

NC ACCESS BEST PRACTICES



Office of Charter Schools
NC ACCESS PROGRAM
NC Department of Public Instruction

School Culture

Academic Support

Bring in the Super Tutors

Implementation Description

With 95% of their student population being Educationally Disadvantaged (ED), Next Generation Academy (NGA) of Greensboro, NC is willing to go the extra mile for their students. Therefore, they implemented an Academic Coaching program in 2019-2020 to increase the amount of small group instruction and individualized attention each student received, which studies have shown are effective strategies in addressing learning disparities (Kosanovich, et al, N.d.). School leadership used their extensive professional network to locate and hire 14 highly qualified retired teachers to provide excellent student support as Academic Coaches. These coaches have a combined experience of about 400 years in education and are affectionately known at NGA as Super Tutors. Depending on their personal availability, each Academic Coach tutored an average of 20 hours per week at NGA. Their initial wages were provided by available NC ACCESS funding, but the school plans to prioritize this program by including it in their operational budget moving forward.

Two to three Academic Coaches were fluidly paired with lead teachers, depending on the need of each class and the coaches' availability. Each Super Tutor provided targeted, direct instruction to support students' mastery of Math and ELA, subject areas that have been shown to influence "*later school and career success*" (Purpura, Litkowski, & Knopik, 2019). Monday through Thursday, rotating, small groups of students met with coaches during instructional blocks within the regularly scheduled school day. Research has shown that "*tutoring interventions that are conducted during the school day tend to result in greater learning gains than those that are after-school or during the summer*" (Robinson, et al, 2021). Friday schedules were more flexible and allocated time for coaches to meet with small groups or individuals who demonstrated a need for a high

About This School

Next Generation Academy

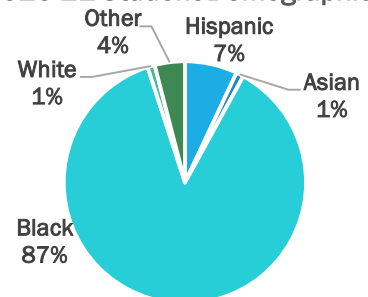
Next Generation Academy is Greensboro's most innovative charter school, offering a stimulating curriculum and a supportive environment to ensure students experience success every day. Next Generation emphasizes personalized learning, a student-centered approach that allows the student to drive their learning, to improve student achievement.

Year School Opened: 2018-19

Grant Awarded: 2020-21

Initial Grade Levels Served: K-4

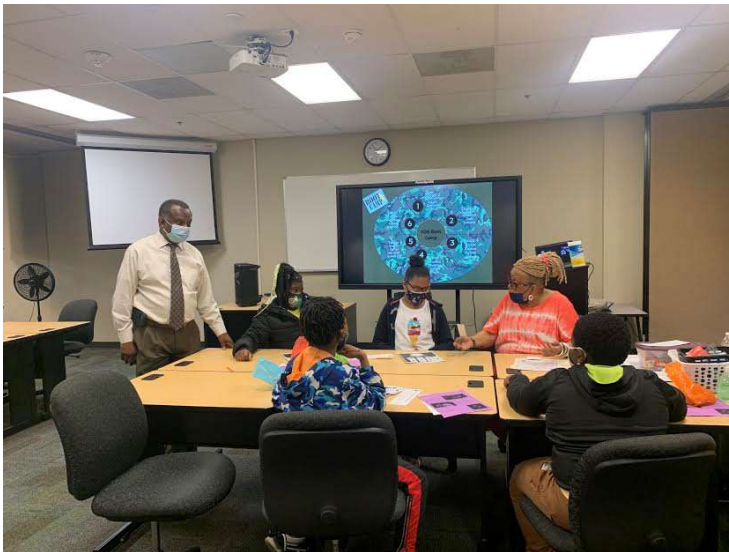
2020-21 Student Demographics



% ED Student Population: 95%

Urbanicity: Urban / Greensboro, NC

Persons in Poverty (Guilford County)⁴: 16.0%



level of support. Soon after the allocated time for coaches to meet with small groups or individuals who demonstrated a need for a high level of support. Soon after the program's conception, COVID-19 safety guidelines changed education overnight, and school leadership had little opportunity to provide Professional Development (PD) for Academic Coaches. Coaches were included in lead teachers' Professional Learning Communities (PLC) to discuss learning goals and identify student needs. The school's technical support team and other tech savvy staff members assisted the coaches with effective virtual instruction as needed. Through the duration of virtual learning, Academic Coaches met with small groups

during Math and ELA blocks in Zoom Break-Out Rooms. In spring 2021, 80% of students returned to school, and coaches tutored those students in-person, while still supporting the 20% of students who continued their education virtually.

Results

As a result of the Academic Coaching program, NGA saw a 7% increase in iReady ELA scores between March and May. They have not yet closed the gap with students' math scores, and consequently have decided to continue Academic Coaching in 2021-22.

Challenges

School leadership was unable to provide PD to Academic Coaches due to COVID-19's challenges. However, the administration intentionally selected highly experienced candidates who would not need much direction in order to be successful with students. Lead teachers and technical services team members supported coaches through the transition to virtual learning.

Future Modifications

School leadership is in the process of modifying the schedule to create an effective system for pairing coaches with teachers. They hope the scheduling changes will provide more consistency for the program, resulting in increased academic growth. The Academic Coaches will be supporting students' needs and addressing learning loss due to COVID in fall 2021.

Additionally, NGA plans to begin including Academic Coaches in their future PD sessions. Coaches will be included in PD in order to ensure that teachers and coaches have a common understanding of the expectations of students as well as strategies that could be used to support student needs.

Critical Components

Getting Started

The NGA administration's existing educator network proved successful in finding quality veteran educators to become Academic Coaches. School leaders without as many connections to veteran teachers could post job openings and conduct interviews for coaches, just as they would for lead teachers.

Ongoing Supports

School leadership plans to seek out PD opportunities and additional funding for sustainable wages to be able to support their Academic Coaches both professionally and financially moving forward.

Equity Connections

Research has shown that "*disadvantaged students...benefit the most from collaborative experiences*" such as small group instruction (Barshay, 2018). NGA provided daily opportunities for small group instruction, as well as individualized attention, by hiring Academic Coaches for every classroom.

Research

1. Barshay, J. (September 24, 2018). "Working in a group might be the best way to help kids meet individual goals, study says". The Hechinger Report. Accessed on June 10, 2021. Retrieved from <https://hechingerreport.org/working-in-a-group-might-be-the-best-way-to-help-kids-meet-individual-goals-study-says/>
2. Kosanovich, M., Ladinsky, K., Nelson, L., & Torgesen, J. (N.d.) "Differentiated Reading Instruction: Small Group Alternative Lesson Structures for All Students". Florida Center for Reading Research. Accessed on June 9, 2021. Retrieved from <https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/ED498777.pdf>
3. Purpura, D.J., Litkowski, E.C., & Knopik, V. (March 8, 2019). "Mathematics and Reading Develop Together in Young Children: Practical and Policy Considerations". SAGE Journals. Accessed June 10, 2021. Retrieved from <https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/full/10.1177/2372732218815923>
4. United States Census Bureau, Quick Facts North Carolina, Retrieved from <https://www.census.gov/quickfacts/fact/table/NC/PST045219>