

Quality Review Report 2010-2011

Park Place Community Middle School

Middle School 266

**62 Park Place
Brooklyn
NY 11217**

Principal: Michele Robinson

Dates of review: November 8 - 9, 2010

Lead Reviewer: James Machen

Part 1: The school context

Information about the school

Park Place is a middle school with 201 students from grade 6 through grade 8. The school population comprises 63% Black, 32% Hispanic, 2% White, and 2% Asian students. The student body includes 2% English language learners and 5% special education students. Boys account for 45% of the students enrolled and girls account for 55%. The average attendance rate for the school year 2009 - 2010 was 93.5%.

Overall Evaluation

This school is proficient.

Part 2: Overview

What the school does well

- The school's strong partnerships with a variety of organizations helps the school meet the academic, social and emotional needs of students and build capacity to improve student achievement.
 - A school partnership with the Futures and Options program extends learning and enhances students' understanding of their career exploration curriculum through pre-internships offered to grade 7 and 8 students. Additionally, cultural partnerships such as Amas Musical Theatre, New York University STEP and the TEAK Fellows program afford students opportunities to tap into their creative talents. These experiences also promote teacher professional development that enables staff to support students' varied learning styles and offer them valuable opportunities to succeed.
- The school strategically aligns its resources by making effective teacher assignments, and integrating technology into instruction thus, increasing opportunities to meet the learning needs of all students.
 - The school ensures the stability of professional meeting time for teachers, which is used to develop skills to be more effective practitioners. Consequently, teachers feel supported in their work to improve classroom practices, resulting in the growth of a professional learning community.
 - All middle school classroom teachers have implemented a MacBook one-to-one computer initiative that capitalizes on web-based strategies that promotes good opportunities to individualize student instruction. Staff members have also chosen the Smartboard interactive whiteboards to engage students and help improve learning outcomes. Combining the whiteboard with the computers, teachers deliver lessons that are more dynamic. As one student stated, "I love how we are encouraged to use technology. It makes our time in class more exciting."
- School leaders support teachers with extensive varied professional development opportunities to elevate school-wide practices and strategies resulting in a focus on the improvement of instruction.
 - The administration conducts daily observations of new and veteran teachers and calibrates their feedback in order to evaluate the impact of professional development activities on classroom practice and to determine next steps in building teacher capacity. Classroom observations are effectively used as a tool to share and promote reflective practice.
 - The cabinet frequently reviews data from a variety of sources to analyze patterns and trends of student performance as a means of monitoring the impact of instructional and organizational decisions. The cabinet attends teacher teaming meetings and reviews agendas and notes from meetings to ensure the quality of the work and to identify areas where additional support may be required.

- Tracking of teaching practices and alignment of curriculum are cornerstones of the school's belief system and supports differentiated instruction that increases student engagement and ownership of their learning.
 - Tracking of effective instructional strategies and routines benefits the entire school community. Teachers credited the sharing of best practices with colleagues with their improved performance in the classroom. One teacher stated, "When I am able to interact with my fellow teachers and reflect on my practice, I am able to immediately adjust my efforts in the classroom." Teachers are able to clearly articulate how they feel students learn best and what their next steps are to support students in producing meaningful work products, as well as why they sometimes fall short of meeting their goals.
 - The principal has successfully placed teaching practices and curriculum alignment at the center of the school's strategy to improve student outcomes. Professional development on analyzing student progress and linking it to teaching strategies provides teachers with the support and examples of successful practices needed to enhance student-learning opportunities as evidenced by the use of digital portfolios and improved grade 8 social studies assessment results.
- Teachers' acute awareness of the needs of their subgroup population guides them to develop programs to address student-learning goals thus allowing timely adjustments of instructional decisions.
 - Teachers consistently gather samples of student work, diagnostic, formative, and summative data, including the item analysis of State test and school-wide attendance reports, to determine areas in need of improvement. Teacher teams use this information to focus instruction for academic intervention services during the Saturday academy designed to address students' identified areas of need.
 - Teachers maintain binders containing formative classroom level data such as periodic assessments, unit test, projects, and ACUITY results. Teacher teams use the information to identify department and grade-level trends, and school wide areas of need. Through the assessments, staff members are able to provide students with individual academic targets.
- The school creates a safe and nurturing environment where students receive support for their personal and academic development supporting student engagement and learning outcomes.
 - The peer mediation program teaches students how to intervene in and resolve conflict. The program's design supports the decrease in bullying and provides all students with continuous help in emotional development and growth. Additionally, all adults in the building, including parent volunteers, assist students whenever the need arises; resulting in students feeling well cared for at school.
 - The school has effectively implemented the Character Development program with a curriculum that establishes school-wide character development themes to promote student motivation, engagement, and positive social behavior. Consequently, students, parents, and faculty state that the school tone is improving and positively impacting teaching, learning, and the school's overall climate.

What the school needs to improve

- Develop a more rigorous implementation of the standards-based curriculum to promote greater levels of student engagement and higher order thinking skills across grades and subjects.
 - The school uses the State standards and scope and sequence curriculum units listed from various programs such as Balanced Literacy, Junior Great Books, Impact Math, and Full Option Science System, which guide teachers on what to teach at the various grade levels. However, the school does not implement the units at a consistently rigorous level. As a result, students do not always receive the exposure to instruction that generates higher order thinking and enhances student performance.
- Strengthen systems to support teachers in identifying interim- and long-term goals that include measurable outcomes to track student progress.
 - School practices do not always align to the Comprehensive Educational Plan or consistently make clear for students the criteria for success. As a result, students are unable to monitor their academic progress.
 - The school does not provide all teachers with carefully scaffolded opportunities to develop systems for accessing targeted students' progress on interim goals.
- Enrich offerings to increase parent involvement and engagement in order to build capacity that helps students meet high expectations.
 - The school is in the process of cultivating a broad base of parent engagement but it has not yet developed workshops and programs for parents to learn supports for their children at home. While student goals are shared with parents, they are not aware of how to help their children at home to meet his or her goal.
 - Neither the ARIS parent link nor the open-source online grade book has been clearly introduced to parents. Consequently, parents cannot track their child's progress beyond the report card system, nor are they provided with suitable opportunities to hone their own technology skills to support this effort, even though it is a school focus.
- Promote greater participation of caregivers in interim- and long-term school-wide planning activities, based on data driven assessments, to garner a broad base of support for the school's mission and vision to improve learning.
 - Parents readily agree that they would like to assume an even greater role in the school-wide planning and decision-making or strategic planning for the Comprehensive Educational Plan. However, although, the principal has taken a more active role in frequently meeting with the parents to solicit their input and support, this is not yet a fully developed practice and therefore the expanding parent team is still not full involved in year-long school-wide planning opportunities.

Part 3: School Quality Criteria 2010-2011

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| School name: Park Place Community Middle School | UD | D | P | WD |
| Overall QR Score | | | X | |
| Quality Statement 1 – Instructional and Organizational Coherence: The school has a coherent strategy to support student learning that aligns curriculum, instruction and organizational decisions. | | | | |
| <i>To what extent does the school regularly...</i> | UD | D | P | WD |
| 1.1 Design engaging, rigorous and coherent curricula, including the Arts, for a variety of learners and aligned to key State standards? | | X | | |
| 1.2 Develop teacher pedagogy from a coherent set of beliefs about how students learn best, and ensure that it is: aligned to the curriculum, engaging, and differentiated to enable all students to produce meaningful work products? | | | X | |
| 1.3 Make strategic organizational decisions to support the school's instructional goals and meet student learning needs? | | | X | |
| 1.4 Maintain a culture of mutual trust and positive attitudes toward learning that support the academic and personal growth of students and adults? | | | X | |
| Quality Statement 2 – Gather and Analyze Data: School leaders and faculty consistently gather, analyze and share information on student learning outcomes to understand school and student progress over time. | | | | |
| <i>To what extent does the school ...</i> | UD | D | P | WD |
| 2.1 Gather and analyze information on student learning outcomes to identify trends, strengths, and areas of need at the school level? | | | X | |
| 2.2 Align assessments to curriculum and analyze information on student learning outcomes to adjust instructional decisions at the team and classroom level? | | | X | |
| 2.3 Use or develop tools to enable school leaders and teachers to organize, aggregate, and analyze student performance trends? | | X | | |
| 2.4 Engage in an open exchange of information with students and families regarding students' learning needs and outcomes? | | | X | |

| Quality Statement 3 – Plan and Set Goals: School leaders and faculty consistently engage the school community and use data to set and track suitably high goals for accelerating student learning. | | | | | | | |
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| <i>To what extent does the school ...</i> | UD | D | P | WD | | | |
| 3.1 Establish a coherent vision of future development that is reflected in a short list of focused, data-based goals that are understood and supported by the entire school community? | | | X | | | | |
| 3.2 Use collaborative and data informed processes to set measurable and differentiated learning goals for student subgroups, and students in need of additional support? | | | X | | | | |
| 3.3 Ensure the achievement of learning goals by tracking progress at the school, teacher team and classroom level? | | | X | | | | |
| 3.4 Communicate high expectations to students and families, engage them in decision-making, and promote active involvement in the school community? | | | X | | | | |
| Quality Statement 4 – Align Capacity Building: The school aligns its leadership development and structured professional collaboration around meeting the school’s goals and student learning and emotional needs. | | | | | | | |
| <i>To what extent does the school...</i> | UD | D | P | WD | | | |
| 4.1 Use the observation of classroom teaching and the analysis of learning outcomes to elevate school-wide instructional practices and implement strategies that promote professional growth and reflection, with a special focus on new teachers? | | | X | | | | |
| 4.2 Engage in structured professional collaborations on teams using an inquiry approach that promotes shared leadership and focuses on improved student learning? | | | X | | | | |
| 4.3 Provide professional development that promotes independent and shared reflection, opportunities for leadership growth, and enables teachers to continuously evaluate and revise their classroom practices to improve learning outcomes? | | | X | | | | |
| 4.4 Integrate child/youth development, support services and partnerships with families and outside organizations with the school-wide goals to accelerate the academic and personal growth of students? | | | | X | | | |
| Quality Statement 5 – Monitor and Revise: The school has structures for monitoring and evaluating progress throughout the year and for flexibly adapting plans and practices to meet its goals for accelerating learning. | | | | | | | |
| <i>To what extent does the school...</i> | UD | D | P | WD | | | |
| 5.1 Evaluate the quality of curricular, instructional and organizational decisions, making adjustments as needed to increase the coherence of policies and practices across the school? | | | X | | | | |
| 5.2 Evaluate systems for assessing students, organizing data, and sharing information with student and families, making adjustments as needed to increase the coherence of policies and practices across the school? | | | X | | | | |
| 5.3 Establish and sustain a transparent, collaborative system for measuring progress towards interim and long term goals and making adjustments during the year and over time? | | X | | | | | |
| 5.4 Use data to regularly evaluate the effectiveness of structured professional collaboration, capacity building and leadership development strategies? | | | X | | | | |
| Quality Review Scoring Key | | | | | | | |
| UD | Underdeveloped | D | Developing | P | Proficient | WD | Well Developed |