

# ARTHUR ROAD ELEMENTARY SCHOOL



Principal: Diane G. Terrell

<http://www.solonschools.org/art/index.asp>

Solon City School District  
Solon, Ohio

Superintendent: Joseph V. Regano

Arthur Road Elementary, celebrating its tenth anniversary during the 2006 – 2007 school year, is the largest of four elementary schools, kindergarten through fourth grade, in the Solon City School District. The school is also home to the district's Integrated Preschool Program that consists of nine classes and serves over 100 children.

This Blue Ribbon School, along with the other schools in the Solon district, has gained wide recognition for its emphasis on high expectations and academic achievement for all students. Parents of

both typically-developing students and students with disabilities move to Solon specifically for the schools and the

educational program. Not only are the

expectations high for all students, but the goal for students with disabilities is to accelerate their learning, to work toward closing the achievement gap that often exists between students with disabilities and typically-developing students.

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***We have high expectations for every child, no matter where they are or what their needs may be.  
A teacher***

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Nearly twenty percent of the students at Arthur Road are identified as students with disabilities. According to Principal Diane Terrell, "Our district is very serious about all children meeting standards and meeting their potential. It's a matter of looking at each child as an individual and determining how they learn best, and it is something we take very, very seriously." This philosophy is confirmed by Arthur Road's designation as one of Ohio's 21 Schools of Distinction. This State Superintendent's program recognizes schools whose students, including students with disabilities, achieve high academic performance.

Students with disabilities are included in regular education classrooms referred to as “collab” classes, where intervention specialists team teach with regular education teachers.

According to Mrs. Terrell, “The special education and regular education teachers work so closely together that, if you walk in the room, it would be hard to tell which was which.”

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***The “collab” teaching arrangement is exciting . . . the professional collaboration is very rewarding!***  
***A teacher***

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Students who are significantly behind grade level are pulled out for reading and math instruction.

## **Leadership**

Teachers at Arthur Road refer to their principal as a “Principal of Distinction” who creates an atmosphere of teamwork, trust, and mutual respect. She shows her appreciation of her staff in many ways, and teachers report feeling supported in terms of their professional and personal lives.

Mrs. Terrell has been principal at Arthur Road since it opened. She is a compassionate leader who has created a culture of respect for students and teachers, holds high expectations for both students and teachers, and values and rewards achievements.

Mrs. Terrell finds balancing the management of the school and being an instructional leader to be a real challenge. She has found that having well-organized operating procedures and routines in place minimizes unexpected interruptions, such as an issue in the lunch room, and provides her with more time to focus on being the instructional leader. However, she definitely believes that teachers should share in the responsibility for instructional leadership, so she meets on a regular basis with the grade-level representatives, instructional leaders from each of the grades. These instructional leaders meet with their respective grade level teams to share information learned through their meetings with the principal and to collaborate on issues around curriculum, assessment, and instruction. The instructional leaders may meet two or three times during any

one week, and the principal meets with each of the grade-level teams at least once a week.

Not only is leadership shared within the school, but also throughout the district. Assistant superintendent Deborah Siegel describes the Solon City School District as a “learning organization” and the central office staff as being the “leaders of learners.” She talks about the consistency in leadership from the school board down through the system and stresses “the key to the district’s success is commitment and focus. Everyone has the same focus. We’ll do whatever it takes for all children to learn.”

## **Professional Development**

A tone of respectful learning is evident at Arthur Road Elementary School. Teachers describe professional development as a way of life. They consider teaching to be a profession, not just a job, and believe that they are a learning community. Solon City Schools, as well as Arthur Road Elementary School, place a high premium on the value of professional development and have made considerable commitments to furthering the education of the staff. Teachers refer to Deborah Siegel, who is responsible for curriculum, as providing tools for teachers to keep learning on track. Teachers in the district are required to take a six-hour literacy course with the literacy coordinator and a course with the technology coordinator during their first year of employment. An in-district masters’ degree program in affiliation with Ashland University is offered on Solon’s campus, with the courses primarily taught by personnel from Solon City Schools. The goal for this program is to “learn it in the evening, take it into class the next day.”

Additionally, job-embedded professional development is ongoing at Arthur Road, where there is a strong emphasis on collaboration with “a lot of learning just naturally occurring throughout the day.” Regular education teachers and intervention specialists collaborate on an ongoing basis. Collaboration time is built into the school day by scheduling grade-level specials such as music and art at the same time so classroom teachers can meet two periods a week. Also,

teachers find time to confer before and after school and during lunch, and sometimes collaboration even occurs “on the run.”

A curriculum resource teacher, a guidance counselor, a district literacy coordinator, and district technology experts provide support to teachers on a flexible basis, as required to assist them in meeting the individual needs of the students. These specialists and content area experts not only offer suggestions but may work collaboratively with the teachers in the classrooms.

## **Curriculum and Instruction**

The curriculum at Arthur Road School and throughout the Solon City Schools is staff-developed and aligned with Ohio’s Academic Content Standards. Teachers credit the district for their successful alignment of the curriculum, reporting that many opportunities have been made available for teachers throughout the district to work together to pull apart the standards and indicators and to develop common assessments. The alignment of the curriculum has focused on vertical as well as horizontal (across the same grade) alignment, so students are prepared for transitioning to the next grade level.

Textbooks are used mainly as additional resources. The Solon Science Committee developed its own textbook after reviewing a number of published series. Third grade teachers use “Curriculum Map at a Glance” to assure that all teachers at that grade level are introducing the same concepts within a given quarter. Pacing guides have been developed for math, social studies and science. Students write “I Can” statements that correspond to the indicators, and these statements are posted in the classrooms. Students report that these statements “tell us what we’re learning in each unit.” “I Can” statements are shared with parents and have resulted in teachers receiving fewer questions from parents regarding what is being taught.

The English Language Arts program at Arthur Road is delivered through a daily 90-minute literacy block. This program is based on a comprehensive literacy approach that the Solon City Schools committed to over nine years ago. Reading, writing, and word study (spelling) are taught through a workshop format that includes whole group instruction, independent work, small-group guided

instruction, and teacher conferencing, which allows students to meet individually with the teacher to share work and receive feedback. This conference time may also be used to assess student progress. Teachers refer to the Guided Reading (where children are started at their instructional level and moved forward as they master specific skills) as the key factor in their reading program. Additionally, Reading Recovery, a 20-week intervention program, is used to address reading gaps for the lowest-achieving first graders. Teachers credit both of these approaches for marked growth in their students' achievement.

The importance of mathematics is emphasized through an 80-minute block of daily instruction. *Math Trailblazers* was adopted by the school district as a supplement to the teacher-developed curriculum. This series involves students in many hands-on lessons that include the use of manipulatives. Students also spend time working with partners or in groups discussing their thinking about how to solve problems and discussing alternate ways that can be done. Whenever possible, real-life examples are used that correlate to the concepts being studied. Students also use classroom or lab computers to create spreadsheets. First in Math, a web-based program, supplements the study of math facts. Students are able to access this program at home where they are required to spend at least 10 minutes a night on their computers. Teachers note that students using this program are mastering the facts more quickly. Fourth grade students interviewed during the onsite visit identified math as their favorite subject and enthusiastically described their use of First in Math.

Science and social studies at Arthur Road are also "as hands-on as we can make them." An inquiry-based model is used to explore concepts.

Technology is integrated within all the core subject areas.

### **Data-driven Instruction**

Data is used daily to drive instruction and improve student performance at Arthur Road Elementary. A comprehensive online student information system, developed by district personnel, provides teachers with on-demand access to each student's demographic, behavioral and testing information. This system allows teachers to generate reports in a variety of ways, including individual,

grade-level, and classroom reports that can be produced in a graphical format.

This information facilitates the grouping

of students based on instructional needs. Prior to the beginning of the school year, teachers use this system to review summative information in each of the content areas for students assigned to their classrooms.

Achievement test results are analyzed with assistance from the district literacy coordinator. Diagnostic tools, including the Developmental Reading Assessment (DRA) and Qualitative Reading Inventory (QRI), are used to determine students' strengths and weaknesses and identify specific instruction needs. Common assessments, developed by cross-district committees, are used to measure progress along with a variety of daily classroom assessments. Information from all these sources provides vital feedback to students and teachers in order in to improve academic performance.

At the beginning of the year, teachers analyze and use the data available to determine grade level SMART (Specific, Measurable, Attainable, Results-Oriented, Time-Bound) goals. At the end of the school year, teachers share the results of their SMART goal data with one another. In addition, students are formally assessed diagnostically in reading, writing, spelling, and math to ensure that they have achieved adequate yearly progress during the school year as well as to lay the groundwork for guiding individualized instruction for the next school year.

At Arthur Road, conversations about instruction all focus on collaboration, which is more than a cliché at this School of Distinction and is credited by Mrs. Terrell and her staff as the critical factor for their success with all students. Everyone at Arthur Road, including the librarian, the art teacher, and the physical education teacher, works together to assure that all students are progressing. Instruction is differentiated based on assessment data. When a student is struggling academically, the Pyramid of Strategies process from *The Treasure Chest* may be implemented. This process focuses on the identifying and

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***Our instruction is totally data-driven. That's how we know who needs what.***

***A teacher***

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***We've always collected data, but we've been "talking about" data for about the past eight years.***

***Diane Terrell, Principal***

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implementing of a research-based practice/instructional strategy. If the selected strategy does not prove to be effective and the student continues to have difficulties, a team of professionals and the parents are brought together to identify a specific goal and develop a plan that is carried out and monitored.

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***Solon is a community that  
really supports its children.  
A Teacher***

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## **Culture**

Arthur Road's Three R's – Be Respectful, Be Responsible, and Remember the Golden Rule – establish the basis of interactions for students and staff. Everyone takes these expectations seriously, and the results are reflected in the respectful and positive school climate that exists in this elementary building.

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***We pledge to do our best, to be respectful,  
responsible, and kind to everyone so that we  
all can grow, have fun and learn from our  
teachers and from each other.***

*The Arthur Road Pledge*

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This climate is reinforced monthly when students celebrate a school Spirit Day. It begins with two fourth grade students leading the entire student body in reciting the school motto – “Arthur Road is a welcoming and safe place for all learners” – and the school pledge.

Problem situations at Arthur Road are used as learning situations. Mrs. Terrell calls herself a “behavior coach,” helping kids to make better choices. She trusts the judgment of her teachers to implement a behavior management system. For example, fourth grade teachers have implemented a program called “Starbucks.” Students earn Starbucks for specific accomplishments. These can be used to purchase items; if a student forgets a homework assignment, they have to pay back the teacher. Third grade teachers have developed a ticket reward system. There is a school-wide culture of respect, and teachers say that, for the most part, kids just really want to please.

Arthur Road is fortunate to have a full-time guidance counselor who provides monthly classroom guidance lessons and works with individual students who have personal issues. She also facilitates groups for friendship and changing family dynamics for students in need of this type of support, assists

with coordinating social services for individual students, and makes “tough parent phone calls” when they are needed. Also, the school psychologist, who is assigned to the building on a half-time basis, provides students with small group sessions that focus on building their self-confidence.

Contributing to this positive climate are opportunities to recognize students’ academic and behavioral successes. Twice a month each teacher nominates one student from his or her class to be a “Star Student.” The Star Students from each grade level have lunch with the principal, who shares with the group the teachers’ feedback regarding the reason each student was selected for this honor.

## **Parent and Community Involvement**

Staff members at Arthur Road are in regular contact with parents, either personally, electronically, or in print. Teachers are always available for parent conferences in person or by phone. Voice mail and e-mail facilitate contacts. Each teacher also has a Web page for posting information. Most teachers have a way of communicating weekly progress to parents such as a learning log that is maintained by the student. Report cards, which are standard-based, are issued quarterly. Parents report that they appreciate the fact that the Arthur Road teachers are open and honest with them about their children’s progress so they can be aware of what they can do to support their children.

The PTA plays a vital role in life at Arthur Road, with their members present to help in the classrooms daily as well as to work on the 32 active committees. These committees coordinate numerous events, including the Kindness Week, special events for each grade level such as VIP breakfasts, and a weekend bowling party for second and third grades, assemblies throughout the year, an ice cream social prior to the beginning of the school year, and a Family Fun Night. To fund these special events, the Arthur Road PTA and the Solon Council of PTAs conduct one yearly fundraiser. News of all events are included in the *Arthur Road Elementary PTA Newsletter* that is published monthly and also posted on the district’s Web site.

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***“They don’t sugar coat anything here, and we really appreciate that!”***

***A Parent***

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A PTA Community Outreach Committee is responsible for a variety of activities such as having students make valentines for senior citizens, collecting books to be donated to the Metro Health Medical Center for patients and their siblings, and collecting donations for UNICEF during trick-or-treating. This committee also works with the school staff to facilitate the annual EWOW Day (Explore the World of Work) where parents and community members share information with the students about their respective professions.

The strong support of the community for their schools is evidenced by the 65% passage rate of a recent school levy. This support is especially impressive, since only 35% of the residents have children attending the schools.

## Arthur Road Data

<b>SCHOOL PROFILE</b>	
2004-2005 Building Rating	Excellent
Enrollment	437
Grade Levels	K-4
Economically Disadvantaged Students	4.5%
Limited English Proficient Students	2.5%
Students with Disabilities	19.5%
African-American Students	13.1%
Asian or Pacific Islander Students	8.5%
Multi-Racial Students	3.4%
White Students	74.2%

<b>SOLON CITY SCHOOL DISTRICT PROFILE</b>	
2004-2005 District Rating	Excellent
District Enrollment	5145

## **Schools of Distinction**

The Ohio Department of Education (ODE) named 21 schools to the first (2004 – 2005) list of Schools of Distinction, celebrating high-achieving schools that have significant numbers of students with disabilities. To make the cut, schools must:

- Have at least 75 percent of students with and without disabilities score proficient or above on a combination of all proficiency, achievement, and Ohio Graduation Tests administered during the past three years;
- Have at least four percent of their students identified as having a disability;
- Serve students of varying disabilities;
- Earn a combined performance index score of 100 or more out of 120 for the most recent reporting period;
- Meet adequate yearly progress (AYP) requirements for the last school year; and
- Not be involved in any investigation that would call their test scores into question.

The 21 schools earning the award during 2004-2005 included nine elementary buildings, one middle school, one junior/senior high school, and 10 high schools located in both large urban and small town settings. At 13 schools, students with disabilities made up 10 percent or more of the student population.