
SPRING FAIR

Park West High School

New York, New York

High school students travel from all five boroughs of New York City to attend Park West High School, which implements the Talent Development Comprehensive School Reform Model. Park West hosted a Spring Fair to showcase their career academy programs and activities for incoming ninth graders. The fair also served as an end-of-year celebration for student clubs and community-based organizations. The Action Team for Partnerships wanted the fair to inform everyone about the positive programs at the high school and to increase collaboration with teachers, parents, students, and community partners.

The Action Team for Partnerships started planning for the Spring Fair by conducting a student survey. At a series of meetings, team members discussed the students' ideas and determined which ones could be implemented at the fair. The team determined a timetable, delegated tasks, and discussed ways to include parents, students, and community members. Over 150 ninth grade students signed up to volunteer for the day.

Responsibilities were divided so that each fair activity had a coordinator. Students, teachers, and parents helped the coordinators develop the activities. They also planned games for siblings. Fair participants could take guided tours of the school to learn about the different career academies such as Hospitality, Medical Tech, Vertical Transportation, and the Physical Education Department. Clubs and community-based organizations set up tables to provide information about their activities and services. Students read their poems and shared their thoughts about the writing process. In-house theater groups presented performances, sang songs, and performed comedy routines.

The ninth-grade students prepared all the food for the fair. Hospitality Academy students taught non-academy students how to chop, dice, flavor, and create delicious dishes for over 500 people. The menu, developed by the students, included plantains, curried goat, rice, and beans, collard greens, fried chicken, and many other items. All of the foods reflected the ethnic diversity of Park West's community. Students served lunch on the school's rooftop. The culinary students donned chef hats and uniforms and served the food like professionals. Beautiful weather and an unbeatable view of lower Manhattan contributed to a wonderful meal.

The fair cost about \$3,000 and was funded by the 21st Century Learning Centers. The biggest expenses were food and postage for invitations. Over 500 students, parents, and community members attended the Spring Fair. The feedback was so encouraging that Park West plans to host another fair in October to welcome parents and students to the school. The fairs create a sense of community and promote a positive image for the school.

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