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Paterson Full Service Community Schools Initiative Overview

A Community School is an educational institution that combines academics of a quality school with a wide range of vital in-house services, supports and opportunities for the purpose of promoting children’s learning and development.

The Core Belief behind Paterson Public Schools’ Full Service Community Schools is to ensure that 100% of Paterson Public Schools’ students graduate High School prepared for college and career ready. The Philosophy of Paterson Public Schools; Full Service Community Schools is that every child be prepared and ready to learn when they enter school every day; that our young people are well prepared for the workplace, as parents, and as citizens; that our communities are safe, supportive, and engaged; and that our parents and community members are involved with the school and their own life-long learning.

2002

PEF began its community schools planning in response to the Abbott facilities decision, which brought the promise of state funded, new and renovated school facilities in Paterson. Through intense community advocacy, we gained 2 new buildings (New Roberto Clemente and International High School) that were designed and built to facilitate Full Service Community Schools. After a few years, all construction was stalled due to financial mismanagement at the State. Our earlier work resulted in the School Board’s adoption of policy that supports community schools, evidence of long term sustainability.

2009

Dr. Evans expressed an interest in Community Schools. The earlier work had resulted in a school board policy in support of community schools, providing a foundation for a new Full Service Community Schools plan.

PPS and PEF created a memorandum of understanding in which PEF agreed to assess the readiness of community partners, PPS agreed to communicate with schools and hire FSCS administrative staff. A Steering Committee was formed to develop a FSCS Strategic plan. Other founding partners were First AME Zion Church, JP Morgan Chase Foundation, NJ Community Development Corporation, Paterson Free Public Library, Paterson YMCA, St. Joseph’s Hospital and St. Luke’s CDC. The Children’s Aid Society provided technical assistance.

2010

- *January* – With a Full Service Community Schools Coordinator on Board, the first round of RFP to Schools were released in January. Four schools submitted applications. After a series of interviews with school teams and site visits, School 5 was selected as Paterson’s 1st Full Service Community School.
- *April* – A Request for Qualifications was issued to Paterson Community Based Organizations and NJ CDC was selected as Lead Agency
- *May/ June* – Parents, teachers, students and administrators participated in focus groups to identify assets and assess needs.
- *July* – Teachers and Administrators and Lead Agency Staff participate in 1st (annual) Theory of Change workshop to develop FSCS Mission, Vision and Goals and Strategies based on focus group findings.
- ActKnowledge is contracted for External Evaluation
- *September* – School 5 opens as Paterson’s first Full Service Community School
- *October* – PPS is awarded a \$2.46 Million grant for Full Service Community Schools.

2011

- *January* – School 4 and New Roberto Clemente are identified as the second cohort
- *February/June* – Parents, teachers, students and administrators participated in focus groups to identify assets and assess needs.
- *May* – Boys and Girls Club of Paterson and Passaic and St. Paul’s CDC are identified as lead partners for Schools 4 and NRC respectively.
- *September* – School 4 and New Roberto Clemente begin

2013

- The process was repeated for Schools 6 and 15 with New Destiny Family Success Center and St. Paul’s CDC as the respective lead agencies

2014

- Full Service Community Schools is incorporated into the PPS Brighter Futures 5 Year Strategic Plan with a goal of 10 Schools over the next 5 years – funding permitting.

2015

- A Sustainability and Fund Development team is convened.