



**Persistence Preparatory Academy
Charter School**

**2019-20 ACCOUNTABILITY PLAN
PROGRESS REPORT**

Submitted to the SUNY Charter Schools Institute on:

September 15, 2020

By Joelle Formato

833 Michigan Avenue
Buffalo, NY 14203

716-235-1520

2019-20 ACCOUNTABILITY PLAN PROGRESS REPORT

Joelle Formato, Founder & Head of School, prepared this 2019-20 Accountability Progress Report on behalf of the school's board of trustees:

Trustee's Name	Board Position
Daniel Greene	Chair; Governance (chair), Finance, Development, Academic Accountability, Facilities
Amanda Winkelsas	Vice Chair; Governance, Academic Accountability (chair)
Catherine Roberts	Secretary; Governance
Kenneth Newsom	Treasurer; Finance (chair)
Misha Russo	Trustee; Development (chair), Finance
Kevin Celniker	Trustee; Facilities (chair), Finance
Darnell Haywood	Trustee; Development
Shatorah Donovan	Trustee; Governance
Tyler Mekus	Trustee; Facilities
Derrick Parson	Trustee; Academic Accountability
Elisha Tomasello	Trustee; Development
Bobbie Finocchio	Trustee; Academic Accountability
Joelle Formato	Head of School, non-voting member

Joelle Formato has served as the Head of School since September 1, 2017.

SCHOOL OVERVIEW

*Through rigorous academics, high-quality instruction and leadership development, **Persistence Preparatory Academy Charter School** ensures that all K through 8 scholars are firmly on the path to succeed within a four-year college and create positive change within their communities.*

Persistence Preparatory Academy Charter School (Persistence Prep) completed its second year of operation in the 2019-2020 school year, serving 170 scholars in grades K-3. Persistence Prep was born out of the Building Excellent Schools Fellowship. Our Founder and Head of School, Joelle Formato, was a 2016-2017 BES Fellow, and had the opportunity to observe best practices from over 50 high-performing charter schools across the country. Building Excellent Schools is still involved with the school providing coaching, observation and resources to our Head of School and Board of Trustees.

Our mission, shown above, is grounded in our five core beliefs:

1. We believe that high-quality teaching is the key driver of academic achievement.

Persistence Prep fundamentally believes that every classroom must be led by an engaging, highly skilled, strategically supported, and effective teacher. We consider a strong teacher to be the number one factor in ensuring scholar achievement. To guarantee a strong teacher in every classroom, Persistence Prep will focus extensive time and resources into the recruitment, development, and retention of strong teachers. Our school design features **27 days of practice-based professional development, weekly observations and feedback meetings, weekly whole staff professional development and four dedicated data analysis days throughout the year.**

2. We believe that college preparation begins in Kindergarten.

To ensure our scholars can reach ambitious goals and be firmly on the path to the four-year college of their choice, we believe that college preparation must begin on the first day of Kindergarten. This preparation is grounded in our **extended day schedule**, providing scholars with 90 more minutes of instructional time per day than the BPS district. Our school calendar will also be longer by five (5) days. In total, this will provide our scholars with the equivalent of approximately 40 more instructional days each year. This extended time is prioritized as instructional time, with scholars receiving **215 minutes of Literacy and 105 minutes of Math instruction daily.** College will be a consistent part of the language used at Persistence Prep, with **classrooms named after universities, daily college cheers, annual college tours,** etc. We firmly believe in the power of exposing our scholars to the world of opportunities available to them.

3. We believe that a structured, supportive, and joyful school culture, with a focus on leadership development, is foundational.

Persistence Prep firmly believes that school culture is the foundation upon which all else rests. Scholars thrive in structure, and can flourish within a consistent environment in which they know what to expect and what is expected of them. Through implementation of the **Responsive Classroom model**, each classroom promotes **social-emotional learning, structured routines and procedures** to promote efficiency and ensure scholars' physical, emotional, and intellectual

safety. Persistence Prep believes that character and leadership can be developed, and that the school is responsible for playing a key role in this development. Our **core values of Community, Enthusiasm, Respect, Grit, and Justice** will be explicitly taught and reinforced throughout the year through our **Character and Movement block** in our Lower Academy, and through **daily Advisory** in our Middle and Upper Academies. Scholars will also consistently be celebrated for their leadership and growth through **weekly Community Celebrations**.

4. We believe in proactive supports for all learners based upon the purposeful use of assessment and data analysis.

To best educate our scholars, it is imperative that teachers have a constant pulse on what scholars have, and have not yet, mastered. Information will be gained through the purposeful use of both formative and summative assessments. This data will be leveraged to intimately know the strengths and areas for growth for each scholar, and provide them with targeted interventions, supports, and extensions to ensure continued academic achievement and growth. All K-2 classrooms will feature a **two-teacher model** that will allow for increased **small group instruction and daily literacy rotations**. Additionally, our annual calendar features **four dedicated data days** during which our teachers will closely analyze scholar data, allowing them to further target their instruction and meet scholars where they are.

5. We believe that family engagement is vital to scholar achievement.

Persistence Prep acknowledges and welcomes families as key partners in ensuring the academic and character growth of every scholar. This vital relationship will proactively begin to be built before a scholar starts school, through **Home Visits** made by members of the school Leadership Team, and will continue to be cultivated throughout the year through frequent communication and a variety of events including **Family Orientations, Weekly communication, Monthly University Nights, Monthly Coffee Chats and Family Achievement Conferences**. We view familial involvement as an imperative piece of our school, and will develop and maintain strong relationships with our families.

In 2019-2020 we educated 170 scholars, who came to us from all across the City of Buffalo. The demographics of our student population were 90% African American, 3% Hispanic, 6% Multiracial, and 1% white. 87% of our scholars are economically disadvantaged and 10% of them receive Special Education services. We filled open seats throughout the year, welcoming 2 mid-year enrollees over the course of the year.

When we closed our school in March due to COVID-19, we quickly transitioned our instructional program and developed a comprehensive distance learning plan that continued to prioritize direct interaction between teachers and scholars. This plan included Google Classroom sites for each grade level, access to online tools such as iReady, EPIC, and Dreambox, as well as daily live instruction in both ELA and Mathematics. Live instruction was offered at three different times during the day (morning, afternoon and evening) to accommodate various family schedules. Over the course of closure, we had over 1700 individual sign-ons for live instruction. In early May, we sent home an at-home learning kit for each scholar that consisted of core school supplies and math manipulatives needed to participate in daily instruction. Additionally, each staff member had a caseload of 6-8 families with whom they checked in at least twice a week. These check-ins allowed us to disseminate key information, assist with food, technology, etc. and maintain a strong relationship with families during a tumultuous time.

ENROLLMENT SUMMARY

School Enrollment by Grade Level and School Year														
School Year	K	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	Total
2017-18														
2018-19	55	47												102
2019-20	54	58	58											170

GOAL 1: ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS

Goal 1: English Language Arts

Students will be proficient in English Language Arts.

BACKGROUND

In the 2019-2020 school year, Persistence Prep dedicated 215 minutes of instruction daily to a balanced literacy approach. This approach included four small group rotations (reading comprehension/guided reading, direct phonics, independent reading, and word work), Read Aloud, Oral Language (Speaking & Listening Standards), and writing. Scholars were broken into leveled, small groups for the majority of these blocks to ensure all had access to the instruction at the appropriate level. Groups were fluid and adjusted frequently based on updated scholar data. All K-2 classrooms feature a two-teacher model to ensure high-quality instruction in both whole and small group instruction.

METHOD

Persistence Prep utilized the Strategic Teaching & Evaluation of Progress (STEP) assessment to progress monitor reading growth over the course of the year. The STEP assessment is a nationally-normed, research-based assessment out of the University of Chicago that monitors developmental reading growth across the K-3 spectrum. The assessment was intended to be given 4 times throughout the year (October, December, March, June), with teachers engaging in a data analysis and planning day after the conclusion of each round. Due to the COVID-19 closure, the assessment was only given in October and December this school year.

Additionally, Persistence Prep administered the nationally-normed NWEA MAP Assessment in September, January and June. This assessment provided us data on scholar progress across the year and allowed us to compare the progress of our scholars to their peers around the country. The assessment was administered in school in September and January, and offered virtually in June due to the COVID-19 school closure.

RESULTS AND EVALUATION

STEP Assessment

In alignment with the recommendation of the STEP assessment, we set an internal goal for 100% of scholars to grow a minimum of 3 STEP levels over the course of the year, and 50% of scholars to grow more than 3 STEP levels. A growth of 3 STEP levels represents one full year of reading growth. We typically give this assessment 4 times throughout the school year, but were only able to administer it

2019-20 ACCOUNTABILITY PLAN PROGRESS REPORT

twice this year due to COVID-19 closure. The data below illustrates growth at each grade level from the October administration to the December administration. After the December administration, staff participated in a day of deep data analysis to diagnose problems of practice and adjust instruction to better meet student needs. We also brought in our STEP trainer as well as a guided reading consultant to assist with teacher coaching and development. Based on our results from 2018-2019, we expected our largest growth to occur on the March administration, but we were unable to see that pan out.

STEP LEVELS & GROWTH OCTOBER TO DECEMBER BY GRADE LEVEL

KINDERGARTEN					
	BPR	PR	STEP 1	STEP 2	STEP 3
# of scholars	23	14	9	7	0
Percentage	43%	26%	17%	13%	0%
GROWTH					
	DNA	1 Step	2 Steps	3 Steps	
# of scholars	29	13	10	1	
Percentage	55%	25%	19%	2%	

FIRST GRADE							
	BPR	PR	STEP 1	STEP 2	STEP 3	STEP 4	STEP 5
# of scholars	0	2	5	17	21	11	1
Percentage	0%	4%	9%	30%	37%	19%	2%
GROWTH							
	DNA	1 Step	2 Steps	3 Steps			
# of scholars	23	23	11	0			
Percentage	40%	40%	19%	0%			

SECOND GRADE								
	STEP 1	STEP 2	STEP 3	STEP 4	STEP 5	STEP 6	STEP 7	STEP 8
# of scholars	2	1	15	21	11	5	2	1
Percentage	3%	2%	26%	36%	19%	9%	3%	2%
GROWTH								
	DNA	1 Step	2 Steps	3 Steps				
# of scholars	43	12	3	0				
Percentage	74%	21%	5%	0%				

GROWTH OF SCHOLARS RECEIVING RTI READING SERVICES

	0 STEPS	1 STEP	2+ STEPS
KINDER	82% (9)	18% (2)	0% (0)
FIRST	24% (4)	41% (7)	35% (6)
SECOND	50% (5)	40% (4)	10% (1)

2019-20 ACCOUNTABILITY PLAN PROGRESS REPORT

NWEA MAP Assessment

As measured by the NWEA MAP Assessment, 31% of scholars met their projected growth goal in Reading from September to January.

NWEA MAP GROWTH RESULTS: SEPTEMBER TO JANUARY – READING

	BC (K)	HOWARD (K)	CORNELL (1)	UB (1)	CANISIUS (2)	SPELHOUSE (2)
% of students who met or exceeded projected RIT	21%	16%	19%	37%	30%	38%
% of projected growth met	63%	53%	48%	95%	61%	67%
Median conditional growth percentile	17	19	19	26	25	32

We did administer the NWEA MAP assessment virtually in June, but only 40% of scholars were able to complete it due to lack of compatibility on their devices. While we did attempt to control for parent involvement, some families did sign off of Zoom and assisted their child in completing the assessment. Due to this impact, the data is skewed. Of the 40% who did take the Spring Reading assessment, 73% met their growth goal from Fall 2019 to Spring 2020.

ADDITIONAL EVIDENCE

Due to the disruption of our academic year caused by COVID-19, it is difficult to fully compare our 2018-2019 data to our 2019-2020 data. Given the results of our December STEP data and January NWEA MAP data, our reading results were not where we wanted or expected them to be, we worked with our STEP consultant and a Guided Reading trainer (Jamie Brillante from the Uncommon Schools network) in January and February of last year to improve our literacy instruction and analysis/response to student data. While we did not have the opportunity to formally assess on STEP later in the year, we saw significant improvement on formative assessments within the classroom.

As we look towards the 2020-2021 school year, we will continue this focus on literacy improvement through the implementation of the new Insight Humanities curriculum and daily Foundations block as explained in the action plan section below.

ACTION PLAN

TOP LINE ANALYSIS	ACTION ITEMS AND NEXT STEPS	BOARD INVOLVEMENT (IF APPLICABLE)
-------------------	-----------------------------	-----------------------------------

2019-20 ACCOUNTABILITY PLAN PROGRESS REPORT

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Strong growth within various STEP levels, but 1-2 target kept scholars from achieving Largest trend across school- scholars struggle with inferential and critical thinking comprehension questions Significant improvement in developmental spelling- tied to November Academic Challenge & shift in phonics instruction In general, school is stronger at closing gap for scholars below grade level than pushing scholars at or above grade level Scholars not provided enough at bats with character rich texts and in- depth comprehension conversations 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Development & implementation of academic rigor rubric- rolled out in January 2020 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Includes weekly collection of a minimum of 3 data points on a focus skill Use of morning huddles 2 days per week for data analysis with coach (in addition to weekly coaching) Hosting STEP trainer and former Uncommon principal for Guided Reading observations and feedback meetings in January/ early February All 4 LT members pulling additional targeted small groups Special Education teacher stationed in Canisius classroom fulltime- administering additional interventions daily during lit centers Guided Reading lesson plans given to 2nd grade teachers to specifically target group of scholars stuck on STEPs 4 & 5 Working with STEP trainer to identify better/more rich leveled guided reading texts Implementation of a text selection PD for guided reading teachers 	<p>Shift funding internally to account for more focused teacher professional development</p> <p>Potential purchase of a more character rich, leveled guided reading library</p>
---	---	---

In addition to the action steps listed above, we have made two additional shifts in our literacy program for the 2020-2021 school year. The first is the addition of a daily Foundations block that focuses on grade level foundational reading skills for all scholars. This block will be in addition to small group phonics and guided reading groups at each individual scholar's level. We are working with partners at The New Teacher Project (TNTP) through their Good to Great training model to develop the scope & sequence for this block, high leverage instructional activities, observation and feedback, as well as scholar work analysis.

The second major shift in our literacy program is the implementation of the Insight Humanities Curriculum, developed by the Lavinia Group. Prior to our COVID-19 closure, in light of academic results reflection and teacher feedback, our instructional team prioritized the selection and implementation of a consistent ELA curriculum as a priority for the coming school year. We conducted comprehensive research of 5

different curricular programs, and ultimately selected the Insight Humanities program from the Lavinia Group for the following reasons:

- **Strong partner with proven results:** The content and leadership expertise offered by the Lavinia Group makes this curriculum more desirable. The curriculum developers are seasoned urban elementary teachers and leaders with proven strong academic results for students. One of their core areas of focus is teacher intellectual prep which directly aligns with our Year 3 instructional priority. Our teachers and leaders would benefit immensely from the opportunity to partner with such a strong national partner to improve our craft. We know that the quality of teacher in the classroom is the number one factor that will impact the academic outcomes of our scholars and want to continue to invest resources to develop our staff.
- **Academic rigor:** In addition to its cultural relevancy, the curriculum is highly rigorous and aligned to Common Core Standards. There is strong vertical alignment across grade level and integration of subject areas (reading, writing and history) to ensure that scholars build true and lasting background knowledge on a variety of topics. The curriculum also encompasses multiple project opportunities and field trips/field experiences for scholars to put their learning into action in a variety of ways.
- **Focus on Teacher Intellectual Prep:** Each unit is set-up in an easy to digest format with clear objectives, learning targets, core vocabulary and essential knowledge and habits. The units also feature a section for teachers to “Build Their Content Knowledge” with a list of readings, articles, etc. to ensure teachers are fully set-up to teach the content. We will work with our consultants from the Lavinia Group to help teachers develop a process for launching a unit, internalizing a scripted lesson plan, and addressing student misconceptions.
- **Social justice/focus on cultural relevancy:** Now, more than ever before, it is imperative that our instruction is culturally relevant and allows our scholars to see their history and stories represented in our learning. The Insight Humanities team developed this curriculum with this focus in mind, and have encompassed books with protagonists and authors of color, history told from a variety of perspectives, engaging teaching strategies, and frequent opportunities for scholars to demonstrate their learning/ become advocates through project-based learning and presentations.

GOAL 2: MATHEMATICS

Goal 2: Mathematics

Students will be proficient in Mathematics.

BACKGROUND

Persistence Prep’s schedule included 75 minutes of direct Math instruction (including 15 minutes of fluency) and 30 minutes of Cognitively Guided Instruction (CGI) in the 2019-2020 school year. For our direct instruction, we implemented the Everyday Mathematics Curriculum across all grade levels. Our Cognitively Guided Instruction scope and sequence was guided by the book *Children’s Mathematics: Cognitively Guided Instruction* (Carpenter, Fennema, Franke, Levi, Empson 2015). Our CGI blocks allowed scholars dedicated time to engage with varying types of story problems and solve in a way that makes sense to them. This block also featured a mathematical discourse during which scholars were able to explain their thinking to their peers. For the 2019-2020 school year, we worked with an outside consultant, Debra Fuentes, for comprehensive CGI training and support.

METHOD

In addition to regular exit tickets and unit assessments, Persistence Prep utilized the Summary Review assessments provided by Everyday Mathematics (every other unit), as well as the nationally-normed NWEA MAP assessment to track progress across the year. Teachers utilized staff data days and coaching meetings to analyze this data, reflect on instructional practices, and tweak instruction. We also employed a fulltime RtI Mathematics teacher who provided Tier 2 services to approximately 20% of scholars across the year.

RESULTS AND EVALUATION

As measured by the NWEA MAP Assessment, 63% of scholars met their projected growth goal in Math from September to January.

NWEA MAP GROWTH RESULTS: SEPTEMBER TO JANUARY- MATHEMATICS

	BC (K)	HOWARD (K)	CORNELL (1)	UB (1)	CANISIUS (2)	SPELHOUSE (2)
% of students who met or exceeded projected RIT	42%	65%	74%	60%	50%	48%
% of projected growth met	89%	123%	116%	122%	90%	105%
Median conditional growth percentile	33	54	57	71	46	46

We did administer the NWEA MAP assessment virtually in June, but only 46% of scholars were able to complete the math portion due to lack of compatibility on their devices. While we did attempt to control for parent involvement, some families did sign off of Zoom and assisted their child in completing the assessment. Due to this impact, the data is skewed. Of the 46% who did take the Spring Math assessment, 74% met their growth goal.

ADDITIONAL EVIDENCE

Due to the disruption of our academic year caused by COVID-19, it is difficult to fully compare our 2018-2019 data to our 2019-2020 data. Given the results of our January NWEA MAP data, we feel that the implementation of the Everyday Mathematics curriculum positively impacted math performance in all grade levels; results that will continue to improve as teachers develop further expertise of the curriculum and scholar work analysis protocols.

ACTION PLAN

TOP LINE ANALYSIS	ACTION ITEMS AND NEXT STEPS	BOARD INVOLVEMENT (IF APPLICABLE)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Shift in curriculum to Everyday Mathematics has deepened conceptual understanding & has maximized scholar at-bats Positive impact of extending daily Math block to 75 minutes 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Lead teachers in a deep analysis of MAP data (gained access to new materials that further breaks down skills assessed) Implementation of weekly MAP Skills assessments to demonstrate mastery of bite-sized skills Revisit and expand list of scholars receiving Rtl reading services Piloting new Tier 2 Rtl Math curriculum (Bridges) Full staff to complete Number Sense 101 online course through Build Math Minds 	<p>Shift funding internally to account for more focused teacher professional development</p>

GOAL 3: SCIENCE

Goal 3: Science

Students will be proficient in Science.

BACKGROUND

Persistence Prep utilizes the FOSS Curriculum to support our Science instruction. Scholars participated in a daily, 35-minute Science block, as well as experienced Science integration across other content areas.

METHOD

For the 2019-2020 school year, progress in Science was assessed through exit tickets, informal class assessments and unit projects/explorations. As our scholars progress with us, we will utilize the nationally-normed NWEA MAP Science assessment to further assess progress and mastery (beginning in Grade 3).

ACTION PLAN

We will continue to use the FOSS Curriculum and Next Generation Science Standards to guide our Science instruction in the 2020-2021 school year. Our focus this year is on cross-content connections and integrated science instruction, particularly within Mathematics. Additionally, we have added a STEAM enrichment course that all grade levels will take. This course is grounded in the Next Generation Science Standards and will allow for additional application of science knowledge.

GOAL 4: ESSA

The 2019-20 ESSA Goal remains unchanged due to the Covid-19 school closure. The 2019-20 accountability status based on 2018-19 results and can be found by navigating to the school report card available [here](#).

Goal 4: ESSA

The school will remain in good standing according to the state’s ESSA accountability system.

Goal 4: Absolute Measure

Under the state’s ESSA accountability system, the school is in good standing: the state has not identified the school for comprehensive or targeted improvement.

METHOD

Because *all* students are expected to meet the state's performance standards, the federal statute stipulates that various sub-populations and demographic categories of students among all tested students must meet the state standard in and of themselves aside from the overall school results. As New York State, like all states, is required to establish a specific system for making these determinations for its public schools, charter schools do not have latitude in establishing their own performance levels or criteria of success for meeting the ESSA accountability requirements. Each year, the state issues School Report Cards that indicate a school’s status under the state accountability system.

RESULTS AND EVALUATION

Persistence Prep’s Accountability status was determined using a self-assessment process because the school had an insufficient number of continuously enrolled students to assign a Composite Performance.

Accountability Status by Year

Year	Status
2017-18	n/a
2018-19	Good Standing
2019-20	Good Standing

APPENDIX A: OPTIONAL GOALS

Goal 5: Family Satisfaction

Families will demonstrate satisfaction with the academic program and school-to-home communication.

Goal 5: Absolute Measure

- Satisfaction with the academic program, as measured by an annual survey given at the end of each school year, will on average, exceed 85%, with 85% of families responding.
- Satisfaction with the school’s communication, as measured by an annual survey given at the end of each school year, will on average, exceed 85%, with 85% of families responding.

METHOD

We administered the family satisfaction survey at the end of our first trimester in December 2019. At that time, we received 66 unique responses, representing 75 scholars. Surveys were available at each of our Family Achievement Conferences (paper and electronic versions) and were emailed/texted home multiple times to solicit responses. Families who completed the survey were entered into a raffle to win two \$50 gift cards to a local grocery store. We also administered an end of the year survey to gather feedback on our school’s overall response to COVID-19.

RESULTS

The survey results we did receive were overwhelmingly positive, with 90-98% of families responding agree or strongly agree to the presented statements. Families were also able to provide open responses for strengths of the school, reasons they would recommend it to another family, and ways in which the school could improve. A sample of these responses are shown below:

- Great Staff, Clear Communication, Staff Know parents, Love for the Children they educate
- High standards, convenient time frame of school hours, communication methods
- Strong Communication, Great Teacher Student Involvement, Excellent teachers

2019-20 Parent Satisfaction Survey Response Rate (December 2019)

Number of Responses	Number of Families	Response Rate
75	170	44%

2019-20 Parent Satisfaction on Key Survey Results

Item	Percent of Respondents Satisfied
The quality of instruction your scholar receives.	96%
The quality of teachers.	96%
The level of communication from the office staff.	98%

2019-20 ACCOUNTABILITY PLAN PROGRESS REPORT

The level of communication with teachers	90%
Your overall satisfaction with Persistence Prep & the education it is providing your scholar.	97%

2019-20 Parent Satisfaction Survey Response Rate (June 2020- School Response to COVID-19)

Number of Responses	Number of Families	Response Rate
139	168	83%

2019-20 Parent Satisfaction on Key Survey Results

Item	Percent of Respondents Satisfied
Level of satisfaction with PPA's COVID response for your child and family.	95%

Some anecdotal comments/feedback from the COVID-specific survey include:

- Just want to thank the staff for being so amazing! Words can't explain the positive impact that you all have made on my family as well as other families and the community in a whole!
- Love the constant communication and support given throughout this whole pandemic! Wonderful job!
- I am very pleased and proud with persistence prep about the way the handled COVID-19. Especially the fact that they kept in mind that some parent/parents were essential and was very flexible to ALL the parents NEEDS.

Goal 6: Enrollment

Persistence Prep is fully enrolled, with high levels of attendance and re-enrollment.

Goal 6: Absolute Measure

- The school will meet projected enrollment targets, and will maintain at least 90% of the is enrollment over the course of the year.
- Of the students who successfully complete the year, 90% will reenroll for the following year.
- Each year, the school's chronic absenteeism rate will be lower than that of the local district.

2019-20 ACCOUNTABILITY PLAN PROGRESS REPORT

METHOD

Persistence Prep utilizes the SchoolRunner SIS to track daily attendance. Teachers take attendance each morning during breakfast, the Office Manager verifies and updates as tardy scholars arrive and then contacts families of any absent scholars. SchoolRunner provides a daily dashboard of attendance data for analysis. Families for whom attendance was a problem attended a meeting with our Head of School or Dean of Culture to develop an attendance plan. As needed, the Head of School completed a home visit to stress the importance of school attendance.

In the 2019-2020 school year, we increased the number of attendance interventions and have created dynamic groups set up within the Schoolrunner platform that alert us when a scholar has reached a threshold for an attendance intervention. Our attendance team, consisting of our Director of Operations, School Counselor and Head of School, met weekly to analyze attendance data and collaborate on interventions. Prior to the COVID-19 closure, we were seeing improvement in attendance and stronger responses from families to implemented interventions.

At the time of our school closure, we had 44 students (26%) who had accrued more than 12 absences and were on a strict intervention plan with an attendance team member.

RESULTS

Reenrollment

2019-20 Student Retention Rate			
2018-19 Enrollment	Number of Students Who Graduated in 2018-19	Number of Students Who Returned in 2019-20	Retention Rate= 2019-20 Re-enrollment ÷ (2018-19 Enrollment – Graduates)
103	0	100	97%

While this report does not encompass our 2020-2021 school data, we have begun the year with 163 of 168 scholars returning to Persistence Prep, for a continued reenrollment rate of 97%.

Attendance

Over the course of the 2019-2020 school year, Persistence Prep maintained an overall average daily attendance of 93%. Within that, however, we did have a significant number of scholars who were chronically absent. Our chronic absenteeism rate (absent for >10% of total school days) was 27%. While the 2019-2020 chronic absenteeism rate for the Buffalo City School District is not yet available, the 2018-2019 rate was 37.4%, leading us to believe we met our goal of maintaining a lower rate.

Attendance, especially in the landscape of distance learning, remains a key area of focus for our school team.

2019-20 Attendance	
Grade	Average Daily Attendance Rate
K	92%
1	94%
2	93%
3	n/a
4	n/a

2019-20 ACCOUNTABILITY PLAN PROGRESS REPORT

5	n/a
6	n/a
7	n/a
8	n/a
Overall	93%

The table above illustrates grade level attendance rates from August 2019-March 13, 2020, at which time our school closed due to COVID-19. During the period of shutdown, attendance was measured through participation in daily live instruction and completion of written work & other online learning. During that period of time, we had engagement and regular online attendance from approximately 80% of our families.

EVALUATION

While we predict that we did meet our goal of maintaining a rate lower than that of the district, we have flagged improvement in our attendance rate as a continued priority for the 2020-2021 school year, especially given the landscape created by COVID-19. We have secured school-issued devices for all scholars and hot spots for any family needing internet. We continue to provide bus transportation for all families within the Buffalo City School District. We have also updated our attendance policy to allow for viewing of recorded lessons and completion of daily assignments to support families who may have childcare challenges and non-traditional schedules. Our attendance team is beginning the school year with a caseload of 5 families each who have been chronically truant over the last two years. PPA staff members will proactively work with these identified families to develop and implement attendance improvement plans.

ADDITIONAL EVIDENCE

Year	Average Daily Attendance Rate
2017-18	n/a
2018-19	92%
2019-20	93% *up until COVID closure