

# Stepstone Academy, OH



## Skyrocketing Growth from the Start: How Young Learners Can Excel

Stepstone's educational leaders knew they needed a research-based assessment to support differentiation and track performance against rigorous state standards. They chose computer adaptive MAP® Growth™ K-2 to keep the team's mix of face-to-face and technology-based instruction focused on student learning and growth.

Curriculum Specialist Colleen Lennon explains the decision to add MAP Growth K-2 to their toolkit: "To be honest, there was no contest. It's the most well-researched test out there. I'm continually impressed by the norm studies and other research NWEA™ publishes. I feel good about the quality of the results. When I'm asked about the credibility of the test, I know what I'm saying is research-based, and there are many studies to back it up. We've been thrilled to be able to work with a company like this."

### **College and Career Readiness Companion**

MAP Growth K-2 reinforces educators' efforts by aiding in-the-moment instructional practices, tracking growth throughout the school year, and predicting performance on high-stakes summative assessments. "It's a winning combination," says Lennon. "We're working to make a lasting difference to help break the cycle of poverty."

All students take MAP Growth K-2 three times per year: fall, winter, and spring. The computer-based, adaptive format of the assessment fits in seamlessly with other activities. "Our students are so used to technology, they actually perform better on the computer than with paper and pencil," says Lennon. Each season, the interim assessment results help guide the team in evaluating programs and differentiating instruction.

MAP Growth K-2 data helps Stepstone Academy teachers keep small group work and daily online instructional time focused. Lennon says, "We use MAP Growth K-2 reports to ensure our college and career readiness alignment is great. We've started to develop a list of skills to incorporate into our teaching so that we can be sure we're setting students up for success."

At Stepstone, rigorous academics aren't the sole priority: it's a mix of teaching and high expectations. Lennon explains, "From a young age, we focus on students being college and career ready. We expose them to rich experiences outside the neighborhood. We talk to them about where they're heading and the types of jobs they can do."

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**Colleen Lennon, Curriculum Specialist**  
Stepstone Academy, OH

### **Growth by Leaps and Bounds**

“Looking at our MAP Growth K-2 assessment results, it’s pretty incredible to see what the students could do. I’ve been in urban education for 10 years, but I’ve never seen anything like this. The growth was off the charts,” Lennon shares.

In kindergarten mathematics, Stepstone students achieved a mean growth of 26 points on the RIT scale—a jump from the 4th to the 77th percentile in just one year. In first grade mathematics, students soared from the 8th to the 73rd percentile. In reading, the mean growth was almost 25 RIT points in both kindergarten and first grade (from the 12th to the 63rd percentile in kindergarten, and to the 65th percentile in 1st grade).

Lennon reflects, “I believe the growth is a combination of everything we’re doing: the daily computer time, the differentiation, the focused work on skills we’ve identified as needing improvement with the help of MAP Growth. Seeing how far we’ve come this year, we’re absolutely thrilled. As we move forward, our goal is for all of our students to be able to reach the benchmarks. We’re working to prepare them for our state’s upcoming summative assessment, PARCC. We’re ready to continue raising the bar.”



## **School Snapshot**

CHARTER SCHOOL

**CLEVELAND, OH**



### **K-5TH GRADE STUDENTS**

**300**

### **ECONOMIC MARKERS**

**96%**

OF STUDENTS QUALIFY FOR  
FREE OR REDUCED-PRICE LUNCH



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