finneytown a place where learning and belonging go hand in hand.

Every story in these pages is a reflection of the care, hard work and creativity of our people. That includes our teachers and staff, our families, our community partners, and, most of all, our students.

Thank you for your continued support of Finneytown Local Schools. We're proud of what we've built together, and even more excited for what's ahead.

Sincerely,

**Anthony G. Smith**
Superintendent

## Mission

Foster a community of learning and belonging.

## Vision

Be a learning community centered on strengths and possibilities to empower our students and staff to think critically, grow intellectually, and live with integrity.

## Core Values

- We value diversity, equity, inclusion, and belonging.
- We are committed to learning, unlearning, rethinking, and engaging in conversations so each individual has the opportunity to achieve and succeed.
- We believe in fostering a safe, accepting, and restorative community.
- We believe in fostering a collaborative learning community that focuses on identifying, enhancing, and empowering individuals' gifts through Project-Based Learning.
- We are committed to fiscal responsibility and good stewardship to maintain the trust and confidence of our stakeholders.

## Finneytown's Focus on Continuous Improvement

Finneytown Local Schools launched a new strategic plan in 2024. This plan will serve as the district's guide through 2027 and has three main focuses:

1. Student, Staff, and Community Learning
2. Community and Connection
3. Facilities and Fiscal Stewardship

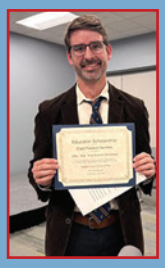
Visit finneytown.org/strategic-plan or scan the QR code to see the progress we've made so far!

# THINGS TO NOTE

## Award Time!

Finneytown Schools cleaned up at the Hamilton County awards celebrations this year. The following individuals were honored at the Hamilton County PTA Dessert event:

Cole Kimnach is the recipient of a PTA student scholarship.



Elijah Sanders, high school social studies teacher, is the winner of the PTA educator scholarship as he pursues his doctorate.

Brittany Utley, elementary school counselor, was honored as the "T" in PTA winner.

Student Ellie Michael was recognized for her Reflections submission.

*Mr. Backer with his wife, Mrs. Backer, who is also a teacher at Finneytown*

At the Hamilton County Education Foundation Celebrate Excellence Breakfast, David Backer was selected as Finneytown's Excellent Educator for his outstanding dedication, impact and commitment to our students and community. The event is dedicated to supporting the work of educators throughout the year, and this year, we were excited to have Anthony Munoz as MC and Mr. Red Legs as a guest.

Teyah McEntush, a sixth grade math teacher, was named Fox 19's April Leaders in Learning award winner!

Last but not least, Aurellia "Relish" Ortiz was named a 2025 READ On! award winner by the Ohio Educational Library Media Association (OELMA). The award celebrates students who are passionate readers. She was nominated by Lara Walker, library media specialist, who highlighted the 89 books Relish checked out this year, along with her knack for making recommendations to classmates. Relish was recognized at the 2025 OELMA Conference and Awards Ceremony on Nov. 14–15 in Dublin, Ohio.

**Our students and staff are what make Finneytown strong. We're so proud of our award winners!**

## Partnering to Meet Student Needs

In January, Finneytown Local Schools began a partnership with neighborhood bridges, a nonprofit that connects local communities with schools to help meet students' basic needs. The organization's mission is to remove barriers and promote equity, so every student has the opportunity to succeed in school and life.

Through this partnership, Finneytown is able to quickly respond to specific needs as they arise, thanks to generous support from individuals and organizations in the community. Subscribers receive email notifications when a need is posted, along with clear instructions on how and where to help.

Together, we're building stronger support systems for students.

**Launched**
January 2025

**Helped 14**
students/ families

**Collected**
gift cards, used laptop computers, and more!

## Finneytown First District in League to Earn Project ADAM Heart Safe Designation

Finneytown Local Schools is proud to be the first district in the Cincinnati Hills League to receive the Project ADAM Heart Safe School designation.

Project ADAM (Automated Defibrillators in Adam's Memory) is a national program focused on preventing sudden cardiac death in schools. Earning this designation means that Finneytown staff are trained and prepared to respond quickly and effectively in the event of a cardiac emergency on campus.

This recognition reflects our ongoing commitment to student and staff safety.

## Restorative Practices Taking Shape

Senior Alivia Lester and eighth grader Ja'Mauri Sanders were recognized by then Superintendent Banks and the Board of Education for their dedication to Restorative Practices and their impactful work as Restorative Peer Mediators.

## Students Building Leadership Skills

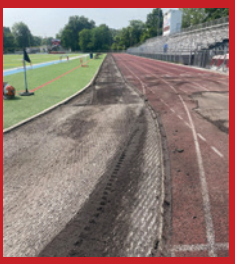
Alyssa Bolt and Jason George represented Finneytown at this year's Regional Youth Leadership (RYL) retreat. RYL is a leadership program for high school juniors and seniors in Cincinnati and Northern Kentucky.

## Master Facilities Plan Update

Thanks to the support of our community, Finneytown Local Schools continues to make progress on the master facilities plan made possible by the 2019 bond levy. This plan is rooted in our mission to foster a community of learning and belonging.

This year, several pieces of the plan were put in motion:

- We hosted a groundbreaking in the fall for our Secondary School.
- The Ohio Facilities Construction Commission approved a budget adjustment for the Secondary Campus to help offset inflation-related cost increases.
- Air conditioning was installed in the gym and 100 building, improving comfort for students and staff.
- Construction on the new 7–12 building began in June.



In addition to district-led work, the Finneytown Alumni Network generously supported several campus improvements this summer, including:

- Painting the interior and exterior of the PE building
- Refinishing the gym floor
- Upgrading lighting in the Performing Arts Center

The district also replaced the track just in time for the new school year.

To follow our facilities progress, visit the Wildcat Workzone at finneytown.org/facilities or scan the QR code.

## Professional Development Keeps District Moving in Right Direction

Our Finneytown staff strives for continuous improvement and being innovative in our teaching and how we move the district forward. As part of this mission, Finneytown staff joined educational professionals from across the state at the Ohio School Boards Association Capital Conference and Trade Show last fall. They also co-hosted an Open Space event for enhanced networking and discussion on how to tackle obstacles and opportunities for Ohio's public schools. Members of our Treasurer's Department also attended the Buckeye Association of School Administrators' finance training.

Additionally, we have been working with the Ohio Public School Advocacy Network (OPSAN) to create a network of educators across the state focused on public school advocacy.

Last fall, our English Language Arts teacher and Yearbook Advisor, Ms. Bruner, also presented at the National Council of Teachers of English annual convention on the topic of addressing the challenges and opportunities of integrating AI into the classroom.

## Career Exploration Starts Young

As part of a project-based learning experience, our kindergartners heard from Ms. Nash, a nurse and Finneytown parent, about how to care for someone in need of medical attention.

Inspired by what they learned, they designed a nurse's station in their classroom, dressed in nurse attire, and put their new skills to the test caring for stuffed animal patients.

Additionally, our eighth grade students got the chance to visit Diamond Oaks for a hands-on vocational trip. From exercise science and sports medicine to cosmetology, and everything in between, they learned about various career programs available right in their backyard.

Last but not least, 30 of our students took a trip to Miami University to explore how math and science play a role in careers like psychology, economics, chemistry and physics.

***It's never too early to expose students to future career opportunities!***

## Students Advance to State

Several of our students made history this year by advancing to state in the Ohio History Day 2025 contest! Congratulations to the following:

**Amarna Hawks**
Coverture Throughout the Years

**Selah McMahan**
Coverture Throughout the Years

**Pia Rianne Improgo**
The 1986 People's Power Revolution

**Haby Ndiaye**
The Great Dayton Flood

**Sean McLain**
Western Confederacy

## Camp Helps Students Connect

Last fall, our Restorative Peer Mediators, who are trained in conflict resolution and restorative practices, kicked off the year with an overnight trip connecting with one another and building lifelong skills. They developed their listening skills, learned how to regulate their emotions and mastered conflict resolution while conquering ziplining and ropes courses.

# ENGAGEMENT

## ProAction Café

These events were held throughout the year and were open to anyone. They are designed to be a safe space to engage in action-oriented and creative conversations about what matters most to our Finneytown community.

## Extended Care Program Moves to YMCA

Over the past year, we transitioned our before and after-school care program to the YMCA. This offers various benefits to our students and families, including more flexibility in fees and programming and experienced providers.

## Building Connections

Building Connections events focus on connecting our families and partners with our schools so that students have a strong foundation. In March, we welcomed our incoming kindergarten families and in January, we hosted local early childhood providers.

## World Culture Night a Success

World Culture Night was once again an unforgettable event celebrating our community's diversity. Thank you to everyone who participated as well as those who helped bring it to life.

## Wildcat Wellness Week

In January, Finneytown Local Schools hosted its first-ever Wildcat Wellness Week, a collaborative effort with Deer Park Schools, Interact for Health and 1N5. The week focused on mental health, wellness and building stronger connections across our school community.

Students and staff participated in engaging activities and friendly competitions designed to promote self-care, teamwork and awareness around mental health. The event provided practical resources and meaningful conversations, reinforcing our commitment to supporting the whole child, academically, socially and emotionally.

## Finneytown Wildcat Welcome Helps New Families Feel at Home

Ahead of the new school year, Finneytown Local Schools hosted a Wildcat Welcome — an open house-style event designed to support new families as they join the district.

Families received help with student registration, toured our buildings, learned about academic programs, and met teachers and staff. The event gave parents a chance to ask questions, get familiar with school routines, and feel more connected to the Finneytown community.

# FINANCES

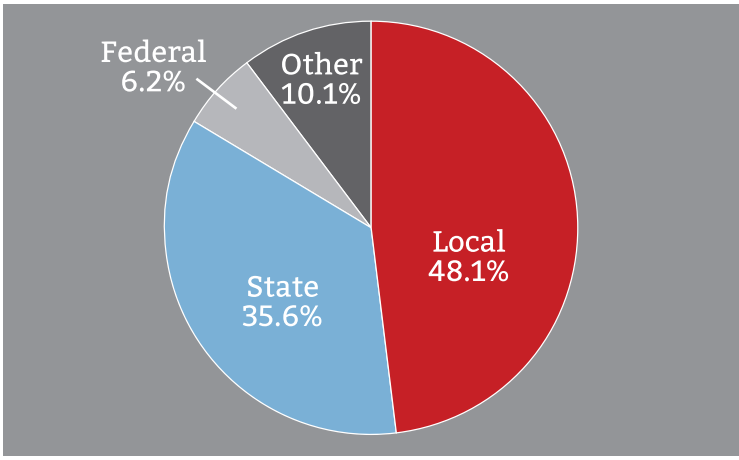
This year, I'm honored to step into the role of Treasurer for Finneytown Schools after serving as Assistant Treasurer for the past four years. It's a privilege to continue supporting the students, staff and families of this community in a new way.

As a public school district, our funding comes from three main sources — federal, state and local revenues. Over the years, the balance among these sources has shifted significantly. State and federal funding have not kept pace with the rising costs of education, which means local taxpayers now provide the majority of our district's funding. Your ongoing support makes the education we provide possible.

On the expenditure side, our largest investment each year is in our people — the teachers and staff who work directly with students every day. Nearly 70% of our total budget is directed back into the classroom for instructional purposes. This focus ensures that our financial decisions align with our mission to put students first.

I'm excited to continue working alongside our Board of Education and district leadership to maintain transparency, plan responsibly, and make the most of every dollar entrusted to us. Thank you for your continued trust and partnership in supporting our schools.

**Anita Ruffin**
Treasurer




## Interact for Health Funding

Interact for Health has awarded Finneytown Schools $100,000 over the next two years. These funds will support our Youth Advisory Council, fueling project-based initiatives through Authentic Engagement: Finneytown Youth Empowerment.

This continued partnership strengthens our efforts to create a community where every student feels seen, heard, supported and empowered.

# ACADEMICS

## Class of 2025

**110** Graduates

**62** attending a 2 or 4-year college or university

**29** entering the workforce

**5** attending trade school

**2** joining the military

### 6 Advanced Placement (AP) courses

- Language
- Calculus
- Government
- Human Geography
- Psychology
- U.S. History

### 3 College Credit Plus (CCP) courses

- U.S. History I
- U.S. History II
- Basic Spanish

## Military and College Athletic Signing

We are proud to see our students signing on to serve our country and advancing their athletic careers at colleges and universities. Congratulations to the following!

**Adrian Benton**
Basketball at Clark State College

**Evan Steimle**
Football at the University of Findlay

**Brandyn Morris**
Ohio Army National Guard

## Governor's Merit Scholarship Winners

Five seniors were awarded a Governor's Merit Scholarship this year, including:

- **Jason George**
- **Amanda Gieger**
- **Alex Grady**
- **Cole Kimnach**
- **Sophia Roque**

The scholarship is aimed at reducing financial barriers preventing Ohio's top graduates from pursuing higher education; recognizing the impressive scholastic achievement of Ohio's top graduates; and incentivizing Ohio's high-achieving high school students to attend an institution of higher education in Ohio.

## Students Making Waves in Career Technical Organizations

A member of our Business Program, Imani Montgomery, finished fourth in DECA's district competition, qualifying for state. DECA — or Distributive Education Clubs of America — is a career and technical student organization that focuses on professional development and leadership in areas like marketing, finance, hospitality and management. Its mission is to prepare emerging leaders and entrepreneurs for college and careers.

This is the first year Finneytown students have participated. Congratulations on your success and thanks to teacher Fred Andrews for all of your work to launch this opportunity!

**We welcomed several new National Honor Society inductees last year!**

# ATHLETICS

## 18 Varsity Sports

### Basketball Team Hooping it Up

Our varsity boys basketball team started the season strong with a 3-0 record under the leadership of our new coach and alumnus, Brandon Robinson.

### Middle School Cheerleaders Make it Big

Big cheers for our middle school cheer squad's first appearance at the CHL cheerleading competition at Mariemont High School. They made us proud by bringing home a third place finish!

Softball Senior Night

FINNEYTOWN

### Kicking Off Sports Seasons in Style

This past school year, we continued our popular tradition of hosting seasonal kickoff events for our student-athletes. These events help team members reconnect and gets our community excited for the upcoming season.

### Track

Congratulations to these incredible Wildcats who ran a season best time of 49:54 in the OHSAA state championship prelims, then came back and placed eighth in the state finals!

### Golfer Makes History

Macy Hunter competed in the girls state sectional tournament at Reeves Golf Course. She is the first Finneytown High School female golfer to make it this far since 2008!

### Senior Finishes Time on Mat Strong

Katherine Murillo ended her Finneytown wrestling career with a third place finish at the OhWay Girls State Tournament in Marion, Ohio.

In other wrestling news, Brady Volz earned his 100th career victory at the CHL tournament and Khadi Lo was the champion in the 120-lb. category.

# ARTS

## National Recognition for Student Artist and Educator

Congratulations to Finneytown High School student Katherine Murillo, who was named a 2025 national winner in the Scholastic Art & Writing Awards. Selected from more than 110,000 teens and over 310,000 submissions nationwide, Katherine's work was recognized for its originality, technical skill and strong personal voice.

In addition, art teacher Megan Kelly received an Educator Award in recognition of her guidance and support of student creativity.

## Art Show Highlights Work

Last December, our media center was transformed into a stunning art gallery, showcasing the incredible talents of students in grades 7-12.

## Orchestra Camp Sets Tone for Year

Last fall, our Wildcats tuned up and made some beautiful music together at our Orchestra Camp, setting the tone for performances throughout the year.

## Marching Wildcats Show Up Strong at Bands of America and Beyond

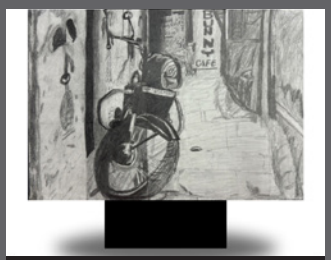
Our marching band rocked the field at Lucas Oil Stadium during Bands of America last fall. Congrats on an amazing performance!

They also scored nearly 20 points higher than their last performance at their final regular season competition at West Clermont, bringing home a third place finish.

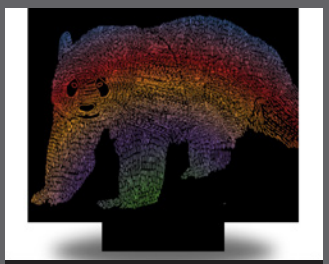
And finally, they earned a Superior rating at State Finals — the highest honor!

## Local Businesses Display Student Artwork

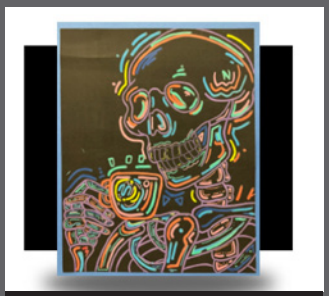
Every business — including doctor's offices — should be visually appealing. We're grateful that Conover Family Dentistry decided to source their artwork locally. Our students' artwork was on display all year!



Biwas Moktan, sophomore



Emery Woosley, senior



Katherine Murillo, senior

## Cinderella Shines on Finneytown Stage

In March, students in grades 3–12 came together for a memorable production of Cinderella — a showcase of creativity, collaboration and talent across all levels of Finneytown Schools.

With colorful costumes, live music and strong performances from a dedicated cast and crew, the show highlighted the power of the performing arts to bring students together and tell timeless stories.

**Finneytown Local School District**

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finneytown.org

**Don't forget to like and follow us on social media**

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# Calling All Finneytown Alumni

Are you a proud Finneytown graduate? The Finneytown Alumni Network (FAN) is an active, growing community of Wildcats who stay connected and give back. Visit finneytownalumni.org to see how you can get involved — share your story, volunteer at events, or support fundraising efforts that make a difference for today's students.