

Raising the Bar: How Coaching and Curriculum Tools Are Shaping School Success



Location: Newark, NJ
Number of Students: 3,800
Number of Schools: 5

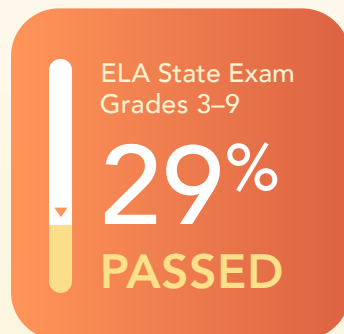
In a district where high schools face some of the most deeply rooted challenges—chronic absenteeism, high suspension rates, and a long history of underperformance—progress can be hard-won. Newark Public Schools partnered with Lavinia Group, a K12 Coalition company, to invest in long-term instructional improvement across five of its most under-resourced campuses. Together, we focused on building strong systems, consistent coaching, and clear expectations—laying the groundwork for growth that is beginning to take root.

The result: Leadership alignment strengthened across five campuses, school-wide Algebra proficiency more than doubled, and all schools achieved Middle States Accreditation.



Challenge

Newark's high schools had struggled for years with stagnant or declining student performance. State assessment data revealed:



- Just 29% of students in grades 3-9 passed the ELA state exam in 2023, down from 36% in 2019.
- Many students lacked access to grade-level content due to an overly simplified ELA curriculum.
- Professional development was fragmented and inconsistent, leaving both teachers and instructional leaders underprepared to drive rigorous, responsive instruction.

The district sought a partner who could help align efforts across leadership and teaching teams—particularly in STEM, ELA, and SPED—and create systems that would move the needle in some of the city's most marginalized learning environments.

Solution

Through a comprehensive, collaborative partnership, we worked alongside district and school leaders to implement targeted supports:

Instructional Coaching & PD

- Delivered content-specific coaching to STEM and Humanities teachers, including SPED educators.
- Modeled lessons and co-taught to set a clear vision for high-quality instruction.



Leadership Support

- Provided job-embedded PD and coaching to principals, VPs, department chairs, and coaches.
- Supported the development of observation and feedback systems that promoted instructional accountability.

Systemic Alignment

- Co-created instructional management tools, including academic schedules, PLC agendas, PD calendars, and exam readiness strategies for cusp students.
- Helped school teams implement intellectual prep, student work analysis, and responsive instructional planning.

"Lavinia's expertise and dedication have led to a notable improvement in instruction quality. Through independent conferencing, modeling best practices, and reconstructing lesson plans tailored to meet the needs of our students with special needs, the quality of instruction has significantly improved. And the impact has extended beyond Special Education, influencing a movement among Department Chairs and Vice Principals towards collaborative efforts and best practices. Their dedication, passion, and expertise have been instrumental in our collective success, and their support is greatly appreciated."

CHABWERA PHILIPS
Department Chair, Special Education, Weequahic High School



Results

Even with ongoing challenges like absenteeism and uneven instructional quality, the partnership showed early signs of momentum:

- All five participating schools earned Middle States Accreditation.
- Math and ELA growth on NJ State Exams outperformed the district growth at all 5 schools in the supported grade levels.
- At West Side High School, deeper instructional planning and coaching led to measurable improvements on classwork and internal assessments:
 - Algebra 1 proficiency rose from 35% to 76%
 - Algebra 2 grew from 43% to 82% after targeted intervention

West Side High School

Algebra 1 Proficiency

↑ 41 % UP

Algebra 2 Proficiency

↑ 39 % UP

Across all sites:



School leaders reported stronger alignment around instructional priorities.



Coaching helped teachers build confidence, clarity, and consistency in lesson execution.



100% of school leaders agreed or strongly agreed they received helpful resources.



100% agreed the professional development was engaging and interactive.

These outcomes signal a strong foundation and a lasting shift in instructional culture.

Learn more at: k12coalition.com



Success Factors



High-Impact Coaching That Shifted Practice

Observation cycles, student work analysis, and co-planning helped teachers reflect on and elevate their instructional delivery.



PLC Routines That Supported Real-Time Instructional Adjustment

Professional learning communities were restructured to drive more targeted conversations and shared learning among educators.



Modeling and Clarity in Instruction

By seeing high-quality instruction in action through co-teaching and modeled lessons, teachers gained a practical blueprint for rigor and responsiveness.



Leadership Alignment and Systems Thinking

Together, school leaders and our consultants co-developed systems that made instructional improvement part of the school's day-to-day rhythm.

Learn More

Discover how K12 Coalition can help your school or district achieve measurable growth. Whether you're looking to improve instruction, build leadership capacity, or align curriculum, our team partners with educators to drive lasting results.

Visit k12coalition.com to explore our services or contact us to start a conversation.

