

# Highlights from Schools Where Students with Disabilities Met or Exceeded the 75 Percent Standard

July 2005

## Overview

Superintendent Susan Tave Zelman highlighted twenty schools because they met or exceeded the 75 percent standard with their students with disabilities on the reading and/or mathematics sections of the Ohio Proficiency Test or the Ohio Graduation Test in 2003-2004. Interviews with the principals, teachers, parents, and students at eighteen of the designated schools revealed that all of those schools incorporate the five integrated and interrelated themes of successful schools found in Schools of Promise. All of the schools:

- o Deliver rigorous, standards-based instruction;
- o Design instruction to ensure all students succeed;
- o Provide leadership focused on improved instruction;
- o Engage parents and community; and
- o Create a school culture where individuals are valued.

Highlights from the eighteen schools visited are in this handout. Write-ups of each of the schools can be found at [www.ohioschoolleaders.org](http://www.ohioschoolleaders.org).

## ODE Schools of Promise Selection Criteria

1. 40% or more of students meet low-income criteria
2. 75% or more of students pass Ohio Proficiency test in reading or math and OH Achievement test in reading
3. 75% or more of students in major racial/ethnic groups and low-income students pass same tests
4. 50% of students in each grade tested pass same tests
5. School meets Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) requirements of NCLB

### Information about the Schools of Promise on the ODE Web site:

[http://www.ode.state.oh.us/achievement\\_gaps/schools\\_of\\_promise/](http://www.ode.state.oh.us/achievement_gaps/schools_of_promise/)

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## Highlights from Schools Where Students With Disabilities Met or Exceeded the 75 Percent Standard

The following schools met or exceeded the 75 percent standard with their students with disabilities on the reading and/or mathematics section of the Ohio Proficiency Test in 2003-2004.

### Elementary Schools

#### **Berwick Elementary School, Columbus, Ohio**

- Columbus alternative school for math and science. Named School of Promise for reading.
- Principal very data oriented. Each student's progress is closely tracked to insure that every student is getting the help needed.
- Philosophy is that it is the teachers' responsibility to figure out how to teach students. It is not the students' problem.
- Teachers co-plan. Re-teach students who don't get it. Provide enrichment for those who do get it.
- Employ a Student Assistance Intervention Learning (SAIL) committee that addresses concerns of individual students who require some form of intervention.
- The 4<sup>th</sup>-5<sup>th</sup> grade teacher, who has a special education background, and the 5<sup>th</sup> grade reading teacher have been instrumental in the progress of students struggling academically, including those with learning disabilities. Students who were struggling with writing were assigned a school newspaper project as an opportunity to improve their writing proficiency skills. Students responded very positively to this challenge, even giving up their lunch and recess time to work on the paper. Because they felt their writing had a purpose, the students threw themselves into the project. They also appreciated the support of the two Parent Coordinators. Their completed newspaper included multiple genres of writing such as interviews, informational reports, retelling, fictional narratives, personal narratives, and letters to the editor. The students who worked on the newspaper were given special recognition at a PTA meeting. When notices were sent home with the students to invite the parents and students to participate in the award ceremony, one of the student's mothers called to check if her child had mistakenly brought home another student's invitation because her son had never received an award before. This parent was the first to come and the last to leave the meeting.
- Implementing the Literacy Across Columbus Elementary Schools (LACES) reading program through third grade with fourth and fifth to be added in the 2005-2006 school year. Each student's LACES progress is charted showing exactly how far each student has come during each evaluation segment. Data is compared with other schools/district/cohort group.
- Columbus District tells schools what to teach each week. Berwick found it necessary to speed up pacing Columbus has set so students will have covered all the materials that will be on the proficiency test prior to taking the test while still having time to review prior to the test.
- Motto is to catch students being good. After students have been at Berwick for a period of time, they are said to be "Berwicked," meaning they do not exhibit behavior problems.
- Data supports that students from Berwick continue to make progress in middle school.

### **Burlington Elementary School, Burlington, Ohio**

- School-wide curriculum mapping.
- Use short cycle assessments.
- Daily common teacher planning time by grade level.
- Required Intervention Program on every grade level for students at the bottom 25%.
- Intervention after school to prepare for proficiency test for 8 weeks prior to test.
- Study Island, a web-based test preparation program, can be accessed by students at school or from home. Students work through lessons and take practice tests aligned to the Academic Content Standards. When four tests are completed, a chart is developed to determine where a student needs help.
- All students with disabilities included in classes for social studies and science - when students have problems, intervention specialist helps.
- Resource room used to supplement needs with the goal of returning students to the regular education classroom.
- Students have homework notebooks – bring home every day.
- Extensive system of incentives and rewards.
- Received \$50,000 for more inclusion professional development – company came in for 4 days – helped regular education teachers with inclusion; how to grade students with disabilities when in regular classroom, etc.
- School has student video program with students presenting day's weather, lunch menu, and announcements.
- Parent involvement – Science Night, Math Night, Reading Night.

### **Central Community Elementary School, Reading, Ohio**

- Mission statement of the school is “to prepare students academically, socially, and emotionally to reach their potential, become responsible citizens, and develop a love of learning that will continue throughout their lives.”
- Everything at the building level must tie into the district strategic plan.
- Each year each building team is expected to come up with building goals based on student achievement data and survey data.
- Five years ago when principal was new and the school was in continuous improvement, she brought in consultants from the Hamilton County ESC and hired subs for teachers. The group of teachers, consultants and principal took their data at the time, and did an item analysis with the focus on the teacher.
- Teachers took a year to take apart the state content standards - then mapped the curriculum with the standards. A calendar was developed with the target date for instruction completion as March. Teachers threw out many unit themes since they no longer applied to student learning. Short cycle assessments were developed. (Noted that it was difficult to let go of old paradigms.)
- Staff members continue to analyze results of Ohio Proficiency looking for weak and strong points
- Professional development based on annual surveys of teachers, students, and parents as well as school goals, test results, and district initiatives.
- Staff members spent an entire year studying Ruby Payne's work on *Understanding Poverty* – in conjunction with Cathy Hamilton of the Hamilton County ECS.
- A parent resource librarian works with parents, Head Start, and preschool personnel to share materials and provide parents with training and materials.
- Selected as a 2005 *No Child Left Behind/Blue Ribbon School*.

### **Cleveland Elementary School, Hamilton, Ohio**

- Principal charged with becoming instructional leader when she took position. Teachers credit her with their consistently effective work with students.
- Principal meets with teachers from each grade level weekly.
- All teachers consider all kids to be their kids.
- A wide range of learning needs exist among the students enrolled in the school who are blind, visually impaired, hearing impaired, cognitively disabled, emotionally disturbed, and learning disabled.
- Successful inclusion is accomplished through a continuous process of collaborative teamwork. Regular and special education teachers collaborate on a daily basis. Flexible grouping is used to meet instructional needs of students.
- IAT is used frequently and not considered to be a referral vehicle for special education vehicle.
- Full-day kindergarten.
- After-school tutoring is available November – March to prepare for proficiency tests.
- Teachers use district standards “placemats” that include curriculum map for their respective grade levels.
- Summer Vacation Program –a workbook with an optional computer program available for purchase to reinforce information learned during year. Also Summer School Program that focuses on reading and math.
- Strong support from community through an “Adopt-A-School” Program.
- Work closely with community agencies to assist families in accessing services.

### **Douglas MacArthur Year Round School, Cleveland, Ohio**

(Has been permanently closed)

- Year-round magnet school. Program increased the traditional calendar by four weeks and reduced the time away from school to periods no longer than three weeks. Teachers feel year-round has contributed to the school’s success.
- Recognized as School of Promise for three consecutive years.
- Principal met weekly with grade-level teams. Some grade levels had same daily planning period.
- Principal one of 20 administrators appointed by CEO to be an “Executive Administrator,” an administrator responsible for mentoring another principal. She has participated in extensive training.
- Students were required to wear uniforms. Parent liked the convenience of having uniforms.
- School-wide Kindness theme (for example, word for month was “dependable”.) Students earned coupons for kind acts. Names were drawn each month and prizes were awarded.
- Standards-based report cards implemented in 2002.
- Pacing guides developed to assure all concepts taught in timely manner.
- Continual monitoring and assessing of student progress. Rubrics used throughout school.
- Student Preparation Initiative- Technology-based program that tests skills corresponding to Ohio’s grade level indicators. This was used as a pretest in the fall and as a post-test in the spring for students in grades 3-5. Principal reported that program had resulted in improved test scores.
- Family liaison worked with parents. Provided training, linked parents to community resources.

- Parents signed a school compact in which they committed to supporting their child's instruction at home.
- School-wide discipline plan. Rules posted throughout building.

### **Genoa Elementary School, Massillon, Ohio**

- District committed to data – Central Office providing leadership. District hires people to analyze items to prepare information for individual schools.
- CIP teacher leaders – pull together data, begin analyzing data, prepare packets for teachers to discuss at their first full-day staff meeting and one late-start day.
- Half hour intervention daily for all students that focuses on the grade level indicators and prepares the students for various assessments. Students are divided into skill groups – flexible – taught by classroom teachers, intervention specialists, and Title I teachers.
- IEP kids are generally pulled out for math, reading, and spelling – all special education materials and instruction are aligned with standards, proficiency and achievement.
- Grade level planning time – every grade level half hour once a week – continually in communication with each other.
- Teachers develop common assessments – they are brought back for discussion during common planning time. Assessment data drives instruction and intervention.
- Staff has high expectations for all students – realize that school is main security for many of the students.
- In addition to the honor roll, awards are also given for improvement and kindness so all students have the opportunity to receive an award.
- Staff uses an FM system when teaching – quieter atmosphere increases the attention of students and encourages them to use quiet voice in classroom.
- Selected as a 2005 Blue Ribbon School.

### **Laird Avenue Elementary School, Warren, Ohio**

- 1919 building, immaculate, bright and cheerful with every nook used for instruction.
- "Principal has built a community with the staff." Staff is willing to do whatever it takes to help students.
- Building Leadership Team meets weekly.
- IAT team meets from 8:10-8:30 on select mornings to address more challenging issues related to individual learning needs.
- Full-time family liaison hired through Community Solutions does whatever needed to support students through their home.
- Class goals developed by students posted in front hall. Announced when accomplished.
- All day kindergarten.
- Grade level teachers have 45-minute common planning time daily.
- All teachers trained in literacy initiative (reading and writing strategies).
- Part of the literacy Collaborative housed at OSU. In alignment with this initiative, the curriculum is literacy-based in grades K-2. A literacy coordinator supports continued focus in grades 3-4 and also facilitates the building's Literacy Team that has responsibility for benchmarking student performance.
- District teachers meet monthly to map language arts and math curriculum.

- After-school tutoring program for third and fourth grade students.
- Incentives for students who attended after-school Program daily and who were present for all testing days.
- School is a safe haven for kids.

### **Lincoln Elementary School, Tiffin, Ohio**

- Principal's philosophy is "Schools need to be a place where people want to be."
- Experienced staff (average of 19½ years) with many having attended Tiffin schools as students.
- One of eight schools selected as a Hall of Fame School, May 2005, by the Ohio Association of Elementary School Administrators.
- All-day, every-day kindergarten.
- Instituted standards-based report card during the 2004-2005 school year.
- Second year for Student Council. After a lively campaign, classmates elect one boy and one girl from each grade in grades two through five to represent them.
- Strong parent support. Parent teacher conference attendance is 100%. Clocked many hours of parent volunteer time.
- Communicate with parents through bimonthly newsletters from principal and classroom teachers, phone calls (phones in each classroom have been most helpful in this regard), assignment notebooks, "Good News From School" postcards, and Family Nights (Back-to-School, Math and Reading).
- Strong PTO. Provides financial support for technology, supplemental classroom materials and field trips. Executive Board, including teachers, meets monthly with the principal.
- Intervention programs include Accelerated Reading, Accelerated Math, Fast ForWord, DIBELS and Early Reading Intervention (ERI), and Ohio Reads.
- Positive Attitudes with Students (PAWS) is a staff-mentoring program that provides extra support for teacher nominated students.
- Use pacing charts for instruction since students tend to move within district from one attendance area to another.
- Summer school sessions, previously funded by Ohio Reads, will be held again during the 2005 summer, possibly funded by business partnerships.
- After-school Study Table is staffed by teachers who volunteer their time as well as by high school and Heidelberg College students.
- School-wide behavior program with a Golden Behavior Award at the end of each month for students who have had no incidents.
- Wall of Fame includes names of students who have done exceptional work (based on individual's progress, not compared to others).

### **Park Layne Elementary School, New Carlisle, Ohio**

- All-inclusive school including Title I personnel; extremely positive atmosphere.
- Use Baldrige – lots of assessment - standards of behavior.
- Focus on data – "Data is driving us" – Do a lot of testing to determine students' level. Teachers use student info from previous year to make decisions regarding grouping. Use data for making decisions regarding which students to include in summer school.
- Students write their own mission statements – issue their own rules.
- All students receive both grade level instruction and instruction on increasing skills at their instructional level. All students are in flexible coaching groups called "flexi" groups where teachers work with students in small groups, at their level - which can be below grade level, at grade level, or above grade level.

- An after school intervention time for all grade levels runs from January to March. First and second graders meet twice a week for 30 minutes and third, fourth, and fifth graders meet twice a week for one hour. A homework intervention room is held on two nights a week (Monday and Wednesday) for 30 minutes. All students are welcome to attend and work on studies for the next day.
- Students keep track of their behavior and also their Developmental Reading Assessment (DRA) level.
- A school-wide behavior plan uses a colored card system that involves students in taking responsibility for their own discipline.
- Extensive system of incentives and rewards.
- Big emphasis on inclusion of parents – Parent Center located in room at school.
- A Garden Club with 85 student members maintains a Pride Garden on the school grounds where a variety of vegetables are grown and harvested.
- CSR grant; had Ohio Reads grant, seeking other grant opportunities.

### **Port Washington Elementary School, Port Washington, Ohio**

- Treat all kids as our own kids – family concept – principal went to school there and now lives on a farm in the area.
- Blue Ribbon School in 2003-2004.
- Staff uses data to do an item analysis – create a map from weakest to strongest; work on the weakest for 10 minutes each day; students take test once a week to determine progress.
- Accelerated Reading Program – all tests on computers - librarian buys all the tests to match the books.
- Strong Alumni association that provides funds to buy books for the extensive library.
- Curriculum Director from ESC sees that all State information gets to the schools – works with each school on curriculum – highly valued by principal and staff.
- Each teacher sends home weekly newsletter – grade level teachers send a team newsletter home at intervals.
- A number of grants –
  - Foster grandparents – 4 hours a day in school – usually stay the entire day, 1 for each kindergarten, 1 for each first grade;
  - Books on Wheels – provides books for students to read while on the bus.
- Administrative Retreat each summer for superintendent, principals, curriculum director.

### **Roosevelt Elementary, Steubenville, Ohio**

- Second time for being recognized as School of Promise.
- All-day, every-day kindergarten since 1998-99 and all-day preschool and special needs programs for 15 years.
- Year-round school age child-care offered from early morning until 5:30 p.m.
- Summer programs are available to students including a Title 1 basic skills program and a program for children with moderate to more severe disabilities.
- The school and each class have a mission statement.
- Credit Success for All (SFA), adopted five years ago, for continuous improvement.
- Every student has an individual intervention plan that tracks the student's progress based on data.

- The full-time SFA building facilitator is a leader in the school and coaches teachers in the SFA approach.
- Teachers participate in intensive researched-based professional development as required by the SFA model.
- All grades participate in a daily uninterrupted 90-minute reading block and grades three to five participate in an uninterrupted 75-minute mathematics block.
- Students are homogeneously grouped for reading instruction, assessed every eight weeks and regrouped based on their performance.
- Every student has an individual intervention plan that tracks progress based on data.
- Students participate in computer-assisted instruction, both to remediate and accelerate, three periods per week.
- Students are required to read with their parents 20 minutes a night. The principal makes time available for students whose parents are not able to meet this requirement.
- Solutions Team that includes parents meets monthly to discuss concerns that could be interfering with student performance.
- A Quality Improvement Initiative that involves students in tracking and charting their own behavior has resulted in a significant reduction in disciplinary issues.
- Students lead parent-teacher conferences using data to report on their own progress.
- Individual students with no behavior incidents and classes that meet goals related to homework and correct responses in the Accelerated Reading Program are rewarded on a monthly basis. Pictures and names are posted on a Wall of Fame and these students are eligible to participate in a monthly drawing held for prizes donated by area businesses.
- Full-time teachers are selected from a pool who have worked half time for a year and from substitute teachers who work on 100-day contracts.

### **South Point Elementary School, South Point, Ohio**

- Started by looking at disaggregated data. This year had third graders take tests in fall. Took a professional day to look at analyzed results so weak areas could be targeted. Teachers use materials to provide appropriate intervention.
- Developing short cycle assessments that are given quarterly.
- After school intervention 8 weeks prior to the proficiency. Three times a week, teachers use their lunch period to provide help to students.
- Very involved PTO – principal has access to thousands of dollars to provide field trips, materials for classrooms, incentives, and rewards. PTO makes most of the money through the sale of entertainment books.
- Uses incentives and rewards liberally. Rewards for doing homework, getting a good grade, making progress, etc.
- Parent Coordinator – hold many parent activities including Parent Math Night, Parent Science Night, etc.

## Middle Schools

### Harding Middle School, Steubenville, Ohio

- Principal credits staff members, who he describes as “second to none” with success of school.
- Teachers conduct one-hour proficiency classes daily.
- Teachers use data from proficiency tests to determine areas in need of strengthening.
- Tutoring, including peer tutoring and after-school tutoring, is available to all students.
- A remedial summer school program that focuses on reading and math is provided to students who are not meeting expectations.
- Computer-assisted programs are popular with the students and many arrive early to access them prior to the start of the school day.
- Parents can access their child’s grades, attendance records and homework assignments through an online Progress Book.
- Awards Assemblies are held every nine weeks to recognize students for scholastic, athletic, and other accomplishments including attendance and citizenship.
- Students who participate in the Harding Enriches Lives of Pupils Through Services (HELPS) Club volunteer their services in the community.

The following schools met or exceeded the 75 percent standard with their students with disabilities during 2003-2004 on the reading and/or mathematics section of the Ohio Proficiency Test or the Ohio Graduation Test but did not meet all other existing SOP criteria.

### Miller South School for the Visual and Performing Arts, Akron, Ohio

- Only one remaining of ten magnet schools that began 12 years ago.
- Students audition to be accepted – admittance criteria is based on talent and commitment to education - competition is strong.
- Key is assessing students’ reading and writing skills – two academic areas where discrepancies can be pinpointed as students come from varying elementary schools within the district.
- Academic content standards are a given.
- Teach to the students’ strengths as the academics are imbedded into the arts.
- Low teacher turnover. Teachers are committed to the arts – not an 8–3:30 job – expectation is to go above and beyond.
- District initiative – Parents Know Best.
- District wide code of student behavior – “We don’t have discipline problems because the kids are engaged.”
- Resources room teacher went through Wilson training with the SERRC.
- Every year there is a field trip to New York – fundraisers support the cost and some scholarships – minimum of one adult for every two children.
- Very active PTA, more active Booster Club.
- A parent of a special education student noted, “What I really like is that parents have access to the teachers 24 hours a day by e-mail. Teachers post homework and assignments on the web. There is no reason for any child to fail.”
- A grandmother of a special education student stated that the school had been a “lifesaver” for her granddaughter who had come out of an extremely difficult environment. She credited the teachers for vast improvement in her granddaughter’s outlook as well as her grades.

- A 7th grade special education student who has been in the school since the 4<sup>th</sup> grade noted, "I didn't used to like the proficiency tests, but now they're fun!" She went on to say, "Two weeks ago I got 105 on my math test. It was the highest score in the class."

## **High Schools**

### **Fort Recovery High School, Fort Recovery, Ohio**

- Principal feels "smaller setting" is the key to their success. (Enrollment for grades 9-12: 320)
- Technology coordinator and teachers developed Curriculum Alignment Tool (CAT), a computerized program, in response to teachers' request for help with aligning curriculum to standards.
- Parents and teachers can access grades for students online through Edline. Additionally, some teachers post homework assignments.
- Teachers have access to computerized data reports and use when planning for instruction.
- Rubrics are used by many teachers and posted in classrooms. Students find them helpful.
- Principal committed to leveraging time for professional development whenever and however he can.
- Building and District Leadership Teams responsible for planning staff development.
- Summer in-service week held in July for district staff. Theme for 2005 – 3D (Data Driven Decision Making).
- Students are required to read during the summer. Summer reading is part of their first nine weeks' grade.
- Strong support from Business Advisory Council that meets quarterly.
- Strong support from parents and community. Just passed a ½% school income tax.
- District has been awarded a variety of grants over the years that have contributed to ongoing initiatives. The Access Grant has been a "key grant" for the district.

### **Leetonia High School, Leetonia, Ohio**

- Theme – No Excuses – for students not getting their homework done and for not getting the help needed with subjects. Teachers post homework on TeacherWeb.com website available 24/7.
- A 25-minute intervention period added to end of day – time devoted to study for the proficiency tests and for students to meet with teachers when help is needed in class or homework.
- Principal and teachers attended a conference to learn about the emotional well being of students so staff members were able to develop more understanding of and respect for students.
- Math teacher provides an after school program for parents so parents can review basic math skills and help their students
- Language arts teacher starts out each student with an "A" – it is up to the student to keep it.
- Professional Development Plan coordinated through the ESC provides three courses a year for all staff members.

- Personal student success story – Student who was grouped with her peers in a lower grade under a “Vegetable Patch” sign and was not presented with the opportunity to participate in the classroom and the general education curriculum was inducted into the National Honor Society in her senior year.

### **Newcomerstown High School, Newcomerstown, Ohio**

- 2003 State Principal of the Year – born and raised in the area
- Principal and superintendent visit all businesses on a regular basis and survey the businesses to determine the skills needed by graduates. School has four computer rooms – one devoted to the types of computers used by businesses in the area so students will be prepared to use them.
- Board in Guidance Counselor’s office denotes where seniors are going after graduation.
- Staff members conduct vertical team meetings to incorporate the academic content standards
- Use data to do item analysis – teachers teach in their own personal style.
- Freshmen take a practice test. Intervention specialist grades all the tests – determines those students who need intervention – works with specific teachers on areas in the test that need to be addressed. Students needing help are required to participate in after school intervention. Two weeks of after-school intervention before tests for all students – incentives and rewards used for all interventions.
- Work closely with parents – invitations to be included in intervention activities directed to parents of students who have “D” or “F.” Beginning of senior year, parents of seniors who are not doing well sent letter stating, “Your student may not be graduating.”
- Countywide program for discipline.

### **Westlake High School, Westlake, Ohio**

- Strong leadership and a culture where students want to be smart because it is “cool to be smart” are two of the many factors that have contributed to solid academic gains made by students with disabilities.
- Director of pupil services key in developing depth and continuity in the services for students with disabilities. He praised the ODE CD - Standards-Based CD – uses it to train teachers to create Individual Education Plans (IEPs) that are individualized and not “canned.” Using the rubric in the CD, he conducts reviews of randomly selected IEPs to assure alignment with the content standards.
- Curriculum alignment with the state standards has been completed K-12 in the district.
- Pacing guides and common assessments have been developed over the past year for grades K-12 in math and language arts. Science and social studies pacing guides are in place and common assessments ready to follow next year.
- In team teaching, both regular and special education teachers prioritize Power Indicators and review the assessment map to make certain that students are “getting” the standards and are being assessed properly.
- A regular ed teacher noted that following the modeling the special education teachers provided, she is now able to work with autistic students without spending time disciplining.
- An English teacher reported that the English classes at the school have completely changed to reflect the OGT.

- The Academic Coaching program is an essential tool in helping the students pass for the OGT. The academic coaching teacher has a classroom that is open all day for students needing extra help. Students who are failing classes are assigned to the room and students can self-assign themselves to the program during one of their study halls. Volunteer peer tutors are recruited for the various subject areas. Classroom teachers also work in the coaching room a period at a time. The coaching room contains files of sample tests students may use to practice the OGT. These are separated into subjects so students may work on that part they find troubling.
- Major goals of the CIP and building SIP call for a focus on identifying staff needs and training to implement the CIP and SIP. Principal allocates 113 sub days that include staff development at district cost and supplements another 35 days from the building budget. (Doug Reeves & Margaret Searle helped teachers align curriculum and identify power indicators. Amy Smith from Kent State helped link the goals and standards.)
- Strong Parent Teacher Student Association – 26 to 28 activities each year.