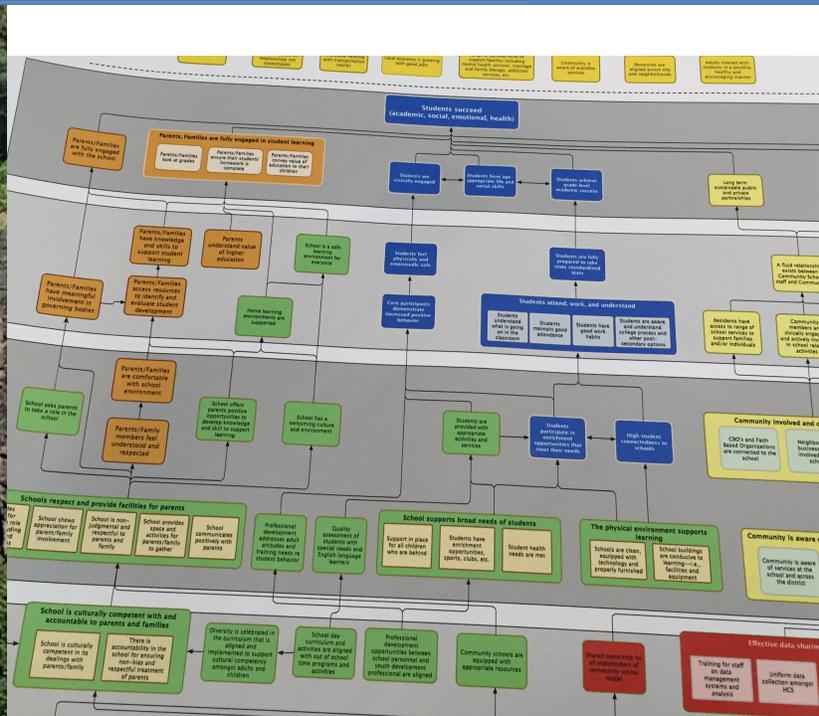
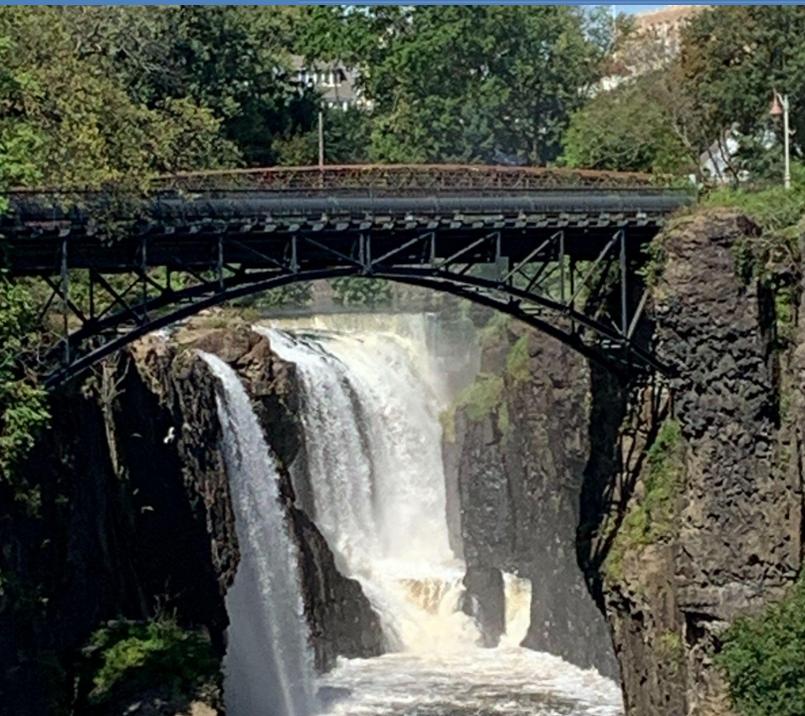


# Paterson Public Schools Full Service Community Schools Evaluation Report 2018-2023

## Final Report



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## Executive Summary

This is a final report of the evaluation conducted by ActKnowledge of a Federal Full Service Community Schools Grant received by the Paterson Public School District for school year 2022-2023; it is also the final report for the five year grant from the US Department of Education.

The year saw a continuing transition as students settled into a second year of in-school learning after two years of online learning during the pandemic shutdown. School 2 and JFK High School are the focus of the evaluation because of the grant funding. However, the role of Paterson's Full Service Community School program in all its community schools was tested as they confronted the trauma, loss, fear, anxiety and learning loss from lockdown, and the return to in-person schooling has been an opportunity to see the community schools continue their efforts to support students and families. While the work of assessing learning loss and restoring performance levels was paramount in everyone's minds, the community school leadership and staff also saw first-hand that students could not learn if they were experiencing trauma, had behavioral issues, severe anxiety and poor attendance.

With many emotional/social issues, family losses, and learning loss from Covid, the role of the community school and its outreach, services, and care became sharply apparent—and remained so even as students continued for a second year with the stability of in-person learning. Community schools around the country, in fact, have had a continuing opportunity to demonstrate that they are needed in order for students to have the stability, health and engagement to learn.

We have used an approach to planning and evaluation called “Theory of Change” with Paterson Full Service Community Schools (FSCS) for many years, as we and others around the country recognized the importance of having clear goals and understanding the context, constraints and opportunities that influence the designing of interventions to meet goals.

The Theory of Change for Paterson schools, as for most schools, has always had a long-term goal of good academic achievement. This means grades, graduation, successful transition to the next level of school, and ultimately good post high school choices and opportunities for further education or good jobs. What the community school movement has always understood is that these goals are only attainable if students attend school, are engaged in learning, can understand the language, and have a school and teaching environment that supports them. But more is needed. In under-resourced neighborhoods, students live in families in which members may be working several jobs, have health issues, and other stresses. Students need to have enough to eat, opportunities to do homework, and be safe from violence in their neighborhood or sometimes even at home. Community schools provide services that strive to achieve good health and stability for students. Paterson FSCS program, to its credit, has excellent health

services, and social workers and behavioral specialists, plus parent coordinators and other support staff.

In Theory of Change terms, Paterson community schools have long recognized that health, stability, and support for behavioral issues, trauma and anxiety are necessary prerequisites to being able to learn. At no time since the start of the community school movement have these supports been more needed than during and post lockdown.

This year, FSCS staff and leadership have shifted their main focus. In the first year back in school, the greatest need the FSCS could serve was helping students and families readjust to being back in school and dealing with trauma. In the second year back, the services for mental health and physical health remain strong; in addition, FSCS staff are back to building community within the school and with the families—and working toward greater academic engagement, including by working to lower the rates of chronic absenteeism. They are as concerned as ever with academic achievement, but understand that these other elements are the necessary prerequisites to academic achievement.

We observed and were made aware of an increase in services for students and families. The toll on community school staff was significant as well, as they were inundated with students needing help.

An ongoing and increasing problem is a mismatch between goals and resources, and between the goals and the communication and policies of the Paterson School District. The district has performance measure targets, but very little of a means to meet the targets—or data collection processes to map the interplay between the FSCS programs and the performance of students in a rigorous way. This is, of course, in part due to lack of resources, not lack of will. Nonetheless, communication between FSCS and the district has not led to a joint “Theory” - or doable plan to meet and map the journey to meeting specific goals – between the two entities.

As the federal FSCS funding has now come to a close as of June 2023, we strongly recommend a long-term plan for both sustainability and joint planning with the district.

## 1. Introduction

Five years ago, the Paterson Full Service Community Schools program in School 2 and JFK High School began a grant-funded journey with the goal of increasing student, family, and community engagement in the service of increased support for student academic progress and mental and physical health. The first year and a half showed definite promise. In March of 2020, of course, the COVID-19 pandemic halted everything, and schools stood empty.

This fall of 2023, schools are open and full of students, hallways are covered in artwork extolling the learning going on in each classroom, and families are engaging in community activities in-person and online. It's a far cry from the era of pandemic lockdowns. Full Service Community Schools helped to support students, families, and learning throughout the pandemic—and are now building the road forward. There remain many challenges—there are challenges that existed before the pandemic which persist, and the spike in absenteeism has exacerbated many of the problems that the Full Service Community School program was put in place to address.

During and after the first stumbling transition from in-person schooling to the first attempts at fully online learning—and then the hybrid school year of 2020-21, there were some educational scholars who saw this tragedy as a possible way for education to “emerge stronger than before COVID-19”. The Brookings Institute report published in September of 2020 noted that the silver lining of the pandemic might be that we had a renewed understanding of the importance of public schooling—for its “caretaking,” its developmental support of “students’ well-being”, and its structurally central role as a location and a mechanism for “for delivering essential services from food to education to health care.” With this newly and nearly universal understanding of schools’ importance in every person’s life, the report argued for grabbing the “opportunity to leapfrog toward powered-up schools”<sup>1</sup>:

A powered-up school could be one that puts a strong public school at the center of a community and leverages the most effective partnerships, including those that have emerged during COVID-19, to help learners grow and develop a broad range of competencies and skills in and out of school. For example, such a school

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<sup>1</sup> Winthrop, Emiliana Vegas and Rebecca. 2020. “Beyond Reopening Schools: How Education Can Emerge Stronger than before COVID-19.” Brookings. September 8, 2020.  
<https://www.brookings.edu/research/beyond-reopening-schools-how-education-can-emerge-stronger-than-before-covid-19/>.

would crowd in supports, including technology, that would allow for allies in the community from parents to employers to reinforce, complement, and bring to life learning experiences in and outside the classroom. It would recognize and adapt to the learning that takes place beyond its walls, regularly assessing students' skills and tailoring learning opportunities to meet students at their skill level. These new allies in children's learning would complement and support teachers and could support children's healthy mental and physical development. It quite literally is the school at the center of the community that powers student learning and development using every path possible.

This notion of the school being "at the center of the community" is complementary to the way a Community School operates. The community schools model, first defined by the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 (ESEA), seeks to draw together the elements of communities needed for the widest range of students possible to thrive and uses schools as the point of coordination for those services.

At School 2, the coordinator worked toward the return of students, creating an early morning program and a safe space for the children who arrive early before school so that there was a place where the parents can drop off their kids before work and make sure that they are waiting in a safe place and not out on the street. The coordinator continued to believe that the FSCS program has to reach out to more students as well as serve more students. The students need to know about the services and help that is available to them. This pertains to the health clinic as well. The health clinic has to serve more students and make sure the students know what they provide. Not only does FSCS have to inform the students, but they have to increase parent outreach as well. The parents need to be informed and educated about the services provided. For school 2, the online parent workshops resulted in positive response, have continued through to the present, and more are planned for the future.

At JFK, there was a continual focus on supporting and assisting students that have experienced trauma since the pandemic began. Because there was a six month wait to see the psychiatrist, FSCS strived to have one in the clinic. The school rightly believed that helping students cope with the trauma will help with social-emotional learning, attention spans, improved mood, quality of life and interpersonal relationships and communications. Handling trauma also lowers substance abuse. Given that trauma is often mis-diagnosed as ADHD because of the similarity in symptoms, FSCS worked to break this cycle by using the clinic. Mr. Hill started restorative practices, helping students to work through problems in school rather than being sent out of school—a long-term investment in students' conflict-resolution skills. Maintaining quality programs, having no gap or lag in services, and providing field trips were ways to lessen the

developmental losses that the students were facing. FSCS continues to provide “the living room,” which is a safe space for students to open up and seek therapy. Because the number of students who were going to the living room was increasing during the pandemic, they had to find ways of providing more services throughout the day. The team’s limits were stretched, but they remained committed to doing what was necessary.

By the summer of 2021, nearly a year later, as McKinsey noted “rising vaccination rates, outdoor in-person graduations, and access to at least some in-person learning for 98 percent of students” but was also reporting:

The impact of the pandemic on K–12 student learning was significant, leaving students on average five months behind in mathematics and four months behind in reading by the end of the school year. The pandemic widened preexisting opportunity and achievement gaps, hitting historically disadvantaged students hardest. In math, students in majority Black schools ended the year with six months of unfinished learning, students in low-income schools with seven. High schoolers have become more likely to drop out of school, and high school seniors, especially those from low-income families, are less likely to go on to post-secondary education. And the crisis had an impact on not just academics but also the broader health and well-being of students, with more than 35 percent of parents very or extremely concerned about their children’s mental health<sup>2</sup>.

One more year later—two years after the start of that first full pandemic school year when, as just one example Brookings noted in 2020, “more than 1 million children did not enroll in local schools,” there has been no national leapfrogging, no national movement toward “powered up” schools.<sup>3</sup> Rather, schools have become political scapegoats for a culture war, teachers have left the profession in droves, and the state of education is often seen as more precarious than ever.

Compounding the situation, those most historically disadvantaged bore more of the burden of educational loss from the pandemic. The Washington Times reported that “Thomas Kane, of the Center for Education Policy Research at Harvard University, told NPR [in October of 2022]

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<sup>2</sup> Dorn, Emma, Bryan Hancock, Jimmy Sarakatsannis, and Ellen Viruleg. 2021. “COVID-19 and Education: The Lingering Effects of Unfinished Learning | McKinsey.” McKinsey. McKinsey & Company. July 27, 2021. <https://www.mckinsey.com/industries/education/our-insights/covid-19-and-education-the-lingering-effects-of-unfinished-learning>.

<sup>3</sup> Goldstein, Dana, and Alicia Parlapiano. 2021. “The Kindergarten Exodus.” The New York Times, August 7, 2021, sec. U.S. <https://www.nytimes.com/2021/08/07/us/covid-kindergarten-enrollment.html>.

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that students in high-poverty areas missed the equivalent of 22 weeks of in-person math instruction during the 2020-2021 school year versus about 13 weeks for students in low-poverty areas, who tended to return to physical classrooms sooner.” At the same time, after the first full pandemic school year, the National Center for Educational Statistics data shows that the return to physical classrooms has not been smooth; students’ behavioral development had been affected by COVID:

Specifically, respondents attributed increased incidents of classroom disruptions from student misconduct (56 percent), rowdiness outside of the classroom (49 percent), acts of disrespect towards teachers and staff (48 percent), and prohibited use of electronic devices (42 percent) to the COVID-19 pandemic and its lingering effects.

Students thrive in an environment with effective social, emotional, and behavioral support,” said NCES Commissioner Peggy G. Carr. “So when we see 72 percent of our public schools report an increase in chronic absenteeism among our students, it poses an opportunity for education leaders to act quickly using tested approaches that work. It is our responsibility at NCES to disseminate data describing the severity of the situation.

In addition to student behavior in school, school leaders were asked about student chronic absenteeism—defined as those missing at least 10 percent of the school year. School leaders reported increased student absenteeism as a COVID-19-related problem consistently across a wide range of school types, including in elementary schools (75 percent), schools with lower student poverty rates (73 percent), and rural schools (71 percent).

Additionally, problems that stemmed from teachers being absent more often were exacerbated by the fact that 77 percent of public schools also reported that finding substitute teachers has become more difficult during the pandemic. Compared to the 2020–21 school year, 61 percent of public schools reported that finding substitute teachers is difficult.<sup>4</sup>

As schools endeavored to take those 2020-2021 (along with the 2021-2022) school year experiences into account, the fall of 2022 was another proving ground for public schools. In New Jersey, non-profit educational news outlet [The 74 Million](#) noted in June of 2022 that

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<sup>4</sup> National Center for Education Statistics. 2022. “More than 80 Percent of U.S. Public Schools Report Pandemic Has Negatively Impacted Student Behavior and Socio-Emotional Development - July 6, 2022.” Nces.ed.gov. July 6, 2022. [https://nces.ed.gov/whatsnew/press\\_releases/07\\_06\\_2022.asp](https://nces.ed.gov/whatsnew/press_releases/07_06_2022.asp).

traditional public school enrollments declined by 18,086 students from two years prior, or “1.4% over the last two years [while] the decrease from the prior two-year period was 0.02%”, which is often seen as having been driven more by declining birth rates.<sup>5</sup>

As became clear by September of 2022, one part of the puzzle was striving to understand the facts of what’s been left unfinished in children’s education as a result of the pandemic—and to design programs around those needs. In Paterson, New Jersey, the district released data on the standardized tests taken in March of 2022—the first such tests since 2019 because of COVID. At the Paterson Board of Education meeting, Superintendent of Schools Eileen Shafer said:

Prior to March 2020, when our school buildings had to close due to the pandemic, Paterson Public Schools had established upward trends in the number of students reading at or above grade level, earning college credit eligibility on Advanced Placement exams, and meeting expectations on state assessments. The national studies that were highlighted in tonight’s presentation show that the pandemic shutdown negatively impacted students throughout the nation, and even more so in districts like ours. The good news is that for more than a year we have had intervention measures in place to help students recover from the pandemic’s impact on their learning, and we have been providing our teaching staff with professional development support, as well. The success of these measures will depend on how well all of us – staff, administrators, and parents – work together.<sup>6</sup>

The presentation also detailed some of the ways that the district is taken to return the district’s schools to those same levels of success—including professional development on using data to adjust pacing in the classroom and social-emotional learning, as well as summer enrichment programs, a Saturday STEAM Academy, and an After-School Program for K-8 students.

While some like Janice K. Jackson—who led the Chicago Public Schools until last year and is now a board member of Chiefs for Change, which represents state education and school district leaders—have called for a “Marshall Plan” similar to the American plan and massive funding that helped to rebuild Europe after World War II, others like Martin West, a professor at the Harvard Graduate School of Education and a member of the National Assessment Governing Board that

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<sup>5</sup> <https://www.the74million.org/article/nj-public-school-enrollment-dropped-18k-since-start-of-covid-state-data-shows/>

<sup>6</sup> Dragone, Gabriella. 2022. Review of Impact of COVID Closure Felt in Paterson Public Schools, District Officials Acknowledge. Tap into Paterson. November 13, 2022. <https://www.tapinto.net/towns/paterson/sections/education/articles/impact-of-covid-closure-felt-in-paterson-public-schools-district-officials-acknowledge>.

oversees the test that found the unfinished learning in 9 year-olds, say there is no “silver bullet [...] beyond finding a way to increase instructional time.” There are, then, basic solutions that will be tremendously challenging to enact, and what seems like massive funding may not even be close to enough. The Times goes on to note that “The federal government has budgeted \$122 billion to help students recover, the largest single investment in American schools, and at least 20 percent of that money must be spent on academic catch-up. Yet some schools have had difficulty hiring teachers, let alone tutors, and others may need to spend far more than 20 percent of their money to close big gaps.”<sup>7</sup>

By the Spring of 2023, however, the metric that was drawing the most attention was chronic absenteeism, defined as missing at least 10 percent of school days. The Empire Center for Public Policy reported in May that:

Absenteeism in New York City was worse than the national average before the pandemic, but the pandemic significantly exacerbated the issue. Only 96 of 1,518 schools kept their average daily attendance rates steady or boosted them from 2018-19 to 2021-22.

Absenteeism was and remains particularly problematic for students in high school, Black and Hispanic students, and special education students. It was and remains worse in schools where surveys indicate that the school culture is comparatively poor.

The negative effects of COVID-related school disruptions on student achievement have been thoroughly researched and discussed. Now, districts across the country have nominally initiated efforts to accelerate student learning to compensate for months or years of disruptions and the provision of low-quality emergency remote online learning. Districts are flush with federal funds to carry out the task, but there remains a major logistical roadblock: Students simply aren't coming to school with the same regularity that they did before the pandemic.<sup>8</sup>

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<sup>7</sup> Fortin, Jacey, and Eliza Fawcett. 2022. “How Bad Is the Teacher Shortage? Depends Where You Live.” The New York Times, August 29, 2022, sec. U.S. <https://www.nytimes.com/2022/08/29/us/schools-teacher-shortages.html>.

<sup>8</sup> Kingsbury, Ian. 2023. Review of School's out Forever. Empire Center. Empire Center for Public Policy. May 19, 2023. <https://www.empirecenter.org/publications/schools-out-forever/>.

With the attention being paid to records in ways that are novel—and with the nation having experienced a novel interruption of the educational system, therefore, the system was struggling to meet a problem that wasn't new, but had taken on new proportions:

Media accounts and academic studies from across the country indicate that students feel disengaged from school and that COVID disruptions normalized the idea of not attending. Plus, COVID symptoms and concerns about spreading it represent a novel public health concern that increases the number of days that students are forced to miss. The research group Attendance Works estimates that nationwide the number of chronically absent students doubled from approximately eight million before the pandemic to 16 million in Spring 2022.

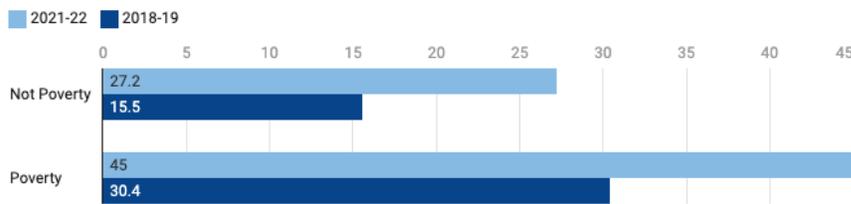
An Economic Policy Institute study cited by the Empire Center's report estimated that "missing one or two days of school is associated with academic losses equivalent to 57 fewer days of learning and missing 18 or more days equates to years of lost schooling."

With such high stakes, it's easy to see why leaders are concerned, especially since the demographic breakdowns show that chronic absenteeism affects those already at a historical disadvantage most:

U.S. Department of Education data from 2015-16 indicates that chronic absenteeism is more prevalent among Black (20.5 percent) and Hispanic (17.0 percent) students compared to White (14.5 percent) and Asian students (8.6 percent).[8] Students with disabilities are at a 50 percent greater risk of chronic absenteeism than students without disabilities (22.5 percent versus 14.9 percent). Meanwhile, differences by gender are trivial (16.1 percent for females versus 15.9 for males) and English language learners are at somewhat lesser risk of chronic absenteeism compared to non-English language learners (13.7 percent versus 16.2 percent). National data does not disaggregate results by economic status, but the Brookings Institute relays that "poor" kids in kindergarten are about 2.5 times more likely to be chronically absent compared to "non-poor" peers.

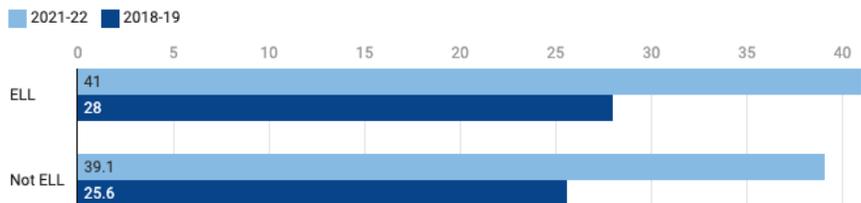
The Empire Center report goes on to apply those demographics:

**Figure 9: Percent chronically absent by demographic characteristic [Poverty level]**



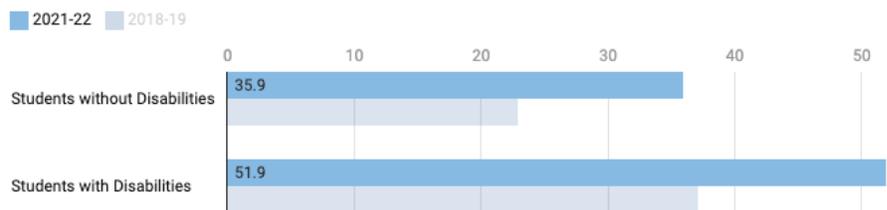
Source: NYC Public Schools - Created with [Datawrapper](#)

**Figure 10: Percent chronically absent by demographic characteristic [English learners]**



Source: NYC Public Schools - Created with [Datawrapper](#)

**Figure 12: Percent chronically absent by demographic characteristic [Disabilities]**



Source: NYC Public Schools - Created with [Datawrapper](#)

In each case, the demographic grouping relationship stayed stable, but the incidence for each group increased dramatically.

In New Jersey, similar trends were observed. State education officials released information on the 2020-21 school year showing that “Absenteeism rose, with 13% of students reported as chronically absent, up from 11% in 2018-19 (it was unreported in 2019-20 because of the

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pandemic). Chronic absenteeism was highest among unhoused students (40%), students in foster care (33%), and Black students (25%).”<sup>9</sup>

For the 2021-2022 school year, the New Jersey chronic absenteeism figure had risen: “18 percent of students in New Jersey districts were chronically absent during the 2021-22 school year. Looking closer at demographics, 28 percent of economically disadvantaged students and 25.1 percent of students with disabilities are routinely not in class. Students who are unhoused had a chronic absenteeism rate of 45.7 percent last school year.”<sup>10</sup>

As of mid-October 2023, only a small number of states had released their absenteeism figures for 2022-2023—New Jersey was not among them. Attendance Works reported that

“A number of states have released chronic absence data for the 2022-23 school year. This emerging data reveals chronic absence remains very high and only decreased slightly from the prior school year. The data was aggregated across 11 states (DE, CO, CT, MA, MS, NE, NV, NM, ND, OH, VA). In the 2022-23 school year there was only a small (2.23%) decrease in chronic absence rates, to 27.85%, when compared to the prior year, our analysis shows.”<sup>11</sup>

Given the demographic groups that have the highest rate of chronic absenteeism overall, it is quite likely that Paterson will be affected in a way that is more extreme than the average. Paterson is described in the latest Full Service Community School grant application as:

[...] one of the poorest cities in the state, with 29% of residents - close to 50,000 people - living below the federal poverty line. Eighteen percent of poor families live on less than \$15,000 per year. Single women with children suffer even higher rates of poverty: fifty percent of families without fathers live below the poverty line, and those who have very young children are the poorest. 41% of Paterson’s

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<sup>9</sup> DiFilippo, Dana, New Jersey Monitor April 7, and 2022. 2022. “Absenteeism Grew in Schools during Last School Year, Education Officials Say.” New Jersey Monitor. April 7, 2022.  
<https://newjerseymonitor.com/2022/04/07/absenteeism-grew-in-schools-during-last-school-year-education-officials-say/>.

<sup>10</sup> “New NJ School Performance Reports Show Student Struggles Post-COVID.” 2023. Across New Jersey, NJ Patch. April 10, 2023.

<https://patch.com/new-jersey/across-nj/new-nj-school-performance-reports-show-student-struggles-post-covid>.

<sup>11</sup> “Chronic Absence Remained a Significant Challenge in 2022-23.” 2023. Attendance Works. October 12, 2023.

<https://www.attendanceworks.org/chronic-absence-remained-a-significant-challenge-in-2022-23/#:~:text=In%20the%202022%2D23%20school>.

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children - one in three children - are poor, and many do not get an adequate amount of food on a regular basis. A majority of Paterson's residents are African Americans, Latinos, or recent migrants to the United States.<sup>12</sup>

At a time when the conversation about solving the conundrum of unfinished learning and chronic absenteeism is, in part, about a renewed sense of cohesion and purpose around learning, the full-service community schools model is getting renewed attention because that sort of cohesion and purpose has always been at the center of the FSCS model. Joel Knudson and Jennifer O'Day, at the American Institutes for Research and the California Collaborative on District Reform point out that community schools model what should be true for all schools:

The work of a school system should be built around a clear vision that reflects the priorities and realities of the district and its community. For example, if the district's vision for student learning emphasizes social and emotional development alongside academics, then this integrated focus should be evident in curriculum and pedagogy, interaction patterns in classrooms and extracurricular activities, and in community partnerships.<sup>13</sup>

Community schools have shown the sort of connective possibilities that were needed in the pandemic. M.D. Fox Elementary School, in Hartford Connecticut, was able to provide a food-and-necessities pantry for its families in Spring of 2022, the first post-pandemic school year.

Lots of families were asking for help," said LaToya Adgers, the site coordinator for the pre-K to fifth grade public school, which serves almost 500 students. "We sat down and asked families, 'If this was on campus, would you come here? And what do you need?'"

It's not that unusual for a school to have a food or clothes pantry for needy families. What is unusual is that Ms. Adgers works for a Hartford community services organization, the Village for Families and Children. And it was the Village that reached out to businesses and organizations to ask them to donate the goods.<sup>14</sup>

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<sup>12</sup> "Project Narrative I. Need for Project." n.d.

[https://oese.ed.gov/files/2023/01/S215J220151\\_PattersonBoardofEducation\\_Narrative\\_508\\_Redacted.pdf](https://oese.ed.gov/files/2023/01/S215J220151_PattersonBoardofEducation_Narrative_508_Redacted.pdf).

<sup>13</sup> "COMMENTARY: Community Schools Can Reinvigorate Learning after Covid — If Done Right." n.d. EdSource. Accessed December 1, 2023.

<https://edsources.org/2022/community-schools-can-reinvigorate-learning-after-covid-if-done-right/666995>.

<sup>14</sup> Tugend, Alina. 2022. "Community Schools Offer More than Just Teaching." The New York Times, October 6, 2022, sec. Education. <https://www.nytimes.com/2022/10/06/education/learning/community-schools.html>.

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While there are several different articulations of the pillars of community schools, perhaps the most important feature is that the “community” nature of the program works both in terms of supports being delivered **to** communities and in terms of supports being defined by the specific needs **of** each community, ensuring community schools have the flexibility to be most effective **for** each community. The ESEA defines a full-service community school as “a public elementary or secondary school that:

- (a) Participates in a community-based effort to coordinate and integrate educational, developmental, family, health, and other comprehensive services through community-based organizations and public and private partnerships; and
- (b) Provides access to such services in school to students, families, and the community, such as access during the school year (including before- and after-school hours and weekends), as well as during the summer.<sup>15</sup>

As we have written previously, this model is seen as particularly effective and appropriate for those students (and their families) facing circumstances connected to poverty, and studies have shown its efficacy in those cases; with COVID, however, its applicability was seen to have a broader application, especially if education is going to remain public in the face of panicked efforts by those of means to supplement their own child’s education instead of revamping the system in their community. Certainly the pandemic showed that we are at a pivot point. The national conversation around the benefits of community schooling may be at a complementary tipping point—new federal funding for the Full-Service Community Schools grant program. The program “will award \$68 million to support community schools across the country, which will spur the planning and capacity-building, development, implementation, operation and coordination of effective services for children and families, particularly in areas with high rates of poverty. President Joe Biden asked Congress to increase funding for the FSCS program to \$468 million in his fiscal year 2023 budget.”<sup>16</sup>

At the same time, strained budgets at the state and local level are a different sort of challenge. In New York City, there is an ongoing community schools funding [conflict](#) that began in May

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<sup>15</sup> “Frequently Asked Questions Using American Rescue Plan Funding to Support Full-Service Community Schools & Related Strategies.” n.d.

<https://oese.ed.gov/files/2021/07/21-0138-ARP-Community-Schools-OMB-and-OS-Approved-071421-1.pdf>

<sup>16</sup> Parmalee, Thomas. 2022. “USDOE Announces \$68 Million in Grants for Full-Service Community Schools.” New Jersey School Boards Association. July 12, 2022.

<https://www.njsba.org/news-publications/school-board-notes/july-12-2022-vol-xlvi-no-2/usdoe-announces-68-million-i-n-grants-for-full-service-community-schools/>

2022, when the City Council voted to reapportion funding more equitably for all organizations that work with schools across the five boroughs. The unintended consequence has been that community schools, which are rich in organizational partnerships, have seen deep funding cuts for the organizations that allow the schools to thrive in ways students and families need—some organizations lost nearly 50% of their funding. Ironically, the New York City community schools movement is seen as a particular success—this same new formula “also allows the city to expand the number of community schools, Caruso said. A department spokesperson said they plan to open about 100 more community schools by this fall.”<sup>17</sup>

It seems the nation is seeing students, families, educators, and officials gather at the nexus of financial strain, educational challenges, and research-based approaches meant to help communities thrive. The future of our children continues to hang in the balance.

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<sup>17</sup> May 19, Reema Amin |, 2022, and 7:21pm UTC. 2022. “NYC’s ‘Community Schools’ Are a Lifeline for Many Students. Dozens Are Bracing for Cuts.” Chalkbeat. May 19, 2022. <https://ny.chalkbeat.org/2022/5/19/23131309/ny-community-schools-cuts-nonprofit-mental-health-attendance-monitoring>.

### 1.1 Overview of Paterson Public Schools (PPS) – Full Service Community Schools (FSCS)

Paterson Public School District was successful in securing a Federal Full Service Community School grant in 2010, which led to the establishment of the Paterson Public Schools (PPS) – Full Service Community Schools (FSCS) initiative. The PPS FSCS initiative comprises five public schools, each of which is partnered with a lead community-based organization to plan, implement and sustain services to support the well-being and development of children, their families and the wider community. The first FSCS established under this initiative was School 5 in 2011, followed by Rev. Dr. Frank Napier School and New Roberto Clemente School in 2012, and Schools 6 and 15 in 2014.

Some schools received additional grants since the first grant in 2010. Napier in 2013, and NRC and School 6 in 2015, received School Improvement Grants (SIG). The SIG grant provides support for professional development and extended school day hours. Four schools experienced leadership change during this period with new principals appointed at Napier in 2014 and at Schools 5, 6 and NRC in 2015. Currently, School 6, School 2, School 15 and JFK have five year FSCS grants and are therefore funded for the current evaluation.

Beginning in March 2019 and extending until September 2021, the FSCS operated with online learning, a transition no one was ready to make. However, the community schools had the organization, staff commitment, understanding of their constituents and program adaptability to step in immediately to help students and parents adjust online learning. Nonetheless, they could only reach families that wanted to be reached.

Last year, 2021 – 2022, brought students back to school. It was more than welcome for everyone, including students. But it brought new, urgent issues – some new and related to Covid loss and disruption and fear, and some old but amplified of instability, poverty, health care and even violence. And in the second year of return, 2022-2023, absenteeism was a continuing challenge reflecting those same endemic issues. This report is a description and interpretation of how the Paterson community schools responded to the transition in a still on-going crisis for students and families.

## 1.2 The Evolving Theory of Change for Paterson Community Schools

The evaluation methodology, as described above, is based on a foundation of understanding and clarifying the desired goals of the school. What these goals are, stating them clearly and articulating how they are expected to be achieved is referred to as the Theory of Change. As illustrated below (Figure 1), a Theory of Change consists of pathways of outcomes that need to be achieved to reach a long-term goal. For example, it is usually the consensus that good attendance is needed to achieve good academic outcomes, and good attendance needs parents to be committed to getting their youth up and out on time.

The goals vary depending on whether one talks to a community school coordinator, a health provider, a teacher, a parent, a principal or the school district leaders. Each year of this evaluation, we convene the staff of the community school, the FSCS partners, and FSCS leadership, to discuss in a participatory way, what their goals for the upcoming year are.

In 2019, this convening was done in person, as was usual. In 2020 and 2021, it was done by Zoom, with follow-up individual interviews. The zoom meetings sometimes had a few participants and sometimes just one participant. From these meetings and interviews, the evaluation team developed the Theory of Change. The resulting theories, per school, were not as rich as those developed in workshops with dialogue and many participants with different perspectives, but they did reflect the major change from pre-pandemic goals to online learning to first year back goals.

In this year, 2022, the Theory of Change reflects goals after the first year back to school for the upcoming year 2022 – 2023. There were no workshops in 2022, so the Theory of Change was updated and further developed based on staff surveys, interviews and site visits. The theory (with the set of short, medium and long-term outcomes needed to reach the long-term goal) remains rich. We surmise—and survey responses suggest—that after the difficulties and uncertainties of knowing what to expect for the last two years, the coordinators, staff and partners have a much better idea of what they are facing.

There are quite a few different factors that are different when comparing this year's ToC framework to previous years (see Figure 4 for the 2019 Theory of Change). For example, this was only the second year back from online/ virtual learning. With students still getting reacclimated and readjusted to in-person learning, there are many concerns for the students' well-being. Behavioral challenges have increased, which include shorter tempers, depression

and anxiety. There are more goals that are geared towards providing a safe and non-stressful environment than there were in previous years.

In each of the schools evaluated, students have declined in their education level during the pandemic and online learning. With both the families and students having been emotionally and physically strained from the pandemic, the site and health coordinators want to provide more awareness about the services they offer and reach more students overall. The adjustment for site coordinators is still as difficult. In addition, there is a site coordinator (at JFK) and other staff who have shifted to different schools, which has affected the performance of the FSCS programs; Ms. Santa's professional development is meant to strengthen the cohesion and coherence of the all-school mindset that leads to superior FSCS outcomes, but the inevitable staffing changes make that goal quite difficult to achieve.

However, certain relationships between coordinators and principals have been getting better, which is a positive. Some goals from last year have been achieved, and there is an increase of student happiness now that they are able to see their friends in person. Also, now that students are back in school, their safety has increased. With students that have a troubled home life, being back in school gives them a space for security and resources.

Paterson FSCS ToC  
Fall 2022

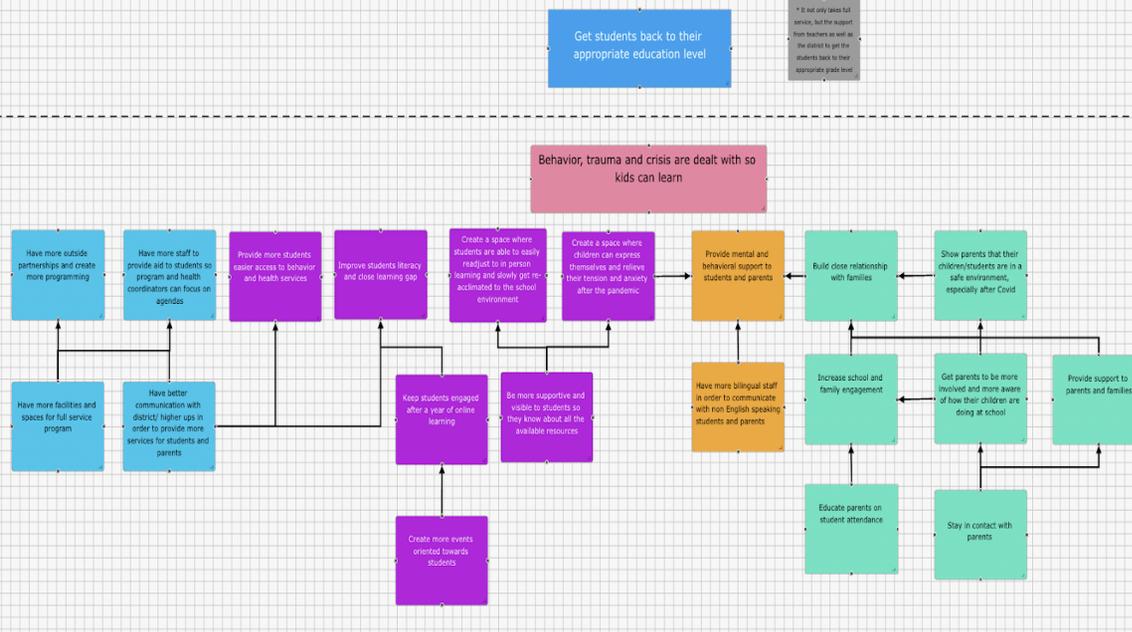


FIGURE 1. PATERSON FULL SERVICE COMMUNITY SCHOOLS OVERALL THEORY OF CHANGE AS OF 2022

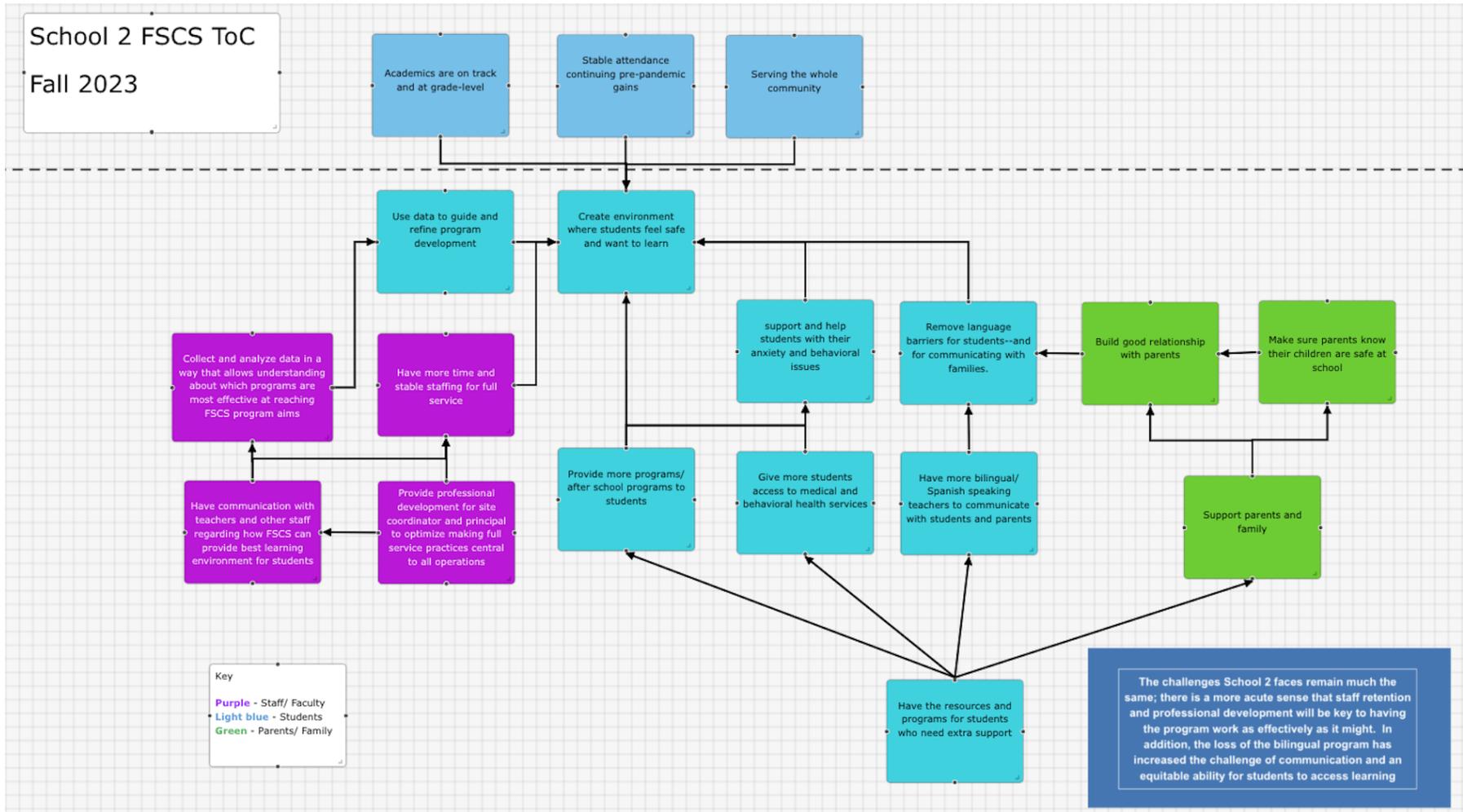
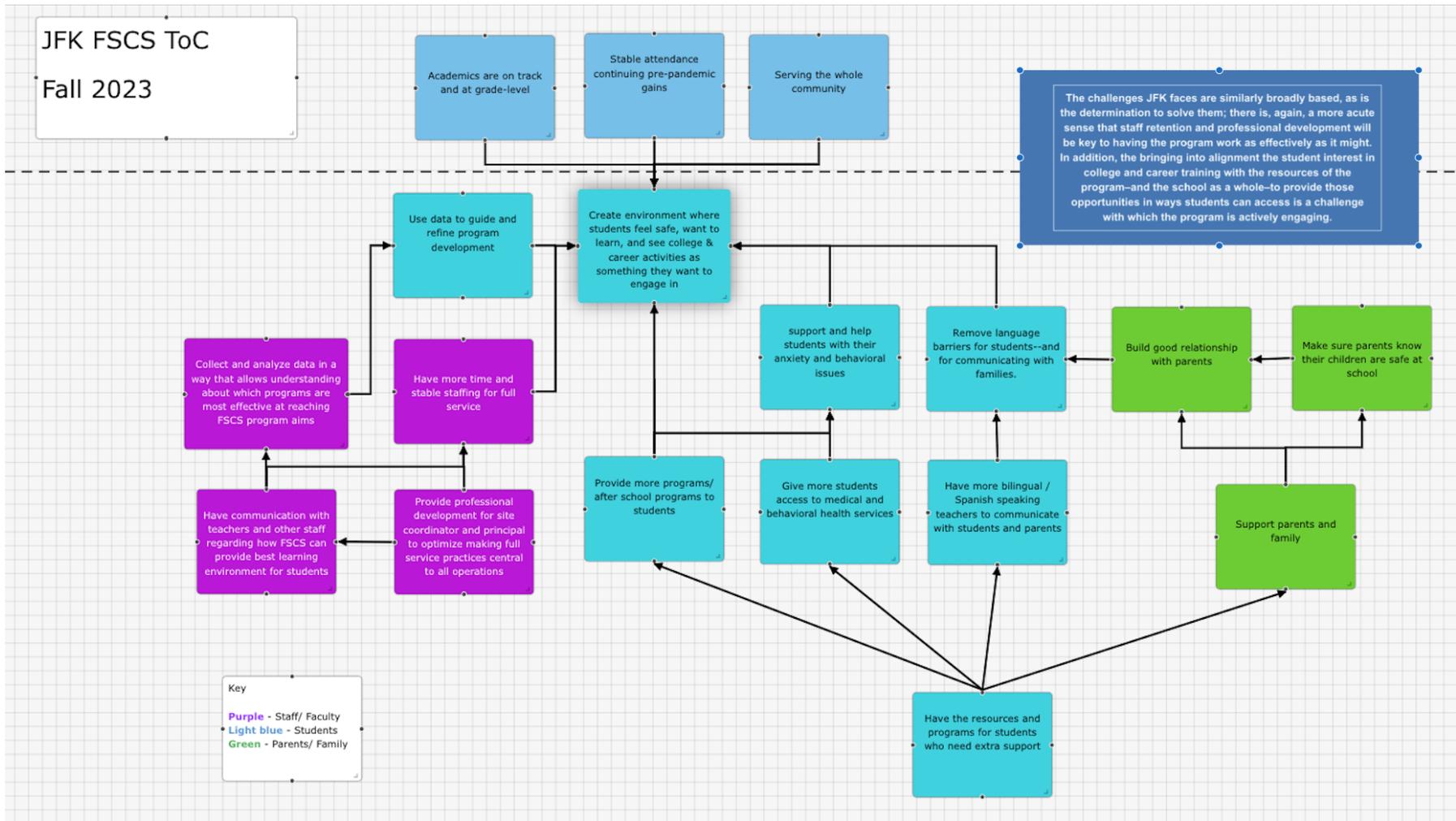


FIGURE 2. SCHOOL 2 THEORY OF CHANGE FOR 2022 – 2023

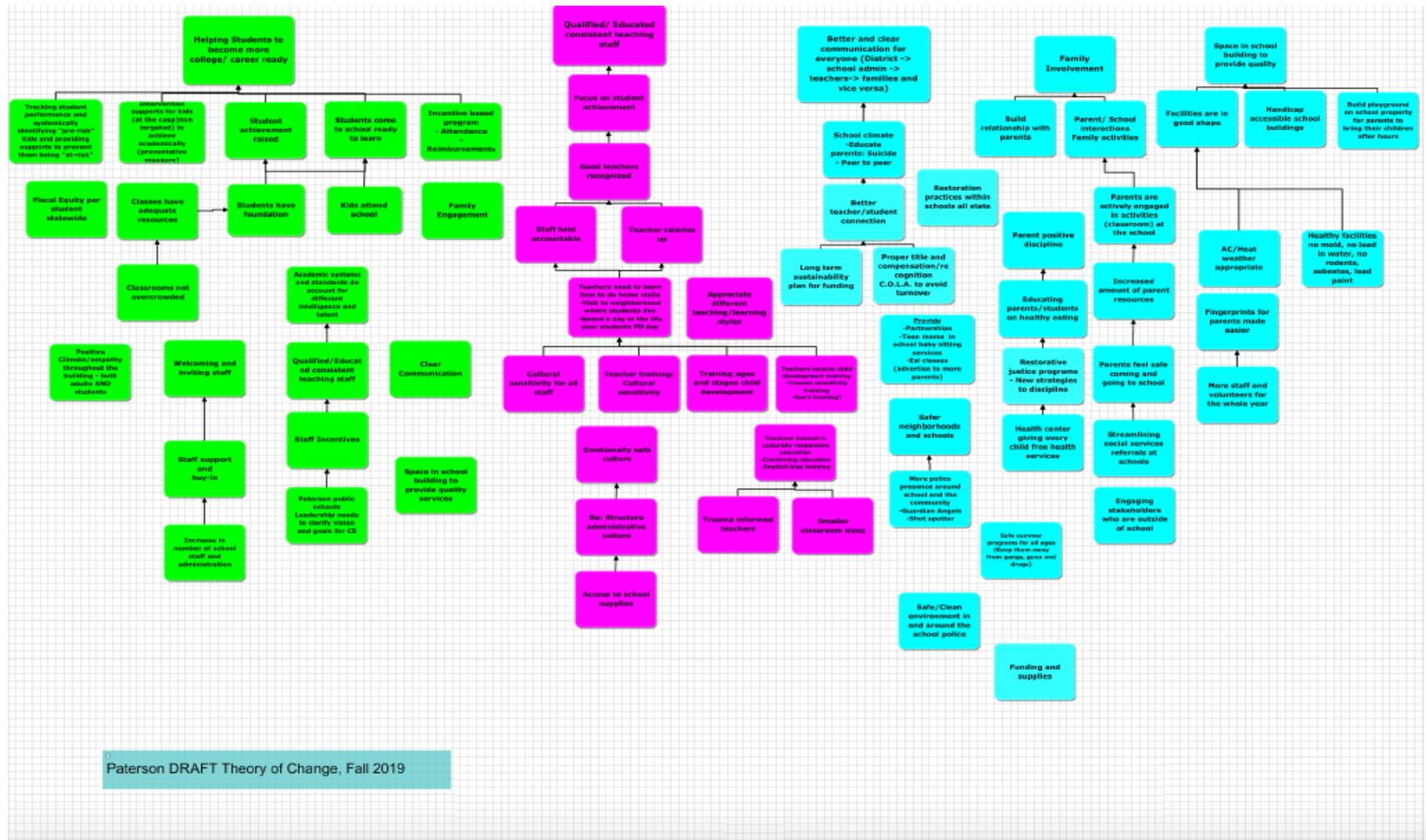
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**FIGURE 3. JFK HIGH SCHOOL THEORY OF CHANGE FOR 2022 – 2023**

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**FIGURE 4: FULL SERVICE COMMUNITY SCHOOL THEORY OF CHANGE – 2019**  
Before the pandemic and out of school learning



### 1.3 Theory of Change Discussion and Evolution

There are quite a few different factors when comparing this year's ToC framework to previous years. For example, this is the first year back from online/ virtual learning. With students getting reacclimated and readjusted to in person learning, there are many concerns for the students' well-being. Behavioral changes have increased, which include shorter tempers, depression and anxiety. There are more goals that are geared towards providing a safe and non-stressful environment than there were in previous years. A major goal that was not in any previous framework, is to get students back to their grade level academically.

Across the board, in all the schools, students have declined in their education level during the pandemic and online learning. With both the families and students having been emotionally and physically strained from the pandemic, the site and health coordinators want to provide more awareness about the services they offer and reach more students overall. There are similar goals from last year that are in this year's framework. The adjustment for site coordinators is still as difficult. There is a lack of communication with the district which is an ongoing concern.

However, certain relationships between coordinators and principals have been getting better, which is a positive. Some goals from last year have been achieved, but with students still having fears of getting sick and having trouble catching up to their own grade level, different goals need to be on the ToC. There is an increase of student happiness now that they are able to see their friends in person. Also, now that students are back in school, their safety has increased. With students that have a troubled home life, being back in school gives them a space for security and resources.

Overall, the data in this year's ToC shows that despite the hurdles that the staff are experiencing, FSCS provides incredible resources and opportunities for the students that would normally not have access to these services, and they will continue to provide aid and services to help any student and parent that they can.

## 1.4 Evaluation Methods

This evaluation uses a participatory mixed-methods approach involving collection and analysis of qualitative and quantitative data. The implementation of the community school services at the schools is based on a model that hypothesizes what it takes to reach goals. The evaluation, in turn, tests whether the assumptions of that model were correct or not, and whether the outcomes identified are being achieved.

As a participatory evaluation, the evaluator and program practitioners ensured that key stakeholders were involved in setting goals, which they did as participants in Theory of Change workshops conducted by the evaluator during the summer season. Key stakeholders also helped identify and collect data, collaborated in the logistics of site visits and collection of materials, and participated in feedback meetings with the evaluators.

Because of COVID and online learning, and the increased gap between higher and lower income students, this evaluation also included an extensive desk review about education inequality and community school roles to alleviate it.

### Theory of Change

The evaluation in prior years has been guided by a comprehensive Theory of Change for the Initiative and for the constituent schools. The process of developing and refining the Theory of Change was carried out from 2010 to 2014 through a series Theory of Change sessions facilitated by ActKnowledge and the National Center for Community Schools, as detailed below:

Many FSCS model stakeholders participated in these sessions, including principals, teachers, parents, community school directors from each school; lead agencies (New Jersey Community Development Corporation (NJCDC), St. Paul's Community Development Center, and Boys and Girls Club of Paterson and Passaic); key personnel from Paterson Public School District and Paterson Education Foundation and providers of health services. The sessions were co-led and facilitated by ActKnowledge and the technical assistance provider from the National Center for Community Schools.

For this 2020 – 2021 school year we tried something different. As schools and coordinators faced uncertainty and unexplored mental health, learning and re-integration needs, we asked schools to just state goals for their first couple of months back in school. Those are presented in this report.

### Site Visits

Comprehensive site visits were made by ActKnowledge each grant year, using a set of interview protocols designed to elicit the views of stakeholders on how the community school was developing, including changes, achievements, challenges, and factors facilitating or hindering progress. In 2023, this involved:

- Interviewing all community school directors and program staff.
- Interviewing principals and/or assistant principals.
- Focus group interviews with parents and/or parent coordinators.
- Focus group interviews with students.

This year, surveys were used instead of focus groups for students.

### Student Surveys

ActKnowledge developed a survey questionnaire to elicit the views and perceptions of students (focusing on 3<sup>rd</sup> grade and up) in the full service community schools (identified through the initiative's Theory of Change and through the education research literature) relating to their experience with attending online, their challenges getting online, the demand within a household for multiple members to use a computer, and how much help they needed or received.

## 2. Findings

### 2.1 Five Years of Program Implementation: Challenges and Successes

Full-service community schools operate from a simple central concept: learning does not and cannot happen in a vacuum. Students who are hungry cannot concentrate in their classes; those who are homeless cannot do homework. Families who experience periods of food scarcity or lack electricity because of financial instabilities cannot support their children in their learning to the extent that will allow those children to thrive—and neither can families who are grappling with drug addiction, incarceration, or the threat of deportations. The community schools model, first defined by the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 (ESEA), seeks to draw together the elements of communities needed for the widest range of students possible to thrive and uses schools as the point of coordination for those services. That adaptive responsiveness has positioned full-service community schools to be a vital part of school systems' ability to provide what much larger swaths of communities found they needed in the unprecedented circumstances of the COVID-19 pandemic—and what communities have continued to need as the full return from the pandemic has unfolded. .

The full-service community school model is seen as particularly effective and appropriate for those students (and their families) facing circumstances connected to poverty. Copious studies, including the Department of Education's longitudinal evaluation of Title I schools, MDRC's look at two years of case management at 24 low-income urban schools, and the Milton S. Eisenhower Foundation's study of East Allegheny, PA middle schools—have shown the model's efficacy in those circumstances.<sup>18</sup> Most recently, the Department of Education noted that:

according to a 2020 RAND Corporation Study of New York City community schools (the study uses the term “community school” rather than “full-service community school”), the approach had a positive impact on student attendance in elementary, middle, and high schools and across all three years that outcomes were measured (2015–2016, 2016–2017, and 2017– 2018). The study also found positive and significant impacts on elementary and middle school students' on-time grade progression and suggested a reduction in disciplinary incidents for elementary and middle school students. The study found that the community schools had a positive impact on students' mathematics achievement in the final year of the study. Further, based on a comprehensive analysis of 143 studies, the Learning Policy Institute concluded that well-implemented community

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<sup>18</sup>

[https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/1xh0STxHsDf1F1A7A8ed6v0RCbj9v2U0M1\\_d2eGcgDOM/edit#gid=308054236](https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/1xh0STxHsDf1F1A7A8ed6v0RCbj9v2U0M1_d2eGcgDOM/edit#gid=308054236)

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schools lead to improvement in student and school outcomes and contribute to meeting the educational needs of struggling students in schools with high poverty rates.<sup>19</sup>

With the COVID epidemic and the economic shutdown that has accompanied our national response, schools have found that the community school approaches are now needed to help an even wider spectrum of students and families—and community schools have been “particularly well-positioned to respond to the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic, including by working closely with partner organizations to address community needs.” (DOE) That need is leading schools – from the REACH Academy elementary school in the Oakland, California, Unified School District, to

Peoria, Illinois, public schools, and Asheville City Schools in North Carolina—to embrace the model as a more foundational building block in terms of strategies and partnerships; the success of their efforts points the way toward a more connected and empathetic approach to how schools can coordinate and deliver the services every student and every family deserves.

While there are several different articulations of the pillars of community schools, perhaps the most important feature is that the “community” nature of the program works both in terms of supports being delivered *to* communities and in terms of supports being defined by the specific needs *of* each community, ensuring community schools have the flexibility to be most effective *for* each community. In its guidance for the use of American Recovery Act funds, the ESEA defines a full-service community school as “a public elementary or secondary school that”

1. Participates in a community-based effort to coordinate and integrate educational, developmental, family, health, and other comprehensive services through community based organizations and public and private partnerships; and
2. Provides access to such services in school to students, families, and the community, such as access during the school year (including before- and after-school hours and weekends), as well as during the summer.

The [National Education Association \(NEA\) takes the further step of defining six “pillars”](#) it feels are key: 1) strong and culturally relevant curriculum; 2) high quality teaching and learning; 3) inclusive leadership; 4) positive behavior practices (including restorative justice); 5) family and community partnerships; 6) coordinated and integrated wraparound community support services. Each of those pillars is to be keyed to the needs of the community through a community school coordinator, school stakeholder problem solving teams, and a community

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<sup>19</sup> “Frequently Asked Questions Using American Rescue Plan Funding to Support Full-Service Community Schools & Related Strategies.” n.d.  
<https://oese.ed.gov/files/2021/07/21-0138-ARP-Community-Schools-OMB-and-OS-Approved-071421-1.pdf>.

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school stakeholder/partner committee. Using the data from a needs and assets assessment, that triad is able to understand what the students and families in their school need and then work to provide it. Those priorities might lean toward English language learning for students and for parents, college and career readiness, nutrition services, community service, social / emotional health, or supports for students who are chronically absent, suspended, or expelled—all depending on what the particular needs are.<sup>20</sup>

More recently, the Department of Education noted in 2022 that:

Research shows that there are certain design features that are common across full-service community schools that are associated with improvements in teaching, learning and student outcomes. The evidence-based features, or pillars (as defined in this notice), include providing (1) integrated supports (e.g., social and emotional learning, access to health and nutrition services);

(2) expanded and enriched learning time (e.g., after-school enrichment and summer school); (3) active family and community engagement; and (4) collaborative leadership and practices to support high-quality teaching. Evidence-based full-service community schools create and implement at least these strategies as part of a comprehensive set of strategies that are designed to reflect and be tailored to local contexts. These four pillars are supported by the Science of Learning and Development Alliance and can be used to address the needs of the whole child, including those children and youth that schools and community partners determine to be most vulnerable.<sup>21</sup>

As the pandemic unfolded, Paterson’s community schools went from supporting students and communities in as many ways as they could to striving to keep students engaged in schools and provide families with emergency support. As community schools have continued the return to in-person learning and the depth of the chronic absenteeism problem has become clear, schools have shifted into a different modes of support for student academics and wellness—and to reconnect with families who have spent two years in different forms of disconnection from school supports.

Site visits and interviews with Paterson FSCS staff and partners showed significant positive effort in these areas for School 2 and John F. Kennedy as they endeavor to build back from the pandemic. At the same time, the challenge has been clear. Chantelle Campbell, Special Funds

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<sup>20</sup> “Community Schools | NEA.” n.d. [www.nea.org](http://www.nea.org).  
<https://www.nea.org/student-success/smart-just-policies/community-schools>.

<sup>21</sup> “Federal Register :: Request Access.” n.d. [Unblock.federalregister.gov](https://www.federalregister.gov). Accessed December 1, 2023.  
<https://www.federalregister.gov/documents/2022/07/13/2022-15091/applications-for-new-awards-full-service-community-schools-program>.

Program Advisor for the past three years and Site Coordinator for the previous six years at School 6 in Paterson described it as an evolution, from getting off the ground, building “traction”. Then, the pandemic threw everything off. We observed the same things people expressed to us, of programs and participation slowing down. When in-person school started up again, a lot of things had to begin all over again.

In the next section we describe and evaluate the programs and supports at Schools 2 and JFK through the lens of the four pillars provided by DOE.

**#1: Integrated supports  
(e.g., social & emotional learning, access to health & nutrition services)**

At JFK high school, which serves over 1800 students, the FSCS program provides medical care (a pediatrician visits two times a week) as well as vision and dental care (every other month) and behavioral healthcare for students social and emotional support through individual and group counseling.

An FSCS Health Coordinator notes that these are important health services in particular for JFK's large population of international students:

We have students from all nations. Dominican. Peruvians. A lot from Bangladesh. And a lot of Ecuadorians. A lot of Colombians. As well as students from Southern, South America and East Asia.

Many of those families have no insurance—and there are many American students for whom this is the primary place where they get care. In addition, the program is a help to families already stretched by the need to work several jobs and provide for their kids. And it is constantly growing. At JFK, enrollment increased by 17% from 2021 – 2022 to 2022 – 2023.

Families in or near poverty, working all hours, often have trouble finding time to enroll their students and it's frustrating for the health clinic, the students and the parents. Once the student is enrolled, they can manage their own appointments, and parents see the benefits.

For the parents themselves, there are programs that support their growth, their mental health, and their sense of connection so that they can be better parents and fuller community members:

The behavioral health office provides programs for the parents as well. There are Zooms to deal with stressors, and Wellness Wednesdays for parents and for the students, also via Zoom. They cover topics such as nutrition, then feelings, and some meditation. Wellness Wednesday has become one of the most successful programs.

Parents also can get food, clothing, rental assistance, electrical assistance and connection to resources. One of the major benefits we have seen of FSCS is how well the coordinators and staff know everyone who can provide assistance in Paterson.

The community-building work is complex. Besides being “the mayor” for families needing services, the health coordinator at JFK is also able to be a school-based parent for students, who will come by her office:

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If they need help with anything like food, clothing, rental assistance, electrical assistance, I connect them to other people and to resources.

In looking at this post-pandemic period, one staff person noted that:

After we came back to school, a lot of kids were happy to come back to school. They missed school. [...]. And the attendance changed a whole lot. Because they were happy to come back and some students [were] just starting. So yeah, they made a big difference between last year and the year before that. Big difference. And also the services here helped, actually, right? Big time. And everything, especially the mental health part. A lot of them needed counseling. I love the fact that they know that this is a safe place. They know where to go.

Evaluation surveys showed “an increase in students saying that they obtained a skill as a result of participating in any of our workshops or activities.” In addition, the JFK coordinator reported:

We had an increase in what we call The Living Room, our mental health counseling program. We certainly saw an increase in students participating in those services. There were barely any students coming into our office the first year back, but last year we had so many students during the day that would come into our office to share any challenges that they were experiencing.

Since returning from the pandemic period, staff report that student engagement has gone very well. More students participate in activities and more go to the office. As the programs have grown they also have added lunches and workshops at JFK to discuss careers, life skills, relationships and setting boundaries.

With that increase in student engagement, the FSCS was able to more fully live its mission. For students who were just exploring how they might grow as human beings, more students participated in after-school program activities, which are designed for students to explore a new activity and learn a new skill.

Maria Santa has worked for the Paterson Public School District for 34 years, as a teacher, a supervisor, a principal, and as an assistant superintendent. As a principal, she had what she refers to as “the privilege, really, because it was a privilege to have that process in my school, to start what became the first full service community school in Patterson.”

That was 13 years ago at School 5. At the time, she recounts, “we were looking for something to really transform this school, to turn it into something unique and service oriented that would serve our students in as many capacities as possible.”

Now “retired”—a term that seems the opposite of the many ways she’s supporting the FSCS model implementation—Maria creates professional development for teams and principals at FSCSs. In talking about JFK, she notes that:

At Kennedy, they were able to establish a wonderful mental health clinic area. They call it The Living Room because we don't want to attach any [stigma when] mental health is still stigmatized. But that Living Room has done wonders to support the students there. They have a clinician there that since Kennedy High School came on board, that was one of the successes there.

They also were able to create the laundry room, which had an impact in terms of attendance because we found that students were not coming to school because they sometimes didn't have the money to go to the laundromat and wash their clothes. So that was a great help there. And the laundromat exists at a couple of the elementary schools.

For School 2, which is a K-5 school serving over 500 students overall and a K-2 Full Service Community School, NJ Family Care (which covers undocumented people and is ongoing) helps families get insurance. School 2 used flyers and a robocall, which resulted in 60 families signing up for health care—40% of the school’s families. The health care program is basically the same as JFK is able to offer—and a laundry room is in the planning stages.

School 2’s Youth Development Specialist with Oasis—a partner to the FSCS program and a haven for women & children—noted that program partners can help in many ways. At School 2, Mott has enabled a parent with hearing loss to get a hearing aid with help from donors, provided food and diapers, called to make appointments—and sometimes accompany families—at doctors and clinics. It is a matter of trying to help, “whatever the need,” including being a patient ear when parents just need to vent. Students and their parents will stop by School 2’s FSCS office, which is filled with boxes of supplies, to get what they need; two of the most common items are eyeglasses and shoes.

Before FSCS, parent engagement was reportedly very low. Our earlier staff surveys indicate that as well as our interviews. Most parents don’t know how or want to ask for anything for themselves, but with the grant, the schools are able to offer services and do outreach. School 2 holds evening events, and helps with housing, food, clothing and more. The coordinator describes some events for parents:

There have been times where we'll have like a STEM night or a reading literacy night So it's academic based for the kids and for the parents to sit in as well to kind of see what the process is for their child and there have also been nights where the parents may be pulled out for their own

workshop, to be taught, you know, something as simple as how to log into your child's grades. So, you know, we're able to kill two birds with one stone in terms of that, which has been really really really helpful, especially having the bilingual support because again, we have a very large population of Spanish speakers.

However, the district removed School 2's bilingual classes and replaced them with more special ed classes. As a result, a very large population of bilingual students does not have enough resources in the school.

## **#2: Expanded & enriched learning time (e.g., after-school enrichment & summer school)**

At School 2, the after school program conducts programs in dance, art, and gardening, etc. They have family engagement, for example with bingo & science literacy night, as well as Thanksgiving turkey giveaways and Christmas visits from Santa. The summer program serves approximately 100 students.

A tutoring program operates three days a week with one teacher per every two students. It is conducted by a church program, and they responded to the FSCS coordinator asking for the program to be stand-alone instead of in the classroom.

The 21st Century after-school program, for the 4th to 8th grade and run by the Board of Education with federal 21<sup>st</sup> Century funding, has a different mission for the programming than the FSCS program. Ideally, community schools can use 21<sup>st</sup> Century funds to enhance their program, but in Paterson the district runs it. The FSCS program includes a lot of experiential learning. Parents who have commented reported that the FSCS after-school offers more.

The 21<sup>st</sup> Century program doesn't seem to have a community building piece – as per reports to the evaluators from FSCS staff.

School 2 coordinator: I am intentional about being at the door when kids get picked up in the afternoon and getting to know the parents. Focus 21 doesn't have anyone to do that. And my teachers know that the expectation is that every child is going to be treated really well in the classroom. Even when it's hard.

JFK had a substantial increase with student engagement over the last year. They hosted five after-school programs, including drama, dance, and film. But it was a difficult journey:

JFK coordinator: it was almost as if that previous year from last year we had to reestablish our program. And so that included basically starting from ground zero to make sure students understood what our program mission was, the services

we provided, promoting the program, ensuring that students were aware of all the services that were available.

Overall, the flexibility of the FSCS grant, and the attention to student and family needs, has allowed offering programs tailored to each school.

### **#3: Active family and community engagement**

While the 1st and 2nd pillars are more tactical and school-focused, “active family and community engagement” is as much about specific outreach as it is about building a fundamental sense of trust and practice of communication within and without the school and its families. The School 2 coordinator on how things have unfolded as the community has returned from Covid:

I think what's helped the most is accessibility to the building, of course, but also the flexibility to serve the parents, flexibility to see them even if they don't have an appointment. Even when they're coming in for a problem, the approach is different. And it's a "how do we fix it?" approach; not "it's broken." It's “what do we do together to make this better?”

School 2's Principal reflected on her seventh year in the School 2:

The things that we have been able to do over the past five years is nothing short of amazing because this is exactly what this community needed. Just the support. They're so appreciative. And every little thing that we did helps. It helps support the parents. It helps getting students to school....Not so much literal transportation, but as far as motivation to come to school, as well as supporting them being here in school, whether it's academically, emotionally, physically, whatever it is that we've done here, really has been such a support to them and to the parents. [...] They feel welcome in the building. It's like a second home. And I think it's also built a level of trust between us because you know over the years. The thing has been that parents, they don't want anyone to know what their situation is, right? A lot of our parents here are coming from other countries and it's a matter of pride. So we've gotten them to the point where they can open up and they can, you know, feel comfortable enough to tell us, you know what, listen, like I have this going on, I don't know what to do. Because we've been such a great support to them that they turn to us first before they'll turn to anybody else. I've seen this from the start of it.

Her approach with parents, especially post-Covid, has been to encourage parents to come into the building and to give them opportunities to come in and be a part of their child's learning, and to see that their child is safe.

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One parent—Parent 1—who has had family that graduated from School 2 in the 1990s—and who, herself, attended as a child in the 2000s—said that she moved into the neighborhood to send her own kids to School 2: “I remember happy times in this school.” Her 5th grader has been happy at the school as well, and the parent has felt the supportive nature of the FSCS program.

Another parent—Parent 2—with a child in the school over the past six years, said that the after-school programming here has been the greatest help for her. She moved from New York to Paterson, and School 2 and Oasis have been the organizations that have helped her: “Jessica (the FSCS coordinator at School 2) for us, has been our help to the Latinos, with the children. Jessica is super important for this school. Super important,” especially when the children are arriving from other Spanish-speaking countries. It's a school where the teachers are English-speaking. Parent 2 said her move has been a good change because of all the activities that Abreu organizes; even though they're within the school, the team works to make them more personal.

Some of the circumstances that come with school district changes make the work more necessary and more difficult. For instance, Parent 2 reflected, School 2 lost its bilingual dual language school program, even though 80% of the students in our school are Spanish speaking from Latin America. So those students are “being forced to learn the language” without the dual language program. Her daughter repeated second grade as a result and her daughters tell her how difficult it is that they're being used to translate. Her daughters are friendly and see that it helps the teacher, it helps the other students, but it's a burden for the students striving to focus on their own learning.

The School 2 FSCS Coordinator reported that the loss of that program has been “the biggest challenge, that change, and I fought this fight for a long time. The answer usually came back to numbers, which to me didn't make sense. Still doesn't make sense.”

After losing the dual-language program, the School 2 coordinator was able to get ESL classes at the school for the adults last year, “which was a big win... So this year it's back and it's later in the evening. We're providing childcare.”

As evaluators we saw the loss of the ESL program as a very significant setback in academics and in social integration and engagement.

On the plus side, the parents say that the parent workshops that Jessica builds as part of the FSCS offerings “get them all together; they build community.” School 2's Workshop Wednesdays were popular: “There was always a topic. There wasn't always a vendor, but it varied. And I tried to always bring things that are not intimidating to the women. And I listen to what it is they are

interested in.” That listening—and the ability to have personnel paid to provide it—is a key ingredient.

With the understanding of what families were facing, the FSCS program was able to provide both material and psychological / emotional support. As a result, this Parent 2 said, “COVID didn't feel as difficult.”

School 2 conducted many food bag giveaways, and also diapers and supplies. They held family events online with kits, for example, for the cooking lessons.

This year, with the grant ended, there's less money, so there are fewer Youth Development Associates—less staff in the evening to do engagements. That's a problem according to one partner, because “emotionally, the families have no resources—they need the program resources; this building becomes 'home'.”

In terms of material needs, teachers know that if they let someone on the FSCS team know what supplies students need, the team will work to find them.

Some of the responses the team has heard from parents that they consider their own data:

“I feel good - I can see” (after a parent was helped to get glasses)

“I came here to be able to hear your voice” (after a parent was helped to get hearing aids)

There has been some decline in attendance for all family programs. More so at JFK because high schools are more of a challenge. Parents aren't as involved because the kids can manage themselves.

School 2, as an elementary school, has done better. That is largely thanks to the zeal and passion for the work that the coordinator has and she has kept the program afloat. Attendance is still an issue for parents .

The FSCS coordinator at JFK encountered successes and lots of challenges, and the difference in success rates has to do with the difference between a high school and an elementary population:

We did a health and wellness workshop for the parents. We did a breast cancer awareness workshop for our parents. We also did cooking classes, which was a very, very popular one. I think that probably the most parents participated in it. And we did that online virtually just because we really didn't have the space to do it at the school.

A lot of our parents are single parents and sometimes they're working two jobs and just don't have the time for it. Another part of it could have been just being unaware of what services we provided. And then some parents just felt like, okay, they're in high school so they're on their own.

I think just trying to figure out the best ways to communicate with parents is key. We attended every back-to-school night, report card night—just to get information out to parents and then they would sign up.

If the parent buys in, then it's almost an automatic transfer for the student to buy in. So I think that was a challenge with parents: follow up and then figuring out creative ways to really get them involved to participate and really be a part of the full service community fold.

That is certainly a barrier, the language barrier. And then, I've never experienced this before, but being new to a country and building that trust with an entity or organization you don't know. I would imagine that a parent would be very hesitant. While we try our best to share information, I'm wondering if there are ways to help bridge the gap. I think another part of it too is having staff members that look like the community, that way that at least can get them in the door to begin building that trust.

Partners reported a parent component at JFK that allows the schools to offer parents workshops and gatherings around topics of interest. The development and assisting in the development of a PTO (parent teacher organization) at the schools has come under the full service site coordinator leading it together with the administration.

#### **#4: Collaborative leadership and practices to support high-quality teaching**

The complex teamwork that makes Full Service Community Schools work, that allows the model to be both responsive and, in the face of challenges, continue to make progress toward the goal, is a central part of this story as well.

Jenna Goodreau, Paterson's Director of Full Service Community Schools since 2016 (and, before that, the School Improvement Grant Supervisor and Teacher) has been a part of the Paterson story since 2000. Her work on the district gave her this perspective on the successes:

The District is very committed to the full service Community Schools Initiative because these are services and programs that really have a big impact on our students and families. When I came in in 2016. We had five schools, and now we have eleven, and are hoping to expand to 13 this year. So the District continues to support the initiative, and continues to yearly increase the amount of funding for the initiative, with having my Department all funded by the District. None of us are funded by the grants. But we are also able to increase the number of

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schools that we're adding. So I believe that the District really supports this initiative.

Looking at changes over the past five years is, for her, “really difficult with COVID being right in the middle of this grant, or pretty much like in year two of the grant. Because I feel like we were starting to make some upward mobility, especially with attendance scores. So that's what we're trying to work on with all of our coordinators. I think we're still working our way back [to where we were in 2019.]”

The end of this grant cycle means creating a sustainable future for the programs in those schools. The FSCS leadership looked at what funding will be available. They have Additional American Recovery Act dollars that are helping some programs now but will not have it next year. This year is critical to finding ways to juggle funding sources and develop new ones.

One of the partners, the New Jersey Community Development Corporation, considers itself a host or placement agency for programming in the schools. Launched in 2019, the NJCDC funds programming in the after-school segment of the day as well as promoting college and career readiness. NJCDC provides each school with \$1000 per month for programs, which allows the schools to work adaptively to provide what the students and families need and desire. That has included academic assistance as well as an after-school menu of programs, from television production to dance, to drama to yoga, to the Summerbridge college readiness program in partnership with Felician University. In more capital improvements, JFK used the funding to build their laundry center which “makes it easy to give students examples of problem solving and ways to rise above” challenges. They will continue their funding.

Using teachers for some of the after-school programs allows teachers to leverage their expertise and connections with kids, so the connections are strengthened; the same is true of hiring school counselors to do after-school counseling.

NJCDC believes they see less absenteeism at program schools than at district schools without the FSCS program, and lots more parent engagement, which “trickles down to kids”. At the same time, there’s more to be done with parent engagement and even more with JFK’s students, who may need to work for their families and may not be thinking about college, which means they don't know about financial aid or bridge programs.

Acknowledging the teachers has also shifted the culture in the building, according to FSCS leaders. Yet, turnover in the district is a distinct challenge:

An FSCS leader: I find that every year I'm training new principles in terms of what full service is because they become reassigned to different schools, they're new

to the whole concept of full service. And so I am there. I act as a sounding board, as a brainstormer, as a troubleshooter, as a liaison with Jenna, as with the site coordinators to assisting them In terms of navigating the leadership of the building, because every administrator has its personality, its understanding, or lack thereof, sometimes of what full service should be. And so I work with the site coordinators to assist them in terms of how to approach principals, and how to maintain the three C's that I declare are the most important things in full service: communication, collaboration, and cooperation. She is engaged with the work, believes in it, but she is also aware that she is "limited to 20 sessions a year. And this year, we have 14 schools." As a means of covering as much ground as possible, Santa says that of "the 20 sessions, I try to do at least two sessions, our principal trainings or principal round tables. This year, for the first time, we're including psych coordinators. And I think I will be holding a psych coordinators training round table based on what I'm seeing when I visit the schools; we ask what do those schools need for this to continue to be a successful venture for the schools.

Another FSCS leader: I feel that disruption in a good administration, because I'll put that in there - in a good administration - It's very difficult to move past. When you have something that's working, especially in our communities, when the turnover is high, it's very tough to make those transitions. When you have students like at JFK high school, it takes a little bit of time for them to warm up. Might be a year or two. By June they might say "I trust you enough now."

And so that engagement, you know, maybe that person knew these students' families. And, you know, we do crazy stuff as educators sometimes. We'll pop up at the home, see them at games, you know. So you build that trust and then it's no longer there. And then you're starting over from the bottom again. And it's like trying to build again. So I don't think we, you know, have a good focus on how it's going to impact the community that we engage with when we do those transitions.

And of course, you know, JFK, within this year, you know, we lost the coordinator. She moved on to a different position, you know, the operations principal was moved into another school. The challenges that school, district, and program administrators face are what Maria Santa works to engage with:

Providing all of the programs and supports deemed important, and even essential, in the full service community school model is impossible given the limited overall resources. As we can see, the federal FSCS grant helps enormously, as do partners such as NJCDC who provide funds.

But the realities of an overtaxed system become clear when as a partner put it:

The teachers are tired. The union does not want them to give us a minute above what's contractual. I don't have teachers volunteering to do anything outside of what's required, and I can't force them to do so.

The district can provide, for example, only one guidance counselor for 1100 students. This is a concrete need for the behavioral specialists, stress programs and family assistance that FSCS meets.

The work must get done—the change must happen if the students are to thrive. Communication, collaboration and the passion FSCS staff bring to their work go a long way to filling the gap left by insufficient funding.

**2.2 Attendance, Absenteeism, and Suspensions by the Numbers: Data and Analysis**

**Average Daily Attendance & Chronic Absenteeism in Paterson FSCS: School 2 & JFK**

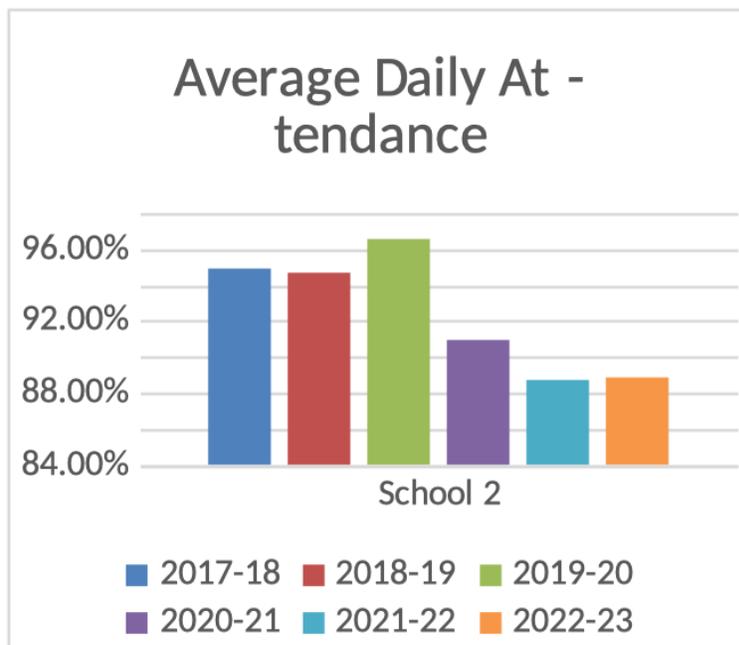
**Average Daily Attendance**

Both School 2 and JFK's four Academies had an Average Daily Attendance (ADA) held relatively steady (with some experiencing a slight rise) for the same 3 year window (2016-2017 through 2/2020). That stability (or slight improvement) was erased during the pandemic, according to the data for 2021-22 SY. Data for School 2 in 2022-2023 showed a slight rise in attendance; JFK data was unavailable / inconclusive

For School 2 ADA was at 94.91% for 2016-2017 and 96.62% ending in 2/2020. In the all-virtual year, ADA went down by 5% to 89.83%. Students returned to school in person for 2021-22 SY, but the ADA dropped further, to 88.72%. This final year of the grant, attendance has stabilized.

**AVERAGE DAILY ATTENDANCE**

	2018-2019	2019-2020	2020-2021	2021-2022	2022-2023
	94.70%	96.58%	90.95%	88.72%	88.86%



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For JFK ACT, Overall Average Daily Attendance (ADA) for the school held relatively steady (with a slight rise) for the same 3 year window (2016-2017 through 2/2020), at 88.04% for 2016-2017 and 89.47% ending in 2/2020. In the all-virtual year, ADA went down by 8% to 81.3%. Students returned to school in person for 2021-22 SY, but the ADA dropped further, to 79.05%.

**JFK: ACT – Data At-A-Glance**

**AVERAGE DAILY ATTENDANCE**

BASELINE		YEAR 1	YEAR 2	YEAR 3	YEAR 4
2016-2017	2017-2018	2018-2019	2019-2020	2020-2021 (V)	2021 - 2022
88.04%	87.14%	86.58%	89.47% (through end 2/2020)	81.30%	79.05%

JFK BTMF’s overall Average Daily Attendance (ADA) for the school showed a slight rise for the same 3 year window (2016-2017 through 2/2020), at 84% for 2016-2017 and 88.55% ending in 2/2020. In the all-virtual year, ADA held relatively steady at 87.6%. Students returned to school in person for 2021-22 SY, but the ADA dropped to 83.53%

**JFK: BTMF – Data At-A-Glance**

**AVERAGE DAILY ATTENDANCE**

BASELINE		YEAR 1	YEAR 2	YEAR 3	YEAR 4
2016-2017	2017-2018	2018-2019	2019-2020	2020-2021 (V)	2021 - 2022
84.0%	83.08%	86.14%	88.55% (through end 2/2020)	87.60%	83.53%

JFK SET had the most dramatic post-pandemic ADA drop. Overall Average Daily Attendance ADA for the school showed a slight rise for the same 3 year window (2016-2017 through 2019-2020), with the ADA percentages starting at 85.27% for 2016-2017 and 87% ending in 2/2020. In the all-virtual year, ADA rose to 92.23%. Students returned to school in person for 2021-22 SY, but the ADA dropped approx. 13% to 79.40%.

### **JFK: SET – Data At-A-Glance**

**AVERAGE DAILY ATTENDANCE**

BASELINE		YEAR 1	YEAR 2	YEAR 3	YEAR 4
2016-2017	2017-2018	2018-2019	2019-2020	2020-2021 (V)	2021 - 2022
85.27%	89.65%	85.70%	87.00% (through end 2/2020)	92.23%	79.40%

Similarly, JFK STEM experienced a substantial drop in ADA after promising gains in the pre-pandemic years. Overall Average Daily Attendance (ADA) for the school showed a slight rise for the same 3 year window (2016-2017 through 2019-2020), with the ADA percentages starting at 87.51% for 2016-2017 and 92.21% ending in 2/2020. In the all-virtual year, ADA stayed basically steady at 91.59%. Students returned to school in person for 2021-22 SY, but the ADA dropped approx. 9% to 82.97%.

### **JFK: STEM – Data At-A-Glance**

**AVERAGE DAILY ATTENDANCE**

BASELINE		YEAR 1	YEAR 2	YEAR 3	YEAR 4
2016-2017	2017-2018	2018-2019	2019-2020	2020-2021 (V)	2021 - 2022
87.51%	86.73%	88.68%	92.21% (through end 2/2020)	91.59%	82.97%

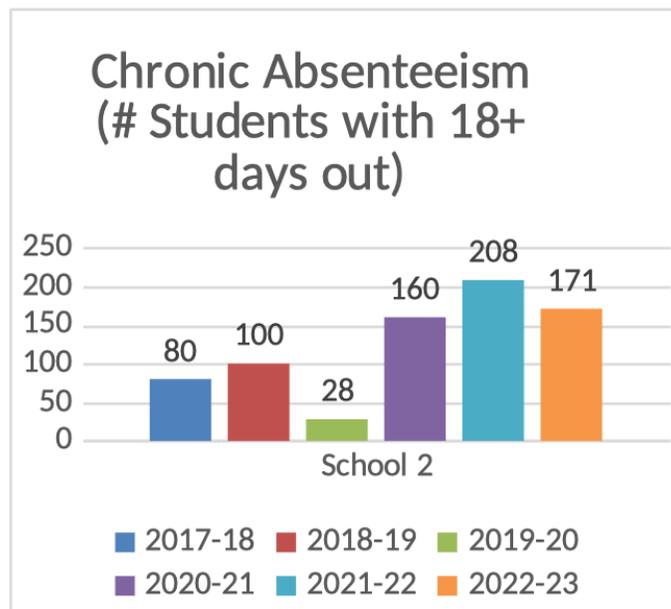
**Chronic Absenteeism**

School 2 is experiencing record levels of Chronic Absenteeism, erasing (at least for the moment) gains that had been made over the past 6 years.

The data on attendance shows that School 2’s level of Chronic Absenteeism had fallen every year from 2016-2017 (the baseline data year) through February of 2020, from 26.72% to 16.57%. In the all-virtual 2020-21 SY, CA is higher than the benchmark year, at 28.65%, and then up by almost a third over that high—to 38.10%—is 2021-22 SY. Current data shows a healthy lowering of that Chronic Absenteeism rate.

**CHRONIC ABSENTEEISM (# of students 18+ days out)**

BASELINE	YEAR 1	YEAR 2	YEAR 3	YEAR 4	YEAR 5
2017-2018	2018-2019	2019-2020 Virtual Mar-Jun	2020-2021 100% Virtual	2021-2022	2022-23
80	100	28	160	208	171
26.48%	19.47%	16.57%	28.65%	38.10%	30.70%



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JFK and its four Academies have been experiencing even worse, with increases of over 100% after several years of steady or lowering rates of CA.

The data on attendance shows that JFK: ACT’s level of Chronic Absenteeism had fallen, risen, and fallen again from 2016-2017 (the baseline data year) through February of 2020, with the percentages beginning at 48.62% and ending up at 37.17% in 2/20. In the all-virtual 2020-21 SY, CA rose to close to the benchmark year, at 46.77%. When students return to school in person, however, CA jumps by almost 50% to 70.05% in 2021-22 SY.

**JFK: ACT – Data At-A-Glance**

**CHRONIC ABSENTEEISM**

BASELINE		YEAR 1	YEAR 2	YEAR 3	YEAR 4
2016-2017	2017-2018	2018-2019	2019-2020	2020-2021	2021 - 2022
48.62%	47.81%	55.74%	36.17% (through end 2/2020)	46.77% Virtual all year (V)	70.05%

JFK BTMF’s level of Chronic Absenteeism had risen, then fallen and fallen again from 2016-2017 (the baseline data year) through February of 2020, with the percentages beginning at 59.86% and ending up at 43.69% in 2/20. In the all-virtual 2020-21 SY, CA fell further, to 32.70%. When students return to school in person, however, CA jumps by almost 100% to more than the baseline year: 63.6% in 2021-22 SY.

**JFK: BTMF – Data At-A-Glance**

**CHRONIC ABSENTEEISM**

BASELINE		YEAR 1	YEAR 2	YEAR 3	YEAR 4
2016-2017	2017-2018	2018-2019	2019-2020	2020-2021	2021 - 2022
59.86%	63.26%	58.63%	43.69% (through end 2/2020)	32.70% Virtual all year (V)	63.60%

Similarly the data on attendance shows that JFK SET’s level of Chronic Absenteeism had held steady from 2016-2017 (the baseline data year) through 2018-19, and then dropped by February of 2020, with the percentages beginning at 65.36% and ending up at 53.32% in 2/20.

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In the all-virtual 2020-21 SY, CA fell further, to 24.95%. When students return to school in person, however, CA jumps by almost 100% to more than the baseline year: 66.84% in 2021-22 SY.

**JFK: SET – Data At-A-Glance**

**CHRONIC ABSENTEEISM**

BASELINE		YEAR 1	YEAR 2	YEAR 3	YEAR 4
2016-2017	2017-2018	2018-2019	2019-2020	2020-2021 Virtual all year (V)	2021 - 2022
65.36%	66.02%	63.43%	53.32% (through end 2/2020)	24.95%	66.84%

JFK: STEM fared the least well. Its level of Chronic Absenteeism dropped significantly from 2016-2017 (the baseline data year) through February of 2020, with the percentages beginning at 53.21% and ending up at 25.73% in 2/20. In the all-virtual 2020-21 SY, CA fell further, to 23.59%. When students return to school in person, however, CA jumps by over 100% to more than the baseline year: 69.24% in 2021-22 SY.

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**School 2 Testing Data**

According to the NJSLA and PARCC test results from SY 2018-19 through SY 2021-2022 (with no testing having been done in the Spring of 2020 or in the Spring of 2021), suggest some challenges in ELA but much more troublesome challenges in Math abilities. (It is worth keeping in mind that the sample size here is small, so any changes in numbers of students and their abilities on this particular test would cause outsized effects.)

There is a pronounced drop in ELA scores in the third and fourth grade: third grade percentages for students who tested at the level of “proficient” or higher dropped from 16.7% to 5.1% for the third grade, and from 32.6% to 20% for the fourth grade. In grades five through eight, however, the number of “proficient” students held steady or improved slightly. If the lens is widened to include SY 2017-18, there is a more consistent and/or steeper drop in the number of students testing at the “proficient” level, but most of that drop is happening between the 2017-18 and the 2018-19 school year—thus, it is not an effect of the pandemic school shutdown.

**School 2**

**English Language Arts/Literacy**

Test Code	2017-2018		2018-2019		2021-2022	
	# of Students Valid scores	% Prof Level (4 & 5)	# of Students Valid scores	% Prof Level (4 & 5)	# of Students Valid scores	% Prof Level (4 & 5)
ELA03	45	28.9	54	16.7	39	5.1
ELA04	60	10.0	43	32.6	35	20.0
ELA05	46	15.2	50	12.0	47	12.8
ELA06	47	40.4	50	22.0	46	26.1
ELA07	57	73.7	40	50.0	37	51.4
ELA08	50	60.0	58	41.4	42	40.5

Math scores tell a different story. Every grade’s Math percentage of “proficient” scores dropped significantly, with the 3rd grade (from 19.6% to 2.4%) and 4th grade (27.3% to 10.8%) showing the most severe drop. Only the 7th grade scores rose (from 9.8% to 12.8%). If the lens is widened to include 2016-17, the results are essentially the same.

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**Mathematics**

Test Code	2017-2018		2018-2019		2021-2022	
	Total # of Students Valid scores	% Prof Level (4 & 5)	Total # of Students Valid scores	% Prof Level (4 & 5)	# of Students Valid scores	% Prof Level (4 & 5)
MAT03	46	41.3	56	19.6	42	2.4
MAT04	60	8.3	44	27.3	37	10.8
MAT05	49	12.2	49	8.2	49	4.1
MAT06	50	8.0	51	9.8	47	4.3
MAT07	59	11.9	41	9.8	39	12.8
MAT08	44	9.1	61	9.8	44	6.8
ALG01	9	77.8	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A

**Suspensions in Paterson FSCS: JFK**

**The Data:**

<b>Grade</b>	<b>Count</b>	<b>Percent</b>	<b>Cumulative</b>
9th Grade	85	31.48	31.48
10th Grade	64	23.70	55.19
11th Grade	82	30.37	85.56
12th Grade	39	14.44	100.00
<b>Total</b>	<b>270</b>		

A total of 270 Students had some type of suspension. 12<sup>th</sup> Grade students had the fewest suspensions.

**Number of Days Suspended**

<b>Days</b>	<b>Count</b>	<b>Percent</b>	<b>Cumulative</b>
1	8	2.97	2.97
2	73	27.14	30.11
3	31	11.52	41.64
4	18	6.69	48.33
5	33	12.27	60.59
6	5	1.86	62.45
7	6	2.23	64.68
8	5	1.86	66.54
9	12	4.46	71.00
10	51	18.96	89.96
11	2	0.74	90.71
12	11	4.09	94.80
13	2	0.74	95.54
14	1	0.37	95.91

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15	2	0.74	96.65
16	1	0.37	97.03
18	2	0.74	97.77
20	4	1.49	99.26
22	1	0.37	99.63
38	1	0.37	100.00
<b>Total</b>	<b>269</b>		

The total number of days suspended ranged from 1 day to 38 days. The distribution is bimodal with the most frequent number of annual days being suspended as 2 days and another peak of 10 days.

<b>Total Number of Incidents</b>	<b>Count</b>	<b>Percent</b>	<b>Cumulative</b>
1	211	78.44	78.44
2	38	14.13	92.57
3	13	4.83	97.40
4	2	0.74	98.14
5	2	0.74	98.88
6	1	0.37	99.26
7	1	0.37	99.63
9	1	0.37	100.00
<b>Total</b>	<b>269</b>		

Data is recorded by incident with each line constituting a separate line of data (albeit repetitive except for the date change). The total number of incidents is the aggregation of the separate data lines. Over 78% of suspensions result from one incident and 14% with suspensions from two incidents. The highest number of suspension incidents was 9 separate incidents.

<b>Two or More Incidents</b>	<b>Count</b>	<b>Percent</b>	<b>Cumulative</b>
Only 1 Incident	212	78.52	78.52
Two or More Incidents	58	21.48	100.00
<b>Total</b>	<b>270</b>		

For data analysis purposes, the number of incidents is coded from just one incident to more than one incident. All students in the data set provided had at least one suspension day.

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The following table of descriptions of suspensions has been aggregated by individual student rather than just as a raw list of individual suspensions. This table gives a flavor of how the data is arrayed in the school district system. There are many cases where the same description was used for more than one student. Therefore, the following list focuses on the combinations of descriptions rather than an actual frequency count.

### Raw Description for Suspension Aggregated by Student

- CAT I
- Repeated Category I Non Compliant Uniform, defiance
- Repeated Category I - Disorderly conduct: Gr. 11
- Repeated recurrence of a Category I offense/Disruptive or disorderly conduct/Walked out of ISS
- Noncooperation or defiance/Repeated recurrence of a Category I
- Category II - 2 instances
- Assault of a person other than a District employee/Category II
- Fighting/Disruptive or disorderly conduct/Category II
- Grade 12 Category II: Defiance and Profanity Use
- Noncooperation or defiance/student left ISS during fire drill/Category II
- Cutting/Physical altercation/Category II
- Category III - 14 instances
- Violation of District Drug Policy/Category III
- Threats to staff/Student Cursed Out Teacher/Smoking policy violation/Unauthorized departure from school or class/Defiance/refusal to attend ISS/Aggressive physical contact/Category III
- Unauthorized Area/Cutting/Category III - 2 instances
- Vandalism - 6 instances
- Unauthorized Location/Vandalism offense/Vandalism
- Vandalism and Weapon
- Aggressive physical contact - 6 instances
- Fighting - 19 instances
- Physical Altercation - 5 instances
- Unauthorized area or location - 17 instances
- Substance abuse policy violation T - 12 instances
- Disruptive Behavior/Substance abuse policy violation T - 2 instances
- Assault of a person other than a district employee/Substance abuse policy violation T
- Glantz Homeroom 117A Self Contained - 2 instances
- Trespass or unauthorized entry onto school premises - 7 instances
- Smoking policy violation - 9 instances
- Cutting Class - 12 instances
- Refused to attend ISS - 2 instances
- Unauthorized entry, Leaving ISS - 3 instances
- Unauthorized Departure from ISS - 3 instances
- Disruptive Behavior/Walked out of ISS
- Walked out of ISS - 3 instances
- Assault of a District employee\*/Unauthorized area/late to class/walk off during fire drill/failure to report to ISS
- Profane language, gestures and aggressive behavior/Unauthorized departure / Leaving ISS
- Failure to report to report to Detention (ISS)/Defiance and refusal to go to ISS
- Profane language, gestures and aggressive behavior/Unauthorized departure / Leaving ISS
- Unauthorized departure from school or class - 34 instances
- Possession of controlled substance - 3 instances

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- Drug Policy
- Consensual Sexual Conduct - 2 instances
- Assault of a person other than a District employee - 18 instances
- Student Threatened Violence Against Staff - 3 instances
- Use of obscene or profane language or gestures - 3 instances
- Assault/HIB
- Noncooperation or defiance - 3 instances
- Repeated Recurrence of Noncooperation & Defiance
- Disruptive or disorderly conduct - 2 instances
- Possession of Weapon - 4 instances
- Cutting Class/weapon possession
- Threat and Possession of a weapon
- Students Fighting and student possession of weapon/Unauthorized Departure and Entry into School
- Unauthorized area/Aggressive physical contact - 2 instances
- Located in an Unauthorized Area/Student involved in a fight
- Unauthorized area/Unauthorized departure - 2 instances
- Disorderly Conduct, and Unauthorized Departure
- HIB/Unauthorized departure from school or class.
- Unauthorized departure from class (ISS)/Assault of a person other than a District employee
- False fire alarm, bomb threat, or tampering with
- Unauthorized departure from school or class/Fight
- Non compliance/Unauthorized departure
- Disruptive or disorderly conduct/Unauthorized departure from school or class.
- Out of Uniform and Unprepared for Class
- Aggressive physical contact/Smoking policy violation/Verbal Abuse to administrator
- 22 minutes Late to Class
- In girls locker room/threatened teacher
- Threats /Assault
- Arson
- Misuse of Electronics
- Harassment, intimidation and or bullying
- Unauthorized area/Use of Profanity towards Staff
- Disorderly Conduct- Cursing at the Teacher
- saying (F) word to teacher and hitting A Female/Disruptive or Disorderly Conduct
- Student continues to not follow teacher instruction
- Threats /Assault
- student left ISS during fire drill/Walked out of Class/Unauthorized Entry into a classroom
- Cutting Class/Unauthorized Entry
- Assault of a Student
- Aggressive physical contact/Unauthorized Departure and Entry into School
- Aggressive student, threats
- Students Fighting in Class/Disorderly conduct
- Abuse/Threat against a teacher by a student/Aggressive physical contact
- Substance abuse policy violation/Fighting/Unauthorized departure from school or class
- Defiance and Threat to Administration
- Unauthorized admitting person on school grounds
- False fire alarm, bomb threat, or tampering with
- Defiance and Unauthorized departure/Loud and disruptive behavior in class/Unauthorized departure from school or class.
- 9th Grade left class /out of uniform/Disruptive Class behavior in class
- Unauthorized departure from school or class/Harassment/Inappropriate Touching
- Assault of a student
- student stole item from my classroom
- HIB
- Assault
- Cutting and Vaping
- fight/Smoking policy violation
- Failure to comply with administrator
- Theft/Aggressive physical contact

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Based on the descriptions above, a series of variables were created to collapse the data

<b>Truancy</b>	<b>Count</b>	<b>Percent</b>	<b>Cumulative</b>
0	198	73.33	73.33
1	67	24.81	98.15
2	5	1.85	100.00
<b>Total</b>	<b>270</b>		

<b>Truancy Suspensions</b>	<b>Count</b>	<b>Percent</b>	<b>Cumulative</b>
None	198	73.33	73.33
Truancy Suspension	72	26.67	100.00
<b>Total</b>	<b>270</b>		

**Truancy** was coded whenever there was a mention of a suspension incident due to any kind of unsanctioned absence where the suspension was just due to some type of truancy.

**Defiance** was coded whenever there was a mention of willful intent to avoid detention, talking back to teachers or rebellious behavior that stopped short of actual aggression and fighting

<b>Defiance</b>	<b>Count</b>	<b>Percent</b>	<b>Cumulative</b>
0	192	71.11	71.11
1	65	24.07	95.19
2	8	2.96	98.15
3	2	0.74	98.89
4	3	1.11	100.00
<b>Total</b>	<b>270</b>		

<b>Defiance Suspension</b>	<b>Count</b>	<b>Percent</b>	<b>Cumulative</b>
None	192	71.11	71.11
Defiance Suspension	78	28.89	100.00
<b>Total</b>	<b>270</b>		

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**Aggression** was scored when there was a suspension due to a fight or physical attack, verbal harassment, mention of weapons etc.

<b>Aggression</b>	<b>Count</b>	<b>Percent</b>	<b>Cumulative</b>
0	180	66.67	66.67
1	82	30.37	97.04
2	7	2.59	99.63
4	1	0.37	100.00
<b>Total</b>	<b>270</b>		

<b>Aggression Suspension</b>	<b>Count</b>	<b>Percent</b>	<b>Cumulative</b>
None	180	66.67	66.67
Aggression Suspension	90	33.33	100.00
<b>Total</b>	<b>270</b>		

**Drugs** was coded if a suspension was made for violations in drug policy. Smoking is not included in this category.

<b>Drugs</b>	<b>Count</b>	<b>Percent</b>	<b>Cumulative</b>
0	249	92.22	92.22
1	21	7.78	100.00
<b>Total</b>	<b>270</b>		

**Other** was coded for a variety of different violations, including smoking, consensual sex, vandalism and arson.

<b>Other</b>	<b>Count</b>	<b>Percent</b>	<b>Cumulative</b>
0	246	91.11	91.11
1	24	8.89	100.00
<b>Total</b>	<b>270</b>		

Some teachers coded suspension using **Cat1, Cat 2, and Cat 3**. These seem to be in increasing severity, but not cross-linked with similar items where there are specific descriptions.

<b>Cat1</b>	<b>Count</b>	<b>Percent</b>	<b>Cumulative</b>
0	266	98.52	98.52
1	4	1.48	100.00
<b>Total</b>	<b>270</b>		

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<b>Cat2</b>	<b>Count</b>	<b>Percent</b>	<b>Cumulative</b>
0	261	96.67	96.67
1	7	2.59	99.26
2	2	0.74	100.00
<b>Total</b>	<b>270</b>		

<b>Cat3</b>	<b>Count</b>	<b>Percent</b>	<b>Cumulative</b>
0	252	93.33	93.33
1	18	6.67	100.00
<b>Total</b>	<b>270</b>		

**Days Suspended by Grade**

<i>Variable Category</i>	<i>Mean</i>	<i>Median</i>	<i>Std Dev</i>	<i>Count</i>	<i>95%(+/-)</i>
9th Grade	6.060	5.000	4.944	84	1.073
10th Grade	7.312	5.000	5.944	64	1.485
11th Grade	5.500	4.500	3.625	82	0.797
12th Grade	5.179	4.000	3.433	39	1.113
<b>All</b>	<b>6.059</b>	<b>.000</b>	<b>4.701</b>	<b>269</b>	<b>0.564</b>

10<sup>th</sup> graders had the highest mean number of Suspension Days

**Days Suspended by Truancy Suspension**

<i>Variable Category</i>	<i>Mean</i>	<i>Median</i>	<i>Std Dev</i>	<i>Count</i>	<i>95%(+/-)</i>
None	6.695	5.000	4.696	197	0.660
Truancy Suspension	4.319	2.000	4.285	72	1.007
<b>All</b>	<b>6.059</b>	<b>5.000</b>	<b>4.701</b>	<b>269</b>	<b>0.564</b>

The mean number of days for a Truancy Suspension was significantly lower than other types of suspension. The median for a Truancy suspension was 2 days.

**Grade by Truancy2**

	None	Truancy Suspension	Total
9th Grade	26%	47%	31%
10th Grade	25%	21%	24%
11th Grade	34%	19%	30%
12th Grade	15%	12%	14%

Chi-Square  $p < 0.0068$

Of the students who had a truancy suspension, 47% were in the 9<sup>th</sup> grade.

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**Days Suspended by Defiance Suspension**

<i>Variable Category</i>	<i>Mean</i>	<i>Median</i>	<i>Std Dev</i>	<i>Count</i>	<i>95%(+/-)</i>
None	6.354	5.000	4.375	192	0.623
Defiance Suspension	5.325	3.000	5.391	77	1.224
<b>All</b>	<b>6.059</b>	<b>5.000</b>	<b>4.701</b>	<b>269</b>	<b>0.564</b>

The median number of days for a defiance suspension was 3 days as compared to 5 days for other types of suspension.

**Grade by Defiance2**

	<i>None</i>	<i>Defiance Suspension</i>	<i>Total</i>
9th Grade	31%	32%	31%
10th Grade	24%	22%	24%
11th Grade	32%	26%	30%
12th Grade	12%	21%	14%

**Days Suspended by Aggression Suspension**

<i>Variable Category</i>	<i>Mean</i>	<i>Median</i>	<i>Std Dev</i>	<i>Count</i>	<i>95%(+/-)</i>
None	4.553	3.000	3.468	179	0.511
Aggression Suspension	9.056	9.500	5.372	90	1.125
<b>All</b>	<b>6.059</b>	<b>5.000</b>	<b>4.701</b>	<b>269</b>	<b>0.564</b>

It should be no surprise that Aggression Suspensions lengths are significantly higher than all types of suspension. The median for and Aggression Suspension is 9.5 days compared to 3.0 days for other types

**Grade by Aggression2**

	<i>None</i>	<i>Agression Suspension</i>	<i>Total</i>
9th Grade	33%	29%	31%
10th Grade	22%	27%	24%
11th Grade	29%	33%	30%
12th Grade	16%	11%	14%

There are no significant differences by aggression and grade

**Incidents2 by Defiance2**

<i>Two or More Incidents</i>	<i>None</i>	<i>Defiance Suspension</i>	<i>Total</i>
Only 1 Incident	86%	60%	79%

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Two or More Incidents	14%	40%	21%
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Chi-Square  $p < 0.0001$       Cramer's V 0.283

Students with Defiance Suspensions are significantly more likely to have more than one incident

**Incidents2 by Aggression 2**

<i>Two or More Incidents</i>	<i>None</i>	<i>Aggression Suspension</i>	<i>Total</i>
Only 1 Incident	83%	70%	79%
Two or More Incidents	17%	30%	21%

Students with Aggression suspensions are more likely to have only one incident rather than multiple incidents.

**Truancy2 by Defiance2**

<i>Truancy Suspensions</i>	<i>None</i>	<i>Defiance Suspension</i>	<i>Total</i>
None	67%	88%	73%
Truancy Suspension	33%	12%	27%

Chi-Square  $p < 0.0003$       Cramer's V 0.218

Students who have a suspension incident due to defiance are much less likely to also have a truancy suspension

**Truancy2 by Aggression 2**

Truancy Suspensions	None	Aggression Suspension	Total
None	63%	93%	73%
Truancy Suspension	37%	7%	27%

Chi-Square  $p < 0.0001$       Cramer's V 0.320

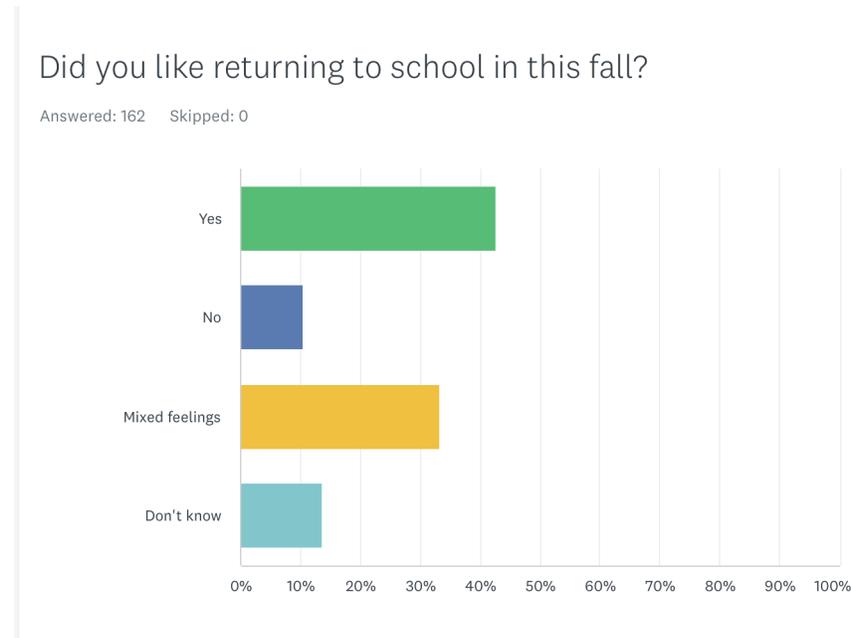
Likewise students who have an aggression suspension are much less likely to also have truancy suspension.

## 2.3 Are Schools Meeting Goals?

### Student Survey Results Analysis

#### Student Surveys – October, 2023 School 2

School 2 submitted 162 student surveys, fairly equally distributed among grades, except grade 6, which submitted almost no surveys. More females than males responded (55% to 42%).



It was nice to see that only 10 percent of students did not look forward to returning at all.

The things students liked most about their school was led by “activities”, expressed in many different ways:

“I like art class, technology, and gym”, “the best thing in my school is that we get to learn and get to do cool stuff”, “the programs”.

And their friends; lunch; the playground.

To our surprise, math was mentioned very often as the favorite thing about school.

A runner-up was mentions of people: teachers, “kind people”.

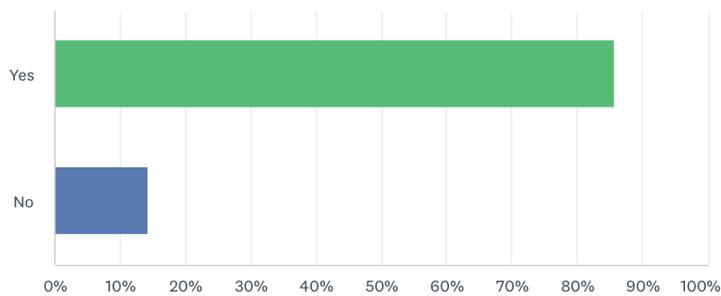
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What students liked least about school were: waking up, rules, testing, teachers yelling, bullying and food.

However, in answer to the question: “what do you like least about your school, more than half responded “nothing” or “it’s perfect” or “I like everything”.

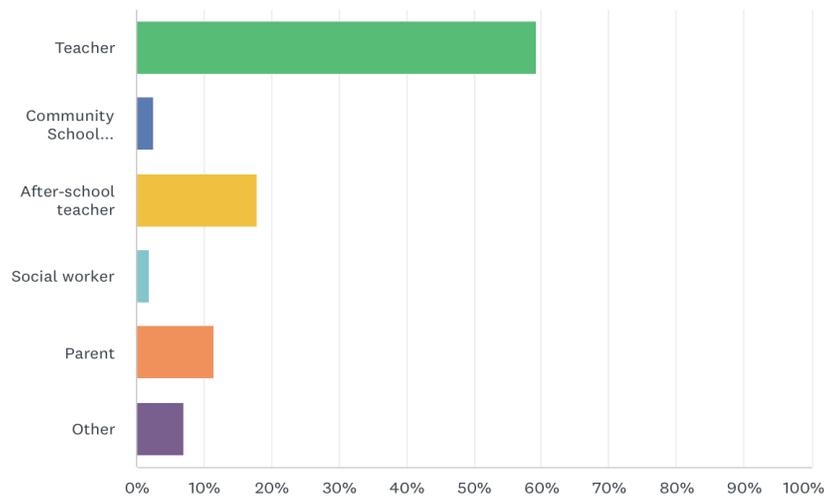
Do you get academic help when you need it?

Answered: 162 Skipped: 0



If yes, who helped you most?

Answered: 157 Skipped: 5

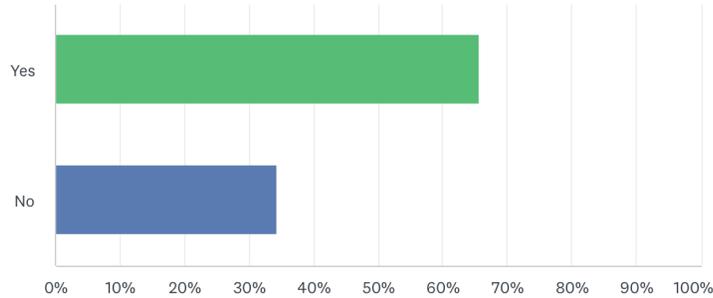


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Have you received any health services, from a doctor, dentist or

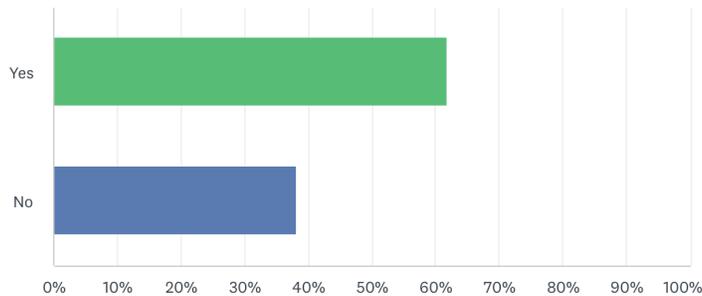
Have you received any health services, from a doctor, dentist or optometrist?

Answered: 160 Skipped: 2



Has after school changed in the last few years?

Answered: 160 Skipped: 2



Some students felt after-school was more fun, a few said it's back to where it was before Covid, a few said stricter, and many said there was a lot of learning and homework help now.

We asked students what they wanted in their school next year, and almost all responded with what they hoped for themselves. The vast majority wanted good grades. Many said they wanted to get into a good high school. A few requested that ESL return to School 2. And there were some requests for better food at lunch.

We also wondered if students know what a community school means. When asked "what does the term community school mean to you", only two students gave a full and accurate definition. However, it was clear that the factors that make it a community school – of programs, services, health, behavioral help, activities, and inclusivity – had a very strong impact on the students.

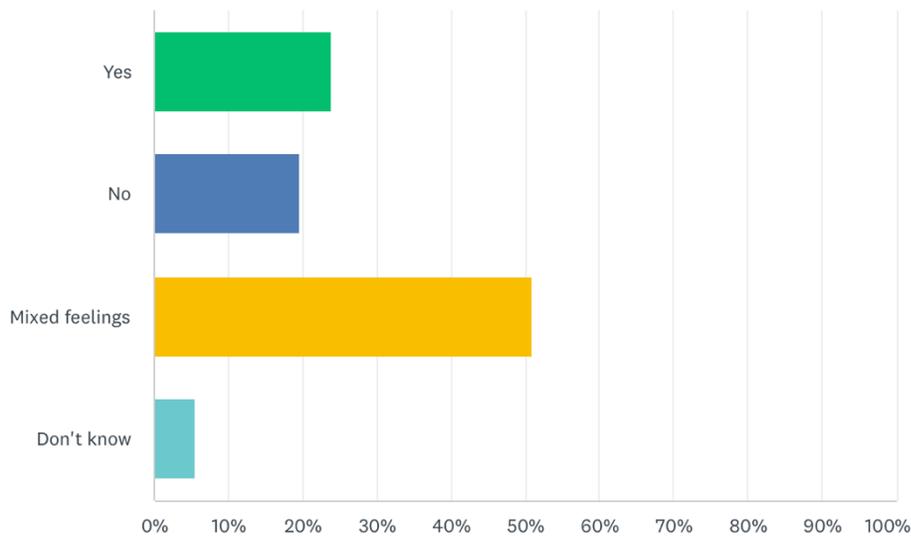
Several said specifically, it means everyone is included. Many said it meant getting supplies, uniforms, clothes and trips. Quite a few said they didn't know, some said it means a big school. Overall, there was a strong sense (over 90%) who attributed something good; with some being specific and others just a positive word.

### Student Surveys – October, 2023 JFK High School

JFK submitted 748 student surveys, equally distributed among grades. More males than females responded (55% to 42%).

#### Did you like returning to school in this fall?

Did you like returning to school in this fall?  
Answered: 747 Skipped: 0



The likes and dislikes about JFK did support the large percentage of students with mixed feelings. Students liked “easy classes” – that was a common response. The second most common positive response was exemplified by “adults who care”.

Negative reports centered around the school being dirty, the bathrooms “horrible” and the uniforms. We were surprised by dozens of complaints specifically about the rule against hoodies.

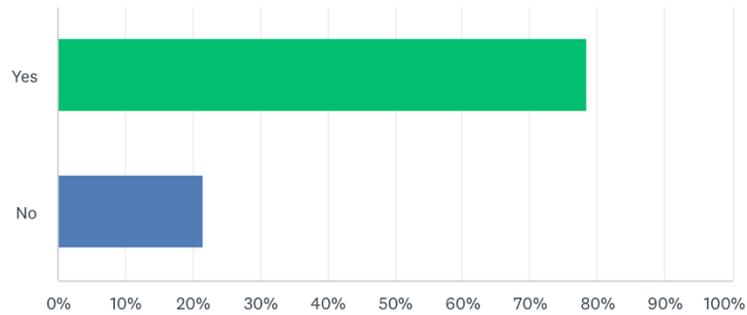
Teachers were praised by some, while others felt teachers “tried to be annoying”.

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More students complained about fellow students than about teachers. They reported loudness, rudeness, fights, and mean behavior.

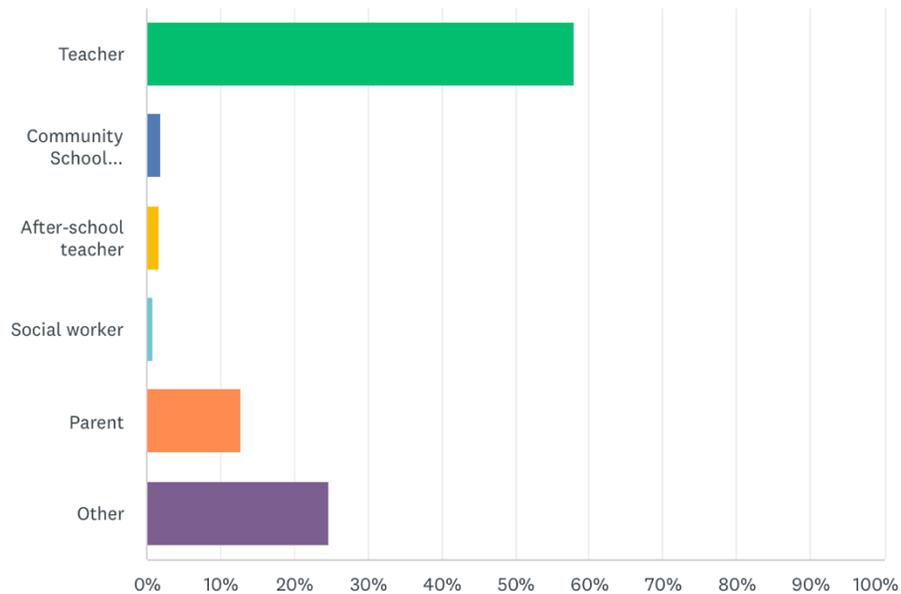
### Do you get academic help when you need it?

Answered: 747 Skipped: 0



### If yes, who helped you most?

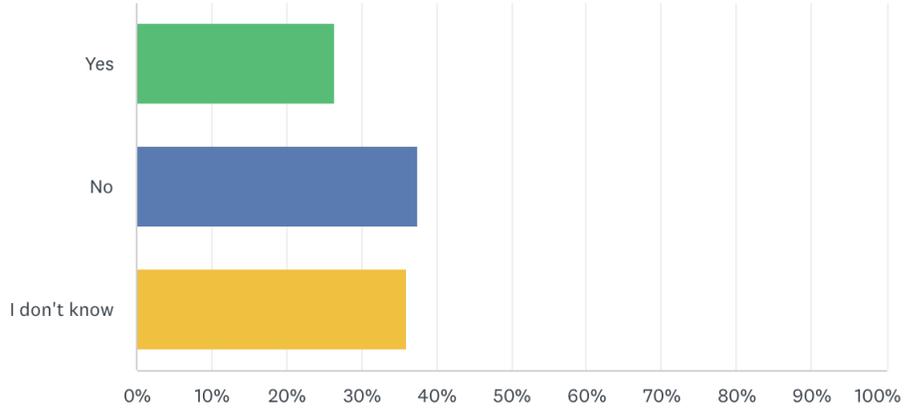
Answered: 636 Skipped: 111



### Do you get help with behavior and emotions if you need it?

Answered: 740

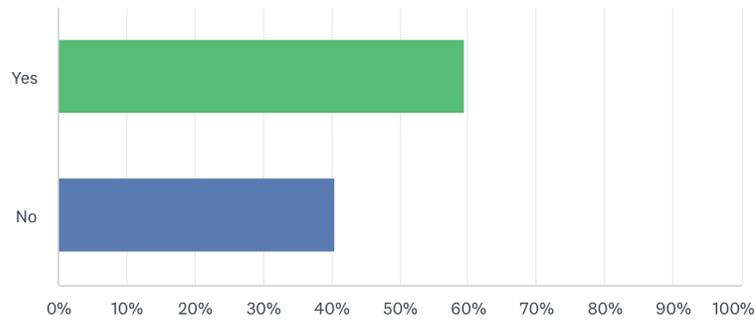
Do you get help with behavior and emotions if you need it?



The most common responses were parents and teachers. A few students said the Living Room, and a few said counselors.

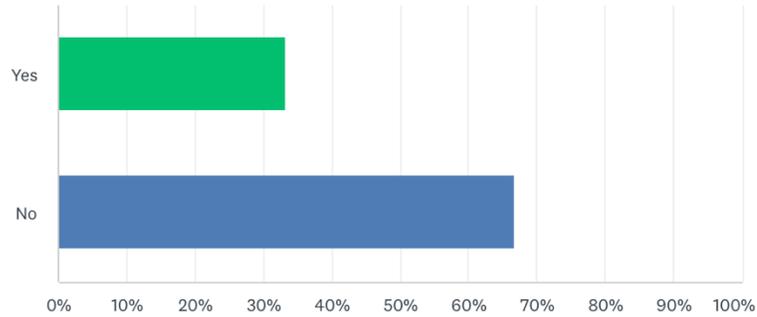
### Have you received any health services, like doctor, dentist or optometrist?

Answered: 729 Skipped: 18



### Has after school time changed in the past few years?

Answered: 736 Skipped: 11



While most felt after-school hadn't changed, those who felt it did had varied experiences by grade. Some left earlier, some reported having to stay too long. Others reported improvement in the school and after-school as the years from Covid lockdown were passing.

Where students wanted to see change was in having much more cleanliness, more respectful teachers, and better behaved students.

What students want most in the upcoming year is good grades.

### Staff / Partner Survey Results Analysis

Taking in the data from the Staff and Partner survey, it is clear that there is general agreement about the challenges for students and staff this school year—and a sense of dedicated possibility about the work ahead. While the survey is anonymous, the perspectives shared suggest that most of the respondents are staff, though some may be partners. The respondents' sense of the major issues students were grappling with as the fall of 2022 began fell into two major categories: unfinished learning (or academic difficulty / not being at grade level), social skills & emotional issues. In addition, individual respondents mentioned students' fear of getting Covid and the lack of Chromebooks for some who say they turned them in last year. Anticipating questions regarding social and emotional issues, the survey drilled down by asking about the "trauma and behavior issues" students returned with last September. Many of the responses fit under the larger umbrella of what one staff or partner termed "dysregulation": disruptive behavior, teasing, a "disdain for structure and authority," anger, a "lack of self-control and a lack of organization." Other responses noted the root causes: Covid, "anxiety, loss," "low self-esteem," and the fact that "many of our students are newcomers to the country and need time to adjust."

When asked whether they had the staff and space to do as much as they wanted, 55% said they did not, while 27% said they did have the resources. 18% did not respond. One respondent offered that their "two part-time staff [are only] available for 15-16 hours a week and both only available during after school hours." This would, of course, not provide support for academics during school hours. While that respondent acknowledged that there are interns as well, they noted that "interns have less than 8 hours a week" and are "also only available during after school hours."

Turning to the question of how being a community school helped in this time of student adjustment, staff members who responded were universally grateful for the wide range of supports the students had received. Several mentioned the specific medical and counseling resources, as well as clothing, hygiene products, uniforms, and backpacks. Families benefited in other targeted ways, respondents noted: "parent engagement, ESL classes" for parents. Less tangible benefits were mentioned as well: "Our Full Service Community School reaches out to families in any kind of need. Our school nurse knows our families and students. Many of the staff [have] been in our school for several years and have strong connections to our families," which dovetails with other respondent's sense that "it helped keep kids [with health issues] in school." Overall, as one respondent put it, "The Full Service Community School was very helpful in finding resources for both students and parents, and Jessica is an excellent facilitator with

parent communication and information.” The connective tissue that the FSCS model strives to build is clear here.

Looking at the tasks ahead, respondents noted the challenge but also set specific goals for the year. Estimates for where “students are academically after coming back for a second year” ranged from “2 years behind at least” to “about a year behind where they could have been without a year of virtual learning” to “better but still behind”. Without knowing where the students stood in terms of grade level before the pandemic (and whether being at grade level before was the measure respondents were using here), the responses suggest some reflection of how deep an impact the 1-2 years of the pandemic has had on students. The lament that students are “about a year behind where they could have been” resonates with that sense of loss, which connects back to an earlier response (from a different respondent) that the students were experiencing “anxiety [and] loss”. While one respondent’s “far behind” suggests the momentous task ahead of striving to help students recover unfinished learning, another respondent’s observation that “they are less issues now that we are in person” because there are “more resources in person for help” suggests the promise of community schools (and in-person schools in general): together, the work is possible.

In taking on that work, respondents are focused. When asked about their plans “this year regarding academics,” each respondent had very specific sets of goals and supports; some offered classroom/content-specific goals, from “small group work that is differentiated” to “help[ing] the students improve their reading decoding skills.” Others were more about school culture and inclusive activities like “executing math and reading competitions for students of all ages” or about “being more supportive and visible.” A third group was thinking more conceptually: “helping children value and improve their academic functioning” and “continue to try and close the gap while teaching new information.” Schools, staff, and partners are creating plans that reflect their ability to be the bridges between the promise of each student and the communities they need to realize that promise.

The final formal question in the survey gave the respondents a space in which to share their “hopes for this year overall,” and the answers offered a view of that same promise from different perspectives. Some hoped just for a “healthy year,” or for “this year to be the best year ever.” Others were more specifically looking to have students “not fall behind academically,” which another response tied to improving parent engagement “to have parents actively participate in their child’s academic success.” The other thread in the responses was the acute awareness of the SEL challenges facing the students and the community; one respondent hoped “to really hone in on SEL to improve the climate of the school,” while

another wanted his students “to know they are seen and cared for as individuals, not just as part of a class roster,” and another wanted to instill “an eagerness to want to learn and be motivated to be successful to the best of their abilities.” Undergirding that sense of possibility were elements of the FSCS model: one response talked about being in charge of the after-school program and “excited to be able to provide all of the support and needs of the children that aren’t addressed or are less-addressed in the public school curriculum.” Another response mentioned that the “number of clients [was] getting higher, helping students with anything they need—academically and medical[ly];” that same respondent used the open “any comments?” space to suggest that success will come because the work *is* being done: “FSCS is well-supported here with staff, parents, and students. All it takes is one person who received services and [is] pleased to pass the word.” The generative nature of quality community educational systems shines in these surveys.

### 3. Conclusions

#### 3.1 Five-Year Analysis

The FSCS program in Paterson consistently, over the course of the five year grant, from 2018 through the present, served hundreds of families and students. Many indicators during the first year and a half of the grant—general attendance, chronic absenteeism, and test data—showed suggestions of improvement at both School 2 and JFK that might have been affirmed or even built upon in 2020-2021. That was not to be.

The pandemic's arrival meant that each school had to adapt quickly to online academics and community programs. FSCS staff, who were versed in creating bonds with families and supporting teachers by supporting students, became creative in how to reach parents, which often worked to alleviate some of the challenges of the COVID era.

The performance of the initiative as a whole confirmed our belief in the importance of community schools, but also surprised us with its strength and resiliency. Staff were going through the same pandemic as the rest of us, and had losses, child care issues, work-at-home issues, and they still worked non-stop to reach families and were largely successful (within their level of funding and staffing).

School and FSCS staff were resilient in using the ToC process to plan out pandemic responses, even as they worried about the learning loss and the mental health challenges that were so clearly accumulating in the student population. While this was an appropriate emergency response, the digital divide and the inequity in how the poorer segments of our society experienced the pandemic generally—higher rates of illness and death, fewer supports and less access to just about anything that mitigated the pandemic challenges for more resourced populations—meant that even with all that the staff was able to accomplish, the fallout would be worse for this population.

This was proven to be the case once schools were back in session for SY 2021-2022. The FSCS staff were diligently focused on returning students' mental health, trauma, readjustment and on their own ability, with space and staff—already limited before the pandemic—overwhelmed by the need that the community experienced post-pandemic. Data show that the FSCS programs were allowing movement back toward normalcy, but the need was greater in exactly the ways that teachers and FSCS staff had predicted. The Staff and Partner survey made it clear that there was general agreement about the challenges for students and staff this school year—and a sense of dedicated possibility about the work ahead.

Absenteeism, both general and chronic, leaped in the first year back; in the second year, the numbers for School 2 (the only school for which we had that information) had stabilized at that level, with some suggestions of slight improvement, though nothing close to the pre-pandemic normal-and-improving numbers.

### 3.2 Recommendations

The gap community schools fill by making it possible for students to learn in normal years, was revealed by the pandemic to be a deep chasm. Nonetheless, the FSCS initiative was ready to step in. Looking forward, the most promising techniques for making up for learning loss are about cohesion across classes and programs, which is what FSCS staff do. At the same time, the FSCS staff has been buffeted by school and FSCS staff relocations, post-pandemic student disaffection, and—always—the scarcity of funds.

We need, as a society, to recognize that the magnifying glass the pandemic put on family problems for immigrants, low income or unemployed parents, mental health of parents and children under conditions of extreme poverty, crowding and lack of access to services shows that all students and families need community school type support.

Society and policy-makers must take educational inequality seriously and make all schools community schools, with resources to reach all students and families. This can be done by expanding the community school model or by districts making all schools community schools. Pretending family and student trauma, poverty, malnourishment, lack of hope, poor English, violence and discrimination are not suitable areas for schools to address only perpetuates the poor or non-existent education received by millions of students. The cost to society of these students not maturing into citizens with marketable skills and an engagement with community will (and has) cost us far more than ensuring all students equal opportunities.

There should be an effort to fund existing programs to have more staff and space, so their capacity is not limited to one or two hundred students.

FSCS should continue to maintain its structure of meeting, working with partners, having good health services and being a firm community. They are doing an excellent job of it and their performance during the pandemic was inspiring. A less-committed initiative and staff could have been too inundated with uncertainty and their own problems.

However, lack of communication and alignment with the district is a hindrance to solving some problems, such as providing accessible ESL classes. As the program works toward sustainability of the vital services and support of the community school model, those essential elements for the Paterson community should be a fundamental part of the conversation.

Data collection continues to be haphazard. That is, there is a wealth of data, but it needs to be collected in ways that serve the measurement and evaluation of the programs and their impact. In particular, collecting data in ways that allow for student test scores to be compared to students who took part in FSCS programming, academic and non-academic, would allow for a closer look at whether there's correlation between the FSCS interventions and academic outcomes.

Finally, the future of the program lies with those who have built it and sustained it in difficult times. Asked how they would use more—and more sustainable—funding, the FSCS staff members had impassioned views on how it could be used to further spread the beneficial effects within the community:

- An emergency fund for family needs, above and beyond the daily stuff.
- The teacher gets the support that they need.
- Programs for special needs classes. So it would be 24 students all together. Just middle school, just to pilot. And let's say today we're going to work on just going to the bodega. We're going to go shopping. Because the students, our students with special needs, the goal is that they become independent adults. So we have to teach them the skills.
- [We] have Gen Ed after-school programs and nothing for the children with autism, which for me that's always uncomfortable.
- The program, perhaps at the state level, would switch from grants to more sustainable funding. There would have to, of course, be performance measures and targets that the schools have to meet to keep that funding. But I know it's a struggle for many schools in many districts to get these programs started, and then put so much into it and then have it kind of end in the five years. Five years seems like a long time, but it's really not.
- ESL programs, more parent workshops, more success with college readiness programs
- We would be able to maybe incorporate something for special education students. Not because we can't, but we're not equipped, I think, as we are to deal with some of the needs that they have. So maybe a specific SPED program for students and parents. These parents also need education and need training for some of these disabilities.
- If maybe in the future we have some more coordinators that work directly for the district, [moving them to where their expertise could help particular communities] would be more of an option. You know, sometimes there's a language need where one person can speak Spanish or Arabic or whatever it is and they would be better off in a

different location.

- I hope that at some point we, as a state, as a nation, are able to integrate full-service community schools and every school. Because it's needed. And our students deserve it.

It is only right that their voices should have the last word on what will make the program thrive and bring its benefits to all.