



**Fairfield County Board of DD  
Leadership Team Report  
March 18, 2024**

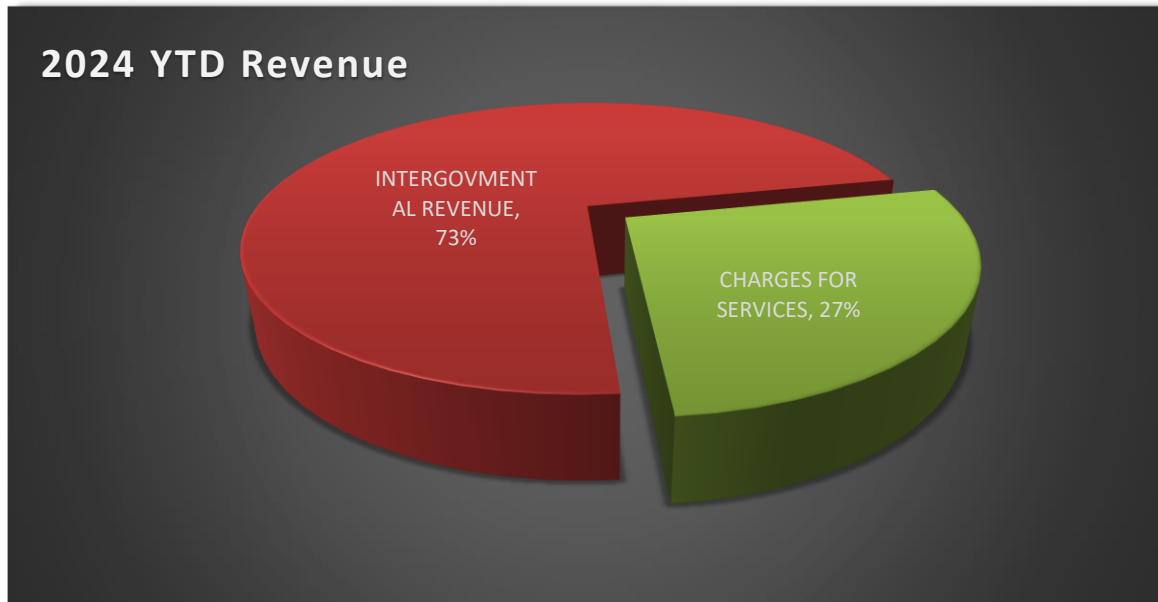
**Finance**

**Beth Seifert**

**Revenues:**

Revenues were approximately \$11,900 above projections.

Medicaid (TCM)	\$ 2,800
ODE	\$ 7,100
Dept of Ed Federal Grants	\$ -7,200
OOD	\$ 18,200
Vinton County Shared Services	\$ 8,400
Educational Aide Reimbursement from Districts	\$ -13,800

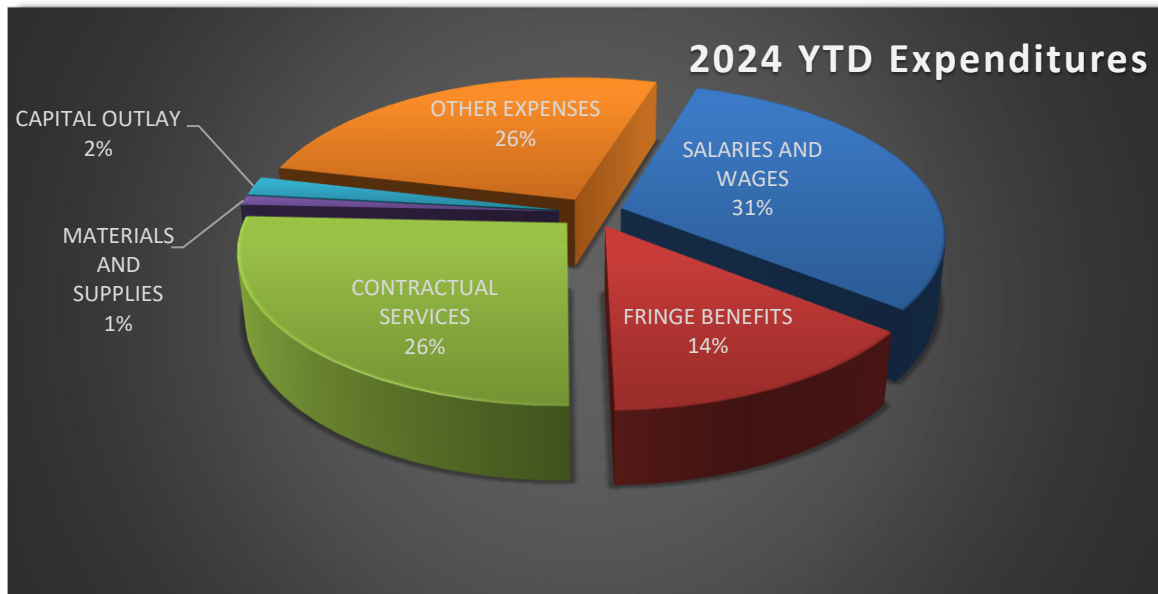


**Expenditures:**

Expenditures were approximately \$446,300 below projections.

- Salary and Benefits were below projections by \$222,800.

- Salaries were \$ 48,300 under budget.
- Insurance premiums were \$ 53,200 under budget.
- Non-wage expenditures were \$ 223,500 below projections.
  - Contract Services were \$ 33,600 over budget.
  - Waiver Match and Administrative Fees were under budget by \$ 104,200.



## Provider and Community Resources

**Kyle Miller**

David Baum and I have continued toward more collaboration between the SSA and PCR departments. We have met with all supervisors in both departments, David shared more details at his department meeting, and we have met with many of the staff most directly impacted. Most exciting is that there have already been increased discussions about person-centered plans, employment, volunteer ideas, and resources. The Employment Coordinator, Amanda Snoke has already met with five (5) ISCs and the Community Builder and Training Specialist, Pam Whiteley, has worked with various staff regarding finding talents, interests, passions, skills, and person-centered practices.

Provider and Community Resource Supervisor, Leslie Dancho, and Pam earned their yellow belts in Six Sigma. We decided to seek these certifications to have the expertise available for the provider community, as well as when the need arises internally. This information has already proven beneficial as Pam continues working with the SSA department on their onboarding process.

As we've mentioned before, we are not holding the monthly provider meeting, but continue providing support as needed. The Provider Resource Specialist, Kristin Thorne, has met with eight (8) agency providers new to the county. Amanda also continues working with a provider developing their Employment Supports to include evidenced based practices. We have been monitoring the progress on the DODD grant to provide funding to employment providers so we can assist this provider to apply. This grant is for staff to attend training and purchase technology to improve quality services and is expected to be released early next month. This funding would be of great assistance to this provider.

As you know, March will be a little different this year with the parent and family event the evening before the Celebration of Possibilities. Pam and Kristin have worked closely with Gaynor on the planning and preparation of the event. Another outreach event for the month has been offering staff the opportunity to read to third grade classes across the county to provide awareness about inclusion and belonging. Leslie and Kristin have been facilitating communication with the schools, organizing the volunteers, and then working with Anne on scheduling the connections.

Art & Clay/Square 7 continues with record level sales and having a positive impact on the community. Sales were 16% (\$6252.00) higher than any other February on record! The impact, however, goes so much further than offering great products. Our collaborations in the area include Child Protective Services, Family Adult Children First Council, Juvenile Court, Ohio Rise, Harcum House, Picture Perfect Ranch, Humane Society, Pfarr Farms, and Big Brothers/Big Sisters. We continue working with the Lancaster City Schools Internship program. One of the interns from this year will be graduating this spring and asked about becoming an employee. Mitsi referred him to the online application. Long-story short, he has started, is doing well and got a "shout out" from a co-worker after the second week due to his willingness to take on new tasks. The goal for the collaboration is not for interns to become employees, but due to the growth and motivation that were demonstrated throughout the internship, this was an easy decision.

## **Services and Supports**

**David Baum**

An update on our progress entering OhioISPs and 1-page profiles: Currently, 746 OhioISPs/1-page profiles are published or are in progress within the Brittco system. 455 of the 746 OhioISPs/1-Page profiles are wavier (IO, Level 1, or SELF) that have been entered. June 30<sup>th</sup> is right around the corner and we are in a great position to meet or exceed this deadline.

Summer Scholarship is fast approaching and letters for this program have been sent out to all eligible students. The purpose of the Summer Scholarship Program is to increase inclusive, structured, community-based experiences for children and youth using a

person-centered approach, focusing on their interests, gifts, and talents. The funding for this program may pay for a summer camp/program/experience. Based on a child's individualized needs, funding may be used for registration fees, transportation, and/or an aide to accompany a child. Funding is based on the age of the student and school enrollment status at the time of application. So far, we have received 109 responses since 3/1 for students who wish to attend an inclusive opportunity over the summer.

I want to take a moment and touch on the growth of people coming through the Service and Support department. 2023 was a year of remarkable growth in the number of people seeking services and those who became enrolled for services. Below are some numbers to give perspective on the record year compared to years past:

- **523 people** went through the Intake & Eligibility process.
  - o Compared to 375 in all of 2022 and 351 in 2021
- **219 new people** enrolled with the services & supports department (FSS & Service Coordination).
  - o Compared to 116 in 2022 and 133 in 2021.
- **A majority (116) of the 219 newly enrolled people are between the ages of 3-5.**
  - o Second most are adults 18+ (39), followed by children ages 6-13 and Transition (ages 14-17)

We are continuing to see this growth happening in the first quarter of this year. Through 2 months, we have seen 40+ people newly enrolled for services in the services & supports department. This ongoing growth creates a challenge and an opportunity as our department continues to collaborate further with the Provider and Community Resource team to support people towards lives of greater independence.

**Resource Management**

**Michelle Dexter**

**Program Enrollment**

Comparisons here since last Jan 2024

Total Enrollment for the Program (this does include **12 preschool students that are active and attend FRS who are not served**)

Individuals have an Individual Support Coordinator (ISC)

Adults supported by ISC

Kids/Transition Age supported by ISC

1749	+18
1245	+38
574	+3
671	+35

## **Communications and Outreach**

**Anne Mikan**

February and March have been a very busy time! You may have seen or heard from Fairfield DD in many mediums as we got the word out about DD Awareness Month. Alicia recorded another episode of Fulfilling Lives which airs on WLOH but is also available on our website and we have a promo running there as well. We had an article in the Lancaster Herald, in conjunction with Krile Communications, and a spot in the Town Crier as well.

DD Awareness events have been happening with positive response. Our team continues to plan promotions, create materials, and capture pictures of each date. We are also currently offering support for two (2) other initiatives across the agency. Parent Connect groups have begun meeting and Alicia has created surveys, sign-in sheets, and any other materials the groups might need to get started on a positive note. Fairfield DD staff are also reading to third graders throughout Fairfield County Schools as we promote inclusion and belonging in our community.

In Professional Development, we welcomed two (2) new folks, utilizing the updated orientation and onboarding process. Planning is well underway for the April 12 All Staff Professional Day focused on organizational health including topics around emotional intelligence and positive communication. Jen is working to plan some fun teambuilding options that staff can participate in if they choose at lunch time.

The focus groups that were announced in January have been meeting as well. The career development group met, facilitated by Cindy and Anne, at the end of February. We had good participation and generated many ideas. Some of these include more interdepartmental training, cross-training, understanding cultures and customs of those we support, as well as translations, behavior support, teamwork, and communication skills. We will discuss ways to start broaching some of these subjects, recognizing various parts of the agency will have different priorities. Anne met with the "Communicating our Values" focus group as well. The staff who attended brought great ideas, but we realize the challenge that there is not one perfect way to reach every staff person due to the nature of different job roles. Knowing where to look for information also rose to the top as an issue. We are going to come back together to discuss impacts after some steps have been implemented.

## **Human Resources**

**Cindy Hillberry**

During February, we continued to work on implementation on the new evaluation system and worked on follow-up to stay interviews.

### **New staff members in the month of February:**

#### *Services & Supports–Behavior Support*

Jamie Parker started her role as a Behavior Support Coordinator on February 12.

#### *Forest Rose*

Destiny Kemmerling started her role as an Intermittent Educational Aide on February 12.

### **Staff members changing positions in the month of February:**

#### *Services & Supports*

Tyler Cordle moved to the role of Independent Benefits Coordinator from Individual Support Coordinator-Employment Focus on February 26.

Lisa Tope moved from the part-time Nurse role into a full-time Nurse role with Forest Rose School on February 27.

### **Staff members leaving the organization in the month of February:**

#### *Forest Rose*

Joan Dawson, Educational Aide, resigned her position on February 2.

#### *Operations*

Scott Robinette, Facilities Technician, resigned his position on February 1.

### **We also have the following positions posted or unfilled at this time:**

#### *Services & Supports*

Individual Support Coordinator 2 (multiple positions - perpetual post)

Individual Support Coordinator (three positions)

#### *Forest Rose*

Educational Aide (three positions)

Floating Aide (one position)

Educational Aide-Intermittent (reposted annually)

Instructor-Intermittent (reposted annually)

## Forest Rose School

## Lindsey Hanes

Forest Rose had many fun events this past month, but February 16<sup>th</sup> takes the cake! Staff were provided with the opportunity to take a walk-in students' shoes by participating in various experiences that simulated everyday life for many of our students. Experiences included staff riding a bus ramp in a wheelchair, navigating their way off a bus and into the school blindfolded with a guide, diapering/assisted toileting, riding the Hoyer Lift, assisted feeding, and using a communication device to express their wants and needs in a public setting.

Afterward, staff reflected on their experiences and ultimately drew conclusions about what is best practice when caring for our students. Staff described the simulations as "powerful," "anxiety-provoking," and "engaging experiences!"

Furthermore, they were reminded of the importance of things like wait-time, explaining each step of the process when caring for a student, proper positioning/handling, and allowing the students to make choices. It also gave us an idea of what equipment needs updated, as well as how we can adapt the physical environment to make the school experience a little bit better for the kids.



## Early Intervention & Birth to Three:

## Jenna Trager

Early Intervention is currently providing services to **207** families in Fairfield County. In February we received **26** new referrals from Help Me Grow and **26** children transitioned out of our program.

## Operations Updates

## Todd McCullough

The Operations report will be short this month to allow room for Lori's enabling tech story. I will just quickly state that progress is being made in several areas on both the IT and Facilities sides of things. IT is spending time working on processing disposals of old devices and bringing in replacement devices, creating a digital board meeting

archive, and creating an inventory of their supplies and equipment. The facilities team continues to catch up from six (6) months of construction while also refreshing the look of different spaces through fresh coats of paint and updating fixtures.

### **Enabling Technology**

**Lori Ferbrache**

I wanted to take this month and provide a summary/update on an Enabling Technology referral that was initiated May 30, 2023. I received the referral for M.B. from ISC, Stacie Fisher, to help him explore technology that might be beneficial for him to increase independence and reduce barriers that he encounters due to blindness. Specifically, he was interested in gaining access to the calendar from Expanding Your Horizons, so that he could select activities that he wanted to take part in. Also, he wanted a way to independently provide proof of income that he has to provide to his apartment annually. M.B. has lived on his own in an apartment for several years, has a part-time job, utilizes LPT for transportation, and has a natural support system comprised of several family members. He learned braille when attending the Ohio State School for the Blind (graduated in 2010), and had a BrailleNote device that he had received while in high school, that no longer worked.

At the time the enabling technology referral was made, the team was encouraging M.B. to look at updating his cell phone and exploring various accessibility settings. When I met with him, he had just purchased a new “flip” phone, as that is what he is used to. It does have speech to text capability, as well as text to speech functions so that he can hear text messages and use his voice to compose them. He also uses the setting that speaks the time aloud for him, so that helps him remain temporally oriented. With my assistance, M.B. explored two different smart phone platforms and their accessibility features for vision. After a few trials, he determined that it was not something that he was interested in further exploring at that time.

He did, however, indicate a desire for a new note taking device, as he used this type of device to help him maintain his schedule in the past. I reached out to AT Ohio to borrow a BrailleNote Touch+ device and M.B. was able to try it out for a few weeks. Limiting factors were that he did not have access to Wi-Fi, so the functions of the tablet (something that his previous device did not have), were not able to be fully explored. We discussed getting Wi-Fi and he stated that he would look into it. After trialing the BrailleNote Touch+, M.B. decided that it was a very similar device to what he had previously, from a note taking and calendar standpoint, and he wanted to get one. However, funding was challenging. The Lion’s Clubs from Rushville and Pickerington both provided donations and then the enabling technology fund, supported by Fairfield DD, was used to pay the remaining cost.

M.B. received the new BrailleNote Touch+ 10 refreshable braille display device in December 2023. We met a few times for initial set up and training. Between sessions, he did a lot of educating himself using the auditory tutorials provided with the device.



In January 2024, M.B. decided he wanted to set up an email account, which meant that he needed Wi-Fi access. We spoke with apartment management and were able to get access to the password for Wi-Fi that could be used in the lobby area of his building. After he successfully logged onto the internet, M.B. and I worked together to set up an email account for him. He was excited, but also frustrated, as he was having a challenging time logging into the account using his braille keyboard. I left that day, with the plan of reaching out to the HumanWare tech support, if needed, if M.B. was unable to log into the account successfully.

The next week, I received an email from ISC Assistant, Tracey Shafer, stating that she had tried to help M.B. sign his new ISP on his BrailleNote Touch+ device, but that he had become frustrated because he wasn't successful and she was asking if more training on the device could be provided. While that is absolutely possible and did happen, I was immediately elated because that meant that he had been able to successfully log into his email account and navigate to open an attachment. These are huge successes in INDEPENDENCE. Not only that, Tracey also told me that he had Wi-Fi set up in his apartment now! I reached out to M.B. to find out more specifically what the challenge was with signing the document and he explained that he could not physically use the touch screen, which is what the document in Brittco required of him. I connected with LaTisha Subham, ISC Supervisor, to help troubleshoot issues with Brittco. She informed me that a physical signature was required or that there is an option to upload a file. So, a picture of M.B.'s signature could be taken and saved to his device and be used as the signature for the document. I also called HumanWare to gain insight on the capabilities of the touch screen portion of the BrailleNote Touch+. Their tech support person was uncertain if the device was capable of doing what I was asking, but he did provide me with guidance on how to turn KeySoft off. KeySoft is a setting that allows the touchscreen of the device to be used as a braille keyboard without the need for a physical keyboard. When M.B. and I had our next visit, I assisted him with turning off KeySoft and was able to physically guide his hand to where his signature was required. So, it is possible to do the task, but he still relied on me as to where to sign, since he is unable to see the screen. We took a picture of his signature and he learned how to save it into his "photos" file. While this is ok, it's not ideal as a strategy for him signing independently, as there is the possibility of an incorrect file being uploaded or attached. However, at least there are some options leading to greater independence.

To follow up, I wrote a summary of this situation and need and asked for LaTisha to reach out to Brittco to see if an option for typing your name and verifying that it is your signature, which is common practice for many documents now. This would provide M.B. with full independence with signing documents electronically. While this is needed for his ISP, this ability can also be used for banking, housing needs, etc. While this was a long story to describe details over the last nine (9) months, I felt the need to share, due to M.B.'s excitement with everything that he is learning to do and

his increased independence, now that he has the BrailleNote Touch+. It is also a great example of all of our Fairfield DD Values of Fiscal Responsibility, Collaboration, Innovation, Empowering Others, Excellence, and Accountability, all summarized in one story. And, by the way, M.B. is only just beginning to exert his independence. He's inquiring about more technology to meet personal goals that he has.