



June 12, 2015 | VOLUME 18 | ISSUE 13

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Every Child Needs A Champion

PS 24 Principal Develops New Professional Learning Methods

When Superintendent of Schools Dr. Marcia V. Lyles opened the August 2014 Administrators' Symposium with the acclaimed TED Talk by Rita Pierson entitled "Every Child Needs A Champion," Principal Rosalyn Barnes was moved by the message and began her quest to build teacher-champions for her 936 students at Chaplain Charles J. Watters PS 24.

Principal Barnes had previously implemented professional learning communities (PLCs) in her school, but, with a renewed sense of passion, she streamlined the school's efforts and adopted a more systemic approach to strengthening the capacity of her teachers to improve student achievement. As she engaged her staff in the review of both student and teacher data, it became apparent there were challenges in three key areas of instruction: engaging students, quality of questions, and meeting the needs of learners through differentiation. With guidance and assistance from Dr. Rosetta Wilson, Executive Director of the Leadership Institute, Principal Barnes moved toward addressing these deficits by engaging her staff in a 4-month cycle of professional learning that included collaborative study groups, administrative and peer modeling, targeted-actionable feedback, and constructed reflection.

Using Doug Lemov's "Teach Like a Champion" as a resource, Principal Barnes and her administrative team agreed upon and presented four high-impact techniques from his book to staff: No Opt Out, Cold Call, Right is Right, and Stretch It. These techniques were presented to staff with the expectation that they would later adopt them into their practice—but not until they engaged in a collaborative learning experience. As a school, they defined what these techniques would look like for students, staff, administrators, and parents. Over a four-week period, administrators and teachers engaged in a study of each technique during their morning PLCs. As they rotated through the techniques, teachers created bulletin boards and began to apply the techniques in their classroom. Teachers received constructive feedback from their administrators and peers relative to implementing the techniques in their classrooms. Teachers worked together to create a model

classroom for each technique, as well as across teams to ensure students had a sound understanding of each technique.

After just four months of studying and applying the techniques, student achievement improved as much as 30% in all classrooms, from the first to the second quarter benchmark assessments. In celebration of their great accomplishments, Principal Barnes and her Assistant Principals, Mr. Stellato and Ms. Shoieb, worked with the Student Council and Coding Team to host the Chaplain Charles J. Watters Champions' Ball. On May 7, 2015, staff and students donned their best After-5 attire, and teachers and teaching assistants were honored for their success. Students made medallions for their teachers and decorated the gym. Principal Barnes acknowledged the staffs' hard work and highlighted teachers who had model classrooms for each technique and deemed them MVPs.

It was an awesome event. Teachers were celebrated for their collective effort and the hard work they do for children. The program ended with a touching video tribute created by the school's Coding Team, which highlighted student voices of appreciation for their teachers. Students expressed why their teachers were champions and spoke about things they wished their teachers knew about them. Tears flowed as staff was surprised and amazed to hear students articulate their gratitude and express their desire to be challenged with more rigorous content and innovative practices.

PS 39 DISPLAYS APPRECIATION FOR ARCHITECTURE

In April, Mr. Keating's 8th grade math class had students working with partners to relate their study of geometry to architecture. The students selected a building of structure & identified its geometric shapes and properties. Students also wrote a brief description of the structure and its history. The structures included: The White House, The Sears Tower, The Chrysler Building, The World Trade Center, The Parthenon, The Empire State Building, The Eiffel Tower, The Leaning Tower of Pisa, The Taj Mahal, The Freedom Tower, The Taipei Building, The London Tower, and Big Ben.



Mr. Keating's 8th grade class at PS 39 show off their projects.

MCNAIR STUDENTS WIN ESSAY COMPETITIONS

Two McNair Academic students penned winning essays in March for Women's History Month. Junior Rhanika Kamel and senior Kashaf Doha both earned accolades for pieces they wrote that celebrate the lives of pioneering women. Ms. Kamel was named winner of Jersey City's Real Women Essay Contest for an essay she wrote about activist, diplomat and former First Lady, Eleanor Roosevelt. Ms. Doha chose to write about a contemporary female writer from our very own Jersey City, Kamala Khan. Khan has gained national recognition for her comic book series, Ms. Marvel; her title character is the first Muslim character to headline a comic



Junior Rhanika Kamel and Senior Kashaf Doha.

book series. Kashaf wrote about Khan for the nineteenth annual high school essay contest celebrating Women's History Month, sponsored by the Elizabeth Ann Seton Center for Women's Studies at Seton Hall University. Miss Doha was awarded an Honorable Mention prize in the contest and attended the Women's and Gender Studies Conference luncheon at the university.

PS 23 SOCCER TEAM ATTENDS PRO SOCCER EVENT

Coach Eric Black and the 8th graders of his Mahatma K. Gandhi PS 23's intramural soccer team attended the New York Red Bulls' soccer match along with teacher chaperones Mark Florio, Meghan Kearns, and Gabe Ursic. The Red Bulls beat San Jose 2-nil, but the excitement went beyond watching the actual match. The 16 eighth grade students, along with high school mentors Brandon Gomez and Darlene Holmes of Dickinson High School (both alumni of PS 23), competed in the seven skills challenges set up outside the stadium, from juggling, dribbling, Xbox FIFA, 3 vs. 3 tournament, etc. It was a beautiful spring evening to watch live soccer, and a great experience for the students.



Coach Eric Black and his PS 23 soccer team at Red Bulls Stadium in Newark.

PS 39 STUDENTS CELEBRATE EARTH DAY

Dr. Charles P. DeFuccio PS 39's Class of 2015 launched their Earth Day 2015 project, "Panthers in the 'Pawking' Lot," last month by beautifying their school grounds. A box of discarded Easter plants - lilies, daffodils, hyacinths and tulips - were planted in the parking lot. The plants are perennials, so they will bloom spring after spring, a legacy of the Class of 2015! Special thanks to Ms. Bass, science teacher, for her support, and Samantha Moore for helping with obtaining the tools for cleaning and gardening of the lot.



PS 39 students work to beautify their school grounds in honor of Earth Day.

PS 25 PARTICIPATES IN HUDSON TMA CHALLENGE

Students at Nicolaus Copernicus PS 25 participated in the Golden Sneaker Contest sponsored by the Hudson TMA (Transportation Management Association).

The Hudson TMA provided pedometers for

students to carry with them to record the number of steps walked during one 24-hour period. Teachers assigned the students who would record their steps. Participants were rotated until every student got to compete. Teachers recorded the data each morning and calculated the number of steps his/her students walked on a log sheet.

Principal Ms. Pistilli and the Hudson TMA held an assembly to award the winners. The 1st place winner received a Golden Sneaker Trophy. The 2nd and 3rd place winners received Honorary Certificates.



PS 25 second and third grade students pose with the Hudson TMA Golden Sneaker Trophy.

The winners for the 2015 Golden Sneaker Contest were:

- 1st Place - Ms. Elder's Third Grade Class (291,428 Steps - Totaling 137.99 miles)
- 2nd Place - Ms. Cerreta's Second Grade Class (247,538 Steps - Totaling 117.21 miles)
- 3rd Place - Ms. Wallace & Ms. Sorrentino's Third Grade Class (178,971 Steps - Totaling 84.74 miles)

[Learn more about Hudson TMA](#)



APRIL ATTENDANCE WINNER!

PS 28 has earned best attendance for the month of April with a 96.5% attendance rate. Congratulations!

IMPORTANT UPCOMING DATES

- **6/17** - Board of Education Caucus, CO, 6 p.m.
- **6/18** - 4-hour session for schools, 12:45 p.m. dismissal
- **6/18** - Board of Education meeting, PS 11, 6 p.m.
- **6/19** - Last Day of School, 4-hour session for schools, 12:45 p.m. dismissal

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