OLi⁴ in Action: Redesigning Systems to Reach Every Student

How Louisville Middle School Strengthened Tier 1 Instruction and Targeted Intervention

SCHOOL PROFILE
Louisville Middle School, Louisville City School District (Grades 6-8)

Louisville City School District

PRINCIPAL: Jason Orin

ENROLLMENT: 640+ students

OLi⁴ PARTICIPATION: 2021–2023

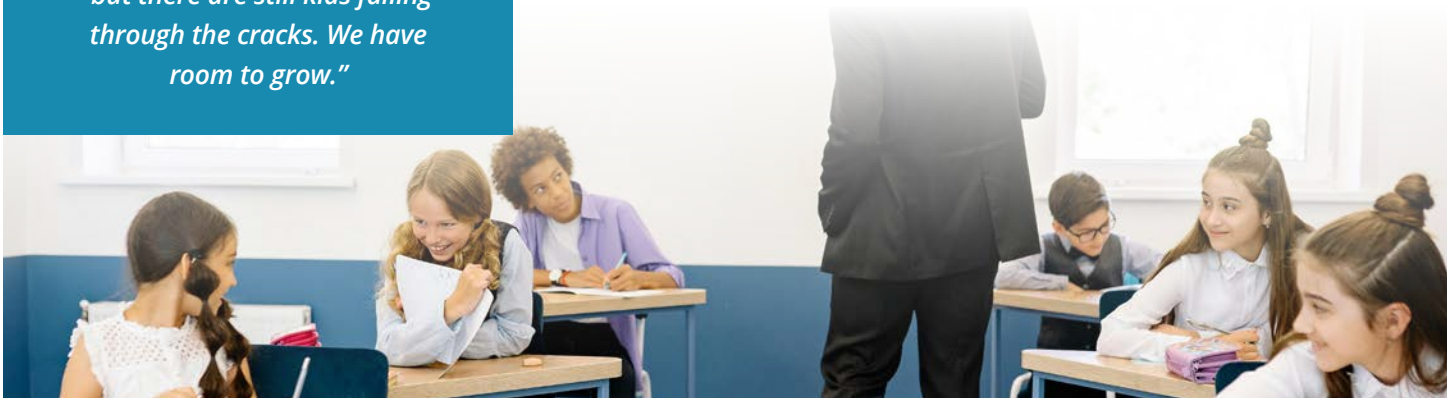
At Louisville Middle School, the work did not begin with a new program. It began with a question: Are we truly reaching all students?

Principal Jason Orin, a 19-year veteran administrator and OLi⁴ Cohort 8 participant, believed his school was doing well. Scores were solid, and staff were committed.

Through OLi⁴, he began to see something more clearly:

> *"We get pretty good scores, but there are still kids falling through the cracks. We have room to grow."*

That realization sparked a shift in the school's systems.



REFRAMING LEADERSHIP: FROM STRUCTURE TO PURPOSE

When Jason began OLi⁴, his teacher-based teams and the district leadership team were functioning—but his building leadership team lacked clarity.

"It kind of seemed like the weakest link," he reflected.

Through OLi⁴ resources and structured reflection, the building leadership team was repurposed around a shared belief:

> *"Every kid in this building belongs to every staff member. It's never your kids or my kids—it's our kids."*

That mindset became embedded in staff meetings, written communications, and daily conversations.

The shift was subtle, but powerful.

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REDESIGNING THE SCHEDULE TO SUPPORT MTSS

One of the most visible changes came from rethinking the master schedule. Previously, students had:

- 93 minutes of math daily
- 93 minutes of ELA daily
- Limited flexibility for intervention or enrichment

The team realized strong instructional blocks were not enough without structured support time, so they redesigned the day.

Now, every afternoon includes "PAWS" (Purposeful Academics with Students)—a no-new-instruction block dedicated to:

Targeted intervention	Skill reinforcement	Enrichment opportunities	Specially designed instruction

Students rotate based on need. If a student struggles on an assessment, they receive targeted support. If they are proficient, they engage in extension or independent work. This schedule redesign has now been sustained for three years.

STRENGTHENING TIER 1 INSTRUCTION

OLi⁴ also prompted a hard look at curriculum coherence. Jason noted that while math had a strong adopted curriculum, other subjects relied heavily on teacher-created materials.

In response, Louisville:

- Adopted new ELA curriculum
- Integrated vetted materials in science and social studies
- Prioritized financially sustainable, high-quality instructional resources
- Embedded high-yield strategies from John Hattie into professional learning cycles

These instructional shifts are showing measurable results:

- Strongest fall MAP results on record
- Performance Index increasing each year for the past three years
- More students moving from Basic to Proficient
- Increasing state test passing rates

Instruction is more aligned. Teachers are more collaborative. Students are demonstrating stronger readiness across grade levels. Jason shared that seventh grade ELA teachers are now noticing students entering with stronger writing skills than in previous years.

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BEFORE ▸ AFTER: FROM STRUCTURE TO SYSTEMS THAT SERVE EVERY STUDENT

Before OLi⁴	After OLi⁴
Strong core blocks (93 min math & ELA) but limited time for intervention	Daily "PAWS" block built into schedule for targeted intervention and enrichment
Building leadership team lacked a clear instructional purpose	Building leadership team repurposed around shared vision: *"All of our kids"*
Tier 1 instruction uneven across subjects	High-quality curricula piloted and adopted across content areas
Intervention reactive and hard to schedule	Systematic Reading Lab + math intervention embedded into the day
Teacher collaboration was compliance-based	Daily team time with data-driven ownership

TARGETED READING LAB: FILLING THE GAPS

One of the most powerful examples of impact is the creation of a Reading Lab. Students identified through screening assessments meet twice weekly (two hours total) with an intervention specialist to focus on:

- Phonemic awareness
- Decoding
- Fluency
- Foundational literacy gaps

Groups are small—often fewer than eight students.
The environment is intentionally stigma-free.

> ***"They know they struggle, but they do not want to be singled out, especially in middle school. The teacher has made it such a safe space."***

Students chart their own fluency growth, see their progress, and gain confidence. At the same time, math intervention aligned with Math Advantage is driving significant gains, with some students moving entire performance bands between grade levels.

EXPANDING THE IMPACT: WRITING AND BEYOND

Louisville's teachers now have:

- One hour of daily team time embedded in the schedule
- Weekly collaboration with the instructional coach and administrators
- Data-driven teacher-based team conversations
- Clear alignment to district goals

Professional dialogue is continuous, not compliance-based.

What once felt like required meetings now feels like ownership.

> ***"There's no shame, no blame, no excuse—it's just what do we need to do, and how can I support you?"***

WHAT THIS MEANS FOR OHIO EDUCATORS

Louisville's story shows that system redesign changes student outcomes.

As systems strengthened:

- Students received timely intervention without missing core instruction
- Tier 1 instruction became more consistent and coherent
- Teams used data proactively rather than retroactively
- Expectations were aligned across grade levels

Students who once struggled to stay on track are now gaining traction—and middle school has become a turning point for growth.