

# Maple Leaf Intermediate School

Garfield Heights City (Cuyahoga County)



2004-2005 School of Promise in Reading & Mathematics	
School Rating	Effective
Enrollment	553
Grade Levels	4-5
Percent Economically Disadvantaged	52%
Percent Racial/Ethnic Minority	33.9%

District Profile 2004-2005	
District Rating	Continuous Improvement
District Enrollment	3,823

## Lesson 1: Providing Rigorous Instruction Aligned to Standards

**Continuous Alignment:** The preparation for the success of the fourth and fifth graders at Maple Leaf is initiated at the two elementary schools that feed new students to Maple Leaf. The three schools worked closely together to ensure that all curricula were aligned to each other and to the State Content Area Standards. Standards are also integrated in all subject areas by including special subject teachers in creating and benchmarking the school's curricula maps.

## Lesson 2: Providing Leadership That Results in Continuous Improvement.

**Fostering Improvement:** The teachers at Maple Leaf are eager to be leading innovators, always looking for better ways to reach students from diverse backgrounds. The principal believes in empowering teachers to make improvements built on incremental changes so teachers and students don't become overwhelmed.

**Teachers as Leaders:** One of the most effective strategies implemented at Maple Leaf is extensive use of teachers as leaders in the school. Teachers serve as leaders at grade levels, in curriculum areas, and at adopting and incorporating technology in the school. Furthermore, senior teachers mentor new teachers on a weekly basis to improve the quality of instruction, collaboration, and staff morale.

## Lesson 3: Designing Instruction to Ensure Every Student's Success

**Critical Intervention:** At Maple Leaf intervention is a critical aspect of ensuring student success. Intervention at Maple Leaf is integrated so that students are in their mainstreamed classroom most of the day. Teachers collaborate on this intervention with parents and colleagues to make sure everyone is on the same page and the students' needs are best served. The district also offers the Extended Learning Opportunity program which provides up to six additional hours of mathematics or reading instruction per week for at-risk students.

**Technology Opportunities:** Technology enhances instruction at Maple Leaf. In particular, an Enhancing Education Through Technology grant provides access to computers and high-quality web-based programs. Teachers use technology to assess student learning and

customize activities that build skills in particular areas. Select teachers attend special trainings to increase their knowledge and ability to integrate technology then train their colleagues at Maple Leaf.

#### **Lesson 4: Engaging Parents and Community to Support Student Success**

**Communicating the Standards:** Standards and student performance data are communicated directly and often to Maple Leaf parents to include them in their children's educations. Curriculum and assessment information is made available through curricula guides, monthly newsletters, nightly homework assignment books, the district website, and online grade books.

**Engaging Students' Needs:** Maple Leaf employs a social worker and a guidance counselor who are responsible largely for connecting students and families with school and community resources through two processes. The school uses the Families and Schools Together intervention program to meet at-risk students' individual learning and developmental needs so as to help the child, help the family, and help the school. Also, Total Community Solutions is a team of school and district staff members who meet with parents to discuss and develop intervention strategies. A student who is referred to TCS can be followed as he or she progresses from one building to another in the district.

#### **Lesson 5: Creating a Culture Where Each Individual Feels Valued**

**Meeting "Needs of the Heart":** With both a social worker and guidance counselor on the school staff, teachers can focus on the needs of the class while special attention is directed towards individual students whose personal challenges lie beyond the parameters of academic achievement. This is a commitment to making sure children feel emotionally safe so they can turn their attention to academic achievement. The social services department dedicates its efforts to the holistic child and is attentive to everything from violence in the home to the arrival of a new baby. For instance, the Garfield Youth, Family, and Teen Services (GYFTS) program can provide support for students in stressful or extraordinary circumstances. Counseling, mediation and anger management training are three of the services that can be provided through GYFTS.

**Character Education and Classroom Management:** Maple Leaf has implemented character education along side the teaching of academic subjects. Positive traits are displayed in the school's main hall, and each trait is emphasized for a couple of weeks so the children understand what the character trait embodies. Part of this program is a "caught doing good" campaign. Students seen demonstrating good character, doing good deeds or meeting one of these six areas of character education receive rewards such as gold coins, character coupons or certificates.

**Understanding Student Culture:** Consultants from the Ruby Payne center discussed the "culture of poverty" with the teachers and the support staff. The consultants helped administrators, teachers and staff learn about the value systems of impoverished families and also examine the implications of these values to an education system. At least one teacher commented that the training helped her develop effective strategies for her at-risk students, like helping them with basic skills such as getting organized, following a routine, or making lists—fundamental skills that are not taught or reinforced at home.