



Charter School Annual Site Visit Report
Charter Schools Office
2009-2010

PENINSULA PREPARATORY ACADEMY
CHARTER SCHOOL
ANNUAL SITE VISIT REPORT

JUNE 2010

Part 1: Executive Summary

School Overview and History:

Peninsula Preparatory Academy Charter School is an elementary school serving approximately 300 students from kindergarten through grade 5 in the 2009-2010 school year.¹ The school opened in 2004 with kindergarten and grade 1 and has no further growth plans.² It is currently housed in a private facility in District 27.³

The school population comprises 82% Black, 11% Hispanic, 2% White, and 2% Asian students. 80% of students are designated at Title I.⁴ The student body includes 1% English language learners and 7% special education students. Boys account for 49% of the students enrolled and girls account for 51%.⁵

The school earned a C on its progress report in 2009 and a C in 2008. The average attendance rate for the school year 2008 - 2009 was 94%.⁶ The school is in good standing with state and federal accountability.⁷

Annual Review Process Overview:

The NYC DOE Charter Schools Office conducts an annual site visit of New York City Department of Education authorized charter schools in order to assess three primary questions: is the school an academic success; is the school a viable organization; and is the school in compliance with applicable laws and regulations. The visits are conducted by representatives of the New York City Department of Education Charter School Office Accountability Team and last the duration of one school day. The annual site visit begins with a meeting with the principal and school leadership team. Subsequently, the reviewers visit classrooms and hold brief meetings with available administrators, teachers, and students. Areas of evaluation include, but are not limited to: academic goals and mission; curriculum and instruction; school culture and learning environment; assessment utilization; parent engagement; government structures and organizational design; community support; special populations; and safety and security.

The following experts participated in the review of this school:

- Robert Galli, Education Consultant
- Aamir Raza, Charter School Office

¹ NYC DOE ATS system

² NYC DOE ATS system and charter agreement

³ NYC DOE Location Code Generating System database

⁴ Demographic Data drawn from NYC DOE ATS System; Title I percentage from 2008 NY State Report Cards

⁵ Student Demographic data is inputted by school staff into the ATS enrollment database and summarized by NYC DOE staff.

⁶ NYC DOE School Progress Report. This document is posted on the NYC DOE website at <http://www.schools.nyc.gov> and is also included in Part 7 of this report.

⁷ New York State Education Department - www.nysed.gov

Part 2: Findings

What the school does well

- The school has engaged in a process of teaching and learning that inspires social and academic success. Expectations of students are:
 - to become proficient in reading and writing of the English language
 - to demonstrate competency in the understanding application of mathematical computations and problem solving
 - to demonstrate competency in the understanding and application of scientific reasoning
 - to demonstrate competency in the understanding and application of social, geographical, civic and world studies
 - demonstrate academic success by making adequate yearly progress as required by federal, state and local accountability requirements
- The school measures student progress by utilizing absolute, comparative and value-added statistical analyses.
- The school has established organizational and administrative responsibilities and tasks
 - A comprehensive calendar is published and distributed to all members of the school-community (academic, marking periods, report cards, Board of Trustees, testing, PTO meetings)
 - Procedures to address school concerns are in place: ladder of referral, communication, chain of command
 - Professional accountability is clear and concise with regard to staff attendance, dress code, school regulations and routines, arrival and dismissal, visitors, supplies, emergencies, health and safety
- Teacher expectations and instruction are given a high priority to promote achievement
 - Staff evaluations consist of pre and post conferences, formal and informal observations, walk-through's, collection of data, conferences, and professional growth plans when necessary.
 - All teachers are expected to plan effectively utilizing curriculum guides, data, teaching points, differentiation and student assessment practices.
 - Teachers are provided with *Lo-Prep and Hi-Prep* resource suggestions in order to reach all students
 - Questioning classifications are used to enhance delivery of instruction and support student cognition (knowledge, comprehension, application, analysis, synthesis and evaluation).
- Classroom instruction is indicative of teacher professionalism and concern for student success
 - Classrooms are print rich as evidenced by a variety of teacher/student resource charts and work
 - A variety of instructional teaching methods was observed, i.e.-whole class, small group and individualized attention
 - Workshop model is used to assist teachers with classroom and time management
 - Scaffolding is used to continually reinforce previous skills learned and introduce new ones
 - Writing is a central focus as evidenced by the topical calendar of genre for all grades: K- 2 (personal narrative, persuasive reviews, poetry, authors as mentors), 3 – 5 (personal essay, writing about reading, realistic fiction, memoirs)

What the school needs to improve

- A closer evaluation of teaching strategies and classroom practices should be reviewed to ensure more rigor and differentiation on this grade level
- Strategies should be implemented to encourage and ensure that students prepare extended writing assignments to prepare them for middle and high school writing tasks
- Not all teachers utilize the sources available to promote higher order thinking skills
 - Practices should be implemented to ensure that all teachers utilize the tools of questioning and differentiation
- The school should encourage intra grade visitations for both teachers and students
 - Have teachers visit each other to identify best practices
 - Have students present and visit other classes to share projects, knowledge and learning strategies
 - Establish a protocol so teachers can videotape their lessons, each other and discuss instructional strategies that are effective and those that should be abandoned
- Classroom libraries exist in all rooms
 - Libraries should be upgraded to include a wide variety of material on all levels

Part 3: Framing Questions

FRAMING QUESTIONS:

Throughout the Renewal Process and the life of each school's charter, the NYCDOE Charter School Office uses the following framing questions to monitor Charter School success:

1. Has the School Been an Academic Success?
2. Has the School Been a Viable Organization?
3. Has the School Been in Compliance with All Applicable Laws and Regulations?

Annual Site Visit Rubric:

1. Has the School Been an Academic Success?
 - Academic Goals and Mission
 - School components and curriculum align together and holistically support the mission
 - School has high academic expectations and employs strategies for the full range of students served by the school, including those at risk and those with special needs
 - Curriculum and Instruction
 - The educational plan is flexible and is adjusted to meet the performance levels and learning needs of all enrolled students
 - School implements programming to address the needs of students with disabilities and ELLs
 - Teachers demonstrate the use of differentiated instructional techniques to support the varying ways by which students learn
 - School has implemented programming for students who need remediation or acceleration
 - School Culture
 - The culture is strong, intentional, supportive and sustainable and promotes student learning
 - The school motivates all students and respects the diversity of learners and cultures in the community
 - School offers programs, activities or support services beyond academics to address students' social and emotional needs
 - School calendar and day are set to provide extra supports to ensure that students are able to meet and exceed academic goals
 - Schedule for communication to parents/students is timely and allows for due process, includes strategies to prepare students for transitions and strategies for those students who are not on schedule, presents a clear and fair system that complies with students' due process rights
 - Structures that foster the development of authentic, sustained, caring, respectful relationships among all stakeholders within school
 - Behavioral expectations and social supports that reflect the school's mission and comply with all applicable laws and regulations
 - Assessment
 - Establishes a culture of continuous improvement and accountability for student learning
 - Develops assessments that shape and inform instruction on an ongoing basis and develop data that's used to gauge student, teacher and school progress through formative and summative assessment
 - Student learning measured with multiple forms of assessments/metrics
 - Develops educational goals and performance metrics that are SMART – Specific, Measurable, Attainable, Reflect the Mission and Time-Specific
 - Develops assessments that are appropriately aligned with curriculum, instruction, and adopted standards

- Provides evidence of how data will influence instruction, professional development and curricular adjustments
 - Parent Engagement
 - Parent engagement strategies that integrate and mobilize parents within the school community as conduits for student success
 - Capacity to communicate effectively with parents and families
 - Parent engagement strategies that integrate and mobilize parents within the school community as conduits for student success
2. Is the School a Viable Organization?
- Governance Structures and Organizational Design
 - School has articulated appropriate roles, responsibilities, and decision-making structure for school community members (including Board of Trustees and school leadership)
 - An accountability structure that provides effective oversight of the educational program and fiscal components of the school is in place and utilized
 - Board regularly reviews a data dashboard of student achievement and fiscal management that forms the basis for Board discussions and decisions
 - Board has diverse skill set that lends itself to strong educational / operational oversight
 - Board has an articulated process for ongoing policy development, Board member development and self-evaluation
 - Organizational charts are aligned with mission; roles and responsibilities are clearly defined
 - Board has developed essential strategic partnerships with organizations that support the mission of the school
 - Community Support
 - School Leadership demonstrated responsiveness to the unique needs and interests of the community to be served
 - School has established a presence in the community and has buy in from community members
3. Is the School in Compliance with Applicable Laws and Regulations?
- Special Populations
 - Well-defined plan and sufficient capacity to service the learning needs of Special Education students, English Language Learners
 - School adequately addresses the academic and non academic needs of students in need of remediation, students with disabilities, students with interrupted formal education, and gifted students
 - There is a coherent plan for meeting the non-academic needs of students with disabilities, students with interrupted formal education, and other populations
 - School employs a process to identify students at risk of not meeting expectations and creates intervention plans and follow up
 - School demonstrates a comprehensive recruitment, enrollment and retention approach that is sensitive to the diverse needs of students
 - School admission policy and lottery preferences serve to create a student body that reflects community demographics and give a preference to community school district residents
 - Safety and Security
 - School is well maintained
 - Transitions and student gatherings are orderly and well supervised
 - Expectations for student behavior are well known and are enforced fairly
 - School is current with all safety recruitments and drills.
 - AED machines are in operation and school staff is trained in CPR