

Frederick Douglass High School

School Improvement Plan: Executive Summary

2009-2010

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Mission

The mission of Prince George's County Public Schools is to ensure that all students acquire information and skills and the ability to apply their knowledge to become lifelong learners and productive citizens in a diverse/global society.

This mission is best accomplished through a structure of child-centered learning communities characterized by: equity and access to a quality education that includes strong instructional leadership; high expectations for the achievement of all students; a rigorous curriculum; frequent monitoring of student performance; extending learning opportunities for students failing to meet academic standards; well trained, certified teachers in all classrooms; enhanced resources; families who are empowered to assist in providing a quality education for every child; a school climate conducive to building positive relationships; a safe and orderly school environment fostering enhanced school pride.

Prince George's County Public Schools

Mission Statement for School Improvement Plan

The school improvement planning process for Prince George's County Public Schools supports and reinforces the *Bridge to Excellence Master Plan (BEMP)*. The process requires each school to develop, implement and monitor a school improvement plan (SIP) designed to prepare students for successful citizenship in the twenty-first century. The two-year SIP provides the framework, direction, and focus required of each school to successfully implement the goals delineated in the *Bridge to Excellence Master Plan*. The SIP is intended to be a "living" document for the school. It should be reviewed, evaluated and refined regularly. The school improvement plan (SIP) outlines the specific activities, strategies, and interventions that each school will implement to ensure academic success for all students, grades K-12.

Consistent with the *Bridge to Excellence Master Plan*, the SIP seeks to ensure that all students in all subgroups make adequate yearly progress. The SIP is aligned with federal legislation such as the *No Child Left Behind Act* and state mandates such as, the *Bridge to Excellence in Public Schools Act* and the *Voluntary State Curriculum*.

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A. Introduction/School Overview

Frederick Douglass High School, located in rural southern Prince George's County, draws students primarily from the area south 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. In July of 2008, Frederick Douglass, along with James Madison Middle School (our partner school), received Candidate Status as an International Baccalaureate Middle Years Programme School. The school-wide instructional focus will be preparing our teachers and students for the next steps in the authorization process. A newly revised mission statement in August of 2009 states: *Frederick Douglass High School, an IB MYP candidate school, empowers our students to become effective communicators, globally-minded problem solvers, and life-long learners who realize their potential and become ethical, service-oriented citizens.* A new motto was also endorsed: *Eagles Learning Locally to Contribute Globally.*

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. As a way to address students' needs, several of the courses have a double period component. Students are encouraged to take a variety of academic electives to prepare them for their post secondary experience. We offer over 75 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.

In 2008-2009, Frederick Douglass made AYP in all categories for the fourth year in a row. Our focus is to continue to improve in all AYP areas, with special emphasis on our Special Education students.

School Demographics

Although the school is situated next to a cornfield, we have a mix of suburban, rural and urban students. For the 2009-2010 school year, our student body is 93% African-American, 3% white, 2% Hispanic, 1% Asian/Pacific Islander, and .1% American Indian/Alaska Native. Approximately 10% of our students are identified as Special Education students. Included in this percentage are 16 students in the Community Referenced Instruction (CRI) program who successfully participate in a variety of activities, including ALT-MSA. Approximately 2.0% of our students have 504 plans.

Frederick Douglass High School has 1,078 students, 65 teachers, 3.5 professional school counselors, five instructional aides, one media specialist, one International Baccalaureate coordinator, one testing coordinator, one pupil personnel worker, one speech pathologist, one peer mediator, one part-time parent liaison, three assistant principals, and one principal. Quality of instruction, system initiatives, and student interests drive course offerings and staffing decisions. Due to system budget constraints, our staffing adjustments did include: a reduction of three teaching positions and our full-time parent liaison. One teacher retired, four teachers were not rehired, two left the system, and two had to take positions elsewhere due to the staffing reduction. As a result, we welcomed four new teachers to Douglass for this school year. Our entire instructional staff is certified. In terms of experience within PGCPSS, 5% of our teachers are second-year PGCPSS teachers who have additional experience, 70% have been teaching for 3-15 years, and 25% of our teachers have more than 16 years in the school system. In order to ensure quality instruction, we work to provide access to quality and appropriate professional development at the school, within the school

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system, and outside opportunities, including Advanced Placement Training, International Baccalaureate Middle Years Program Training, Framework for Teaching Workshops, Discipline Literacy professional development opportunities, Maryland Assessment Group Conference, and Special Education conferences.

The Frederick Douglass school community has a long and rich history of excellence. We continually strive to improve in all that we do.

B. Major initiatives and School-wide Strategies for Targeted Subgroups

Although Frederick Douglass has exited school improvement, we will continue to work to increase achievement for all students in all subject areas including the HSA courses of English 10, Algebra I, Biology, L/S/N Government, the Advanced Placement courses, and the courses that support these assessed areas. Based on the results from the Spring 2009 Climate Survey, we also will continue to strive to ensure that Douglass is safe and orderly and that a culture of high expectations for all (staff and students) is the norm. The priority subgroup, based on AYP data analysis, is our special education students. The following is a description of the major initiatives.

- **Collaborative Planning:** Teachers in English, Science, Social Studies, Mathematics, and World Language Departments have common planning periods. This allows for collaboratively planning, discussions of pacing and student achievement, data analysis, and identification of instructional strategies in order to ensure rigor in the classroom. All special education teachers have the same planning as the content area teachers, so they are expected to participate fully in the departmental collaborative planning, planning with their general education teacher(s), and department meetings. The Assistant Principals also work closely with the Teacher Coordinators and Department Chairs to ensure that all meetings are instructionally focused.

- **Student Scheduling:** Identified English 9, English 10, and Algebra 1 students have a double period that provides extra time-on-task and deeper curricular exploration. We offer one section of single-gender Algebra 1. In addition, students who have failed the Algebra HSA and have already passed Algebra 1 are enrolled in America's Choice Mathematics program (Pathways and RampUp) to provide students with additional algebra instruction and support. Students with low Scholastic Reading Inventory scores are enrolled in a READ 180 course that provides additional reading instruction. One section is dedicated for regular education students and the other for special education students. This year, most of our Advanced Placement (AP) students have an accompanying seminar course that provides additional opportunities for learning, reading, review, and discussion. Additional HSA support classes are in the master schedule to assist students in meeting their HSA graduation programs. Students who are eligible to participate in the Academic Validation Program (AVP) have been scheduled into the appropriate content area course, and those students who need extra remediation are in the Content Enrichment Program (CEP) classes, if their schedules allow.

- **Teacher Expectations:** As our teachers are all certified, the instructional focus continues to move to on-going improvement and effectiveness in instructional strategies, use of technology, and collaborative planning (horizontally and vertically), and data analysis. Charlotte Danielson's *Framework for Teaching (FFT)* is the basis for much of our conversation, and six of our teachers have volunteered to participate in PGCPs pilot evaluation program that is based on FFT. Core content area teachers are participating in discipline literacy sessions. We are also engaging in a culture change to become more globally focused as a school community as our teachers continue to take part in IB MYP training and unit planning activities. All teachers, as well as all 9th and 10th grade students, will be considered IB MYP learners. Our principal is empowering leaders and modeling for them how to have courageous conversations around instruction and students as priority, so that the entire staff is responsible for student learning.

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- **Extended Learning Programs and Interventions:** We again will target students for HSA and AP remediation and intervention in after school learning opportunities as they are available. Due to budget restraints, the programs will be less extensive. Parents will need to provide transportation for after school programs and tutoring, and students will need to maximize their experiences in their current HSA, AVP, and CEP classes. Our special education Algebra 1 teachers and students are receiving additional support from a KEAS (Key Elements for Algebra Success) coach. The School Testing Coordinator (STC) is organizing an "Adopt-A-Senior" mentoring program that matches teachers with seniors who have yet to meet their HSA requirements.
- **Programs that Make Connections -- Summer AP Bridge, Summer Arts Institute, Freshmen Orientation, and Advisories:** Incoming AP students participated in a week-long program that provided strategies for success in the challenging AP courses. Approximately 90 students attended the seven-day Arts Enrichment Institute: I Am... Finding My Own Voice; this program was offered to our rising 9th and 10th grade students, as well as the rising 6th and 7th grade students at James Madison Middle School, as an opportunity to bring the IB MYP philosophy to our students during the summer. The 9th grade orientation was a welcoming, pep-rally where student leaders provided tours of the school, instead of the students visiting their classes. In the advisory, all students are matched in groups to a teacher, and this "5th Period" meets twice a month. Topics include: student code of conduct, agenda use and organizing for school, IB Learner Profile characteristics, and study skills. The curriculum and activities are designed by a team of teachers who prepare the advisory teachers prior to each session. This year, several of the advisories are targeted groups, which include at-risk students, special education students, student leaders, and James Madison IB students. Our goal with these programs and activities is to provide students opportunities to positively connect to the students and adults in the Douglass community, so they may have a positive high school experience. We hope this will translate into higher achievement, improved attendance, and 100% of students graduating.
- **International Baccalaureate Program:** Frederick Douglass is in candidate status phase of implementing an IB Middle Years Programme with an authorization target date of 2010. Douglass is partnering with James Madison Middle School, and the focus for this year is professional development, instructional planning (horizontal, vertical, and interdisciplinary), and completing Application B for the MYP. The program targets all 7th and 8th grade students at James Madison and all 9th and 10th grade students at Douglass. The vision is to apply for a Diploma Programme in subsequent years as well. Teachers are committing to the various training opportunities. The goal of this program is to raise the achievement of all students and to create an instructional program that has as its fundamental concepts holistic learning, intercultural awareness, and communication. This approach should prepare students for higher-level and more rigorous courses.
- **Vocabulary Across the Curriculum:** The English Department is leading the school in revamping our vocabulary development across the curriculum strategies and program. We recognize that a rich vocabulary arms students to improve their writing skills, as well as their reading comprehension, both which are critical for the success of our students on the HSAs, the AP exams, and the SAT exam, as well as in the college admissions process.
- **PBIS (Positive Behavior Intervention & Support System):** A growing team of Douglass staff members and student members are actively engaged and involved in the decision making process and strategic planning of how to effectively infuse and implement positive behavior strategies to help strengthen our school community and promote positive behavior which in turn will improve student achievement. The genesis for this system was an analysis of our suspension and referral data and the need to reduce the behaviors that lead to referrals in terms of disrespect, class disruption, and insubordination, especially with our 9th graders. The Eagle Bucks incentive program will be reworked, and as well as plans for assemblies for students who regularly uphold the tenets of PBIS
- **College Summit:** Douglass is in the second year of offering the College Summit Program. Due to the staffing reduction, this program had to be realigned, so that one teacher teaches it as a semester course to our seniors in the fall and to our juniors in the spring. The purpose of the class is to equip students with the skills and information needed to embark on successful post-secondary educational journeys. Students, teachers, administrators, and parents continue to positively receive this offering.

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- **Instructional Council/SPMT:** This leadership group meets twice a month, on the first and third Wednesdays at 3:30 in the Media Center, and it has developed into a professional learning community that addresses the instructional needs and issues of the school community and participates in professional development activities that include: learning walks, curriculum mapping, data analysis, peer observations, article studies, and sharing of best practices. Parents are welcome to attend.

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

- **Special Education (SPED):** Even though Frederick Douglass made AYP in all areas and subgroups, we are still committed to improving the achievement of all of our students, but most urgently our special education students. For reading (English 10), our special education students met the confidence interval of AYP with 50% of students proficient (short of the AMO of 65.8%) and for mathematics (Algebra 1), this subgroup made the confidence interval with 38.1% proficient (short of the AMO of 56.1%). This represents a distinct improvement in reading and a slight improvement in math over last year's achievement; however, continued emphasis on successful instructional practices for our special education students is still needed. Special educators and content co-teachers will have the opportunity to plan together and to improve co-teaching skills and relationships; effective co-teaching is the expectation. Teachers will plan with their content areas. Staff will have to have an increased awareness of the learning styles, accommodations, and modifications in order to better meet the instructional needs of our students. Benchmarks and unit tests will be used as an instructional tool with the students. For our MOD-HSA students, teachers will continue to ensure that instructional modifications are reflected in the modified assessments through an emphasis on experiences with on-line tools. READ 180 and the Pathways/RampUp courses will also give added support to our students. The Needs Analysis section further identifies the specific areas of weakness with our Special Education students.

A critical component in this subgroup is our ALT-MSA students. The Community Referenced Instruction (CRI) Department is committed to preparing and implementing the procedures/process for managing and administering the ALT-MSA to CRI students in grade 10. The staff will go to in-service training sessions to prepare for the process, as well as for using the extensions to the Voluntary State Curriculum based on the math, reading, and science core learning goals.

- **Limited English Proficient (LEP):** The school does not have a Limited English Proficient subgroup at this time.

C. Parental Involvement

Frederick Douglass High School continues to make parent involvement a priority. We notify our parents about our school improvement status each year by sending the letter generated by the school system, on our website, and communications through our PTSA. We have a very dedicated and effective Parent Liaison who ensures that parents are an active and important part of the school community. Much of our communication between parents, students and our business partners is done via our school website, Global Connect (an automatic call out system), and email. The website conveys updated information that includes schedules, activities, the School Improvement Plan, SAT strategies, extracurricular, and other school information. 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. Additional avenues of communication include: mailings (back to school information, progress reports, report cards, benchmark information and HSA information, immunization, uniform information), flyers, evening meetings (AP/Honors Night, 9th Grade Parent Orientation, HSA & AVP Nights, Financial Aid Night, Junior Night, etc.) 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

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and activities in order to keep parents informed. Parents are also encouraged to be a parent of the School Planning and Management Team (SPMT) meetings. The schedule for the 2009-2010 school year will be distributed at each meeting to encourage additional parents to participate. The Instructional Council/SPMT meetings are held on the first and third Wednesdays at 3:30 in the Media Center, and they are scheduled for the following dates:

	Leadership Retreat		
August	8/20-8/12	January	1/6 & 1/20
September	9/2 & 9/16	February	2/3 & 2/17
October	10/7 & 10/21	March	3/3 & 3/17
November	11/4 & 11/18	April	4/7 & 4/21
December	12/2 & 12/9	May	5/5 & 5/19
		June	6/2

This year Frederick Douglass High School has a Parent Resource Center. Our part-time Parent Liaison (one day a week) is working to encourage consistent and continued parent involvement. Parents are invited to shadow and/or visit their students while in school. Working in conjunction with the PTSA, parents are encouraged to volunteer to participate in various school activities, fundraisers and school groups to provide support to our students and the school community as a whole. Monthly workshops have been planned for the 2009-2010 school year that are geared to provide information to assist our students and parents with obtaining the information and skills necessary to have a successful high school career as well as prepare for life after high school.

The staff at Frederick Douglass High School also understands the importance of keeping parents informed about their child's academic progress. Our Back-to-School night was the second Tuesday of the school year in order to welcome parents to Douglass early and to open the lines of communications from the start. Our parents have become accustomed to accessing grade information on-line and are accessing the parent portal for SchoolMAX. This GradeMAX online grading has proven to be effective in keeping the lines of communication open with parents to ensure students are completing and turning in their assignments. Staff is dedicated to replying to all electronic and phone communications in a timely fashion.

Community Involvement

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 support 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. Prince George's Community College is partnering with Douglass to develop a cohort of concurrent enrollment students and mentoring group. KAPLAN provides a discounted rate for SAT preparation courses for Douglass students. The Book in A Day program directly benefits our students, as well as the support from the College Summit Foundation. The Business Department coordinates the work study program with many governmental agencies and business in the DC Metropolitan area. The CRI Department partners with a number of community organizations and businesses for work-based training placements. They include: the PGCPD Board of Education and North Forestville Elementary, Clinton Nursing & Rehabilitation Center, CVS, Rite Aide, Anaconda Press, PG Hospital Center, So. MD Hospital, Surratts-Clinton Library. In order to create a welcoming look for the beginning of school, Ed's Plant World donated the materials and labor for landscaping the front of the building. Rosecroft Raceway, Prince George's Equestrian Center, as well as the local grocery stores (Safeway and Giant) are willing to support our school. Our PBIS team is soliciting additional local businesses to provide support for our incentive system.

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D. Safe and Orderly Environment

Frederick Douglass incorporates many strategies to ensure a safe and orderly environment. Douglass is in year three of the mandatory uniform policy. Staff will continue to be diligent about communicating the policy and uniform expectations to students and parents.

A student handbook was created and distributed to all 9th grade and new students and is available through our school website for the entire school community. Administrators hold Code of Conduct assemblies by grade level to ensure students are aware of the high expectations of our school, and the principal reiterates the importance of compliance through the televised announcements. Peer mediation conferences are facilitated by our peer mediator, student mediators, school security, and administrators in order to be proactive with student conflicts. Alternatives to suspension are offered such as morning detention, in-school suspension, cafeteria work during lunch, and parent shadowing. Staff is expected to consistently enforce policies and procedures in terms of uniform violations, attendance, tardies, and discipline infractions. The PBIS implementation plan is also a major initiative in ensuring that Frederick Douglass maintains an environment conducive to teaching for learning.

Accurate attendance is also important for a safe and orderly environment. Daily attendance is now recorded by period in SchoolMAX, and the administrators, pupil personnel worker, professional school counselors, teachers, and attendance secretary review the attendance information daily to note any errors for correction and to increase parental contact when students are absent from class. The Pupil Personnel Worker and the School Counselors, along with the administration, will follow the attendance guidelines as described in Administrative Procedure 5113. The Attendance Committee will meet twice a month to discuss attendance. A Truancy Checklist filled out for each student who exceeds the allowable absences. The students' attendance will be monitored weekly, and each quarter a conference will be met with to address the issues for their absences. Phone calls to the parents, parent conferences, and home visits will be utilized to help improve the student's attendance.

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 order to improve security measures, Douglass is using new student identification card scanning program that helps track when students enter and leave the school building. This is a joint effort between the school system, our security staff, IT Technician, and the administration. The ultimate goal is to keep our students and staff safe, to better account for our students, and to better monitor visitors and potential outsiders.

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 confer 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.

The entire staff is dedicated to ensuring that students graduate and graduate on time. Graduation requirements and expectations are shared with the students in the agenda book, the student handbook, the website, in classroom visits by the professional school counselors, and during each enrollment time. To help students in Special Education and FARMS categories achieve the goal of graduation, the staff will closely monitor the students' academic achievement and attendance. We will provide extra help through the after school programs, as available, designed to help with academics. We will closely monitor each student's progress via his/her progress reports, 9th grade monitoring program, and Senior Agreement. In addition, the

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School Counseling Department will proactively work with students in Special Education and FARMS to help with educational, career, and personal/social goals and achievement. The counselors will work directly with the Special Education Department to make sure all of those students are scheduled correctly and are receiving the appropriate interventions that are available. Counselors will work directly with FARMS students to ensure that all their needs are met and ensure that these students are not excluded due to monetary reasons.

E. Strategies to Attract (and Retain) Highly Qualified Teachers

All teachers, including special education teachers, at Frederick Douglass High School are certified. The turnover rate continues to decrease and transfers are minimal. In fact, one teacher returned to Douglass after teaching at another high school. Our goal is to retain the best and brightest teachers for our students, and this is accomplished by creating a positive learning and teaching culture through a variety of strategies. These include: implementing the IB MYP, empowering teachers to use innovative strategies, monitoring instruction daily and providing positive and constructive feedback, providing collaborative planning time, minimizing administrative tasks when possible, encouraging the use of technology for instructional and task-related responsibilities, supporting outside professional development opportunities, providing the appropriate materials, and fostering a supportive and safe school community.