

Introduction

Frederick Douglass High School, located in rural southern Prince George's County, draws students primarily from the areas surrounding the crossroads of Pennsylvania Avenue and Route 301. Although we are a comprehensive high school, our academic focus is to engage all students in a challenging, rigorous, diverse and safe educational journey. Our vision is to become the signature high school in Prince George's County and this is characterized by: a rigorous learning environment; highly qualified, skilled, dedicated staff that value and engage in continued professional development; a safe and orderly environment; integral community and parent involvement. Our staff also values these additional indicators: students are first; students are prepared for success; students attend classes; discipline is consistent; test scores are high; curriculum is challenging.

The instructional school day begins at 8:30 a.m. and concludes at 3:10 p.m. We offer a block schedule that provides an extended instructional period of approximately 80 minutes per class. Students alternate four periods each day on an A day, B day schedule. Students are encouraged to take a variety of academic electives to prepare them for their post secondary experience. We have 85 academic electives to meet the interests and needs of our student body. Our school has a strong tradition of extra-curricular programs, clubs and sports with more than 35 after school activities and/or sports to choose from.

For the 2005-2006 school year, Frederick Douglass was in year two of school improvement because we did not make AYP in 2004-2005 for reading with our students in the special education and FARMS subgroups, we did not make AYP for mathematics with all of our students and with our African-American, special education, and FARMS subgroups of students.

School Demographics

Although the school is situated next to a cornfield, we have a mix of suburban, rural and urban students. Our student body is comprised of 91.93% African-American, 4.93% white, 1.64% Hispanic, 1.2% Asian, and .3% American Indian. Approximately 11% of our students are identified as Special Education students, and 15% of our students are in the Free and Reduced Meal program. Included in this percentage are 24 students in the Community Referenced Instruction (CRI) program who successfully participate in a variety of activities.

Due to district-wide boundary changes as a result of a new high school opening, Frederick Douglass experienced a tremendous amount of change in both students and staff. The student population is almost 500 students fewer than in 2005-2006. Approximately 56% of our students stayed at Douglass or were assigned through the identified feeder schools. However, 38% of the student body transferred from another district school, and almost 5% of our students are from schools outside of Prince George's County Public Schools.

Frederick Douglass High School has 84 instructional staff members, a decrease from 101 in 2005; in addition, 23 teachers and counselors are new to the school, resulting in a tremendous change in staff composition. We also welcomed a new principal and two new assistant principals. This change has impacted the number of veteran teachers. Last year, more than 50% of the teachers had over 16 years experience. For 2006-2007, only 27% of our teaching staff has been teaching in the county for more than 16 years, and almost 43% of our teachers have five or fewer years. Almost 20% of the staff is non-tenured while the other 80% is tenured and 40% of those teachers hold an Advanced Professional Certificate. We welcome new teachers to the staff each year and strive to ensure that those teachers are successful by providing mentors and targeted professional development.

The Frederick Douglass High School family would not be complete without the assistance from our supportive parents and business partners. Although our PTSA enrollment substantially decreased last year, the parent leaders have renewed emphasis on membership in the organization and overall parent support and participation. Our parents actively support all aspects of the high school program. Many parents volunteer their time by selling concessions at all games, chaperoning dances and field trips, and raising money to defray the cost for senior class activities. We

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also receive assistance from numerous business and community partners such as the county council, the Lion's Club, Washington Redskins, GIANT, Safeway, Food Lion, Jostens, Coca-Cola, and Kinko's.

Major initiatives and how these efforts will improve student performance.

Our priority needs focus on increasing students' scores on four measures: the High School Assessment tests, the Maryland School Assessment tests, the Scholastic Aptitude Tests and the Advanced Placement tests. To prepare for these tests, the core departments meet together weekly to ensure that their lessons are aligned with the Core Learning Goals, test indicators, and curriculum frameworks. All departments will meet regularly not only to plan and discuss pacing, but also to collect and analyze student achievement data and student samples. Benchmark data is gathered with subsequent item analysis. Reading across the curriculum is encouraged not only in our "Read to Lead" program conducted weekly, but also in daily reading instruction in our classrooms. All departments implement weekly content-specific SAT activities, and the writing process is emphasized across the curriculum. The school is also paying for half the cost of the required national Advanced Placement tests for all students enrolled in AP classes.

Activity buses are included in our School Operating Resource (SOR) fund to provide transportation to students who need to remain after school for content specific tutoring. The tutoring is done by departments and is facilitated by Frederick Douglass High School staff members. Staff members will also instruct students in need of targeted remediation in the Algebra Twilight classes.

Frederick Douglass High School will continue to offer English 9 daily instead of every other day; this provides for a more focused and accelerated learning opportunity for those students. For the 2006-2007 school we will also offer six sections of English 10, with the accelerated learning component for students with low benchmark scores in English 9. The increased time in English will be used to focus on literature and grammar. More time on task is used for flexible small group instruction, whole group instruction, and twenty minutes of independent reading. Most English teachers have a common planning period, and the English 10 teachers meet weekly to engage in collaborative planning where the following are addressed: course pacing, rigorous instruction, and analyses of common assessments administered and content delivery. Department notes are submitted to the principal on a weekly basis. Informal and formal observations are done weekly with feedback to teachers to monitor alignment with content on the High School Assessment.

A "diagnostic prescriptive" database has been compiled to monitor student growth. The database contains data from the benchmark assessments, results from the English 9 High School Assessment and specific subgroup details such as race, free and reduced lunch status and whether the student has been identified as a special needs student. This database allows us to determine which students need additional assistance in English 10 and the possible impact their academic growth will make on the High School Assessment in specific subgroups. This form of data analysis is shared and analyzed by the entire English/Language Arts department.

For the 2006-2007 school year, the students were assigned classes based on needs and performance, and much effort was put forth in matching teacher strengths with the courses. Frederick Douglass High School will offer Algebra I every day instead of every other day. The increased time in Algebra and Geometry will be used to focus on increased writing in mathematics and the use of technology to solve mathematical problems. Planning time is used for weekly meetings to discuss course pacing, rigorous instruction, and analyses of common assessments administered and content delivery. Department notes are submitted to the principal on a weekly basis. Informal and formal observations are done weekly with feedback to teachers to monitor alignment with content on the High School Assessment.

A diagnostic prescriptive database has been compiled to monitor student growth in mathematics. The database contains data from the benchmark assessments for Algebra 1 and Geometry, results from the Algebra High School Assessment and specific subgroup details such as race, free and reduced lunch status and whether the student has

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been identified as a special needs student. The database is shared with all mathematics teachers and used to analyze each student's strengths and weaknesses.

The Mathematics department is working closely with the Regional Resource Teacher for Mathematics. Professional development workshops for mathematics will include how to use the appropriate curriculum documents to ensure there is alignment with the Core Learning Goals, how to use AREA J for solving BCR and ECR questions and how to utilize technology to solve mathematical problems.

The Science and Social studies departments are following the models established by English and Mathematics. The Biology teachers and the Local, State, and National Government teachers meet weekly to collaboratively plan and discuss course pacing, rigorous instruction, and analyses of common assessments administered and content delivery. Department notes are submitted to the principal on a weekly basis. Informal and formal observations are done weekly with feedback to teachers to monitor alignment with content on the High School Assessment. Both departments are maximizing outside of the building professional development opportunities.

The professional development for the 2006-2007 school year will continue to emphasize effective collaborative planning, as well data collection and utilization to adjust instruction and improve student achievement. Additional areas are teaching strategies for reading comprehension, strategies for active learning and practical strategies for achieving success for struggling readers and writers. In addition, staff will be trained in using technology to monitor student achievement and to enhance instruction. This will include sessions on Edusoft, mygradebook.com, Blackboard, and PowerPoint. All teachers will participate in the professional development workshops to ensure that the strategies shared are used in all content areas.

Subgroups (create a heading for each subgroup the school is targeting)

Special Education (This subgroup did not make AYP in reading or mathematics)

To meet the needs of our special education population the accelerated learning program was extended for English 10 and Algebra 1. This intensive school instructional format provides students with increased time on task during the school day. Additional support, training and measures for accountability will be provided for teachers of special needs students in order to address the instructional needs of this subgroup. All Prince George's County Public Schools staff development offered for English 10 and Algebra teachers is also offered to our special education teachers. Using a variety of co-teaching models also allows students to learn content in various ways that will best meet their instructional needs. Our most commonly used special education accommodations are verbatim reading, additional time on task, flexible grouping, peer tutoring, manipulatives, and reading and math materials covering a wide range of levels to meet each student's needs.

African-American (Frederick Douglass High School did not make AYP because of African-American students in Algebra)

Algebra teachers meet twice a week during school to ensure all teachers are following the curriculum and pacing guides. Assessment items are selected from the Maryland State Department of Education website to monitor student growth. A large emphasis has been placed on adhering to the prescribed curriculum, using technology, how to use construction tools and deductive reasoning. A BCR and ECR problem are given weekly to prepare students for the High School Assessment. Students are provided an opportunity to critique other peer work and then to review and revise their own work. During extended holiday breaks each student receives a review packet of Algebra skills that have already been taught. The packets are returned after the break and serve as 5% of their final grade for the quarter. Teachers will continue to use differentiated instruction and hands-on learning for special needs students.

Free and Reduced Meals (Frederick Douglass High School did not make AYP because of free and reduced meal students in reading and mathematics)

For the students in this sub-group that did not meet the annual measurable objective, the academic coach will provide students the opportunity to meet after school for 1.5 hours twice a week to receive additional reading and

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math instruction that will enhance their skill levels and confidence. Transportation home will be provided by after school activity buses. Math materials (graphing calculator) and reading and organizational materials will be given to each student in the program. The scores on the benchmarks are used as the pre and post test assessment to determine student academic growth.

The school does not have a limited English proficient (LEP) subgroup at this time.

Safe and Orderly Environment

Frederick Douglass incorporates many strategies to ensure a safe and orderly environment. A student handbook was created and distributed to parents at Back-to-School Night and to students whose parents were unable to attend. Administrators hold Code of Conduct assemblies by grade level to ensure students are aware of the high expectations of our school. Several rules from the Code of Student Conduct are reviewed daily via public announcement by the principal. Peer mediation conferences are held by school security and administrators in order to be proactive with student conflicts. Alternatives to suspension are offered such as morning detention, in-school suspension, volunteer work after school hours, and parent shadowing.

Administrators review the attendance bulletin daily to note any errors for correction. The attendance secretary attends all of the administrative meetings to discuss students with excessive absences. Monthly attendance data is shared with all staff members. To stress the importance of attendance, the school will be using the "N" grade policy for students who have five or more absences in a semester course or 10 or more in a year-long course. A plan for educating teachers, students, and parents on enforcing this existing board policy is being developed.

Our school website is updated weekly and is used by parents, students, and staff members to keep them apprised of events and important information. Parents are encouraged to spend at least one day with their child at school. This is recommended to encourage dialogue between the parent and student, to allow parents to experience what is expected of their child daily, and to let parents know they are always welcome at Frederick Douglass High School. In addition, the professional school counselors meet with parents and students to address graduation requirements and expectations.

To facilitate building security, we have a digital security system that will enable us to monitor all intruders in the building over an extended period of time. A security officer is stationed at the front door and a thorough system of identifying and tracking visitors is in place. In addition, a strict student identification policy is in place so outsiders are easily identifiable.

To ensure student safety, our administrators are very visible in the halls both between and during classes. The principal has an open door policy that allows students to feel comfortable in consulting an adult to get their problems resolved. In addition to supporting teaching and learning in the classroom, the faculty welcomes students at their doors and encourages students to get to class on time. A school-wide tardy policy is used that reinforces to all students the importance of being on time for class and provides consequences for being tardy. Teachers conference with students, contact parents, and refer repeat offenders to the administrative team who follows up with consistent consequences for those students. This has set a positive tone in the building that stresses the importance of being on time and on task in the classroom.

Parental Involvement

Frederick Douglass High School continues to make parent involvement a priority. Much of our communication between parents, students and our business partners is done via our school website and email. Updated information from the School Improvement Plan to daily activities is displayed on the website for parents to access daily. We will continue to offer this avenue as one of our ways to keep parents informed about the academic programs in Frederick Douglass High School. We also have a parent serve as a member of our School Planning and Management Team. This parent joins us to provide input and feedback about our school-wide initiatives. During each PTSA meeting the principal also shares information and activities that took place for the month to keep parents informed. Parents are

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also encouraged to be a parent of the School Planning and Management Team (SPMT) meetings. The schedule for the 2006-2007 school year will be distributed at each meeting to encourage additional parents to join us. There are also two members of the PTSA Executive Board assigned to explore ways to increase parent involvement. Suggestions are taken at each PTSA meeting to explore new ways to keep parents informed and involved. The Instructional Council/SPMT also discusses ways parents can support our instructional program.

The staff at Frederick Douglass High School also understands the importance of keeping parents informed about their child's academic progress. An online grading system was purchased for every teacher to use for both parents and students to access using the internet. This tool has proven to be effective in keeping the lines of communication open with parents to ensure students are completing and turning in their assignments. The staff also voted to offer two additional parent conference "nights" for second and third quarter to meet with parents after work hours to discuss their child's academic progress for the 2006-2007 school year. This format continues to be a huge success. This is in addition to regularly scheduled parent conferences and the November conference day.

The number of business partners that are working with Frederick Douglass High School continues to grow each year. We continue to have major support from the Dion Johnson Foundation to buy equipment for the television production lab which delivers our morning announcements daily. The foundation also pays for a consultant from Channel 7 to meet with our television production students to discuss journalism issues and careers. Three business partners, GSA, NOAA and the Defense Information Systems Agency, have donated computer equipment to assist us in creating an additional computer lab for the student body. Kinko's prints and copies our CRI newsletter free of charge each quarter. This newsletter is sent home to the parents to show the work done by our special education wing. Hewlett Packard has donated identification badge chains for our students. The Region IV Office also offers quarterly parent workshops at James Madison Middle School that covers a wide range of topics from information on High School Assessments to Adolescent Behavior. There are many also small businesses that offer gift certificates to our staff members to highlight the great things they have done for students here at Frederick Douglass High School.