

Paul Robeson Charter School for the Humanities, Mercer County



The New Jersey Department of Education (NJDOE) Lighthouse District Initiative recognizes districts that have demonstrated measurable progress across diverse groups of learners. The NJDOE is proud to welcome the Paul Robeson Charter School for the Humanities to the second cohort of Lighthouse Districts.

Paul Robeson Charter School for the Humanities' mission is to provide a personalized education that challenges, inspires and prepares students to passionately pursue their dreams and lead a life of active civic engagement. In 2016, the school went through the state renewal process and engaged in a comprehensive strategic planning process leading to changes in their overall mission, vision and academic program. The academic growth they have shown over the past few years correlates with other areas of improvement, such as staff development and school climate and culture.

Paul Robeson Charter delivers effective instructional practices by emphasizing foundational skills, rigor and multiple instructional approaches. They adjust their mode of instruction to meet the needs of their students. They have used whole group direct instruction and small group class participation to ensure that all students can participate in learning activities. They use technology tools to provide individual learning for students.

Individualized learning is crucial to the student framework for Paul Robeson Charter. All materials are student-facing, and all exit tasks and/or independent work is teacher-created. This ensures that the educators have done the same thinking that is being asked of the students. These practices have been made possible by the enormous support given to the educators by administration in the form of professional development.

Staff development is a priority for the school which is evident in their high teacher retention rates. School administrators engage teachers with in-house professional learning opportunities and allow them to find relevant professional development opportunities outside of the district. During the 2018-19 school year, the school's common theme was "writing across the curriculum." The district supported this theme by providing appropriate reference books and professional development to enhance practice.

With a system of writing portfolios, students write a piece for each of their classes, including electives, each quarter of the school year. These portfolios are graded with a school-wide rubric to evaluate the writing and ensures that students are easily able to compare their writing and identify their strengths as well as areas that require improvement. This practice is supplemented by professional development for all staff that focuses on the best practices for writing and in-class discussion. While the writing portfolios are reviewed each quarter, student work is reviewed in weekly or bi-weekly coaching meetings.

Paul Robeson Charter's student meetings will often highlight some of the foundational skills from the previous year's learning that still need to be reinforced. The findings from these meetings prompted administration to start the school's intervention program. This program ensures that every day of the week has an intervention block for students to focus on reading or math, which greatly reflects how important each student's success is to Paul Robeson Charter School.

Personalized, wraparound supports for all students and a welcoming environment are hallmarks of the school and just two of the reasons why Paul Robeson can retain such strong educators year after year.

Paul Robeson Charter Demographic Information

Grades Served: 4 to 8

Total Enrollment: 376

Economically Disadvantaged:
95.2%

Students with Disabilities: 10.1%

English Learners: 15.7%

Ask Paul Robeson Charter to Share Their Story

- 1) Individualized learning
- 2) Professional development opportunities for staff
- 3) Intervention Program
- 4) Writing-focused curriculum
- 5) Student-focused lesson planning
- 6) Small group instruction

Contact Information

School Director Freya Lund

flund@paulrobesoncs.org

609-394-7727