

PATERSON PUBLIC SCHOOLS

Our Children, Our Future



Paterson Public Schools saves over \$2M in one school year using Process Management methodologies

The Paterson Public School System is immersed in a system wide effort to transform itself from a struggling urban district facing enormous challenges to one that is "a leader in educating New Jersey's urban youth." Fundamental to this work is the redesign of essential procedures and processes. The work of APQC to this end has not only helped the district realize significant savings in time and money, but it has contributed to increases in student academic outcomes. I am truly grateful for their assistance."

— Dr. Donnie Evans, Superintendent

Paterson, one of the largest districts in New Jersey, has been under state control since 1991, and like other urban districts across the country, it has experienced a diminished capacity to drastically increase student achievement.

Recognizing that it could only be resolved through multiple strategies identified in its "Bright Futures Transformation Plan," Paterson committed to not only building the capacity of staff in meeting student needs, but also recognized that severe process issues were directly contributing to the lack of support in meeting academic outcomes. Having experienced many past challenges, they are aggressively taking steps to improve their outcomes and processes.

Paterson began their work with APQC by creating a Leadership Council which identifies potential projects and provides a central reporting point for all teams. This effort has continued in the district as projects in new areas have been added to the work.

PATERSON PUBLICS SCHOOLS

- Member of APQC's North Star Community since August, 2011
- 29,000 students
- State takeover in 1991
- 53 Campuses
- 37 Languages spoken

PROJECT HIGHLIGHTS

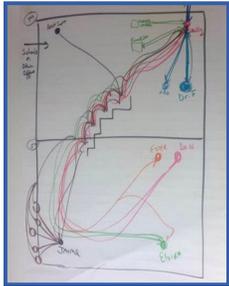
Assessment—The team reviewed and improved the process of sharing and applying assessment data in the district. A process was built to ensure support including a feedback loop to develop the transparency of how teachers and principals were changing their practices based on the assessment results. The new process has created deeper, more meaningful conversations around the use of data in the district.

Benefits Payment Team—The team was able to cut the time for reconciling records and invoices from each benefit provider by 75%, eliminated discrepancies in bills saving \$25,000 per month and led to renegotiating the contract with their intermediary resulting in an additional \$200,000 savings per year.

Payroll—The Payroll Process required too much time and effort spent on building and making changes to payroll each pay period. One problem was that IT systems used in the process were not tied together. Also, the process was very manual using large amounts of paperwork. The team made process changes and an update, tying the two systems together, that saves \$800,000 worth of labor, while also improving reporting and tracking of time.



Hiring—This team focused on shortening the time from a Principal selecting a new teacher till the time the offer letter could be extended. As the team was formed, the current timeline frequently ran to five weeks, leading to the loss of some very qualified people. The team was able to identify in the current process variation and complexity that led to delays. They reduced the process to seven days through communication and tracking. A spaghetti chart of the current sign off process led to automating the current paper process for handling personnel actions to further improve the process. The automation also reduces the labor costs by \$50,000 for this process in addition to improving tracking and monitoring.



Central Registration—Paterson had moved to a Central Registration process for all new Kindergartners in the previous year. Problems included challenges with families waiting up to four months for an appointment, and student records not being completed and delivered to schools before the year began. The team’s new process means no family waits more than two weeks for an appointment, which last 20-30 minutes. 500 more students were registered by mid-June and all documents were completed and sent to the schools prior to each registration appointment. Having demonstrated the capacity of the new process, the team is adding High School registration and scheduling to their plan.

Freshman Choice—Paterson is a High School Choice district. In the previous year, more than a quarter of High School freshman attempted to change their choice of high school after the original selection had been made, leading to complaints and bad feelings in the community. Redesigning the Choice Process created remarkable results: Less than 3% of families chose not to submit their selections ahead of time, and 98% of incoming freshmen were able to secure their first or second choice of High School.

Budgeting—Paterson believed there were potential improvements in the way the district built and administered the budget each year. Difficult decisions needed to be made in tight time frames with imperfect information. The team worked with people across the district to build a stronger way of capturing potential budget impact and costs for other areas of the district. In addition to direct budgeting effects, the new process assists areas in capturing how success will be measured for any initiative up front, so the district can better understand which initiatives provide the best value. The new process enabled discussions on Cabinet goals and budgeting to four months earlier in the cycle this year.

Forced Placement—A team is working to improve the process that ensures teachers who become surplus due to changes in the district, have an avenue to continue to provide value to the district. In addition, the process will ensure that Principals have the staff they need to meet their school’s needs and teachers can address any development needs while waiting to get back in the classroom.

GOING FORWARD WITH APQC

The district as well as state representatives are pleased with the progress to date, and excited about the future work to come. Work continues on some of the projects as they move into action some of their longer term action plans, including more projects for the upcoming school year.

Our ability to continue to make significant academic gains for our students is predicated on our ability to create a high performing, efficient and effective organization. Through our identified projects and leadership from APQC in making “visible” those areas that need improvement, we have a powerful opportunity to become the best and our students to become all that they wish to be.

— Dr. Marguerite Vanden Wyngaard
Deputy Superintendent

