Quality Review Report
2018-2019

Parkside Preparatory Academy
Junior High-Intermediate-Middle 17K002
655 Parkside Avenue
Brooklyn
NY 11226

Principal: Adrienne Spencer

Dates of Review:
April 11, 2019 - April 12, 2019

Lead Reviewer: Jerry Brito
The Quality Review Report

The Quality Review is a two-day school visit by an experienced educator. During the review, the reviewer visits classrooms, talks with parents, students, teachers, and school leaders and uses a rubric to evaluate how well the school is organized to support student achievement.

The Quality Review Report provides a rating for all ten indicators of the Quality Review Rubric in three categories: Instructional Core, School Culture, and Systems for Improvement. One indicator is identified as the Area of Celebration to highlight an area in which the school does well to support student learning and achievement. One indicator is identified as the Area of Focus to highlight an area the school should work on to support student learning and achievement. The remaining indicators are identified as Additional Finding. This report presents written findings, impact, and site-specific supporting evidence for six indicators.

Information about the School

Parkside Preparatory Academy serves students in grade 6 through grade 8. You will find information about this school, including enrollment, attendance, student demographics, and data regarding academic performance, at http://schools.nyc.gov/Accountability/tools/report/default.htm.

School Quality Ratings

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Instructional Core</th>
<th>Area</th>
<th>Rating</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>To what extent does the school...</td>
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<tr>
<td>1.1 Ensure engaging, rigorous, and coherent curricula in all subjects, accessible for a variety of learners and aligned to Common Core Learning Standards and/or content standards</td>
<td>Additional Finding</td>
<td>Proficient</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.2 Develop teacher pedagogy from a coherent set of beliefs about how students learn best that is informed by the instructional shifts and Danielson Framework for Teaching, aligned to the curricula, engaging, and meets the needs of all learners so that all students produce meaningful work products</td>
<td>Area of Focus</td>
<td>Proficient</td>
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<tr>
<td>2.2 Align assessments to curricula, use on-going assessment and grading practices, and analyze information on student learning outcomes to adjust instructional decisions at the team and classroom levels</td>
<td>Additional Finding</td>
<td>Proficient</td>
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## School Culture

**To what extent does the school...**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Area</th>
<th>Rating</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.4 Maintain a culture of mutual trust and positive attitudes that supports the academic and personal growth of students and adults</td>
<td>Additional Finding</td>
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### Additional Finding

**Area of Celebration**

- Well Developed

## Systems for Improvement

**To what extent does the school...**

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<th>Area</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.3 Make strategic organizational decisions to support the school’s instructional goals and meet student learning needs, as evidenced by meaningful student work products</td>
<td>Additional Finding</td>
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### Additional Finding

- Well Developed

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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>3.1 Establish a coherent vision of school improvement that is reflected in a short list of focused, data-based goals that are tracked for progress and are understood and supported by the entire school community</td>
<td>Additional Finding</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Additional Finding

- Proficient

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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>4.1 Observe teachers using the Danielson Framework for Teaching along with the analysis of learning outcomes to elevate school-wide instructional practices and implement strategies that promote professional growth and reflection</td>
<td>Additional Finding</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

### Additional Finding

- Well Developed

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<tr>
<td>4.2 Engage in structured professional collaborations on teams using an inquiry approach that promotes shared leadership and focuses on improved student learning</td>
<td>Additional Finding</td>
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### Additional Finding

- Proficient

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<tr>
<td>5.1 Evaluate the quality of school-level decisions, making adjustments as needed to increase the coherence of policies and practices across the school, with particular attention to the CCLS</td>
<td>Additional Finding</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Additional Finding

- Proficient
Findings

School leaders and staff effectively communicate expectations to families connected to a path to college and career readiness for students. Teacher teams and staff establish a culture for learning that systematically communicates a unified set of high expectations to students.

Impact

Partnerships with families support students in their progress toward high expectations. Supports such as College Awareness Week ensure that students take ownership of their progress and are prepared for the next level.

Supporting Evidence

- School leaders and staff use various tools to communicate high expectations to all students and families and partner with them to promote college and career readiness. Progress reports are distributed to all students and their families to ensure that student progress is understood prior to their receiving official report cards. Progress reports contain information about student performance on homework, unit assessments, classwork participation, and extensions of learning. In addition, the school's staff provides workshops to families to provide information and strategies to help their children prepare for State assessments. Prior to the State English Language Arts (ELA) test, the school facilitated a workshop about the test for parents, explaining the various literacy skills tested, including identifying main idea, citing textual evidence, and understanding point-of-view. In addition, one parent shared that she had received handouts on how she could support her child at home. Parents were also given the opportunity to take a truncated version of the ELA test, with a particular focus on looking for text-based evidence to support a short response. The focus on communication and supporting high expectations results in a strong relationship between the school community and families. All parents agreed that the staff works to communicate with them about their children’s progress and how they can provide support.

- The school provides each grade with a handout that details the components necessary for students to successfully move onto the next grade level. The sixth-grade handout presents families with the skill sets necessary in each content area for their children to move onto seventh grade. For example, the handout makes clear that students must have an understanding of how to apply ratios and unit rates, write and determine the values of expressions with whole-number exponents, and solve problems involving area and volume. In an eighth-grade handout, families are informed that their children are required to understand the Civil War through analysis of texts and use evidence in presenting arguments. These documents cite different strategies families can employ to support their children. Parents agreed that school leadership and staff effectively communicate high expectations for their children and how they can support them.

- Teachers support students so that they take ownership of their progress, with the goal of preparing them for the next level. Each year, school leadership and staff facilitate College Awareness Week, a series of events promoting the importance of a college education and how students can prepare for it. Activities include staff members discussing their own collegiate experiences, classes creating pendants highlighting what college means to them, and students completing a college inventory in which students match their interests to various college academic programs. In addition, the school plans tours of neighboring colleges and high schools, such as Kingsborough Community College and Westinghouse High School. In a student meeting, all agreed that teachers ensure students understand educational opportunities beyond the school, and students are informed about how to prepare for these.
Findings
Teaching practices are aligned to the curricula and reflect an articulated set of beliefs centered on differentiation, with a focus on the instructional shift of citing textual evidence. In many cases, student work products reflect high levels of thinking and participation.

Impact
Although students are grouped and engage in differentiated activities based on their interests and proficiency levels, not all lessons had them engage in content-related discussion. There was little evidence of student ownership in their work products and discussions.

Supporting Evidence

- In a seventh-grade science lesson, students were asked to classify rocks based on their physical properties. Students were grouped according to proficiency levels and language needs. Student groups were engaged in discussions centered on the sorting of different rock formations, using a group-work evaluation rubric. Each group was given a different task card, which formed the basis of their analysis and responses. In a seventh-grade ELA class, students were tasked with identifying and providing evidence to support their claim based on whether or not the main character in the book *Lyddie* should sign a petition. Students worked in partnerships to develop a thesis. Subsequently, the students were directed to sort themselves into two larger groups reflecting their preferred positions. In both lessons and across other classrooms, teaching practices were focused on providing differentiated work activities that were contingent on citing text-based evidence.

- While student work tasks are differentiated, there were missed opportunities for students to engage in content-related discussions. In a sixth-grade ELA class, students were interpreting the second stanza of Rudyard Kipling’s poem, “If.” Students were grouped in triads to discuss their thoughts on questions posed and to write down their responses on a group note-catcher. However, discussion was not evident in all groups, even after the teacher reminded the class that it was the focus of their work. In an eighth-grade math class, students were working on solving systems of equations through graphing. Students were directed to copy their learning targets into their notebooks. Next, the teacher asked students to engage in brief partner talk to identify the slope and y-intercept in the first problem presented. Then, a student was asked to read aloud the second math problem presented. A review of this lesson found that the majority of instructional time involved copying down the tasks into student notebooks at the teacher's direction, with minimal discussion taking place. A review of classroom practices reveals that discussion strategies were not used across a vast majority of classrooms.

- Student work products reflect high levels of student thinking and participation, but students' taking ownership of their learning was not often evident. In an eighth-grade social studies lesson, the students’ discussion centered on the impact of industrialization on society. During their whole-class discussion, participants built upon one another’s points. Moreover, students also analyzed how well all members of the class were engaged in the discussion. Though the lesson was designed to involve all students in an in-depth discussion, the engagement was solely among students who volunteered, thus limiting their ownership of their learning. A review of classroom practices revealed no evidence that indicated students are engaged in activities that have them to take ownership of their work.
Additional Finding

Quality Indicator: 1.1 Curriculum  
Rating: Proficient

Findings

School leaders and faculty ensure that curricula are aligned to Common Core Learning Standards and integrate the instructional shifts of citing text-based evidence and building math fluency. Curricula and academic tasks consistently emphasize rigorous habits and higher-order skills for all students.

Impact

Curricula promote college and career readiness for all students. In addition, emphasis on rigorous habits and higher-order skills requires all students to demonstrate their thinking.

Supporting Evidence

- School leaders and faculty ensure that curricula are aligned to Common Core and integrate the instructional shifts by developing plans that center on citing evidence from rigorous student texts. In a seventh-grade lesson plan, students are studying the outcome of the French and Indian War by analyzing multiple sources, including excerpts from such documents as the Sugar Act of 1764 and the Proclamation of 1763. Students are to engage in discussions facilitated by leading questions in which they refer to the texts provided. Texts were assigned to each group based on previously-established student proficiency levels. In a sixth-grade ELA lesson plan, students are tasked with identifying the rules to live by, as communicated in Rudyard Kipling’s poem, “If.” Students are to engage in a close reading of the second stanza and discuss posed questions in student partnerships. Scaffolds to support learning for groups of students include the use of anchor charts and an analysis of key vocabulary. The lesson culminates in an analysis of how the themes in “If” connect to the book Bud, Not Buddy. A review of lesson plans reveals an explicit focus on the Common Core and the use of grade-appropriate texts to drive student work.

- The instructional shift of building math fluency is another focus found in curricular documents. In an eighth-grade math scope-and-sequence plan, students are learning the rules that govern mathematical functions and how to graph them. The document outlines prior knowledge needed by students to engage with the content, the various skills students need to successfully complete the unit, and the assessment protocols to determine students’ understanding of the material. In a seventh-grade lesson plan, students are learning how to make predictions using experimental probability. The lesson calls for explicit modeling of making predictions based on data provided and allowing students to solve problems in groups using math talk as a guide. Scaffolds for English Language Learners (ELLs) include assigning varied work tasks and using an online multilingual glossary, as needed. Overall, curricular documents demonstrate a focus on developing math fluency consistent with the Common Core and the school’s instructional focus.

- Curricular documents and academic tasks emphasize rigorous habits and higher-order skills for all students. In a seventh-grade science unit plan, students are exploring how to formulate a hypothesis, design and implement experiments, and analyze and interpret results through their study of biological functions. Instruction is differentiated for groups of students, using such supports as visual media, science stations, and language supports for ELLs. In an eighth-grade social studies lesson plan, students are studying the impact of industrialization on society using text and media sources such film clips. Students are heterogeneously grouped, and work tasks are differentiated by the use of scaffolded questions, sentence stems, and visual supports. Overall, curricular documents are tailored to emphasize rigorous habits that address the needs of all groups of students in preparing them for college and career readiness.
Additional Finding

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<tr>
<th>Quality Indicator:</th>
<th>2.2 Assessment</th>
<th>Rating:</th>
<th>Proficient</th>
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Findings

Across classrooms, teachers use assessments that are aligned with the school’s curricula. Teachers’ assessment practices consistently reflect the use of ongoing checks for understanding and student self-assessment.

Impact

Actionable feedback is provided to students regarding their achievement using a glow and grow assessment model. Teachers make effective adjustments to meet all students’ learning needs.

Supporting Evidence

- The school uses a glow and grow assessment model where student progress is determined by teachers’ citing one strength and one next step, based on student performance and work products. In a sixth-grade math lesson, a student was working on math problems about identifying ratios. As the glow, the teacher complimented her on being able to identify the amount of yellow paint the problem asked for, based on a ratio table. As a next step, the student needed to use mathematical representation to communicate ideas related to the solution of the given problem. In a writing assignment, a student was given glows related to his explanation of how the author developed a character’s point-of-view and how he cited text-based evidence to support his thinking. The teacher provided several next steps, including avoiding the improper use of pronouns and clearly stating in the essay to whom the character is directing her feelings and beliefs. A review of other student work products reveals that the glow and grow assessment model is consistently used throughout the school to provide actionable feedback.

- The school provides actionable feedback on essays and written responses, focusing on the introduction, inclusion of evidence, analysis, and conclusion, with a score based on a three-point curriculum-aligned rubric for each section. On an ELA essay related to the fall of Saigon, an eighth-grade student was given feedback on all four sections. With relation to evidence, the teacher stated that although she provided evidence to support her claim, more evidence should have been pulled from the texts to bolster her claim. For the conclusion, the teacher stated that she cited both texts and her tone contributed to making the meaning of the essay clear. As a next step, the student needed to use more transition words and phrases to make the connection between the two texts clearer. A review of student essays reveal that this model of feedback is consistently used for written responses, with students given disaggregated feedback on the different essay components.

- Across classrooms, checks for understanding and student self-assessments are conducted to monitor understanding and adjust lessons. In a seventh-grade science lesson, two teachers checked in with groups of students as they worked on classifying rocks based on their physical traits. Teachers made notes on student understanding garnered from student discussions and their responses to probing questions. At one point, a teacher asked students to give a thumbs-up if they needed more time to work on their assignment. Extra time was given when students indicated they had not yet completed their assignment. In addition, students engaged in self-assessment of their own work. For example, an eighth-grade student completed a self-evaluation form regarding his understanding of exponents and scientific notation. The student evaluated himself based on a four-point rubric and cited that he needed to improve on dividing exponents. A review of classroom practices and student work reveals a consistent use of checks for understanding and student self-assessment across classrooms.
Additional Finding

Quality Indicator: 4.1 Teacher Support and Supervision  
Rating: Well Developed

Findings

School leaders and teacher peers strategically use effective feedback and next steps from classroom observations to support teacher development. Clear expectations and feedback to teachers about their practice are provided using the Danielson Framework for Teaching.

Impact

School leaders and teacher peers elevate schoolwide instructional practices and implement strategies that promote professional growth and reflection, with a particular focus on developing question and discussion strategies. Feedback articulates clear expectations for teacher practice, supports teacher development, and aligns with professional goals for teachers.

Supporting Evidence

- School leaders use the Advance observation process in order to evaluate teacher performance, determine schoolwide areas of need, and plan professional development (PD) sessions. The frequency of teacher observations is based on teacher preference determined during the Initial Planning Conference (IPC). School leadership develop a calendar in which observation dates are planned for the school year. During the IPC, teachers and school leaders collaboratively develop teachers’ professional goals aligned with the Danielson Framework for Teaching, which is summarized and accessible to all school leaders. Professional goals are monitored through the Advance observation process and the minute managers, which are non-rated observations in which teachers are given near-immediate feedback. Observations and minute managers form the basis for individualized PD plans for teachers in need of medium and high levels of support. For example, school leaders determined that a science teacher needed support in developing more effective questions. Consequently, the teacher attended a PD session with this focus and provided a written report on how the session influenced her instruction. Thus, the observation process has the effect of elevating teachers’ instructional practices.

- Advance is used by school leaders to focus on the schoolwide goal of developing questioning and discussion strategies. In one observation report, a teacher was given detailed feedback on developing probing questions to be used to guide students’ explanations. The feedback complemented the teacher for planning an in-depth lesson. It was also noted that students’ responses to questions were incomplete due to the limited time they had to provide them. As a next step, it was suggested that the teacher offer more time for students to engage in discussions and make their thinking visible. A subsequent observation noted improvement in the teacher’s questioning and discussion techniques. To further strengthen her practice, it was suggested that the teacher plan so that students create their own questions to develop their thinking and challenge their peers’ thinking. The school leader’s feedback resulted in an increase in the teacher’s performance in Advance with regard to developing questioning and discussion strategies.

- School leaders use the minute manager observation protocol to provide concise, timely, and meaningful feedback to teachers about specific areas of the Danielson Framework for Teaching. For example, an observation of a sixth-grade math teacher focused on lesson planning. The report detailed how the planning allowed students to engage in alternate math word problems as a means of providing differentiated tasks, according to their reading proficiency levels. As a next step, the teacher was advised to include a share-out while planning to allow students to make their learning evident. Minute managers are used schoolwide to supplement the Advance observation process and allow non-rated feedback to further teachers’ growth.
Additional Finding

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<th>Quality Indicator:</th>
<th>4.2 Teacher Teams and Leadership Development</th>
<th>Rating:</th>
<th>Proficient</th>
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Findings

The majority of teachers are engaged in structured, inquiry-based professional collaborations, with a particular focus on identifying and addressing students’ misconceptions. In addition, distributed leadership structures are in place so that teacher voice is noted in key decisions.

Impact

Teacher teams promote the achievement of school goals and the implementation of the Common Core, strengthening the instructional capacity of teachers. Teachers have built leadership capacity so that they have a role in affecting student learning across the school.

Supporting Evidence

- The majority of teachers engage in professional collaborations that promote the adoption and implementation of best instructional practices schoolwide. In a seventh-grade content-integrated teacher team meeting, including teachers from math, ELA, social studies and science, the focus was on how to incorporate instructional strategies across content areas to build coherence. The meeting began with a review of students’ essays based on Rachel Carson’s *Silent Spring*, with a focus on identifying evidence of students’ employing interdisciplinary strategies that the team had previously planned. After the review, teachers shared their noticings, which included students’ citing evidence from the text, incorporating mathematical and economic concepts, and using different text sources, such as articles from the *New York Times*. Next, teachers engaged in a brainstorming session in which they discussed various ways that the team could continue to incorporate different content into students’ work products. The discussion led to ideas such as building into the curriculum more trips related to the topics being studied, looking at using texts that can provide a historical perspective on contemporary topics, and teaching math using ELA texts. Finally, teachers discussed subsequent steps in preparation for their next meeting.

- In a mathematics department meeting, teachers analyzed student work products with the goal of identifying misconceptions in solving multi-step percent problems. In analyzing student work, it was determined that the problem of practice was place values, since students had difficulties calculating percentages due to place value misalignment. The team agreed to re-teach number sense, with a focus on ensuring the proper use of place value. The team also agreed to re-assess students on multi-step percentage problems three days after the re-teach. In a science department team meeting, teachers looked to build students’ ability to understand, retain, and use science content and academic vocabulary based on an analysis of a science midterm exam. Teachers identified topics through which key academic vocabulary words such as *constant* and *controls* could be incorporated into lessons, with a focus on repeated use of the terms for a week. Team members agreed to alter exit tickets to assess specifically the use of the targeted terms. Thus, the result of teacher team efforts is to promote the Common Core and strengthen teachers’ instructional capacity.

- Teachers are given opportunities to have a voice in key decisions that affect student learning across the school. Lead teachers, who act as liaisons between school leadership and the staff, facilitate teacher team meetings. They also act as liaisons to the district office, so that important district initiatives are communicated to the school community. Teacher teams meet during the spring to review student performance data and make changes to curricular documents for the following school year to address learning gaps. In addition, teachers are involved in a peer-to-peer support program, in which teachers provide professional supports for each other on topics such as differentiated instruction and student engagement. Overall, teachers’ voice is valued, and they have input into key decisions that affect the school community.