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**Maxfield Elementary School of Academic Excellence**  
**Dr. Leslie Hitchens, Principal**

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## **2026-2027 Family Engagement Plan**

### **OUR MISSION AND CORE BELIEFS**

#### **Mission:**

Maxfield Elementary provides a restorative and nurturing learning community committed to achieving academic excellence. All are welcome here.

#### **Core Beliefs:**

- We believe in the transformative power of relationships.
- We believe every child can and will learn. No exceptions.
- We believe in the inherent innocence and good of each child.
- We believe in restoration of the mind and body.

### **OUR PROGRAM**

*Opened in 1890, Maxfield is a community school supported by generations of tradition. Parents, community, and staff all work together for the success of children to provide a well-rounded education that incorporates culture, focuses on creative and critical thinking, utilizes technology, incorporates both the arts and science, and provides a solid foundation in reading and math. Parents can expect excellence in teaching, multiple supports through school and community resources, and a welcoming environment.*

The Family Engagement Plan (FEP) is organized into four impact areas. We will be working together this year to build positive and goal-oriented relationships in each area. Families and staff at school developed this plan together.

| <b>Welcoming Environment</b>                                                                        |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                |
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| <b>Our school has staff member(s) available for families to discuss this plan and ask questions</b> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Principal: Dr. Leslie Hitchens</li></ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               |
| <b>Our school communicates with families in many ways.</b>                                          | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Thursday take home folders that include Principal's Weekly Newsletter, student progress report/update, Teacher/Grade Level Newsletter, and additional flyers.</li><li>• Principal's Newsletter is done using S'More which will translate into many different languages.</li><li>• The Parent Handbook, the Family-School Compact and the Family Engagement Plan are available on the school's website, on the family bulletin board, and in the main office.</li></ul> |

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|                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The School Calendar is available on the school's website and the Principal's Weekly Newsletter always lists upcoming events.</li> <li>• Multiple family events typically focus on increasing parent's awareness of academic programs and celebrating student successes.</li> <li>• Connect Ed phone calls, emails, and text messages regarding upcoming events are sent out on a regular basis.</li> <li>• Greeting tables are set up at the front of the school at various points in the year to share information about special events and to connect with the community and parents/guardians.</li> <li>• Maxfield website updated for easier use</li> <li>• Teachers regularly connect with parents.</li> <li>• Maxfield staff respond to parent requests for information in a timely manner.</li> </ul>                                                                                                                   |
| <p><b>The achievement gap, or rather the "opportunity gap," between scholars of color and white scholars in Saint Paul Public Schools continues to be of great concern. Our district and school are working to change practices and systems by identifying the barriers that make it harder for scholars of color to succeed and for their families to support their learning. As we continue to develop the use of Culturally Responsive Instructional practices, our teachers will consistently evaluate and reflect on the teaching practices for multiple perspectives.</b></p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Our school's equity committee meets regularly to discuss and help facilitate the implementation of best practices in culturally responsive instruction for all scholars at Maxfield.</li> <li>• Maxfield has a professional library of inclusive books teachers can use so that all scholars see themselves and their families represented in the literature we use at Maxfield.</li> <li>• scholars at Maxfield are provided differentiated educational opportunities that meet their specific individual needs.</li> <li>• Partnership with the Irreducible Grace Foundation to further staff and student understanding of Social-Emotional Learning</li> <li>• Partnership with the University of St. Thomas to bring Dougherty Scholars to work with our scholars.</li> <li>• A girls' group is conducted by our Restorative Practice coach and School Counselor that helps build confidence and self-efficacy.</li> </ul> |
| <p><b>Transitions between schools can be challenging, and we work to help families as their children start and leave our school.</b></p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            | <p><b>For new scholars and families, we support the transition by:</b></p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              |

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|  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● We invite families to stop in to meet their child's teacher. All classroom teachers contact their scholars' families to provide a personal invitation to stop by at the beginning of the year.</li> <li>● PreK scholars participate in multiple transition events during the spring prior to their transition to kindergarten. These include both parent and student visits to kindergarten classrooms, question and answer sessions with school administration.</li> </ul> <p><b>For scholars and families moving to the next school in their pathway, we support the transition by:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● The school counselor and 5th grade teachers support all 5th graders transition to Middle School. Presentations and outreach is done to help families with the transition. Specific student activities include Maxfield scholars going to visit and tour Hidden River, Maxfield's pathway school and a transition to Middle School unit is taught by the school counselor with various topics related to Middle School. 5th grade scholars also participate in a mock Middle School day.</li> </ul> |
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| Family Partnerships                                                                                                                                                                         |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               |
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| Our school-parent compact establishes the shared responsibility for student success between the school, families, and scholars. Families and teachers work together to develop the compact. | All families receive a copy of the compact in the fall at the start of the school year. Copies are also available in the main office, on the website, and on the family bulletin board.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       |
| There are many opportunities for families to build connections to the school and to each other.                                                                                             | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● The Maxfield Advisory Council began in the 2024-2025 school year. This council is made up of staff, family members, and community members.</li> <li>● Title I Annual Meeting where we will share information about our school-wide Title 1 program will be held <b>three times per year.</b></li> <li>● Multiple family events focus on increasing parent's awareness of academic programs and celebrating student successes.</li> <li>● Parent-teacher conferences. PreK and Kindergarten will conduct Academic Parent Teacher Teams for their conference format this year. Grades 1-5 will conduct family-teacher conferences in the fall and spring. Please check the school calendar for exact dates.</li> </ul> |

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|                                                                                                   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Parent Teacher Home Visit Project – multiple teachers have been trained and have already been participating in the Project.</li> <li>● Volunteering in the school in classrooms, attending field trips, and at other special events and performances. Background checks are required for volunteers. Check in the office for information about the background check.</li> <li>● We will continue to identify ways to celebrate additional cultural events in order to better reflect the increasing diversity of our school community.</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            |
| <b>We work to make these meetings and events available for every family in the school.</b>        | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Interpreters are available for parent-teacher conferences and special education due process meetings. Due to the wide range of languages, Maxfield is unable to have bilingual staff on site to support all families. We utilize district-identified interpreters to connect with families when we know they need language support. We also utilize district translated materials to communicate information with families.</li> <li>● We will continue to refine our outreach efforts for those families for whom English is not the primary language. The number of scholars and families of English Language Learners is growing and we are working to develop consistent resources to be able to meet their communication needs.</li> <li>● Multiple family nights also happen throughout the year. Transportation, translators, and child care are available upon request. Please refer to the Weekly Parent Newsletter for specific events.</li> </ul> |
| <b>Our school supports families as advocates and provides opportunities for parent leadership</b> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● The belief in parents as advocates and leaders is central to the work at Maxfield and the work of the Promise Neighborhood. Several opportunities are available for parents to engage with staff to support their child and our school community, and also to engage with Promise Neighborhood staff to serve as community leaders.</li> <li>● There are several ways for parents/guardians to handle concerns about things at the school. School administration and support staff (school counselor and social worker) all work with families and teachers to address concerns. In addition, parents are referred to the district's Ombudsperson if they are unable to resolve concerns at the school level.</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     |

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| <p><b>Our school shares information about state standards, assessment, and student achievement with families in multiple ways</b></p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● <b>Report cards and progress reports will be discussed</b> during parent-teacher conferences. If parents/guardians are unable to attend a conference at school, teachers will hold a phone conference or virtual conference.</li> <li>● <b>Parent-Teacher conferences are held twice during the year and three separate APTT meetings.</b> Maxfield provides interpreting for conferences and offers parents/guardians the option of in-person or virtual conferences.</li> <li>● <b>Support for developing literacy skills within the school day:</b> Maxfield provides multiple supports for developing readers in grades kindergarten through grade 3. Partnerships with MN Reading Corps and others, provide tutoring support to scholars. Also, additional licensed staff and paraprofessional staff work with classroom teachers to develop student's literacy skills.</li> <li>● <b>Support for developing literacy skills at home:</b> Families who read to and with their children help instill in them a love of reading. scholars in grades 1 through 5 are expected to read a specific amount of time at home each day; the exact amount of time is dependent on the grade level and the student's learning needs. <b>The minimum expectation for daily reading is 30 minutes.</b> scholars who are learning to read are expected to practice letter sounds, memorizing sight words, and listening to others read. Kindergarten teachers provide materials for parents to work on at home with their children. As we move through the school year, the materials are differentiated to meet the needs of the child.</li> <li>● <b>Additional opportunities for parents/guardians to be informed and to support their child's learning:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Maxfield holds multiple Family Nights throughout the school year. These are designed to provide parents/guardians with information and to have them experience activities with their children that they can then do at home.</li> <li>○ In addition, during the Open House in August teachers provide parents/guardians with information about grade level learning expectations, typical classroom activities, an outline of the year, and homework expectations.</li> <li>○ Maxfield maintains an open-door policy and invites parents/guardians to regularly visit the school to observe their child in the learning environment (COVID Guidelines).</li> </ul> </li> </ul> |
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| <p><b>Our school will engage families in Personalized Learning as a key strategy to accelerate student achievement, as these changes come to our school</b></p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Parent Portal is available by contacting the main office</li> <li>● Maxfield Elementary continues to participate in the district's 1-to-1 iPad initiative. All scholars received iPads in September. At Maxfield iPads are used to prepare scholars to effectively use technology to gather information, to process and analyze information, and to present what they have learned. We work to ensure our scholars have the technology and analytical skills they will need in the future. iPads are also used to provide customized instruction by utilizing programs like RazKids for reading and many others. The majority of programs that scholars use at school for individualized instruction in math and reading can also be accessed online at home, the public library, etc.</li> </ul> |
| <p><b>Many before- and after-school enrichment and support opportunities are available for scholars</b></p>                                                     | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Maxfield Elementary partners with the YMCA to provide after-school enrichment and learning opportunities for all scholars in grades K-5. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ The YMCA School Success program is a 4-day per week program that works with the district's Extended Day Learning program. The program typically runs for 1 hour 45 minutes. The program includes enrichment and academic support in reading, writing, and math. This year due to the shortage of bus drivers, EDL will be primarily parent pick up and walkers.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                                          |

| Community Partnerships                                                                                          |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 |
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| <p>Our school develops community partnerships to provide additional support for scholars and their families</p> | <p>Maxfield Elementary partners with several organizations to support families and scholars.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Cultural Wellness Center</li> <li>● Saint Paul Eastside YMCA</li> <li>● Assistance League of Minneapolis and Saint Paul</li> <li>● Saint Paul Promise Neighborhood Initiative Partners</li> <li>● Children's Dental Services</li> <li>● Wilder Foundation</li> <li>● MN Reading Corp</li> <li>● University of Saint Thomas</li> </ul> |

This plan is available as part of our school's SCIP, or School Comprehensive Improvement Plan at [scip.spps.org](http://scip.spps.org), is on our school website at [Maxfield.spps.org](http://Maxfield.spps.org) and printed copies are available in the office.