



**Deboarh Cannon Partridge Wolfe College of Education at New Jersey City University
Completer Impact on P-12 Student Growth Accreditation Project**

Spring 2024

The Deboarh Cannon Partridge Wolfe College of Education (COE) at New Jersey City University (NJCU) undertook a project to collect and analyze data regarding the ability of COE completers to effectively contribute to P-12 student learning and to apply in P-12 classrooms the professional knowledge, skills, and dispositions they received during their preparation. This case study will complement New Jersey DOE Performance Reports for Educator Preparation by providing personal accounts and other descriptive data related to completer impact.

The data collected through this case study is used as a component of our accreditation process, and anonymous results will be shared with study participants. To conduct this study, we partnered with the Learning Community Charter School in Jersey City, New Jersey. The Learning Community Charter School is a local education agency (LEA) that functions as an independent school district. Learning Community Charter School employs 6% of 2020 – 2023 COE completers, making it our third largest LEA employer of initial program completers. Additionally, the completers employed by Learning Community Charter School graduated from six different initial licensure programs, and this allowed us to efficiently gather program impact data about a variety of programs.

Learning Community Charter School is a K – 8th grade LEA with an enrollment of 634. Students with disabilities make up 6.6% of total enrollment, and 30.2% of students are economically disadvantaged. Additional demographic data are in Table 1.

Table 1- Learning Community Charter School Enrollment by Racial and Ethnic Group

Group	2022-2023
White	27.2%
Hispanic	21.1%
Black or African American	15.5%
Asian	31.0%
Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander	.8%
American Indian or Alaska Native	0.0%
Two of More Race	4.4%

The percentage and variety of completers and the LEA’s diverse student composition made Learning Community Charter School an ideal research site for our study of initial program impact. The completers in this study finished their initial licensure program between 2020 –

2023, and in 2023-2024, they were in their first, second or third year of employment at Learning Community Charter School. The focus of this case study was attainment of completers' annual Student Growth Objectives <https://www.nj.gov/education/edueval/teacher/sgo/index.shtml>

For teachers in traditional public schools, the New Jersey Dept. of Education defines Student Growth Objectives as long-term academic goals for groups of students set by teachers in consultation with their supervisors. Student Growth Objectives are:

- specific and measurable academic goals that are aligned to state academic standards;
- based on student growth and/or achievement using available student learning data;
- developed by a teacher in consultation with his or her supervisor;
- approved by a teacher's supervisor; and
- factored into a teacher's annual performance evaluation

In New Jersey, educators serving in charter schools are not bound by these educator evaluation requirements (NJDOE, 2017). Several of the charter schools that employ recent program completers use student growth objectives that are less quantitatively explicit and/or that address proficiencies that are foundational to academic standards attainment, such as Social Emotional Learning Competencies. Some participants in this study pursued student growth objectives based on academic standards and others pursued student growth objectives based on competencies that form the foundation of academic learning. All participants selected student growth objectives that were specific and measurable. All selected student growth objectives that were developed in consultation with and approved by their principal, and the results of all participants' student growth objectives were factored into their annual review process. As a construct, therefore, Student Growth Objectives are an appropriate tool for illustrating our completers' contributions to P-12 student-learning growth and application of the professional knowledge, skills, and dispositions received during their preparation.

Methodology of the Study

This case study replicated the methodology used in the Keene State College Case Study, which was profiled in CAEP's publication *Resources: Standard R4 Program Impact*. This study included the following components:

- Completers and principal participation in an interview
- One classroom observation of each completer. This observation provided critical background and context for analyzing Student Growth Objective attainment.
- One interview with each completer in which the Student Growth Objective(s) was examined.
- One interview with the school principal in which completers' student growth objectives were analyzed based on school-wide goals.

Table 2 – Completer – Participants in Case Study

Completer	Year of COE Program Completion	Current Year of LCCS Employment	Teaching Assignment
Teacher 1	2022	Year 2	Music – All Grades

Teacher 2	2022	Year 2	5 th Grade English Language Arts
Teacher 3	2021	Year 3	7 th – 8 th Grade Science
Teacher 4	2023	Year 1	6 th – 8 th Grade Mathematics
Teacher 5	2023	Year 1	7 th and 8 th Grade Social Studies
Teacher 6	2023	Year 1	2 nd Grade Elementary Self-contained

Data Collection and Analysis

Interviews

Between June 3 – 14, 2024, the school principal and six completers were interviewed. Interviews took place via Zoom and were recorded and transcribed (see the content in Teacher Interview and Principal Interview sections).

Classroom Teaching Observation

Classroom observations were conducted on June 11 and 18, 2024. These provided important context so that COE investigators could more fully understand completers’ Student Growth Objectives and the factors impacting objective attainment.

Student Learning Evidence

Each study participant reported the specific data/metrics used to determine if their respective Student Growth Objective was met. As a cross check, the school principal was then able to corroborate this information.

Teacher Interview Results

Question #1: What was your individual student growth objective for the 2023-2024 school year, and how was it measured?

Teacher 1 -- 90% of general education students in grades K – 4 will successfully demonstrate the five aspects of concert posture:

1. stand up
2. feet apart
3. knees relaxed
4. shoulders down
5. arms and hands are by our side.

This goal was assessed with an observational checklist during spring concert rehearsal.

Teacher 2 -- 100% of all seven students with IEPs will read on grade level by the end of the year. The goal was measured using the Developmental Reading Assessment as a pre- and post-assessment.

Teacher 3 -- Students with IEPs will improve their writing of *Claim–Evidence--Reasoning*

assignments from September – June. This goal was measured using September and June *Claim–Evidence--Reasoning* samples for each student (total 9).

Teacher 4 -- Sixth grade students with IEPs will increase their overall math grade level from sixth grade to at least pre-algebra [7th grade] as measured by MAP Growth assessments administered in the fall and at the end of the school year.

Teacher 5 -- 100% of 8th grade students will complete the Civil Rights Unit with a score of 80% or higher on the final assessment. This will be completed prior to the class trip to Atlanta, Selma and Montgomery.

How measured?

Pre-assessment: Anticipation Guide – This was not scored numerically. However, the general pattern was that students knew factoids related to the Civil Right Era. They did not understand overarching concepts. They did not understand the factors undergirding major events and they could not link major events to implications.

Post Assessment: Civil Rights Test that included multiple choice items, vocabulary matchings, reading and explaining primary source documents (such as Montgomery ordinance about bus segregation), and giving examples of cultural icons that trace their foundation to the Civil Rights Era (ie – X-Men and Black Panther)

Teacher 6 -- All 23 students will read at second grade instructional reading level by June 2024 as assessed by individually administered Developmental Reading Assessment.

Question #2: Did you attain your student growth objective, and how would you describe this?

Teacher 1 -- The Student Growth Objective was attained.

Factors leading to goal attainment were:

- Explicit modeling and performance of a winter concert
- Differentiation by placing anxious students near the ends of the risers, where they can feel less crowded in
- Providing sufficient rehearsal time so that students can practice these five elements while on the risers on the stage and under the stage lights

Teacher 2 -- The Student Growth Objective was partially attained. The October DRA results were that 2/7 students reading at grade level. June DRA results were that 4/7 students are reading at grade level, yet 7/7 advanced at least one grade level. Teacher 2 states (and principal concurs) that this result demonstrates effective student growth since a one-year grade level reading increase is what all students are expected to achieve in a school year.

Factors leading to student growth were:

- Providing extra time
- slowing the pace of the curriculum
- consistent classroom routines for all reading and writing tasks
- use of a consistent paragraph graphic organizer
- teacher and peer modeling

Teacher 3 -- The Student Growth Objective was achieved.

Factors leading to goal attainment were:

- Heterogenous grouping of high needs and high achieving students based on common interests in class projects.
- Observational checklists to observe small group interactions and having this inform the group compassion. Exhaustive “all criteria” assessing of the assignments that get assigned early in the marking period to determine the instructional support needed (i.e. -- conceptual science teaching, language skills to fully convey their understanding of the science concepts, understanding of how to create a data table, etc.)

Teacher 4 -- The Student Growth Objective was attained.

Factors leading to student growth object attainment were:

- Use of a variety of teaching techniques, including performing problems at the board, developing creative projects, using videos, providing extra practice opportunities, and traditional math worksheets.
- Adjusting professional demeanor to more of a growth mindset for the students

Teacher 5 -- The Student Growth Objective was attained.

Factors leading to student growth object attainment were:

- Use of different modalities such as different songs of the era played during the Do-Now each day, and videos (i.e. - Oprah’s interview of the Little Rock 9)
- Relevance: 8th graders needed to develop a lesson about Civil Rights to teach students in 2nd grade, so they knew they would need to use this information right away.

Teacher 6 -- The Student Growth Objective was partially attained. Twenty-one out of 23 students achieved the objective. Note: The school principal advised that Teacher 6’s results demonstrate effective student growth since a one-year grade level reading increase is what all students are expected to achieve in a school year.

Factors leading to student growth object attainment were:

- Implementation of the Daily 5 Reading Centers:
 - Read Independently
 - Partner Reading
 - Listen to Reading
 - Creative Writing (based on journal prompts)
 - Work on Writing (based on the current writing unit)
- Strategic Grouping of Students in Small Groups. Here the emphasis was on student agency and on developing students’ ability to make responsible choices about which centers to spend time in based on their interests and on staying productive (and away from classmates that might be distracting). Teacher 6 taught students how to consider their daily task goals and how to make thoughtful decisions about ELA center engagement.

Question #3: How did you contribute to the school-wide goal of building a stronger school community through the implementation of restorative practices?

Teacher 1 -- Contributions to the school-wide goal were:

- Implementation of team-building activities as a regular part of the music curriculum. These include teaching rhythms and giving groups of students different instruments in which to play the rhythms (drums, bells, etc.) The students have to work together by following Teacher 1's conducting in order to know when their group is supposed to play and when they are supposed to stop so that another group can play. By working together, they play a song.
- Implementation of a variant of game Four Square. Students must communicate nonverbally as they work together, and this prepares them to follow the conductor's nonverbal directions when they are performing.
- Restorative Circles were used to resolve conflicts between students in Teacher 1's classes. Teacher 1 shared that, while team-building activities are effective on a regular basis, it is still a very good idea to be able to just stop, form a circle, and share feelings when a conflict arises that could potentially jeopardize the sense of community within a class.

Teacher 2 -- Contributions to the school-wide goal were:

- Holding one-on-one restorative meetings just with the two parties outside in the hall as a modification to the full class model.
- Explicit teaching of language that student/s with language processing disabilities can use to interact with classmate in a conflict-free manner

Teacher 3 -- Contributions to the school-wide goal were implementation of conflict resolution circles.

Teacher 4 -- Contribution to the school-wide goal was:

Teacher 4 developed a plan to teach Restorative Circle language and to practice Restorative Circle interactions with students assigned to lunch detention and afterschool detention. Teacher 4 observed that students who earned detention consequences were the students most in need of additional scaffolding in the use of Restorative Practices. By explicitly teaching Restorative Practices skills in detention, Teacher 4 supported the school-wide success of Restorative Practices and enabled a more constructive use of detention time.

Teacher 5 -- Contribution to the school-wide goal was:

Teacher 5 held Restorative Circles in his classroom during lunch period. He also linked the Restorative Practice concept of repairing harm to the curriculum. For example, he drew a connection to Oprah's "restorative circle" between the Little Rock 9 and their tormentors who appeared together on her show.

Teacher 6 -- Contribution to the school-wide goal was:

Teacher 6 ran Sharing Circles this year. The emphasis was on attentive listening, structured speaking opportunities, and community-building. Teacher 6 did not run conflict-resolution circles this year. Rather, she provided reminders of the correct language to use and the correct actions to take so that students can each contribute toward a strong

classroom community.

Question #4: How will next year's student growth goal build on the student learning that was achieved this year in your classroom?

Teacher 1 -- Expand on the goal related to concert posture by having student do this while singing choral arrangements that are more advanced.

Teacher 2 -- Continue to focus on use of the graphic organizer introduced this year while also having students continue to maintain their skills of using consistent voice and including background information in their writing.

Teacher 3 -- Teach Restorative Circle language and practice implementing circles with some students during "Reflection Period" (lunch detention). This type of scaffold will help those who are more apt to get into conflicts with peers better participate in the Circles and get the most out of them. This goal will be assessed using observational checklists.

Teacher 4 -- Teach organizational strategies to increase students' autonomy while maintaining their same rate of mathematical skill/knowledge development (one grade level increase per year).

Teacher 5 -- Develop 7th grade lessons that did not get his full attention due to this year's focus on the 8th grade curriculum.

Teacher 6 -- Keep the same SGO. She discussed wanting to change her small group structure so that she uses "choice groups" and "ability groups" for centers. By including ability groups, she will make it easier to implement guided reading.

Principal Interview Results

Question#1 : As developer of their summative evaluations, you already know that the six teachers in this project achieved their annual student growth objectives. Is there anything else you can add about their positive impact on student learning at LCCS?

Just to say that we are expected to help the students earn placement at very selective high schools. We have to make sure that our curriculum is one that enables the students to do that. So, we spent a lot of time really trying to develop a curricular focus that is higher level thinking, very integrative learning. Another important aspect is developing leadership skills in our students. I'm sure [Teacher 5] talked to you a little bit about the project he developed. So, with his final capstone project, those kids took what they were learning in that class ...and then they turned around and then did community service in terms of teaching the younger students and the community about what they learned in a very interactive way. I think that is highly responsive to developing students, not only their social emotional intelligences, but also their leadership skills.

So [Teacher 4, Teacher 5, Teacher 6]...all these people. I will say that when I think about each one of them, they very much have a growth mindset -- an "*I have a lot of control if I want to about this*" way of thinking that makes them able to keep at work on things.

Question #2: I know that each teacher has to indicate how they contribute to the school-wide goal, and I learned how these six teachers did that, but how do you measure the effectiveness of

the goal they contributed to? How do you measure the impact of Restorative Practices?

We also look for indicators about the strength of our school community because Restorative Practices is about strengthening community. Student leadership is something we emphasize that can't be separated from Restorative Practices because it's what makes it successful, and we look for evidence that we are developing student leaders. That's why we try to really create a lot of opportunities for students to give us feedback and to develop and create new initiatives at school.

Input from Job Candidates

I use students even when we bring in applicants for hiring. The student leaders ask them questions and they get to ask the student leader questions. We tend to get these candidates. And they all say it's based on meeting these student leaders, and how impressed they are.... how the students were, how they spoke about the school community, how they spoke about their experiences, how they related to each other. So that's one observable.

Increased Acceptance Rate from Selective High Schools

We also know when we get feedback from high schools. Our students are the leaders at their high schools. Without question, LCCS students tend to take leadership roles in the next school that they go to across the board. They are so much so now that, like I've seen certain schools increase their acceptance rate. One of the more selective schools will take more of our students because they are just very certain that our students contribute a great deal to their school community. So, they want more students from our school. So, we're seeing that.

Student Survey Data

In terms of improvement, our students said they'd like some of their classmates to be nicer. They want to feel included by their peers. They really enjoy Restorative Practices, Restorative Circles. And, there should be more culturally responsive things done in our house system than there currently are. So that's from our student data.

Question #3: What feedback do you have for us? What might NJCU do to provide more support/preparation to allow our graduates to have an even stronger impact on student learning?

These folks...they have a lot more self-confidence, and their time as interns definitely contributes to that. They were here for two or three years before they were hired, so being able to be interns for this period of time makes a difference.

I don't think NJCU students [first generation students] sometimes reflect on some of the things that they do that are really remarkable and the fact that they balance so many things.

I don't think people like [Teacher 2 or Teacher 1 or Teacher 4 or Teacher 3] actually appreciate the value of their own experiences. They don't. I don't think they're consciously realizing this, but because they've worked so hard always, that translates into being a very strong and effective teacher because they understand what it means to do that, and why it matters for their students. So they do that for themselves. They model it for the students, and then it shows up in their practice.

Study Findings

Synthesized study data indicate that COE completers employed at the Learning Community Charter School effectively contribute to student learning and successfully apply what they learned in their teacher preparation programs. As teachers in this ethno-racially and socioeconomically diverse school community, the completers in this study engage in professional practices that serve the needs of a broad range of students. Completers' specific contributions include:

- Developing relevant and engaging curriculum;
- Developing curriculum that fosters student leadership
- Developing / implementing instructional practices that enable students of varied abilities to achieve grade-level standards
- Serving as models of a growth-mindset orientation, of persistence, and of a strong work ethic for Learning Community Charter School students' benefit
- Implementing a range of Restorative Practice approaches to positively contribute to the Learning Community Charter School community,

Opportunities for Improvement

- Need to develop experiences that support candidates' ability to develop asset-focused professional self-concepts

Findings of the Spring 2024 Completer Impact on P-12 Student Growth Accreditation Project will be shared with the Learning Community Charter School leadership. It will also be used by COE faculty as a means to inform program improvement and replication of the project in LEAS in which completers teach at multiple sites.

Reference

New Jersey Department of Education (2017). *Guide to the TEACHNJ Act*. New Jersey Department of Education