



June 9, 2015

Allison Mayas, Board Chair
National Collegiate Preparatory PCHS
4600 Livingston Road SE
Washington, DC 20032

Dear Ms. Mayas,

The Public Charter School Board (PCSB) conducts Strategies Visits to gather and document evidence to support school oversight. According to the 2014 Memorandum of Understanding that PCSB has with the Office of the State Superintendent of Education (OSSE) around implementation of the 2012 Waiver to the Elementary and Secondary Education Act, PCSB must “ensure that public charter schools identified as Focus or Priority are providing interventions and supports to students and their teachers consistent with that school’s Intervention and Support Plan” (p.5). Your school was designated as Focus by Office of the State Superintendent of Education for the performance of the performance of your economically disadvantaged and African American students on the DC CAS.

PCSB conducted a Strategies Visit, which included on scheduled day on May 6, 2015 and two unscheduled visit between May 11, 2015 and May 15, 2015 to observe how the school’s Focus intervention strategies are being implemented in classrooms.

The Strategies Visit report is attached. We appreciate the assistance and hospitality that your staff gave the monitoring team.

Sincerely,



Naomi DeVeaux
Deputy Director

Enclosures
cc: School Leader

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

National Collegiate Preparatory Public Charter School (National Collegiate PCS) serves 307 students in grades 9 through 12 in Ward 8. The DC Public Charter School Board (PCSB) conducted an Elementary Secondary Education Act (ESEA) monitoring visit in May 2015 because National Collegiate PCS was designated as Focus by Office of the State Superintendent for the performance of your economically disadvantaged and African American students on the DC CAS.

PCSB conducted a Strategies Visit for ESEA monitoring requirements. A Strategies Visit contains one scheduled day, set by the school, and two unannounced classroom observations within a one-week window between May 11, 2015 and May 15, 2015. PCSB collected evidence related to the school's Focus strategies, including: learning communities, explicit model lesson plans, Sophomore Seminar, 5th block test prep, Achievement Network and DC Cooperative partnerships, Study Island, Achieve 3000, College Prep course, Financial Literacy, in-house SAT and ACT preparation program, Advanced Placement (AP), Discovery Education 11th Grade College Readiness Assessments, PSAT, Math Seminar, and in-house graduate courses for teachers.

The majority of evidence collected during the scheduled day and the unscheduled observation window centered on the school's implementation of explicit model lesson plans, in-house SAT and ACT preparation programs, Advanced Placement, and College Prep courses. Most students were engaged in targeted learning throughout the observation window. PCSB observed a noted effort throughout the school to prepare students for college and found the school environment to be respectful. Implementation of the explicit model lesson plan was mixed. In a few classes teachers scaffolded lessons and delivery was student-centered, but in the majority of observations, students were offered few differentiated learning opportunities and mostly worked independently on a single task or project.

SCHOOL INTERVENTION AND SUPPORT STRATEGIES

The following table summarizes National Collegiate PCS strategies and evidence collected by PCSB for the purposes of the 2012 ESEA Flexibility Waiver. PCSB observed the school implementing those strategies during both the scheduled day on May 6, 2015 and the observation window from May 11, 2015 to May 15, 2015.

PCSB leaves it to the discretion of school leadership to determine the best use of time during the scheduled day of observations for the purposes of Focus intervention strategies. Therefore it may not be possible to observe certain strategies chosen by the school. In cases where PCSB did not have the opportunity to observe the strategy we will indicate that in the report.

Strategy Described in Intervention Plan	School's Description of Strategy on the Ground	Evidence
<p>Learning Community</p> <p>Learning Communities were reconstituted this school year to allow for greater opportunities to target specific learning goals in a given class and provide greater opportunities to accelerate learning or support students in areas of need.</p> <p>Note: This is a change from school year 2012-2013.</p>	<p>NCP will measure the success of grouping students into learning communities through classroom observations that evidence improved instructional practice centered on differentiating instructions to meet each student's present levels of performance.</p>	<p>PCSB saw some evidence of reconstituted learning communities through classroom observations. In one observation students were able to choose their roles in a group project. In another observation students were asked to research individualized topics on an iPad before reporting out to the class. PCSB did not see differentiation of instructions to meet each student's present levels of performance.</p>
<p>Explicit Model Lesson Plans</p>	<p>NCP will measure the success of using this model of lesson planning through classroom observations to observe</p>	<p>PCSB observed scaffolded instruction that transitioned from teacher centered to student centered in few classes.</p>

Strategy Described in Intervention Plan	School's Description of Strategy on the Ground	Evidence
<p>At National Prep, teachers plan and design lessons using the explicit model lesson plan template. This template scaffolds instruction from teacher led with an Introduction portion for new material, to Guided Practice with teacher support, and leading to Independent Practice by students. This model of planning guides instruction from teacher centered to student centered.</p>	<p>improved delivery of instruction as evidenced by lessons that scaffold instruction and lessons that transition in delivery from teacher centered to student centered.</p>	<p>On the scheduled day PCSB saw evidence of the explicit model lesson plans in four out of the seven classes observed. In one observation the explicit lesson plan was implemented effectively. The teacher began with an introduction, an example, non-example and rubric. Students then practiced and evaluated each other. In most classes the explicit model was not implemented. For example in one observation the students worked on problems at their desks throughout the class period after a brief warm-up.</p> <p>On the unscheduled days PCSB saw explicit model lesson plans in few classes. With the exception of three out of ten observations, lessons were not scaffolded to transition from teacher centered to student centered.</p>
<p>Sophomore Seminar (DC CAS)</p> <p>This school year National Prep hired a highly qualified English teacher to teach Sophomore Seminar classes. Sophomore Seminar classes are designed to support</p>	<p>NCP will use sophomore students' performance data on 4 interim assessments throughout the academic year to evaluate the effectiveness of this program in supporting its goal of better</p>	<p>PCSB observed the Sophomore Seminar on an unscheduled day. During the observation students were asked to identify three "best works" to include in their portfolios. Students provided justifications to explain their assignment,</p>

Strategy Described in Intervention Plan	School's Description of Strategy on the Ground	Evidence
<p>the instruction of literacy skills for 10th grade students. The class focuses on skills such as reading and analyzing informational and literary texts, synthesizing information from multiple sources in order to successfully respond to clarifying questions, and teaching reading and comprehension strategies for successfully interacting with texts with higher lexile demands. By having one teacher, the curriculum is implemented with fidelity and instruction is directed by one teacher whose sole responsibility is to teach seminar classes.</p> <p>Note: This is a change from school year 2012-2013.</p>	<p>preparing students to demonstrate mastery on the DC CAS.</p>	<p>and reflect on their academic growth. It was unclear whether or not these “best works” were interim assessments. Some students completed portfolio work while others responded to a writing prompt. The teachers circulated and provided feedback to students.</p>
<p>ANet Partnership (DC CAS)</p> <p>This school year NCP partnered with the Achievement Network to provide interim assessments in English and mathematics to students in grades 9 and 10. Through this partnership, NCP is provided a data coach to support with analyzing test data in order to develop action plans for supporting</p>	<p>NCP will use students’ performance data on 4 interim assessments in the academic year and DC CAS test data for school year 2013-14 to measure the success of its partnership with the Achievement Network.</p>	<p>While this strategy may be in place, PCSB staff did not observe evidence of the ANet partnership. Observers did not see evidence of student performance or teachers differentiating instruction based on student level (see above) during this observation window.</p>

Strategy Described in Intervention Plan	School's Description of Strategy on the Ground	Evidence
<p>students with attaining proficiency in Common Core State Standards in math and English for grades 9 and 10.</p> <p>Note: This is a change from school year 2012-2013.</p>		
<p>DC Cooperative Partnership (DC CAS)</p> <p>This school year NCP partnered with the DC Cooperative to support with professional development and training for all instructional staff to support the learning of best practices for reaching diverse learners. Through this partnership, instructional staff receives in-house professional development in teaching diverse learners and opportunities to attend outside training sessions around reaching and teaching special education students.</p> <p>Note: This is a change from school year 2012-2013.</p>	<p>The success of this partnership will be measured through classroom observations with the purpose of observing for instructional delivery that includes varying classroom activities and instruction that includes appealing to varying learning styles and student ability.</p>	<p>In one observation PCSB observed a lesson in which students were asked to choose their own roles and responsibilities within the context of a structured project. Roles included graphic designer, time and question manager, researcher and presenter and recorder. In another observation PCSB observed students choosing their own civil rights leaders to research and report out on. Students worked on the same activity for the duration of class during the majority of observations.</p>
<p>Study Island (DC CAS, SAT, ACT, AP)</p>	<p>NCP will use student performance data on the DC CAS, PSAT, SAT, ACT, and AP</p>	<p>On the scheduled day PCSB observed an ACT prep class. Students all had</p>

Strategy Described in Intervention Plan	School's Description of Strategy on the Ground	Evidence
<p>National Prep purchased Study Island a web based Common Core Standards program designed to support DC CAS preparation in Mathematics, English, and Biology. The Program also provides support for college readiness through SAT, ACT, and AP test prep.</p> <p>Note: This is a change from school year 2012-2013.</p>	<p>exams for school year 2013-14 to measure the success of Study Island within its academic program.</p>	<p>computers and logged into a McGraw Hill practice plus, an ACT practice website (in place of Study Island). The teacher explained the teaching staff found McGraw Hill to be more aligned to the ACT than Study Island. Two teachers circulated from student to student helping each one with specific questions. Teachers asked questions to help students figure out how to solve the questions. Teachers also asked students to explain their reasoning.</p>
<p>Achieve 3000 National Prep uses Achieve 3000 a web based reading support program that is designed to help students improve their reading fluency and comprehension skills. The program is adaptive and provides reading passages on students' current reading level.</p>	<p>NCP will use student performance data on the DC CAS, PSAT, SAT, ACT, and AP exams for school year 2013-14 to measure the success of Achieve 3000 within its academic program</p>	<p>While this strategy may be in place, PCSB staff did not observe evidence of the Achieve 3000 program during this observation window. In fall 2014 a teacher demonstrated the program for a PCSB staff member, but PCSB has not observed the program being used by students in a classroom setting.</p>
<p>College Prep Course College preparation course was redesigned as a full year course offered to seniors and facilitated by instructor with knowledge of</p>	<p>The measure of success for the College Prep course will be 12th grade students' preparedness for matriculation to college as evidenced by successful completion of</p>	<p>PCSB observed the College Prep Course both on the scheduled and on an unscheduled day. Both classes focused on preparedness for college.</p>

Strategy Described in Intervention Plan	School's Description of Strategy on the Ground	Evidence
<p>college recruitment or college admissions processes. The purpose of this course is to assist students with navigating and completing the required steps to gain admission to college and preparing students academically to meet the rigor of college courses.</p> <p>Note: This is a change from school year 2012-2013.</p>	<p>the course, application and acceptances to college, financial literacy certification, improved SAT scores over the course of the school year, and garnering of scholarships to colleges and universities</p>	<p>On the scheduled day students practiced their public speaking skills. The teacher reviewed SAT words of the day: <i>circumscribe</i> and <i>clandestine</i>. The teacher also reviewed effective public speaking skills, and discussed giving “loving feedback.” The exercise was practice for the thesis presentations that will happen the following week. The teacher showed a non-example of a presentation, and students discussed how they would rate the presentation using their rubrics. Each student made a presentation about a topic that was important to him or her. After each presentation every student and the teacher gave feedback to the individual.</p> <p>On the unscheduled day students continued their public speaking skills lesson. The teacher showed examples and non-examples, and the class continued sharing short oral presentations.</p>
<p>Financial Literacy</p> <p>Financial literacy was added to the College Prep Course curriculum. This component of the curriculum is offered to</p>	<p>The success of the acquisition and implementation of this curriculum will be measured by the number of students who participate and successfully complete the</p>	<p>While this strategy may be in place, PCSB staff did not observe evidence of Financial Literacy being taught during</p>

Strategy Described in Intervention Plan	School's Description of Strategy on the Ground	Evidence
<p>seniors as they prepare to matriculate from high school and enter the world independent of parents. The financial literacy portion the College Prep course offers an opportunity for students to be versed in making wise and responsible fiscal decisions as they prepare to navigate the world independently.</p> <p>Note: This is a change from school year 2012-2013.</p>	<p>program and gain financial literacy certification at the completion of the program.</p>	<p>the College Prep Course classes during this visit.</p>
<p>In-House SAT and ACT Preparation Program</p> <p>In-House Standardized SAT Prep Program is an addition to NCP's educational program that allows NCP students to prepare to complete SAT and ACT assessments by attending review classes facilitated by members of NCP's instructional staff. Students in grades 11 through 12 will attend SAT prep classes and will receive instruction in strategies for successful completion of SAT assessments and will review for these</p>	<p>NCP will measure the success of this program by comparison of student performance on the SAT and PSAT for school year 2013-14 as compared to student performance on the SAT and PSAT for school year 2012-13.</p>	<p>For evidence related to In-House SAT and ACT Preparation, please see evidence above related to the ACT Prep course.</p> <p>During an unscheduled observation PCSB observed a teacher help students sign up for the ACT exam on laptops. Students asked questions, and a student who had taken the test shared her experiences with her peers.</p>

Strategy Described in Intervention Plan	School's Description of Strategy on the Ground	Evidence
<p>assessments by completing practice activities. Identified teachers will attend SAT Prep Workshops for Teachers and will use in-house software to support preparation efforts.</p> <p>Note: This is a change from school year 2012-2013.</p>		
<p>Advanced Placement</p> <p>This school year National Prep began offering AP classes in the upper grades. Honor students who do not enter the IB program after grade 10 will enroll in AP classes.</p> <p>Note: This is a change from school year 2012-2013.</p>	<p>NCP will measure the success of the Advanced Placement program by the percentage or number of students who meet success on the Advanced Placement Exam during the 4th quarter of the school year.</p>	<p>PCSB observed the Advanced Placement program during both the scheduled and unscheduled days. Students were highly engaged in AP classes throughout the week.</p> <p>During the scheduled day, a class of 12 students reviewed material for the AP test next week. The teacher used an interactive white board to show images and asked the students to explain concepts related to ecosystems.</p> <p>During the unscheduled day the teacher introduced two new concepts and had the class of 20 students respond to questions as a group. After the class discussion students generated their own examples.</p>

Strategy Described in Intervention Plan	School's Description of Strategy on the Ground	Evidence
<p>Discovery Education 11th Grade College Readiness Assessments/ACT Preparation</p> <p>This school year NCP began administering College Readiness Assessments in the 11th grade. CRA assessments are provided by Discovery Education. These interim assessments assess students' readiness for college. Each assessment has four sections: English, Math, Reading, and Science Reasoning. The benchmarks report a scale score of 1 to 36. These scale scores have been shown to predict performance on the ACT College Admissions.</p> <p>By offering College Readiness Assessments in the junior year, students build and review skills that are assessed on the ACT and learn where they are weakest and strongest. These assessments support preparation and instructional efforts for maximum success on the ACT exams that students will complete in the Fall of senior year.</p>	<p>NCP will measure the success of this program by analyzing student performance on the ACT for this current school year compared to students' performance on the ACT for school year 2012-13.</p>	<p>While this strategy may be in place, PCSB did not observe evidence related to Discovery Education 11th Grade College Readiness Assessments/ ACT Preparation visit nor did they observe a teacher data discussion during this site.</p>

Strategy Described in Intervention Plan	School's Description of Strategy on the Ground	Evidence
<p>Note: This is a change from school year 2012-2013.</p>		
<p>PSAT</p> <p>Revised Standardized Assessment Schedule SY 2013-14:</p> <p>10th Grade Fall: PSAT</p> <p>11th Grade Fall: PSAT</p> <p>11th Grade Spring: SAT</p> <p>12th grade Fall: SAT</p> <p>NCP revised the standardized assessment schedule to include 10th grade students. Students in the 10th grade completed PSATs in the Fall with 11th grade students. The benefits of students completing the PSAT in their sophomore year are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Experience/Encounter with Test • Risk free exposure to test questions, format, content • Practice for the SAT • Opportunity to identify students' areas of strength and weakness and 	<p>NCP will measure the success of the 10th grade PSAT administration by analyzing the performance of this year's 10th grade students on the PSAT as 11th grade students (SY2014-15) in order to compare results to the previous years' 11th grade students to determine if early exposure to the PSAT positively affects performance on the PSATs in the 11th grade.</p>	<p>While this strategy may be in place, PCSB did not observe PSAT testing or observe a teacher data discussion.</p>

Strategy Described in Intervention Plan	School's Description of Strategy on the Ground	Evidence
<p>design appropriate preparatory strategies</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Students can take the PSAT only once in a school year, but can take the test multiple times. • Students who take the PSAT in their sophomore year must take the test again in their junior year to enter national Merit Scholarship Corporation programs. <p>Note: Assessing 10th grade students is a change from school year 2012-2013.</p>		
<p>Math Seminar SY2014-15</p> <p>For school year 2014-15, NCP added a support math course for 9th and 10th grade students to its academic program (in addition to required 9th and 10th grade math classes). The goal of this math seminar course is to reinforce math strategies and mathematical foundations for algebra I and geometry.</p>	<p>NCP will measure the success of this math course addition at the end of the school year based on the percentage of students who meet success in algebra I and geometry and meet benchmark on math PARCC assessments.</p>	<p>PCSB observed the Math Seminar on an unscheduled day. The objective was for students to solve right triangles using the Pythagorean Theorem. The class worked together on a problem involving integers, but not the Pythagorean Theorem. Then the teacher gave each student their three best works for their portfolio. Some students engaged in self-evaluation while others, who did not have graded assignments for their portfolio, remained off-task for the remainder of class.</p>

Strategy Described in Intervention Plan	School's Description of Strategy on the Ground	Evidence
<p>Graduate course SY2014-15</p> <p>As part of NCP's Professional Development for instructional staff for school year 2014-15, NCP along with the DC Cooperative for Special Education have partnered with Catholic University to offer an in-house graduate course to regular education teachers around special education and meeting the needs of our diverse student population. This in-house semester long course will begin on September 4th and end on December 11th 2014. In addition, teachers will earn 3 graduate credits from Catholic University to use toward recertification or furthering of academic pursuits.</p>	<p>NCP will measure the success of this partnership by assessing and measuring the academic performance of its special education students. The goal of this partnership is to equip teachers with a means of learning best practices and strategies for meeting the needs of all learners thus garnering improved academic performance among special education students.</p>	<p>While this strategy may be in place, PCSB staff did not observe evidence of the in-house graduate course partnership.</p>