

Maple Lane Elementary Macomb Intermediate School District (MISD) Center Program



The results are proven,
the possibilities endless.SM



District: Macomb Intermediate School District (MISD)
Schools: Maple Lane Elementary, Rockwell Middle School and Neil Reid High School
Location: Macomb County in Michigan
Grades: K-12

General Education Students in the County:	150,000
Special Education Students in the County:	20,000
MISD Center Program Students:	1,500

In Michigan, as in several other states, traditional school districts are often supported by special agencies that operate outside of the district hierarchy. These organizations, called Intermediate School Districts, provide vital services to students with a wide

variety of special needs, from those suffering from a range of cognitive disabilities to those with physical and/or emotional challenges.

Michigan. The MISD provides programs and services to support the 20,000 special education students in the county. In addition to the services that the MISD provides within the local district schools, it also operates seven independent

“Many [students] are now for the first time viewing themselves as capable and skilled. For a great number of emotionally impaired children, that feeling of self-efficacy is something they have never known.” -- Dr. Elaine Kress, School Psychologist, Maple Lane Elementary

The Macomb Intermediate School District (MISD) is the third largest Intermediate School District in Michigan, serving some 150,000 students in the 21 public school districts, charter schools and private/parochial schools in Macomb County,

schools, collectively called Special Education Center Programs. To best serve those students in need of more comprehensive or immersive assistance, three schools (Maple Lane Elementary, Rockwell Middle School and Neil Reid High School) are dedicated specifically to helping students who suffer from severe emotional and behavioral impairments (SEI).

Setting Goals

Maple Lane Elementary, Rockwell Middle School and Neil Reid High School already have records of success when it comes to helping children and young adults with SEI reach their full potential and become independently-functioning students or members of society. The schools’ success has come from their comprehensive educational programs that partner with students, parents, local educational agencies and communities. The educators in the Macomb Intermediate School District know that emotional and behavioral problems can rarely be solved in a vacuum, and are often inherently tied to other, sometimes equally-fundamental issues.

One particularly notable related issue is that of reading ability. Students who come to a MISD Center Program school for behavioral reasons rarely do so without demonstrating academic problems as well, and delayed reading abilities are often at the core of such academic problems. Some students stay within the Center Program

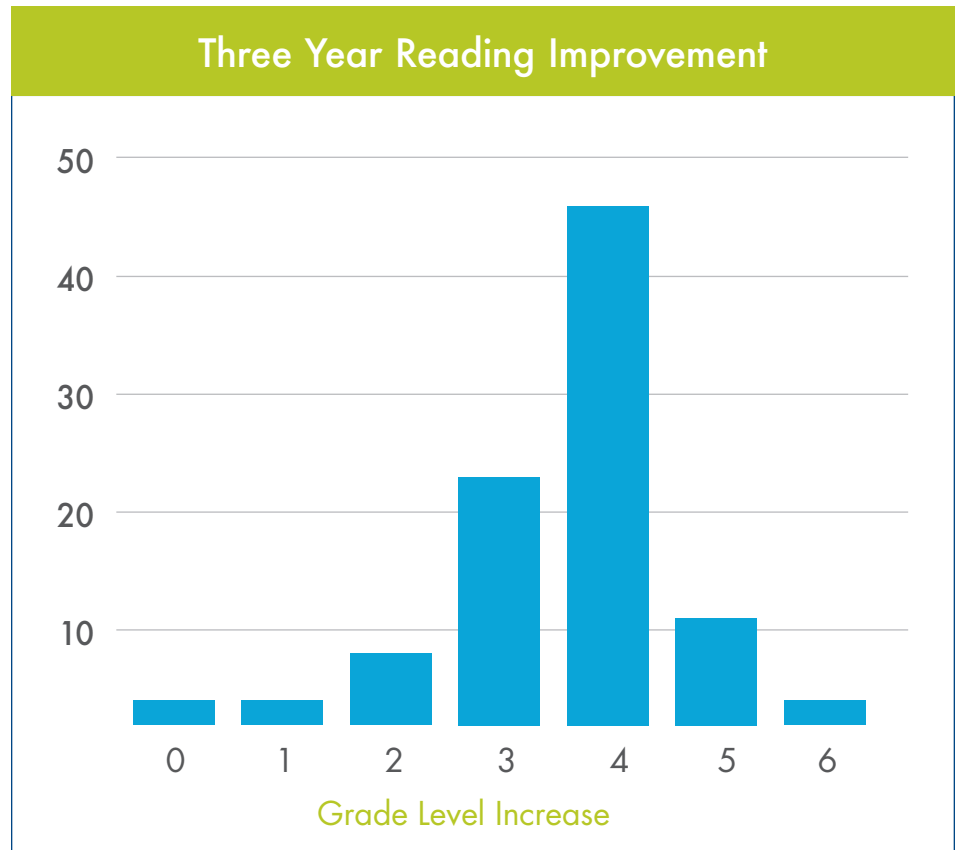
school system for the duration of their academic careers, but the MISD works to ensure that many transfer back into mainstream classrooms, and, for these students in particular, a solid foundational reading skill set is absolutely vital. For these reasons, the leaders of the MISD decided to completely revamp their reading program.

Implementing the Program

Given the importance of reading to the district's other educational goals, the search for a new teaching program was thoughtful and strategic. The district decided to bring in specialized reading consultants to work directly with the schools' established reading committees, who together looked at several different options for the renewed reading program (over the course of 13 work sessions) before eventually deciding to implement a pair of **McGraw-Hill Education** reading programs in tandem – **SRA Corrective Reading** and **SRA Reading Mastery**.

The two SRA programs complement each other well. SRA Reading Mastery, the best option for students on the lower end of the reading performance spectrum, is designed to instill the deep foundational reading skills necessary for later advancement, and it has been proven to help students decode and comprehend the meaning of print effortlessly—even students who are seriously at risk of failure. Once students establish the essentials, they can move on to SRA Corrective Reading, which is designed to provide intensive, sustained, direct instruction to target specific deficiencies, such as decoding or comprehension.

“We were looking for programs that were not only deeply rooted in research and offered strong intervention strategies, but programs that also aligned with the needs



of these specific students,” says Dr. Cynthia Alderman, Executive Director of Center Programs. “Corrective Reading and Reading Mastery offered both, and that was the driving factor for us.”

The first phase of the program's implementation, in the fall of 2009, was to introduce the program at Maple Lane Elementary, which, largely a function of the students' ages, has the highest percentage of non-readers of the three schools. Initial training was held over four days in August, during which teachers were trained on **SRA Reading Mastery** and the two **SRA Corrective Reading** modules, **Decoding** and **Comprehension**. SRA provided nine monthly consultant visits during the 2009-10 academic year, led first by Dr. Maria Collins, an independent consultant, and later by Sharman Rowe of McGraw-Hill Education. Throughout the entire process, McGraw-Hill Education sales representative, Leigh Brougher supported implementation by

coordinating training, resources and consultations.

Along with the switch to the new materials, Maple Lane made the commitment to devote a large portion of each day—120-150 minutes—to language arts instruction. The transition was school-wide, and, looking beyond any simple curriculum change, aimed to induce a true culture shift.

Academic Results

Three years into the program at Maple Lane, the improvement is undeniable. Of the students who have been in the **SRA Reading Mastery** program for all three years, 61% have advanced their reading skills at a rate of greater than one grade level per year, and an additional 23% have progressed at a rate of one grade level per year.

Perhaps most impressive are the success rates of students who were previously deemed “non-readers.” Non-readers who began in the

inaugural class and remain in the *SRA Reading Mastery* program have made an average gain of 4.61 grade levels in only three years, and several of these students are now reading at a 5.8 grade level. Students who began *SRA Reading Mastery* in 2009 but have since moved on to *SRA Corrective Reading - Decoding* have seen a similar average gain of 4.6 grade levels over three years, and students who moved on to *SRA Corrective Reading - Comprehension* have exceeded even those numbers, with an average gain of 5.6 grade levels—almost twice what might have been expected.

“The administrators love that the program puts clear focus on data driven results,” says Dr. Alderman. “It identifies deficit areas for students to help them truly master each skill.”

Teachers report that the structured approach lends itself perfectly to the Center Program’s overall methods, as evidenced by the tremendous gains made by students, and parents are ecstatic about the gains their children have made—especially for those who were previously non-readers.

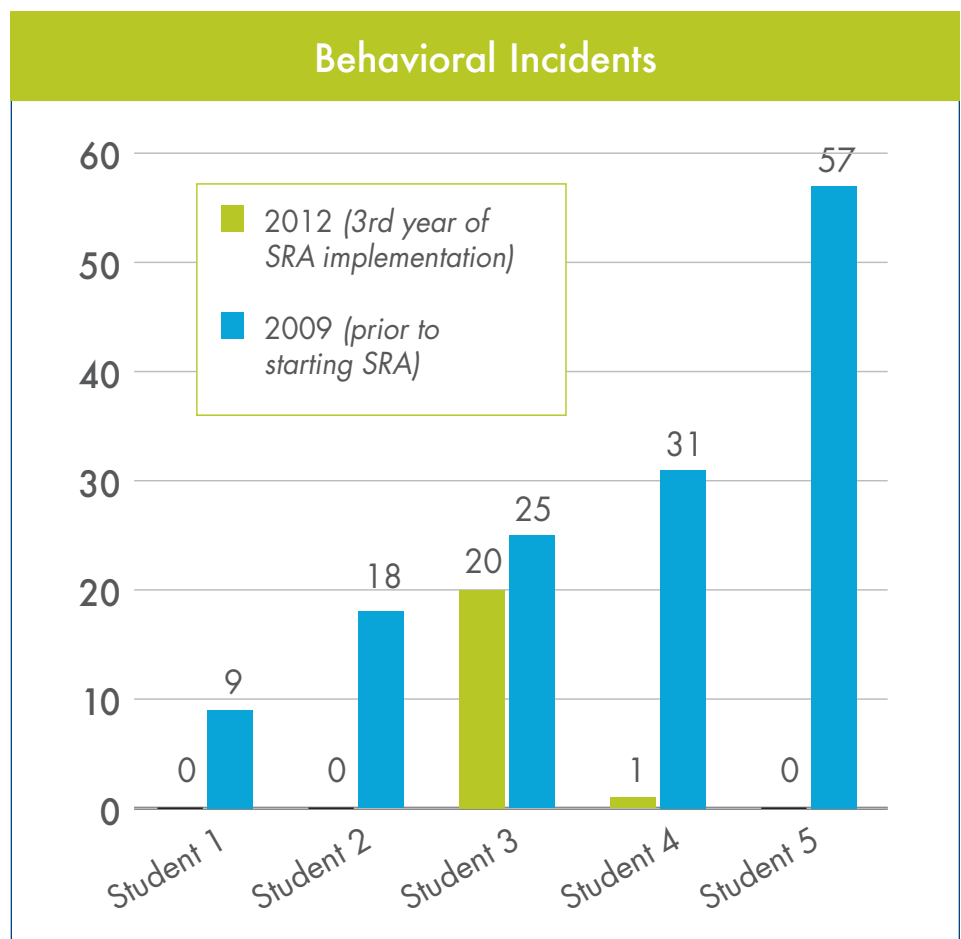
“Students are returning to their district schools!” says Dr. Alderman. “That has always been the goal, and that single fact really illustrates the overall success.”

Deeper Shifts

The program has driven other results that the Center Program community holds in even higher esteem than reading improvement rates that sometimes approach two grade levels per year.

“The real magic of the SRA program is that it turns students into believers in themselves,” says Dr. Alderman. “It’s especially rewarding to see this in older students, who have been struggling for so long.”

The SRA program has benefitted Maple Lane students in many ways



beyond reading. Dr. Elaine Kress, Maple Lane’s school psychologist adds: “Many are now for the first time viewing themselves as capable and skilled. For a great number of emotionally impaired children, that feeling of self-efficacy is something they have never known. We know that behavior problems are often a result of students’ built up academic frustration...so when things improve their whole demeanor and attitude improves!”

This story is reflected in data that is equally as impressive as the reading improvement numbers. The five students who were recorded as having the highest numbers of behavioral incidents in 2009 have all seen behavioral improvement—in 2012, four of these five had managed a 97%-100% decrease in their total number of referrals. Other previously highly disruptive students have even been fully integrated back into their local schools.

While there are many crucial elements to the MISD Center Program’s SEI success, the importance of reading cannot be understated. “We know reading is a critical indicator for success in life,” says Dr. Al Katsimpalis, Maple Lane’s Principal. “Reading truly drives everything.”

“The SRA reading instruction was a huge part of his success,” said the mother of one such student at a recent MISD board meeting.



Education