

A Positive School Culture



Parent and Community Involvement



Instruction Designed for All Students' Success



Rigorous Standards and Instruction

Schools of Promise



Strong Instructional Leadership

High Achievement for All Students

Ohio Department of Education

www.ode.state.oh.us and search for keyword **PROMISE**

Schools of Promise

High Achievement for All Students



Promising Schools

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All students can achieve at high levels.

And yet, not all groups of students have succeeded in our educational system. We see substantial gaps in achievement among different groups of students at every level of Ohio's educational system, especially for low-income students and students of color. Research tells us that if we close these gaps and generate high achievement for all groups of students, Ohio's economy will benefit significantly, and our students, families and communities will enjoy a better quality of life.

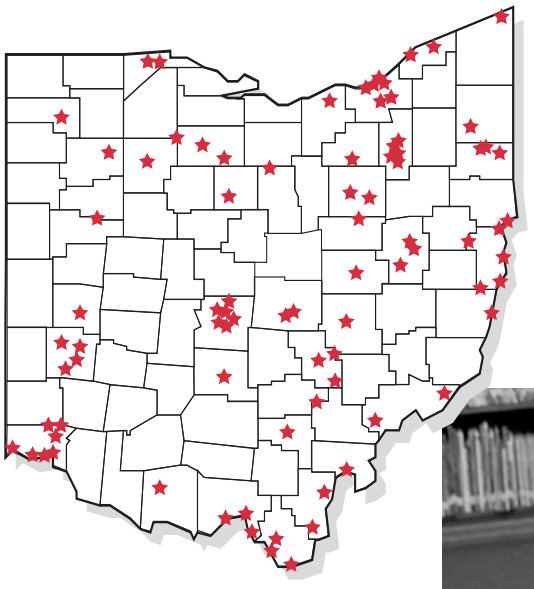
These gaps in achievement don't have to exist. Experience and a growing body of research tell us that when students don't perform well, it's more about the quality of teaching and learning in schools than it is about the child's background. We have direct evidence that proves this.

Each year in Ohio, we identify schools that are helping all demographic groups of students achieve, even when more than 40 percent of the students qualify for free or reduced-price lunch.

All students can achieve at high levels.

We find these Schools of Promise in rural Appalachia, in our urban centers and in our small towns and suburbs. Students in these schools not only meet state standards – they exceed them.

Our Schools of Promise send the message to the 1.8 million students in Ohio that where you live doesn't determine the quality of your education. And they tell the 117,000 teachers in our classrooms that no matter where you teach, your students can succeed. These schools are a resource for any educator or administrator who is interested in improving student achievement for all populations of students.



As we spread the word about these promising schools and their best practices, we hope to ensure that all of Ohio's children will receive the rich education they deserve in a democracy. In a fiercely competitive global marketplace, our students need advanced knowledge and skills to prepare them for 21st century workplace demands.



Promising Practices

We can all be proud of our Schools of Promise. But more importantly, we can all learn from the successful practices of these schools. The Ohio Department of Education commissioned case studies of these schools to look at leadership, teacher effectiveness, professional development, parent involvement, student behavior and community engagement.

Why are these Schools of Promise so successful?





In studying the practices of our Schools of Promise, evidence of five elements emerged:

1. Rigorous standards and instruction;
2. Strong instructional leadership;
3. Instruction designed for all students' success;
4. Parent and community involvement;
5. A positive school culture.

The way these elements are practiced reflects the unique community of each school, but the central themes remain constant. The detailed case studies provide scholarly insight into successful programs, practices and policies that helped these high-performing schools boost the achievement of all students.

View case studies at **www.ode.state.oh.us** and search for keyword **PROMISE**.



1 Rigorous Standards and Instruction

These schools deliver rigorous instruction aligned to the standards.

All students have access to challenging academic curricula, regardless of how they are grouped for instruction. Measurable and high academic goals are set for all students. State standards are used to explicitly plan, design and evaluate curricula and instruction. School personnel continually use assessment data to drive their decision making. Teachers pursue a variety of instructional strategies to ensure that their students acquire challenging skills.

Promising practices...

All classroom lesson plans at **Genoa Elementary School (Perry Local)** require the teacher to identify the standards for each subject or instructional area, the instructional performance and an evaluation component. All lessons in every curriculum area include an introduction, modeling, guided practice, assessment and intervention.

Teachers and administrators at **Withrow University High School (Cincinnati Public)** clearly communicate the standards to students and parents. All of the classes begin with the teacher outlining the plan for the day's lesson and identifying which standard is being addressed. As a result, students always know what is expected of them.

Fredericksburg Elementary School (Southeast Local) uses a mathematics program, Everyday Mathematics, because it aligns with Ohio's academic content standards and focuses on problem-solving and hands-on activities for students. In addition, the mathematics program "spirals" to allow students a smooth transition as they move from one level to the next.

Eastmoor Academy High School (Columbus City), a college preparatory high school, prepares students to perform well on the Ohio Graduation Test and college entrance examinations. The school's humanities program is an innovative, creative interdisciplinary curriculum that is team taught by a history teacher and an English teacher. From the ninth grade on, students take humanities courses that integrate the arts, philosophy and religion, architecture and social studies. Eastmoor prepares students for college with higher order thinking skills and intense writing that emphasizes research, analytical skills and literary criticism.

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2 Strong Instructional Leadership

These schools provide leadership that results in continuous improvement of instruction.

There is a shared responsibility for improving teaching and learning throughout the school. Teachers and administrators have regular opportunities to plan, work and learn with each other. Administrators focus primarily on student learning and good teaching. School personnel collaborate around instructional issues and learn from each other in ways that continually improve teaching. Innovative use of human resources and coherent professional development programming support the instructional process.

Promising practices...

The assistant principal, counselors and the athletic director partner with the principal at **Bucyrus High School (Bucyrus City)** to form an administrative team. The principal approaches this team for feedback on improvement initiatives, and then brings in other staff members who can spread positive change throughout the school. The school implements new improvement initiatives quickly and tweaks them to ensure they are meeting the needs of their students.

The administration at **Dawson-Bryant High School (Dawson-Bryant Local)** has found creative hiring practices to improve staff flexibility and instructional practices through the use of long-term substitutes and part-time teachers. Long-term substitutes are brought in on a regular basis to readily cover classes for teachers if they are ill, need to attend professional development or need assistance. By working at the school on a consistent basis, these long-term substitutes get to know the students, resulting in more effective classroom instruction when they work as substitutes. The school also uses experienced, part-time teachers, some of whom are retired, and shares teachers with the vocational education program.

A strong sense of professionalism and teamwork is imbedded in the everyday work of the teaching staff at **Port Washington Elementary School (Indian Valley Local)**. The school day was extended by contractual agreement to provide a block of collaboration time each morning from 7:35 a.m. until students arrive at 8 a.m., which allows for teamwork between and across grade levels. In addition to the principal spending a considerable amount of time in the classrooms, the district's superintendent and curriculum coordinator meet with every teacher for half a day twice each year.

Teachers at **Walker Elementary (Canton Local)** are strong instructional leaders who have shared planning time to collaborate on classroom strategies and goals, especially in language arts. Two literacy coaches work one-on-one with classroom teachers to model strategies that reach diverse learners and align with the language arts content standards. Coaches actually teach lessons and demonstrate how students can learn. They provide materials for small group instruction and help teachers set up centers in classrooms that include games and activities tied to strands and assessments.

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3 Instruction Designed for All Students' Success

These schools design instruction to ensure every student's success.

The school is relentless in its efforts to ensure that all students succeed, including children most at-risk for academic failure. Working under the assumption that no student is allowed to fail, the staff is continually assessing students to determine their academic progress and providing immediate intervention to those who are struggling. Teachers are given the time to collaborate, and the resources and flexibility to try a variety of innovative strategies that will ensure every student succeeds.

Promising practices...

The students at **William C. Bryant Elementary School (Cleveland Municipal)** often work in small groups based on their reading levels. Some of the teachers have experience working with differentiated instruction and multiple intelligences, so they vary activities to meet students' individual needs. They adjust the group composition, depending on what the class is working on.

Brickell Elementary School's (Defiance City) intervention program is fully integrated into every classroom and is an essential part of the school's success. The program relies heavily on assessments that enable substitute and Title I teachers to provide coordinated intervention. Through effective management, the teachers can provide individual attention for struggling students and can use customizable computer software programs to meet individual needs.

Special education at **Kyle Elementary School (Troy City)** is inclusive, and the school no longer has a self-contained resource room. The school had only one full-time intervention teacher three years ago and now has two intervention teachers and five intervention aides. Within the classroom, the special education teachers often work with mixed groups of students, including those with Individualized Education Programs (IEP), those at-risk and those who are average students.

To reach students with different learning styles and ability levels, teachers at **Centennial High School (Columbus City)** collaborate with one another and engage students in active learning connected to the real world. For instance, language arts teachers help students synthesize information and make connections between literature, themes, the modern world and their own lives. Students work on projects integrated across multiple subjects – such as physics and mathematics or history and language arts. Teachers encourage students to think independently, solve problems and develop concepts in stages. Interactive assignments allow students to find their own strengths.

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4 Parent and Community Involvement

These schools engage parents and the community to support student success.

Parents have multiple avenues for getting involved. The school works actively to build strong relationships with parents, families and community groups. The school reaches out to parents, families and communities in ways that help create a sense of true partnership – built on mutual respect and focused toward the common goal of improving student achievement.

Promising practices...

Burlington Elementary School (South Point Local) and Dawson-Bryant High School (Dawson-Bryant Local) both provide a parent training program, "Together We Can." This 10-hour program helps parents understand appropriate behavior in school, how to help their children succeed and how to be a volunteer.

Parents and students at **Roosevelt Elementary School (Steubenville City)** share responsibility for learning by reading together 20 minutes a night, with books provided by the school in take-home packs. Parents know that if this requirement is not met, their child will not be eligible for special activities at the school. To ensure that every student experiences success, a "Breakfast Reading Club" staffed by volunteer teachers provides a reading and response activity for students whose parents were not able to meet the 20-minute requirement at home.

The teachers at **William C. Bryant Elementary School (Cleveland Municipal)** attribute their school's high level of parent involvement to its contractual requirement between each student, parent and teacher, as well as its overall philosophy that parents are expected to play a major role in their children's education. This agreement, Our Commitment to Success, is signed every year and addresses academics, attendance and homework. Parents are expected to pick up their child's report card twice a year and attend monthly parent workshops on how to help their children with homework.

Using federal dollars, **Columbus Alternative High School (Columbus City)** employs two part-time parent consultants who serve as liaisons between families and staff. These two parents work 10 hours a week, using e-mails and phone calls to stay in contact with parents. If a student is absent, teachers and the consultants contact the family immediately. They also meet with parents to discuss warning signs for student disengagement, set individual student goals and monitor progress, and help parents transition their children into high school.

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5 A Positive School Culture

These schools create a culture where each individual feels valued.

The school focuses on making students the top priority, both in and out of the classroom. The teachers, administrators and facilities provide the best possible education and environment. The staff believes each student can excel, and has high expectations of students' work and behavior. High levels of respect and strong, supportive relationships among teachers, students and families are seen as key instruments in student excellence.

Promising practices...

Roosevelt Elementary School (Steubenville City) encourages students to work hard and behave appropriately through a reward system that revolves around getting their pictures and names up on a "Wall of Fame" in the front hallway of the school. Students who maintain good behavior for the entire month are added to the Wall of Fame. Classrooms that meet their monthly goals, such as the percentage of students completing reading and mathematics homework, also have their pictures posted on the Wall of Fame. Monthly drawings are held to award Wall of Fame students with prizes donated by area businesses.

Douglas MacArthur Elementary School (Cleveland Municipal) has a prevailing theme of "Kindness Counts," where staff members give Kindness Coupons to students who are caring to others. A monthly drawing is held for those students at the citizenship assembly, where 10 of them receive prizes. The school also has a Student of the Month, who excels in scholarship, citizenship and attendance.

From January to March, after-school tutoring is provided two nights a week at **Genoa Elementary School (Perry Local)**. Teachers eagerly sign up to participate, and the staff works very hard to get the students to attend. The principal sets up carpooling, and teachers drive students home after tutoring.

Administrators, teachers and students at **Struthers High School (Struthers City)** enjoy a personal, nurturing school culture where mutual respect is maintained through clear, strong discipline policies and high expectations for all. Teachers do not need to reprimand students. They use effective, interactive strategies to prevent discipline problems. Teachers feel responsible for making sure all students succeed, spending extra time with them after school and during lunch periods. At Struthers, teachers encourage students to perform at high levels and praise their efforts to improve.

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Promising Future

The Ohio Department of Education has sponsored case study research on the effective instructional practices and cultural qualities of Schools of Promise.

These case studies will benefit all schools, no matter who the schools serve or what challenges or successes they have experienced in the past.

We hope that one day, Ohio will become a State of Promise.

Schools of Promise
High Achievement for All Students

Where to read more

To view the Schools of Promise research,
or to learn more about the Schools of Promise,
visit the ODE Web site at
www.ode.state.oh.us and search for keyword PROMISE.