

Eskolta Network Insights: A snapshot of the underserved students in your school

Sample Transfer School

March 2021

In New York City, over 100,000 students are underserved. These are a vibrant, dedicated group of learners: students who bear the weight of many inequitable systems, youth of color, immigrant youth, youth waylaid by homelessness, unsupported through mental illness, or pushed into the job market to support siblings. Serving them – as Transfer Schools do – provides redress to our systems' failures and goes to the very heart of public education.

This report examines the prior experiences and progress of students enrolled in Sample Transfer School in 2018-19, as well as highlighting key areas for effectively supporting them. We hope the data will serve as a companion to insights your team is gathering from students and in classrooms, and as a spark for further inquiry.

Throughout this report, we define “underserved” students as those who have experienced two or more early warning indicators predictive of not being on track for graduation: 9th grade course failure, low credit accumulation or attendance, suspension, multiple state test failures, multiple transfers to new schools. **At Sample Transfer School, 83% of students met this definition in 2018-19, compared to 73% across Transfer Schools and 34% citywide.**

As you read, remember this data tells only a limited story. Underserved students are impossibly diverse, defined best, not by any number, but by the fact that they are persistent, determined, restless and creative minds who have faced obstacles and yet are still engaged and progressing towards graduation.

As you read, consider jotting down the following...

- 1. Moments of pride.** Is there data here you want to trumpet? Can you pause to connect it to concrete structures in your building? What are the attributes contributing to this success? How can they be drawn out or replicated?
- 2. Moments of surprise.** Is there data here that does not fit your conception of your school? What context do you want to bring? Are there places that you crave more information? How can you get that information?
- 3. Moments for support.** Is there data here that raises questions for you? How can you be supported by the larger Eskolta Network community? After reading, what is one question you would ask other teams in the Eskolta Network to improve your impact?

Bright spots. Compared to other Transfer Schools, Sample Transfer School stood out on the following outcomes.

a) 61% of 1st year students at your school showed an increase in GPA of 0.5pts or more over GPA prior to transfer, compared to 38% on average in other transfer schools.

b) 47% of Latinx students at your school showed an increase in GPA of 0.5pts or more over GPA prior to transfer, compared to 28% on average in other transfer schools.

Areas for further inquiry. These outcomes might be areas for your team to focus on in the future.

a) 84% of parents who responded to the School Survey responded positively on item 1a. School staff regularly communicate with me about how I can help my child learn. This compared to 95% on average in other transfer schools.

b) 88% of parents who responded to the School Survey responded positively on item 1h. Staff at this school work hard to build trusting relationships with parents/guardians like me. This compared to 97% on average in other transfer schools.

Think about: What policies, practices and procedures are in place in your school that others might learn from? What goals do you have for the ways you support underserved students to make progress towards graduation?

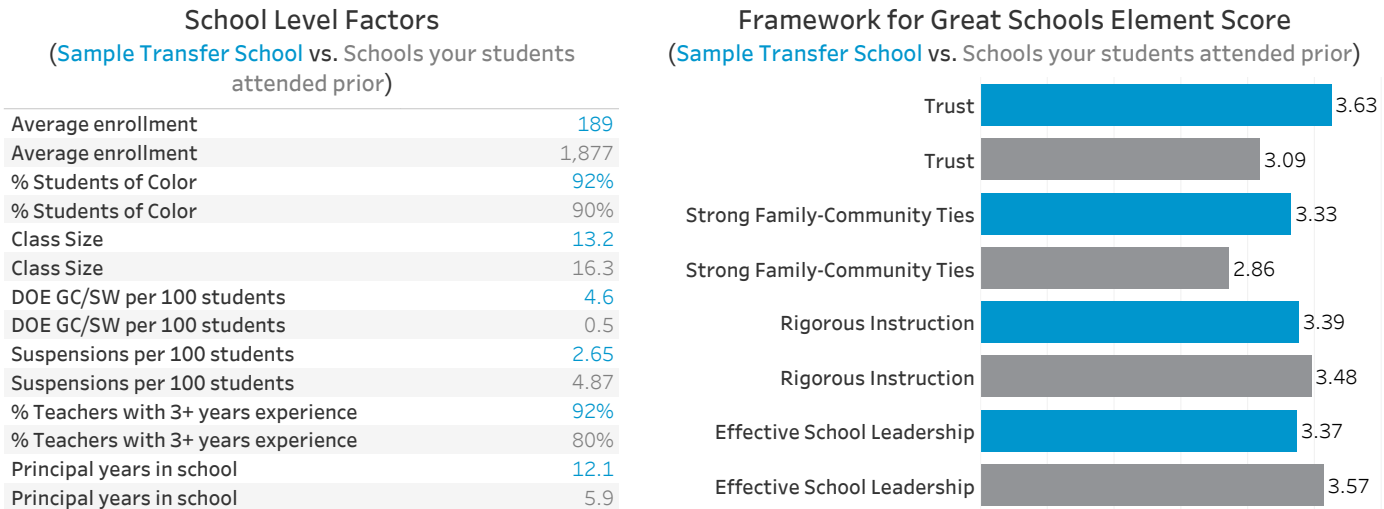
Persisting in the face of systemic challenges

“I personally felt like my [prior] school wasn’t giving me what I needed to get to my goal. I was constantly being put down by staff and teachers . . . I wasn’t motivated to do anything at all . . . and it felt as if no one cared.”

—Transfer School Student, *And Still They Rise*

Transfer School students find their education disrupted for reasons ranging from self-empowerment to selfless tragedy, from stepping into family conflict to stepping up to family caretaking. However they are united by a system that is incentivized to drop them, by discipline strategies rife with bias against students of color, by systemic housing insecurity, by a lack of funding for mental health and substance abuse support.

Comparing Sample Transfer School to Students’ Former Schools. Here is how your school compares to the schools your students attended prior on a selection of indicators.



Think about: How has your students’ experience of school changed since transferring?

The chart below highlights barriers your students have experienced in their pathway to graduation. In it, we show percentages of all students enrolled in your school in 2018-19, compared to the city as a whole, disaggregated by race/ethnicity. Latinx includes those identifying as Hispanic regardless of race. Note that where the number of students identifying as a particular group is too small to protect their identity, those disaggregations are not included.

Percent of students who experienced the following early warning indicators
Sample Transfer School (colors) vs. All city high schools (grey)

Indicator	City Comparison	Latinx*	Black	White	Asian
Overage and Undercredited	North Queens Co..	62%	69%	67%	50%
	All other NYC HS	23%	26%	11%	11%
9th Grade Course Failure	North Queens Co..	79%	80%	83%	54%
	All other NYC HS	37%	40%	18%	15%
Level 1 on State ELA or Math 3 or more times	North Queens Co..	54%	56%	22%	13%
	All other NYC HS	41%	41%	17%	14%
At Least One Suspension	North Queens Co..	59%	57%	50%	29%
	All other NYC HS	16%	25%	9%	5%

Black, indigenous and students of color are disproportionately left behind due to systemic racism. For example, research has repeatedly revealed the bias against students of color in the rate of suspensions, as well as the ways in which standardized tests disadvantage students rooted outside white middle-class American culture. To combat these disparities, we must examine them.

Think about: In what ways has Sample Transfer School brought discussions of equity and systemic racism to the fore as you seek to support your most marginalized students?

Making Progress Towards Graduation

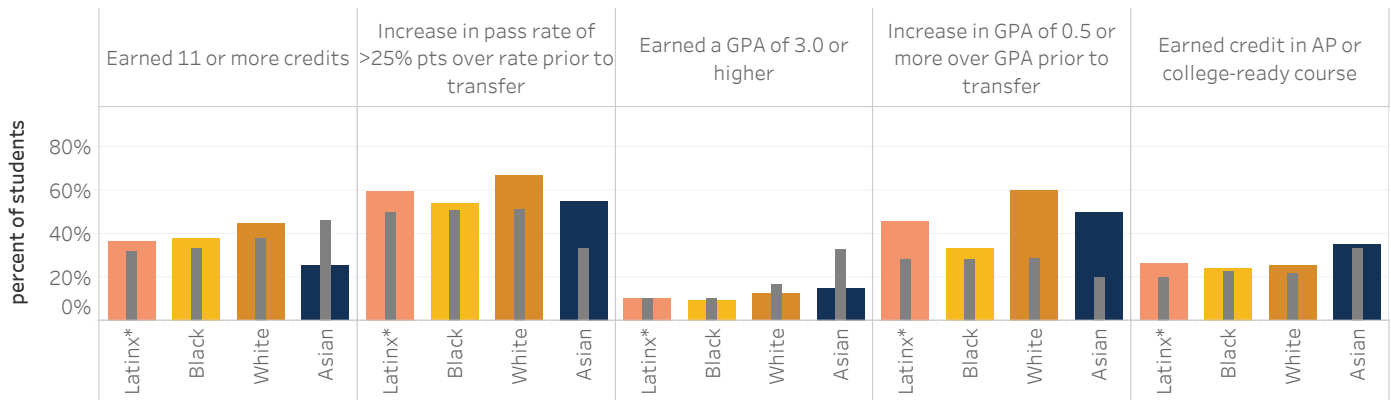
Of the greatest value to his success, he says, was learning to make goals and follow through on them: “I was taught to know my next step and how to prepare for it.”

—Transfer School Student, *And Still They Rise*

Effective support of underserved students begins by creating a learning space where students feel welcome and valued, and then building the authentic trusting relationships on which all learning rests. Schools that excel at this support understand that their students’ lived experience is an asset, and build bridges between content in the classroom and student culture at home. Above all, they imbue each student’s learning with a sense of purpose, and then provide the resources, care, and compassion to help the student take responsibility for enacting it themselves.

The students enrolled in your school in 2018-19 made progress on the following indicators predictive of postsecondary success, compared to other transfer school students. Remember that data will never capture all the progress students are making – social-emotional skills and academic behaviors are not easily measured – and formative growth that is absolutely responsible for future success is often easily missed when looking only at numbers.

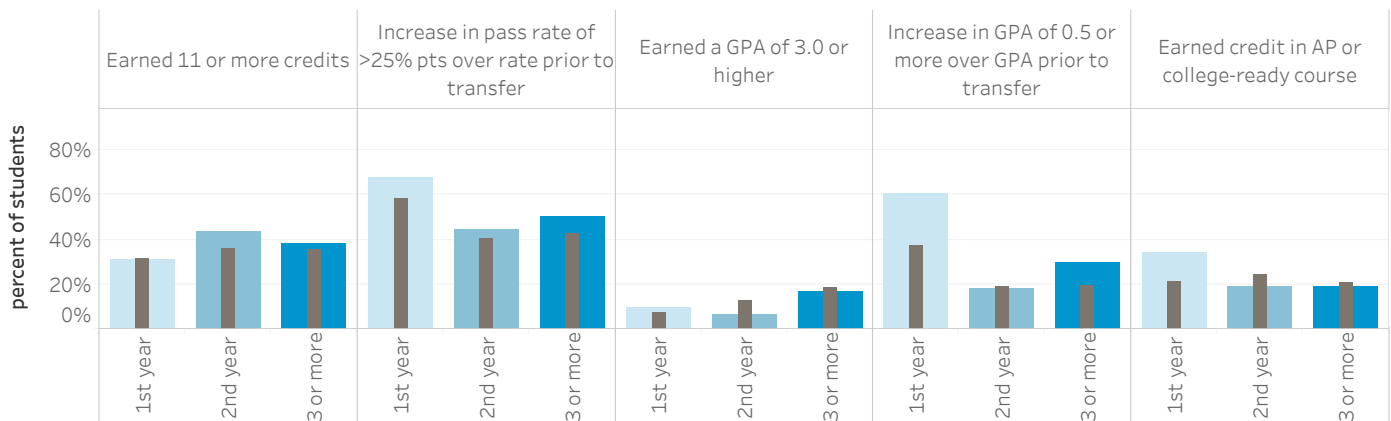
Percent of students showing indicators predictive of post-secondary success
Sample Transfer School (colors) vs. All Transfer Schools (thin grey bars)



Think about: In what ways are you preparing underserved students to succeed in post-secondary pathways?

Often the first year a student is in a school is devoted to building relationships, trust and community. We recognize that growth may not be linear. Here is how your students made progress in 2018-19 based on how many years they were enrolled in the school.

Percent of students showing interim indicators of post-secondary success
Sample Transfer School (colors) vs. All Transfer Schools (thin grey bars)



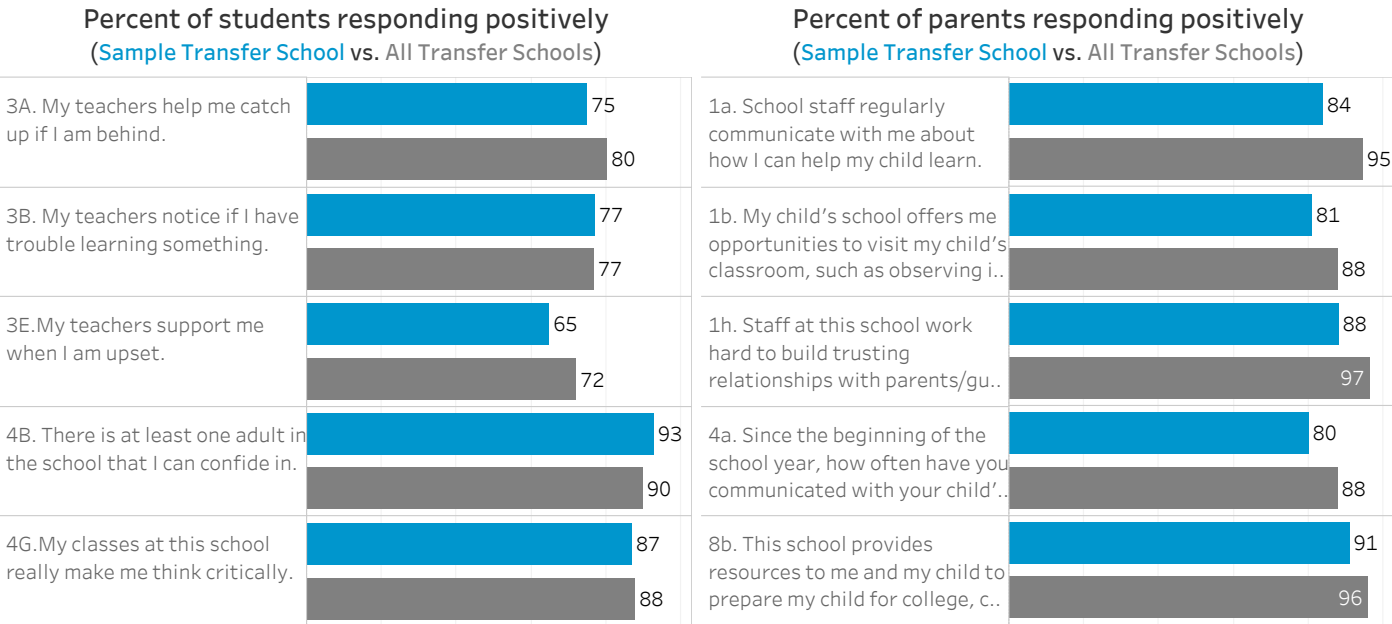
Think about: How does your support to students shift over the course of their time with you?

Factors that Support Underserved Students

“It’s a family environment, an environment that motivates you to want to grow, to want to accomplish your task.”
 —Transfer School Student, *And Still They Rise*

Serving previously underserved students requires structures that pervade the school: connecting students to outside opportunities that span all aspects of their identities – academic, economic, legal, medical – while internally building a culture of care, compassion, and high expectations. The most successful schools scaffold for individual development by leveraging the support of a wider loving community, encouraging both personal and collective responsibility. The results are tight bonds of trust used to help students move forward to their dreams.

Comparing Student and Parent Responses on the School Survey at Sample Transfer School and other Transfer Schools. The charts below show a selection of items from student and parent responses on the School Survey at your school in 2019, compared to other Transfer Schools. These items were chosen because they represent core practices shown to support underserved students in their pathway to graduation and post-secondary readiness.



Think about: Which items represent factors most valuable in your support to underserved students?

Notes on Data Sourcing and Methodology

Results shared here are drawn from citywide de-identified data provided by the NYC Department of Education for students enrolled in the 2018-19 school year, as well as publicly available school-level data from the NYC School Survey and School Quality Report for the same year. This year was chosen as the most recent year in which data were not impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic, which interrupted schooling and led to shifts in grading policies. Data on attendance, graduation, and post-secondary pathways were incomplete for transfer school students at the time of writing and are therefore not included here. We continue to seek this data so that it might be included in future reports.

Comparisons made here to students’ former schools are weighted such that a given high school is proportionally represented in the aggregation based on the number of your 2018-19 enrolled students who transferred from there. GPA is calculated from course grades and weighted by credit value. “Indicators predictive of post-secondary success” represent the core indicators of re-engagement and college-readiness on which we expect Eskolta Network schools to show growth as part of their participation in the Network. Items from the School Survey were selected because they were associated with improved GPA and course pass rates for underserved students specifically.

*Data shown here on race and ethnicity reflect a categorical variable prepared by the NYCDOE based on parent/guardian responses to the Student Ethnic and Race Identification form at enrollment. In this variable, students who identify as Hispanic are categorized as such, regardless of whether they also identify as another category in the form. We continue to seek clarification from the NYCDOE on why race and ethnicity are so merged into mutually exclusive categories in the data they provide to researchers.

Quotes from Transfer School students are from research for which Eskolta was a collaborator: Baum-Tuccillo, M., Arora, V., Holstein, A., & Fine, M. (2020). *And Still They Rise: Lessons from Students in New York City’s Alternative Transfer High Schools*. New York: The Public Science Project.

A Closer Look at Your Students

Making Strong Progress

Here is a list of students enrolled in your school in 2019-20 who showed a great deal of progress in 2018-19. Choose one or two students you know well and think about your interactions in the classroom.

- What do you know about the experience of these students at your school?
- What supports were particularly effective for them and why?

Student Name	Attendance 2018-19	GPA 2017-18	GPA 2018-19	Credits Earned 2017-18	Credits Earned 2018-19
Student A	72	1.5	2.7	7.2	17.3
Student B	96	0.9	2.4	11.0	22.3
Student C	99	1.8	2.8	14.2	21.7
Student D	85	0.7	3.1	10.5	20.9
Student E	80	0.3	3.1	4.6	16.7
Student F	89	0.1	2.1	4.0	17.0
Student G	80	1.5	2.4	4.6	17.0
Student H	78	0.6	2.6	1.0	18.7
Student I	93	0.3	2.1	6.2	16.9
Student J	81	0.5	2.0	4.0	17.2
Student K	82	1.1	2.1	8.6	19.2
Student L	82	0.4	2.5	6.0	18.3
Student M	79	0.7	2.1	8.5	15.2

Struggling Despite Regular Attendance

Here is a list of students enrolled in your school in 2019-20 who earned less than 11 credits in 2018-19 despite attendance over 70% for over 150 days enrolled. Choose one or two students you know well and think about your interactions in the classroom.

- What do you know about the experience of these students at your school? What challenges have they faced?
- How do you think these students would respond to the change idea you are testing?

Student Name	Attendance 2018-19	GPA 2017-18	GPA 2018-19	Credits Earned 2017-18	Credits Earned 2018-19
Student N	75	0.7	1.9	12.5	7.6
Student O	79	0.6	3.8	10.2	6.7
Student P	70	0.3	1.9	5.6	6.6
Student Q	73	0.6	1.7	5.5	9.1
Student R	74	0.6	0.6	5.6	5.6