

## Glover Community Learning Center

935 Hammel Street

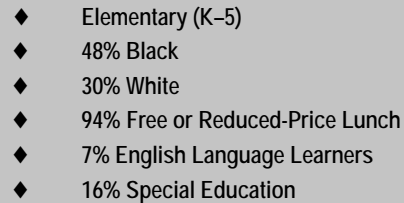
Akron, OH 44306

Principal: Rebecca Cacioppo

---

Glover Community Learning Center serves more than 500 K–5 students in Ohio’s Akron City School District. The after-school program implemented by Glover Community Learning Center is designed and supervised at the district level. Akron After School provides after-school programs in eleven elementary schools and two middle schools. The program originated from parents’ expressed need for a

safe place for students to learn after the regular school day ends. Supported by multiple funding streams, Akron After School provides free, rigorous, after-school academic interventions and enrichment activities to eligible students in a number of the district’s highest-poverty, lowest-performing elementary schools, including Glover Community Learning Center. This community learning center functions as a regular school during the day but provides additional services, such as adult education programs, at night and on the weekends. The strength of the program at Glover, in particular, lies in the dedication of its teachers, careful alignment of the curricula with the regular school day, and efforts to meet the academic needs of all students, especially those struggling the most.

- 
- ◆ Elementary (K–5)
  - ◆ 48% Black
  - ◆ 30% White
  - ◆ 94% Free or Reduced-Price Lunch
  - ◆ 7% English Language Learners
  - ◆ 16% Special Education

Components of the district’s after-school program include:

- Targeted interventions with scripted lesson plans (1.5 hours per day for four days). These lessons reinforce the skills taught in class, providing more detail to help struggling students understand concepts and retain strategies and facts. Up to 20 students can receive homework support provided by one supervising teacher, with possible support from a high school or college student. Upper grade activities serve fewer students than lower grades, since course work is more intensive.
- Enrichment classes (1 hour per day). The enrichment component provides students their choice among 15 fun yet academic classes, such as theater, sports, and ballet. City recreation classes, taught by two staff members, can hold up to 30 students, while a class like ballet holds 10 to 15 students.
- Homework club (1 hour per day). This optional club is designed to help students with organizational and study skills, teaching them to keep track of due dates and organize notebooks. Students with parent permission forms may choose to do homework during the homework club time instead of participating in one of the enrichment classes.

### **Data-Informed Instruction**

Instruction at Akron After School is tailored to student needs based on assessments. Although there is not enough time for fully individualized instruction, individualization is prioritized. After-school instructors give a pre-test on the first day of program instruction to measure students' baseline skill levels. In addition, they provide the program coordinator with regular updates about students to determine if they need additional services or more tailored instruction. School-day teachers provide after-school instructors with assessment data for individual students to supplement the pre-test results. Based on students' academic ability, after-school instructors may pair up students with differing skill levels. School-day teachers also provide after-school instructors with information about what happens during the regular school day—what was taught and what needs to be taught and reinforced.

Across the district, intervention assistance teams utilize data to identify struggling students for out-of-school programs and specific interventions. These teams include a school psychologist, counselor, two regular teachers, and two special education teachers.

The Akron After School program presents opportunities for teachers to incorporate time- and materials-intensive activities not possible during regular school hours. The program also supplies time to try experimental teaching strategies and instruction differentiation. Akron After School instructors are able to break students into small groups and change the pace of instruction according to students' needs. The program also incorporates social and team skills building by emphasizing team and peer-group work. With the school-day content at times repeated and reinforced, students have opportunities to receive extra help and rehearse material learned in the classroom.

### **Employing Effective Teaching Strategies**

All program instructors are encouraged to participate in professional development opportunities available to classroom teachers, such as in-service days. In addition, they receive professional development focusing on teaching scenarios, manipulatives, hands-on learning, and 3-D scientific models to engage students. Also, the district created in-house expert teams so teachers with experience can lead and guide others in using technology and other aspects of the after-school program.

### **Encouraging Collaboration Among Teachers**

The principal at Glover Community Learning Center makes teacher collaboration a priority, and provides common planning time to facilitate this collaboration, which typically occurs in non-core classes such as music or gym. Common planning time enables school-day and after-school instructors to exchange ideas, share knowledge about students participating in the program, and implement instructional strategies. Grade-level teachers plan the kind of tutoring and added instruction that would help their students grasp the material taught during the regular school day. They also collaborate on forming groups to help students develop socially and academically. This effort reflects a general drive toward connected learning—learning that links what happens in the after-school program to what happens during the regular school day.

Several classroom teachers participate in the program and instruct the same students they have during regular school hours. This alignment provides teachers who are more familiar with the students' needs more time to provide subject-specific interventions.

### **Aligning Program Curriculum With the School Day**

The students play a role in monitoring their school and after-school activities. They fill out daily planners and individual log books to keep a record of school-day assignments and their own behavior. The program instructors also show them how to graph their academic and behavioral performance over time. This log book is reviewed by parents and teachers and requires signatures from both.

### **Evaluating the After-School Program to Improve Student Learning**

Glover Community Learning Center participates in the districtwide evaluation of the Akron After School program. Akron City School District evaluates the program annually to identify areas for improvement. This evaluation, conducted by an external evaluator, examines a variety of measures including state-administered test scores, attendance, interviews, focus groups, and surveys of parents, students, and teachers. Results of this evaluation showed that students who participated in the after-school program performed better on standardized tests than non-participants. The evaluation explicitly showed positive effects on students' behavioral and academic performance that could be tied to program participation, and program participants were shown to have a greater sense of belonging and involvement in the school.

Glover Community Learning Center aids the district in its evaluation and collects data on site-specific activities. The coordinator at Glover submits data to the district every year. These data include attendance rates, grades, and number of behavioral incidents. The district-level program uses these data as the basis to evaluate, reform, and improve instructional practices, identify needed interventions, and assess both student and teacher practices.

A comprehensive needs assessment guides program design. In order to inform out-of-school programming and monitor progress, program officers collect multiple types of data, including grades, homework completion rates, disruptive behavior instances, and standardized test scores.

The principal at Glover has noted that with the introduction of the Akron After School program, the classroom climate improved. Struggling students are less easily frustrated, as they are aware that they will be able to get extra help after school. Students get a chance to practice their lessons in a different way. Likewise, school-day teachers can move more quickly in instruction so that higher-achieving students get an academic boost, while the needs of the lower-achieving students may be addressed in-depth after school.

This project has been funded at least in part with Federal funds from the U.S. Department of Education under contract number ED-PEP-11-C-0068. The content of this publication does not necessarily reflect the views or policies of the U.S. Department of Education nor does mention of trade names, commercial products, or organizations imply endorsement by the U.S. Government.