



Peninsula Preparatory Academy Charter School

"Parents Are Our Partners"

611 Beach 19th Street, Far Rockaway, NY 11691 ~ Phone: (347) 403-9231 ~ Fax: (718) 318-4561 ~ Karen Jones ~ Principal

Regular Board Meeting

November 12, 2015

Principal's Report

I. Instructional and Learning Goals and Objectives/2015-2016:

Much of the information below is a continuation of the instructional and learning goals of last month. What has significantly changed is the "mini-observations" to methodically modify teacher instructional practices. Also included are updates to specific initiatives:

- Our students will be proficient in grade K-5 at a minimum of 75% accuracy in ELA (reading and writing) and Mathematics with evidence of proficiency based on NYS assessment and ITBS assessment.
- We will use monthly instructional and student performance results to measure students' development regularly. The algorithms of our online programs continuously re-measure and re-group students based on proficiency levels. Our online programs also create specific remedial lessons for individual and small groups of students when deficits are identified.
- Teachers will measure their effectiveness through the process of discussing the skills observed during the mini-observation, including a "next steps" review. Teachers will take the reflective lead in identifying what worked during instruction and what steps need refining. Observers will also provide 1 paragraph summarizing the discussion and next steps for improvement.
- We will provide to the Academic Committee, monthly, samples of student work, with the expectation that the evidence will show continuous improvement and attention to student need.
- Teachers will engage students in DAILY core reading instruction, through our reading programs, Achieve3000 and NY Ready, with teachers initially modeling for students the expectations of proficiency with a gradual release toward independence. We want both teachers and students to develop a sense of ownership for learning.

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- Our students will also have daily small group guided reading instruction, focused on increased comprehension development, enriching vocabulary, and increasing students' ability to analyze what is being read.
- Teachers are learning how to maintain a realistic pace of instruction, balancing time-restraints and student proficiency. After reviewing student work, including passing on or above grade level, teachers are NOT to proceed to the next chapter or unit until at least 85% of their students are AT or ABOVE grade level on all assessments.
- Students are more often working in collaboration with one another, allowing teachers to move around the classroom listening to student conversations and supporting those who require additional guidance.
- Teachers are including more projects and multi-media presentations on information presented, allowing for differentiation and deeper understanding, presentation skills, and learning the organizational process.
- Teachers are monitoring and recording student responses, attentiveness, students' ability to accurately complete classroom assignments, and also able to demonstrate an understanding of what is being taught.
- Students are beginning to respond with increased attentiveness to the daily intervention periods built into the academic schedule. Special Education teachers are more directly supporting identified students, evidenced through decreased "acting out" of those students who tend to become frustrated when they don't understand.
- There is an increased effort from teachers to help students make the necessary connections to new information, but allowing them to engage in "healthy struggle" as a precursor to understanding.

II. Use of Data/Teacher Learning Curve

- There has been a significant increase of data recording and usage, much to the angst of our teachers. We are remaining patient, but continuing to stress the urgency of getting it done.

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- Professional Development on November 4, 2015 was completely on the topic revising our supervision and evaluation approach. We have discovered that teacher practice does not change with the standard method of observing once or twice a year and providing long detailed feedback. We are making more frequent visits, getting into classrooms more often, and changing instructional practice by lowering teacher-stress levels and making them more informal. Teachers have more input into how they can improve. The observer also provides less formal, but brief written feedback.

III. Writing

- All classrooms have a BENCHMARK writing piece in place. Students, based on what they currently knew about writing, completed this assignment. Teachers were asked NOT to grade this assignment.
- October has a more instructional piece, based on specific goals and objectives to be met. Teachers were asked to edit and then students re-write until they have created the best example of learning that they can create. Teachers will then assign a score based on a predetermined rubric. This assignment will be added to the progression toward proficiency in writing.
- All classrooms should have at least 2 samples for each child and will submit a 3rd sample by November 30th.

IV. Response to Intervention (RTI)

- RTI is a process through which all students are supported within a specific "framework" to insure successful outcomes at the conclusion of the school year. All students begin at Tier 1 with teachers providing effective instruction for all students, based on research-based strategies. Teachers must be assured that they are spending the right amount of time on particular points of learning. This was a point made by Ms. Miller at our retreat, when she asked, "do teachers know what proficiency looks like?".
- Progress Monitoring is a very important component of instruction, allowing teachers to know who is "getting it" and who does not. Those

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students who do not get it, even though there is provided significant intervention efforts made, move into a category of Level 2.

- In Tier 2, there is increased small-group work and individual tutoring. This is already occurring within our building as teachers are working with these small groups during half of their lunch period (students' recess periods). Contact is being made to parents to alert them of these challenges, letting them know that specific assignments are being sent home, with detailed instruction or on-line assignments.
- A small number of students will not make the necessary gains, even though they have received these supportive instructional efforts. Students will then be referred to CST (Child Study Team). Within this team are teachers and Leadership collaboratively providing additional intervention strategies to assist the classroom teacher. After 10 days of interventions, there is another meeting to assess the student's progress. If there is little to no progress made, then the student will move to Tier 3. We are at this place beginning next week for a small number of students.
- We will contact their parents, again, with evidence of limited improvement, to let them know of our continuing concern regarding their child. We will list the interventions that have been made and then determine next steps. Some students will move to AIS services and others will be referred to SpEd services in our attempt to provide a greater amount of instructional interventions. We have an excellent team of SpEd teachers this year, with clearer direction on what is their role in bringing our students to a higher level of competency. This is the protocol in both ELA and Mathematics.

V. Developing Teacher Efficacy

- Not only will teachers receive increased amounts of in-class coaching and support, they will also engage in PLC (professional learning community efforts) while engaging in book studies focused on in-depth professional learning. Teachers will receive both informal and formal observations, with feedback given in writing, followed by discussion. We will also videotape lessons for teachers to audit their own work, along with peer review.

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- Grade level team collaboration is a MUST, with all members of the team officially meeting 2-3 times a week, including meetings with ELA and Math coaches and the Data Specialist while the coach is in the classroom. While these have been the guidelines, the collaborative planning has not been as successful as we would have liked.
- Student work will be reviewed by both the Principal and Assistant Principal, to coach teachers on continually raising expectations and pushing students forward.
- Student discussions and explanations will also become an important component of learning to increase comfort in speaking, use of vocabulary, and clarity of thought. This will improve students' writing, as use of words will find an increased confidence level.

VI. Professional Development

- Professional Development for November 4th has included introducing, discussing, and modeling the rethought model of supporting teachers, building increased collaboration between grade level teams, and providing increased support of our students.
- Professional Development on November 18th will provide general feedback to teachers based on instructional trends we have observed, learning behaviors (both productive and counter-productive)

VII. Questions? Comments?

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