

Paths to College and Career

Paths to Success in Hillsborough County Public Schools



Background

Since 2018–2019, Hillsborough County Public Schools (HCPS) has implemented the *Paths to College and Career* (*Paths*) curriculum in Grades 6, 7, 8 and 10 for use in intensive, developmental, and advanced reading.

HCPS selected *Paths* to help students access complex grade-level text, become proficient writers, and improve their performance on the ELA Florida State Assessment (FSA).

In collaboration with HCPS staff, Public Consulting Group (PCG) experts designed and delivered professional learning and coaching to teachers and literacy coaches focused on implementing the standards, *Paths* curriculum content, and high-quality instructional strategies.

This brief summarizes district-level progress for HCPS and highlights two schools that demonstrated promising results using *Paths*: School A, a middle school, and School B, a high school. Both schools were identified as Achievement Schools¹ and received PCG onsite coaching.

The following presents district- and school-level data on student demographics and the differences in percentage of students scoring proficient or above on the ELA FSA after one year of implementing *Paths*. This brief also offers findings from focus group interviews with faculty and students from School A and School B as well as district administrators.

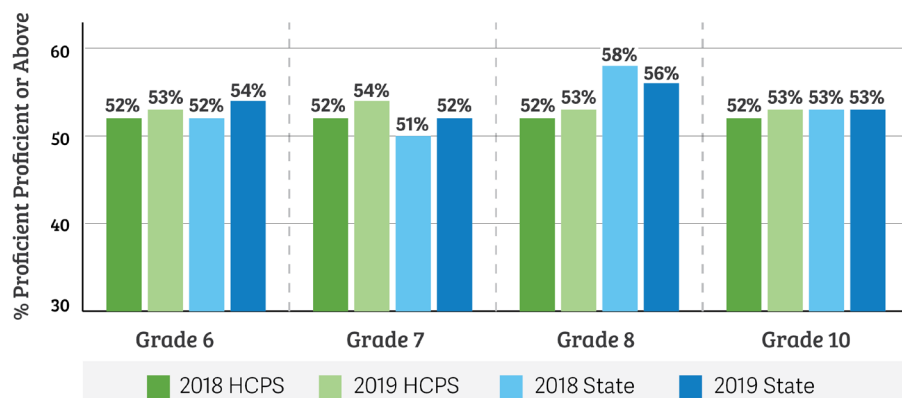
District Outcomes

At the end of the first year of implementation, HCPS demonstrated encouraging results.

Increase in Proficient or Above: The percentage of students scoring proficient or above on the FSA ELA in HCPS increased from baseline in Grades 6, 7, and 10.

Exceeded State-Level Gains: District gains in percent proficient or above exceeded state-level gains in Grades 7 and 10.

**HCPS and State FSA ELA Percent Proficient or Above:
Spring 2018 to Spring 2019**



¹ Achievement Schools are the 50 schools in the district identified based on performance data to receive intensive support and resources with the goal of increasing the number of students performing at or above grade level

PCG Support



76 schools



2 years of support
(2018-2020)



Annual *Paths to College and Career*
Summer Institute



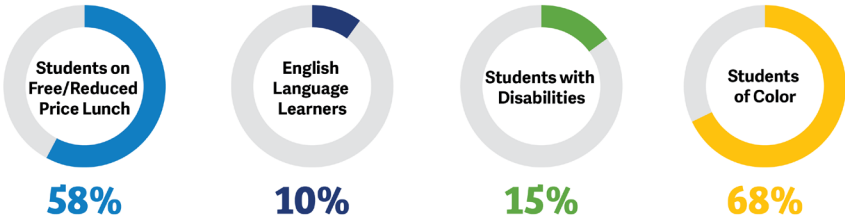
115 job-embedded
coaching days
(2018-2020)



District Demographics

HCPS is the 7th largest school district in the United States, serving more than 206,000 students in Grades Pre-K through 12. The district is racially and economically diverse.

Key Student Groups Served



District Voices

PCG staff conducted focus groups and interviews with administrators, faculty, and students from across HCPS. The majority of respondents confirmed that they would recommend *Paths to College and Career* to other schools. This recommendation was based on positive feedback regarding the impact of using *Paths* and the support they received in their implementation.

Standards-Aligned Instruction: Teachers, literacy coaches, and administrators noted that teacher instruction is increasingly standards-aligned. They also commented that, because *Paths* provides teachers with standards-aligned instructional materials, teachers can focus more on the delivery of instruction instead of searching for materials and planning.

Implementation Support: Teachers and coaches noted that PCG’s in-classroom coaching and professional development were a critical implementation support.

Improvement in Student Outcomes: Administrators, faculty, and students reported positive changes in student outcomes as a result of implementing *Paths*. They noted positive changes in reading, writing, and ability to analyze and cite texts, as well as student engagement in more collaborative activities and marked improvement in communication.

“The curriculum builds [skills] and fills [gaps] at the same time. Students feel that success and they don’t have the stigma of reading third-grade work when they are in eighth grade.”
—*Paths* Teacher

“I really developed skills going deeper in the text. [*Paths*] makes you put more evidence, read the book and go back to the text, and find better information to support [your point].”
—*Paths* Student

“I could see growth from [daily writing assessments]. I could see that students [developed] a focus statement, layering of evidence, and their conclusion that everything built toward. Kids liked seeing [the growth] too – they could see how far they came.”
—HCPS Administrator

Hillsborough County Public Schools

- 206,841 students
- 136 Elementary Schools
- 44 Middle Schools
- 32 High Schools



School A: Middle School Case Study

School A is racially and economically diverse and serves 576 students in Grades 6 through 8. After one year of implementing *Paths*, FSA ELA scores were several percentage points higher in each grade level.

Teacher Perspectives

Teachers provided positive feedback regarding the impact that *Paths* had on their teaching and their student’s progress.

Student Engagement with Complex Texts: According to *Paths* teachers at School A, students have enthusiastically engaged with complex texts to an extent that they had not previously observed.

Students Doing the Cognitive Work of the Lesson: Students were asked to make their thinking visible in response to daily writing assignments, which included citing sufficient and relevant textual evidence.

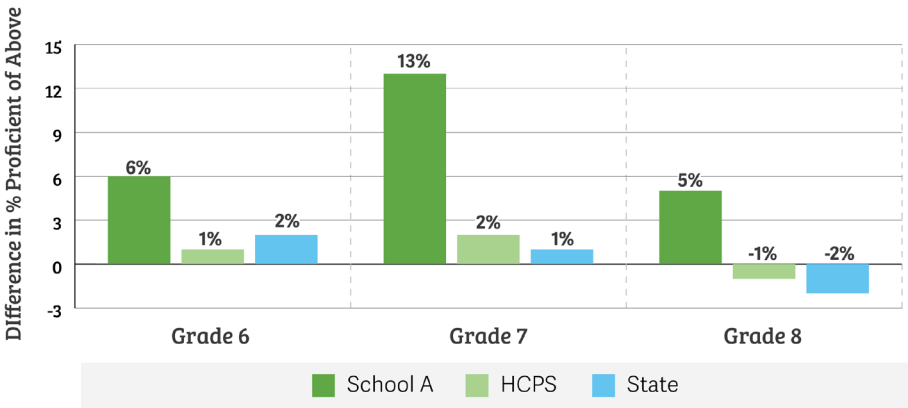
School A Results

An analysis of the FSA ELA results from School A presents promising findings.

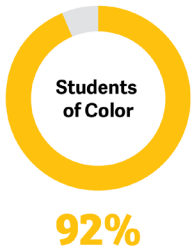
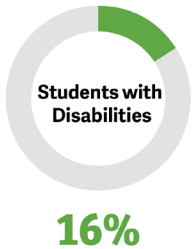
Exceeding District- and State-Level Gains: School-level gains exceeded district and state-level gains in the percentage of students scoring proficient or above on the FSA ELA for Grades 6, 7, and 8:

- Grade 6 scores increased 6 percentage points from baseline;
- Grade 7 scores improved 13 percentage points from baseline; and
- Grade 8 scores rose 5 percentage points from baseline. During the same period, Grade 8 performance on the FSA ELA declined at the district and state-level.

School A, HCPS, and State FSA ELA Difference in Percent Proficient or Above from Spring 2018 to Spring 2019: Grade 6, Grade 7, and Grade 8



Key Student Groups Served



“This is the first curriculum that I used that allows my students to read and interact with a wide genre of grade level text in the form of novels (fiction and non-fiction).”

–HCPS Administrator

“Students who had no interest in reading do not want to stop reading when the classes end.”

–School A Teacher



School B: High School Case Study

School B is racially and economically diverse and serves more than sixteen-hundred students across Grades 9 through 12. At baseline, twenty-eight percent of School B’s 10th grade students earned a 3 or higher on the FSA ELA. After a year of implementing *Paths*, the percentage of students scoring proficient or above on the assessment rose several percentage points.

Teacher Perspectives

Teachers from across the school offered positive feedback regarding the impact *Paths* had on their teaching and on student’s results.

Improved Student Performance in Reading and Writing: Teachers observed marked improvements in their students’ engagement with grade-level texts and the writing process. Specifically, teachers commented on their students’ ability to engage with multiple texts, identify information that supports their argument in a writing assignment, and cite quality evidence in their written work.

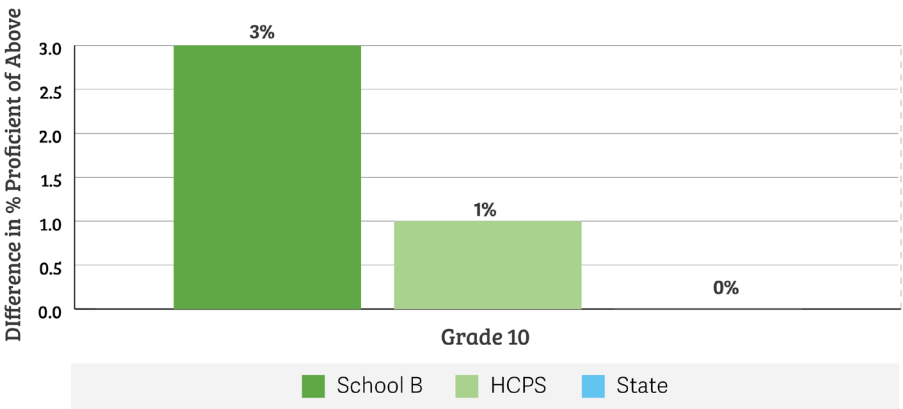
Improved Performance on Standards-Aligned Assessments: Teachers noted that *Paths* helped improve their students’ performance on standards-aligned assessments. For example, *Paths* teachers at School B observed that students’ scores on the most recent assessment increased when compared to student performance on the previous exam. Teachers also commented that they noticed improvements on student performance on *Paths* assessments and learning checks over the course of each unit of study.

School B Results

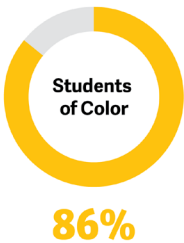
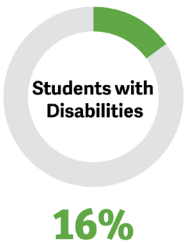
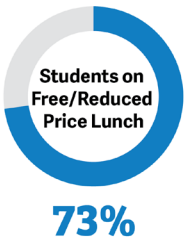
There are positive trends in School B’s 10th grade FSA ELA performance data.

Exceeding District- and State-Level Gains: School-level gains exceeded district and state-level gains for the percentage of students scoring proficient or above on the FSA ELA in Grade 10.

School B, HCPS, and State FSA ELA Difference in Percent Proficient or Above from Spring 2018 to Spring 2019: Grade 10



Key Student Groups Served



“I have seen growth (significant growth in some) in my student’s reading skills. Students [are] more at ease with the reading and writing process.”

–School B Teacher

“The curriculum is closely aligned to the standards, appropriately rigorous, and connects the reading and writing process.”

–School B Teacher

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