THE SCHOOL DISTRICT OF PHILADELPHIA
Opportunity Network
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Gateway to College Mid-Year Evaluation
December 6, 2016

Provider: Community College of
Philadelphia
Contract Term: FY 2013-FY 2017
Program Capacity: 125

Site Visit Date: Friday, November 18, 2016- 9:00 a.m.
Child Count Compliance: 100%
Average Daily Attendance & Number of Students Present:
64% (Number of Students Present, N/A) See comments in *School Safety* section

Walkthrough Review Team:
Majeedah Scott, Director, Multiple Pathways
Marcus De Vose, Assistant Director, Transition
Services
Brandon Vaughn, Program Manager, Philadelphia
Youth Network

Program Staff:
Dr. David Thomas, Dean, Access and Community
Engagement
Timeka Ford-Smith, Director, Gateway to College

Domains and Performance Levels:
Programs were rated according to seven domains: Vision for Learning, Family & Community Relationships, School Safety, Positive Environment, High Quality Instruction, Talent Development, and Data. The domains are aligned to the School District's evidence-based "High Performing School Practices" and "Essential Features of Alternative Education Programs", as well as the Pennsylvania Department of Education's Leadership Framework. Each domain includes three to seven components that are individually rated according to three broad performance levels: **Failing**, **Needs Improvement**, and **Proficient**. In general, a **Failing** rating indicates that a program could not demonstrate or did not develop practices identified within a domain component. A **Needs Improvement** rating indicates that overall a program has made some progress or effort toward practices identified within a domain component, but has not sufficiently developed the practice. A rating of **Proficient** indicates that, in general, a program has made adequate progress toward the implementation of practices identified within a domain component.

Comments/ Considerations:
Gateway to College received ratings of **Proficient** in all components within each domain assessed during this mid-year evaluation.

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

Vision for Learning

Gateway to College was rated **Proficient** in all of the five components within this domain: strategy for literacy and numeracy skill-building, retention plan implementation, orientation for new students, family engagement plan, and individual graduation plans.

Gateway to College offers Learning Lab Workshops and Writing Workshops available through the College for any student in need of extra academic support. The program offers intensive skill-building workshops, which last for three days before the semester begins for students. The program administers the Accuplacer diagnostic exam to determine students' skill areas that need academic support. Students are rostered into small group tutoring for Math, English, and Science. The program has mandatory Achievement Lab hours and the Achievement Lab is now classified as a non-credit course.

The Program presented its written retention plan, which includes the use of *MyDegreePath* and Starfish. *MyDegreePath* is implemented to support students' progression from course mapping to degree completion. Starfish is the college's early warning system and is used to monitor student progress and inform needed interventions. The program consistently reviews credit profiles and incorporates faculty academic advising and intervention support from College counselors. Gateway uses their Academic Coordinators as intensive case managers. An Individual Learning Plan is created for each student; Student Success Plans are developed for struggling students and students testing into developmental courses. Each student is assessed to determine personal, academic, and social-emotional needs. Home visits, job visits, and phones calls are made weekly when attendance is an issue. The program holds weekly SAT meetings to review each student's progress and provide ongoing support and needed interventions.

Students attend orientation for a mandatory two days. A major goal of orientation is to ensure that each student has a great new experience. The program has a Gateway Boot Camp and offers College 101 and FYE courses. All students have a one-on-one meeting/interview with the Gateway to College Director.

The program presented its written plan for family engagement, which included communication logs and strategies for maximizing/improving parent and community engagement. Additionally, the following documented activities and outreach efforts were discussed: parents/guardians information session during recruiting; parents/guardians/mentors night; routine parents/guardians outreach by Academic Coordinators; parents/guardians representation on the Gateway Advisory Council; and parent engagement events hosted once each semester.

The program presented individual graduation plans. The individual graduation plans included differentiated strategies such as the use of *MyDegreePath* on *MYCCP* to analyze a student's current roster of credit-bearing courses that also count toward the student's major. The Head Academic Coordinator for the program routinely reviews all credit profiles. Individual graduation plans are developed in conjunction with individual learning plans. Gateway to College provides comprehensive postsecondary bridging, exploration and preparation; however the review team recommends that related practices, including the use of *MyDegreePath*, be incorporated into individual learning plans to develop one comprehensive individual graduation plan for each student.

Family and Community Relationships

Gateway to College was rated **Proficient** in all five components within this domain: parent surveys, parent/community outreach, communication logs, strategy to improve family engagement, and partnerships with employers and postsecondary institutions.

New this year is the Gateway to College internship program. Approximately 25 students have applied for paid internships at companies such as United Bank, St. Christopher's Hospital and the School District's Re-engagement Center. The program is continuously making new connections with organizations where students can gain work experience.

The program presented results from its parent surveys and discussed the impact of that survey results has had on its practices. Results from parent surveys helped the program to develop relevant training topics for parents. Gateway to College presented communication logs in a binder, which were complete, well-organized, and comprehensive. Specific efforts for parent/community outreach include: an open invitation for parents/guardians to attend all Advisory Council meetings; one parent/guardian serves a representative on the Advisory Council; Gateway to College Newsletter and other communications are mailed to parents and the community; and home visits are made for students who are chronically absent.

Gateway to College presented evidence of its numerous partnerships with employers and postsecondary institutions. The program developed dual admissions partnerships with the following postsecondary institutions: Arcadia University, Cabrini College, Cheyney University, Eastern University, Holy Family University Immaculata University, LaSalle University, Peirce College, Rosemont College, Saint Joseph's University, and Temple University. Moreover, the program developed partnerships with the following employers: Comcast, Shoprite, Starbucks, Toyota, University of Pennsylvania Health Systems, and offices/departments within the the Community College of Philadelphia. While the program's partnerships with postsecondary institutions and employers meet the needs of its students, Gateway to College also offers campus visits to other colleges, comprehensive career services, and participation in job fairs. Due to the program's dual enrollment structure and governance, Gateway to College students are enrolled at both the Community College of Philadelphia and the School District of Philadelphia, and they attend classes 100% of the time on the College's campus.

School Safety

Gateway to College was rated **Proficient** in all six components within this domain: average daily attendance, number of students present in classrooms, attendance policy and truancy plan, orderly daily routines, use of Scholarchip with fidelity, and program-wide positive behavior system.

Gateway to College average daily attendance for December 2016 was 64%. Students are required to sign in daily at the Gateway office. The program does not use Scholarchip but has purchased its own attendance tracking system that requires students to swipe in. The program presented its written attendance and truancy plan. Strategies and documented efforts include: communication with faculty; use of the early alert system; daily check-ins that inform attendance; phone calls/text messages/emails made to students; home visits in response to attendance and truancy issues; and student referrals to the SAT Team for interventions. Morning check-in, class transitions, and dismissal were not observed during this visit but were observed weeks prior. The Gateway to College Director checks in with students often via the program's Breakfast Club and conferment with Academic Coordinators.

The program discussed and presented a written plan/system for behavioral expectations, consequences, and incentives/rewards; and implements a program-wide system that includes: adhering to the College's Student Code of Conduct; individual meetings with the program's Director and Dean to discuss behavioral challenges; Gateway-specific rewards/incentives for student recognition such as lunch, gift cards, and newsletter spotlights; and Dean's List recognition for academic performance.

Positive Environment

Gateway to College was rated **Proficient** in all four components of this domain: engagement of students and families in building a positive environment, respectful interactions between staff, students, and families, staff have a good rapport with students, and team building activities for staff and students.

Gateway to College engages students and families in building a positive environment. Gateway to College has instituted monthly activities for its students and parents, including Parent/Mentor Night, Gateway Summit, and Dodgeball. Parents/guardians are invited to serve on the Advisory Council. The Gateway to College Summit (all school meeting) is held during each semester, which allows Academic Coordinators to reach out to parents and students to discuss successes, as well as ongoing challenges and available supports. Gateway to College students have access to the Community College's wide array of student activities and events, all in support of building a positive program environment.

Review team members observed respectful interactions between staff and students. All Gateway to College employees make every effort to create and maintain positive and supportive relationships with all students and their families, as evidenced in the family engagement plan.

In addition to the above-mentioned efforts under the "engagement of students and families in building a positive environment" component, the program also offers: Gateway to College Summit; Gateway to College Annual Peer Learning Conference; weekly staff meetings; and professional developments opportunities available through the Community College.

High Quality Instruction

Gateway to College was rated **Proficient** in all seven components within this domain: students actively engaged in class, early warning system for academic interventions, students enrolled in the courses they need to meet graduation requirements, program has identified students eligible for Keystone Exams, strategies to prepare students for Keystone exams, postsecondary bridging, and postsecondary exploration and preparation.

Review team members observed the Gateway to College Hip Hop Class. The class is offered only to students enrolled in the program, unlike all other classes that students take on campus that educate all Community College of Philadelphia students. The class was already in progress, and 15 students were present in class. The Instructor led and assisted students in a discussion on ethical egoism, utilitarianism, and deontological ethics, within the context of hip hop music and other areas of modern-day American culture. The Instructor utilized various materials to engage students with the content: an LCD projector displayed key concepts for the lesson; video clips were played to spur discussion and help students make connections; and hip hop lyrics were analyzed for meaning and metaphors. The Instructor challenged students to demonstrate understanding, analyze, apply, synthesize, and evaluate multiple information sources.

The program has an ongoing process to identify students who are struggling academically and a system to track student progress. The program's strategies include: use of the College's Office for Student Success Initiatives to provide Gateway to College with an academic early alert report (Starfish) at the 20% and 50% reporting periods; review of student progress in the Odyssey computer-based credit recovery program; on-going check-ins and contact with college faculty to monitor student progress; use of Accuplacer results to assess areas of academic skill deficiencies; and failure notices sent to parents/guardians after midterm exams.

A review of five credit profiles and rosters showed that students are enrolled in the appropriate courses. The program has identified students eligible for the Keystone Exams. Students meet with their Special Education Coordinator in advance of the Keystone Exam to review strategies and skills to ensure success on the exam.

The program presented its written plan for preparing for postsecondary experiences through exploration activities, enhanced preparation and bridging activities. Bridging Plan elements included: dual admissions partnerships with local 4-year institutions; seamless transition and "preferred access" into the Community College upon graduation from the program; and the use of *MyDegreePath* on MYCCP for academic advising and planning. Students enrolled in Senior Seminar use CHOICES planner and College Board's Big Future site to research careers and colleges. In addition, Gateway to College students participate in the Community College of Philadelphia's Majors Fair and Transfer Fair.

Talent Development

Gateway to College was **Proficient** in all seven components within this domain: common planning time for teachers, differentiated staff supports, staff turnover, professional development calendar, staff selection process, new staff induction, and principals conduct regular observations and provide constructive feedback. The calendar/schedule was presented and reflected regular allotment for common planning time. The Gateway to College staff routinely meet together to plan programming, develop student academic interventions, and monitor student progress. College faculty meet routinely throughout the semester within their respective departments

regarding curriculum, program learning outcomes, students' learning outcomes, general education requirements, and core competencies.

The college offers a diverse array of professional development and training opportunities to all staff including face-to-face and online options. Gateway to College uses a performance review process with staff that focuses on areas of performance that need improvement, as well as a plan to address/support improvement. Individual staff meetings occur once per semester to review the status of goals outlined in the performance evaluation.

The program categorized their staff turnover rate as low, crediting the low turnover to the urgency in the services they provide to students. Since 2010, four staff members have left (1 laid off due to budget cuts, 2 transitioned to other opportunities, and 1 relocated).

The program presented its professional development calendar and related documentation. Hiring of staff is conducted through the College's Human Resources Office and the Dean's Office, with input from the Gateway to College Director. Staff induction is facilitated by the Community College's Human Resources Office and includes an extensive review of College benefits and professional development opportunities. All new staff are officially inducted and welcomed by the President each semester during the College's opening week sessions.

Documented efforts to conduct regular observations and provide feedback include: all seminars and morning meetings led by Academic Coordinators and observed by the program's Director, and feedback provided to each Academic Coordinator by the program's Director on the seminar syllabi and course lessons. Annual performance reviews are conducted and documented for all Gateway to College staff. College faculty are subject to regular review by respective Department Heads and/or Deans to ensure rigor of course content and delivery and alignment with student learning outcomes, program learning outcomes, and student satisfaction.

Data

Gateway to College was rated **Proficient** in all four components within this domain: strategy to track student academic progress and provide interventions, system to collect and analyze data, program improvement plans & related data reports and formative and summative assessments.

Gateway to College implements an ongoing process to track student academic progress and the effectiveness of related interventions. The program houses all student information in the Community College's Banner system and the Gateway to College National Network database. The early alert system is used to provide student academic progress data throughout the semester. Gateway to College staff determine needed areas for intervention by routinely conducting a review of student files and course completion. Interventions are determined by program staff, and are implemented and monitored under the direction of the program's Director and the program's Special Education and Interventions Coordinator. There is a College-wide implementation of the Starfish and Civitas student information systems, which allow Gateway staff to document information regarding student case management and SAT meetings. The program has a system to collect and analyze data and uses it consistently to inform practice (Accuplacer, Gateway to College National Evaluations, Starfish, and Civitas).

Gateway to College has a program improvement/strategic plan and monitors progress using data. Annually, the program compiles a year-end report of performance outcomes, which is submitted to the Dean for review, strategic planning and future program enhancement. The program administers formative and summative assessments via implementation of the Accuplacer test and Gateway to College National Evaluations. Course specific assessments are administered to students by College faculty to measure academic success relative to each individual course.