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# National Blue Ribbon Schools Program

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Greathouse Shryock Traditional Elementary School  
Louisville, Kentucky

## Backpack of Success Skills: Ready for Middle School Video Transcript

*Jessica Baker, 5<sup>th</sup> Grade Teacher:* So, when our kiddos get to 5th grade, they have to prove that they're ready to move on to middle school. So, we have different success skills that our students are working on K through five and building this backpack of artifacts that, will prove that they are ready to go on to the next levels.

*Carmen Coleman, Chief Academic Officer, Jefferson County Public Schools:* The Backpack of Success Skills is our district's way of emphasizing that students are more than a test score or a grade. We know those are important, but we also know that to be successful in life, you have to be good at communicating, good at problem solving, and you have to persevere when things are difficult. And so the Backpack raises those skills up and our students have to continually provide evidence of their learning.

*Jessica Baker:* So, the success skills are introduced in kindergarten. So, our students are being exposed to them every single year, and even in kindergarten our students are collecting artifacts to add to their virtual backpacks. Really, it's just common language across our entire school from the moment they walk into our building.

*Marissa Wilkerson, 5<sup>th</sup> Grade Teacher:* So, we want to make sure the kids understand the success skills and so we implement them daily into our lesson plans. For example, we make AR goals, we look at their MAP scores of how they can grow. And so, the kids are accountable for what they can accomplish.

*Chris, 5<sup>th</sup> Grade Student:* So, Backpack Defense is basically a slideshow presentation and you explain how you are prepared and resilient learner, emerging innovator, a globally and culturally competent citizen, an effective communicator and a productive collaborator. So, you explain those to your teachers or some other staff, and they kind of like rate you like they, "He did good. He can go on to middle school."

*Charlie, 5<sup>th</sup> Grade Student:* For my prepared and resilient learner, I give you a lot of examples, like in my MAP test on how I've grown a lot, especially in math, because I've always struggled with math. But, it has become easier this year because of me being prepared and being resilient with my assignments.

*Megan Bryant, 3<sup>rd</sup> Grade Teacher:* Our kids practice their defense, first kind of in class with their peers. I think that's a great relatable person. Like the person next to them is also going to defend. And sometimes they get ideas from one another and that definitely helps give them a starting like, "Ooh, I

need to adjust this." They also work with teachers. we've practiced and carved out time during the day so that it does feel so much more natural and they are ready to go, their response is ultimately, "This was so easy and I feel so ready."

*Yashnoor, 5<sup>th</sup> Grade Student:* Like the teachers always are, encouraging you. If you make a mistake, they're like, "You can try again. It's fine. Don't worry about it." So, like for example, the Backpack Defense, our teachers, like if you don't do it that well the first time, you can do it again, don't worry about it. But, of course, you've got to put the effort in it. So, if a younger student ever asked me about Backpack Defense, I would tell them, don't be that nervous because at the end, you're actually going to feel really good you did it.

*Karla Davis, Principal:* I think the factors that make Greathouse so successful is the partnership agreement between the home and the school. There are high expectations in place for not only our students, and our parents, but also for our staff. We're never satisfied with the status quo. We're always looking for ways to improve and to do things even better.

*Angela Burns, Assistant Principal:* If another school wanted to replicate this, I think that it's important to define what those success skills are for your school or your district. And then making a plan to implement. We did it gradually. It took several years to get to where it is now. But making that part of your everyday instruction.

*Julie Simms, Technology Teacher:* If you're collecting work and putting it in some kind of portfolio, you really have already got the collection of work. We're just categorizing it into these success skills and showing the students how they go across the board in your everyday life and your school life. And I just think it's a great way for them to look back at all the hard work that they have done throughout the years.