



NYCDOE

Quality Review: Final Report

The New York City Department of Education



Quality Review Report

Knowledge and Power Preparatory Academy II

(KAPPA II)

Intermediate School 317

**144-176 East 128th Street
New York
NY 10035**

Principal: Kendra Washington Bass

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Reviewer: Charles Lupton

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Part 1: The school context

Information about the school

The Knowledge and Power Preparation Academy II (KAPPA II) is an intermediate school with 196 students enrolled in grades 6 through 8. The school has a mix of ethnic backgrounds among its students, with 82% Black, 17% Hispanic and 1% from White and from Asian and other groups combined. English language learners make up 2% of the population and 5% are special education students, both well below average for the City. The school receives Title 1 funding with 73% of students eligible, which is above the averages for similar and all City schools. The attendance rate, at 93%, is above the averages for similar and all City schools.

In 2005, the school stopped enrolling grade 5 students. The school also moved in 2005 to its current site, which it now shares with two other schools. One of these schools provides support for English language learners on behalf of KAPPA II.

The school is an empowerment school. Empowerment schools have more flexibility to make key decisions and control the resources for their school community. Empowerment schools are free to develop or purchase professional development services, choose which schools to affiliate with and benefit from reduced reporting requirements.

Part 2: Overview

What the school does well

- The principal is well respected and has the capacity to continue to implement school improvement.
- The school has developed its own detailed data collection and analysis tool for English language arts and is developing systems and structures for collecting and recording other student data.
- Each teacher plans and presents lessons according to a school rubric, creating a consistent approach for the students.
- The teachers put significant effort into creating and maintaining a stimulating and attractive school environment, including helpful instructional rubrics to support learning.
- The range of school visits effectively supports the curriculum and encourages students to aspire to go to college.
- As part of the school's enrichment program, each student learns an orchestral stringed instrument and has the opportunity to perform.
- The staff are mutually supportive and work well collaboratively to improve instruction.
- The focus on maintaining high attendance rates is good.
- The school has clear curricular progression and utilizes curricular rubrics well to support instruction and student self-evaluation.
- The school has systematic and well-received systems to reward achievement.

What the school needs to improve

- Improve student engagement further, particularly through developing differentiated instruction.
- Continue to develop school planning to include objectively measurable short- and long-term goals within fixed timescales.
- Develop a combined school development document, utilizing the best features of the two planning methodologies currently used by the school,.
- Extend the use of existing data to provide increased understanding of the performance of groups of students, classes and grades over time.
- Extend existing expertise in data collection and analysis throughout the school.

Part 3: Main findings

Overall Evaluation

This is a proficient school.

KAPPA has developed effective data collection and analysis systems to give it a good understanding of the progress and performance of all its students and different classes and grades. However, the data is not utilized fully to explore the achievement of specific groups of students.

Planning for success is integral to the school and drives all aspects of the school according to a clear rubric put together in conjunction with Replications, the organization that develops KAPPA schools. Plans focus on all students and seek to improve performance universally. High expectations are communicated to students and parents very well and raise student commitment to their own learning. School developmental planning is thorough and includes some data-led objectives but there are too few short-term targets for the school to assess the impact of its planning as effectively as it could, given the available data.

The school is effective in aligning the curriculum and the students enjoy school. Although there is no evidence of differentiation in class, resulting in some instruction not adequately matched to need, students are engaged in their learning, usually in a very active manner. Students and staff respect each other well so that personal and academic needs are met effectively. Professional development is good although it does not focus sharply enough on utilizing the good data that is available throughout the school.

The principal is well respected and has driven school improvement successfully since her appointment. With the highly committed staff team, the school has a strong capacity to improve well in the future.

How well the school meets New York City's evaluation criteria

Quality Statement 1 – Gather Data: School leaders and faculty consistently gather data and use it to understand what each student knows and is able to do and to monitor student progress over time.

This area of the school's work is proficient.

The school has developed a comprehensive data collection and analysis system, the Matrix, to support instruction in English language arts. It provides good information to identify trends in performance and to highlight students who require intervention. Other systems of data collection are utilized effectively to provide the school with a clear understanding of performance and progress in other subjects, including mathematics. The combination of qualitative and quantitative data facilitates a good understanding of the performance and progress of each student, class and grade overall. However, the systems are not yet sufficiently developed to provide detailed information on the performance of students from different ethnic backgrounds.

The school has three English language learners and their individual performance is assessed well, with intervention provided by another school occupying the same building. There are nine special education students, eight of whom are taught in the only collaborative team teaching class in the school, enabling the school to monitor their progress well. The school has identified a number of specific groups that it monitors closely, for example students who

are borderline levels 1 and 2 and levels 2 and 3 in English language arts and mathematics. Staff use the data gathered effectively to identify and monitor the progress of these students.

In the latest School Report the school's Annual Yearly Progress (AYP) was determined by special procedures because the school has no grade 4 students and had no grade 8 students at the time. This has made it difficult for the school to compare its performance with similar schools. However, the principal is in a network of other KAPPA schools and has a good understanding of how this school compares with them. The school has a sound understanding of its current performance in relation to its past.

Quality Statement 2 – Plan and Set Goals: School leaders and faculty consistently use available data to understand each student's next learning step. Through collaborative planning and student and parent engagement, they set high goals for improving teaching practice and accelerating each student's learning.

This area of the school's work is proficient.

Each member of the school community, including parents, is committed to the founding principles of the school and signs an agreement to cement this commitment. This is fundamental to the school and underpins all the school's activities, goals and plans. The principles are reinforced frequently during the day.

As part of the commitment, the school sets high expectations of academic achievement and behavior, resulting in improving standards. For example, in 8th grade mathematics classes, there are detailed sticker charts containing State curriculum standards that are completed when students reach 80% or higher for each standard. These are popular with the students who are consequently motivated to achieve. This approach is not used in each grade, however, leading to a lack of consistency. Teachers grade selected student work in accordance with State standards so that all students have a clear idea of how well they are performing. They give guidance on how to improve so that students have a clear understanding of what more they need to do. Expectations are also conveyed to the students through self-assessment based on clear rubrics, helping students to be self-critical of their performance. Parents are routinely informed about their child's progress.

Goals clearly focus on the whole school, each academic subject, individual students and identified groups of students, including those in greatest need. School planning identifies some objectively measurable, long-term goals but does not include defined, interim, success criteria. Because of this, the school does not have a clear, quantitative understanding of the progress it is making towards its goals, although it does have an awareness of progress. A future meeting is scheduled during which the Comprehensive Education Plan will be reviewed. The school recognizes that more frequent review is required.

The school also sets long-term, aspirational goals for all students to go to college and organizes several 8th grade trips to visit Ivy League and Black-dominated universities, effectively supporting this goal.

Quality Statement 3 – Align Instruction: The school aligns its instructional activity and resources, and student engagement around its focused plans for accelerating learning for each student.

This area of the school's work is proficient.

The school has developed its curriculum based on the mandated curriculum and it is very effective in ensuring coverage, progression and continuity. It reviews the curriculum annually and alters it according to need. Data collection is considered when planning the curriculum

and the school is successful in frequently generating both qualitative and quantitative data. This is used well for reporting and to influence some future instruction but is not used effectively to review progress towards goals.

Teachers are held accountable for their instruction through collaboration with colleagues, class observation from the coach and principal and through their personal commitment to the school ethos. Lessons are structured well, each following the same pattern that includes lesson aims. However, there was no evidence of differentiation in any class visited or in teacher planning. Although all students were engaged in their work, many very actively, the lack of differentiation means that the needs of all students are not always being met, resulting in some students not always being on task. Nevertheless, their behavior is good.

The principal is adept at making budgeting, scheduling and staffing decisions to improve student outcomes. For example, the school has hired two coaches and deploys them in areas of greatest need and for professional development. However, decisions tend to be made with reference to qualitative rather than quantitative data and the impact of decisions has not yet been evaluated.

Relationships between staff and students are generally good and respectful. All students reported that they certainly know and trust a member of staff and many students turn to teachers for social and academic support. Staff willingly give their time to support students with tutorials at lunch times and even when the school day is finished. The school has good strategies to maintain its above-average attendance rate.

Quality Statement 4 - Build and Align Capacity: The development of instructional leadership, staff, and capacity are aligned around the school's collaboratively established goals for accelerating the learning of each student.

This area of the school's work is well developed.

The principal has a clear set of criteria that are used for staff selection by committee. These include commitment to the KAPPA principles, good portfolios, additional talents and, if possible, being Teachers of America as they have specific training in data collection and analysis. The principal has been successful in hiring four such teachers who are having a positive effect on data utilization in the school. However, their skills are not disseminated fully, resulting in missed professional development opportunities.

In many ways, the school's professional development is very good as it is designed to benefit all staff, including paraprofessionals, through its focus on school planning and student outcomes. It also includes collaborative activity and is a major driver for school development. However, it does not focus specifically enough on the interpretation of data and does not utilize the school's existing skill base as effectively as it could. As a result, the school is not making the maximum use of the good data it collects.

Formal and informal observations occur frequently with written feedback that includes constructive, developmental points for action. The feedback is well received by staff but the follow up procedures are not sufficiently rigorous, leading to some staff not developing as fast as they could. The level of inter-staff support and collaborative work among staff is good and of benefit to the students.

Since her appointment, the principal has worked hard and with significant success to instill the school's principles, including smooth procedures and mutual respect, into the school community. As a result, she is well respected, has the capacity to continue to move the school forward and has the staff and parental backing to do this.

The school enjoys very strong collaboration with Replications who work with the school to develop KAPPA principles and with elements of school planning. Other collaborations are

also positive and support students, for example with the New York Historical Society, which students visit regularly.

Quality Statement 5 - Monitor and Revise: The school has built-in structures for evaluating each student's progress throughout the year, recognizing weaknesses in its improvement plans and teaching practices, and flexibly adapting plans and practices to meet its goals for accelerated learning.

This area of the school's work is proficient.

Each year, the school reviews its Comprehensive Education Plan and collaboratively sets out the agenda for the following year, based upon completed objectives. The plan contains good analysis of previous data and sets clear goals for each area of the school's work for the following year. Most goals contain long-term, empirical measures of success. Generally, the plan is realized through effective and flexible professional development that is planned throughout the year and is responsive to changing circumstances, including issues arising from comparisons of student performance. Other issues also force changes to planning; for example, sixth grade enrollment fell and the school responded by reducing the number of classes while reorganizing them homogeneously to account for changes to instructional need.

Currently, the Comprehensive Education Plan is reviewed twice each year. The review is largely based upon qualitative data as the plan does not contain data-led, short-term measures of success. Consequently, even though the principal is aware of progress towards the goals, this is not quantified, making the school less responsive to change.

In conjunction with Replications, the school has also developed a second development plan to inculcate the KAPPA principles into the school. This is effective and contains clearer goals and annotated review. The two planning formats are not combined, however, and this is an area for development.

Part 4: School Quality Criteria Summary

SCHOOL NAME: KAPPA II (IS 317)	∅	✓	+
Quality Score		X	

Quality Statement 1 – Gather Data: School leaders and faculty consistently gather data and use it to understand what each student knows and is able to do and to monitor student progress over time.	∅	✓	+
1.1 The school uses available data and generates its own data to provide an objective, constantly updated understanding of the performance and progress of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> each student, classroom, grade level, 		X	
1.2 The school uses available data and generates its own data to provide an objective, constantly updated understanding of the performance and progress of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ethnic groups, English language learners, special education students* 		X	
1.3 The school uses available data and generates its own data to provide an objective, constantly updated understanding of the performance and progress of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> all other categories of interest to the school* 		X	
1.4 Performance and progress are measured based on comparisons with similar schools, with the school's own past performance, and among students, classrooms, grade levels, academic subject areas, ethnic groups, and other groupings of interest within the school.		X	
Overall score for Quality Statement 1		X	

* These criteria are partially aspirational as of now because schools do not have routine access to all of this data. The NYC DOE plans to provide schools with enhanced access to the necessary data in 2007.

Quality Statement 2 – Plan and Set Goals: School leaders and faculty consistently use available data to understand each student's next learning step. Through collaborative planning and student and parent engagement, they set high goals for improving teaching practice and accelerating each student's learning.	∅	✓	+
2.1 Using data, school leaders and faculty engage in a collaborative process to set demanding, objectively measurable goals for immediate and long -range improvement, and to develop plans and timeframes for reaching those goals.		X	
2.2 Goals and plans focus on the school as a whole and on each student, classroom, grade level, academic subject, and group of students whose performance or progress has been identified by the school as a particular focus area.		X	
2.3 Particular attention is given to improving the performance and progress of students in greatest need of improvement.		X	
2.4 High expectations are conveyed to students and parents/caregivers. Students and their parents/caregivers are regularly invited to provide information about each student's performance and how to improve. This information is central to setting challenging goals and developing, evaluating, and revising plans.			X
2.5 Goals and plans for improving student performance and progress drive the activity of all members of the school community: leaders, staff, students, parents, and other partners.		X	
Overall score for Quality Statement 2		X	

Quality Statement 3 – Align Instruction: The school aligns its instructional activity, resources, and student engagement around its focused plans for accelerating learning for each student.	Ø	✓	+
3.1 The school selects the curriculum based on how well it aligns with or implements the mandated curriculum and on the curriculum's capacity to generate meaningful interim data about progress towards goals and to support the school's high expectations and improvement plans.			X
3.2 Teachers are accountable for improving instruction and student outcomes. They plan and differentiate their instruction based on the needs revealed by student data and by the focused plan the school has developed to improve each student's and group of students' outcomes.		X	
3.3 Budgeting decisions are driven by the needs revealed by student data and by the focused plan the school has developed to improve each student's and group of students' outcomes.		X	
3.4 Staffing decisions are driven by the needs revealed by student data and by the focused plan the school has developed to improve each student's and group of students' outcomes.		X	
3.5 Scheduling decisions about the use of teacher and student time are guided by the needs that emerge from examining student data and by the focused plan the school develops to improve student outcomes.		X	
3.6 Instructional programs actively engage students.		X	
3.7 Staff know and respect students and respond to their academic needs, as well as their personal needs that affect academic performance. Each student knows and trusts an adult on the staff who is concerned about him or her.		X	
3.8 Student attendance and engagement are high priorities. High rates and patterns of absences trigger immediate intervention.			X
Overall score for Quality Statement 3		X	
Quality Statement 4 – Build and Align Capacity: The development of instructional leadership, staff, and capacity are aligned around the school's collaboratively established goals for accelerating the learning of each student.	Ø	✓	+
4.1 Leaders, faculty, and staff are selected based on their high expectations for student performance and progress and based on their commitment and capacity to use data, compare outcomes within and across classrooms and schools and develop and revise plans and methods to improve performance and progress.			X
4.2 Professional development decisions are driven by the needs revealed by student data and by the focused plan the school has developed to improve each student's and group of students' outcomes. Professional development is designed to help leaders, faculty, and staff use data, self- and peer-assessments, and collaboration with peers to achieve goals for improved school and student outcomes. Professional development and self- and peer-evaluation are aligned and overlap.		X	
4.3 The principal frequently observes classroom teaching and has a considered strategy for improving the quality of each teacher's instruction. Teachers frequently observe and support each other's classroom instruction with the goal of improving student outcomes.		X	
4.4 Planning, evaluation of results, and revision of plans takes place in teams. Leaders and faculty inform each other of their goals and results, candidly evaluate themselves and each other, and use what is learned to drive improvement.			X
4.5 The principal is respected and has capacity to effect change.			X
4.6 The school runs smoothly. Procedures are clear, communicated to all, and are generally followed.			X
4.7 The school aligns youth development and support services around stated academic goals. Partnerships with outside bodies are routinely used to achieve academic goals.			X
Overall score for Quality Statement 4			X
Quality Statement 5 – Monitor and Revise: The school has built-in structures for evaluating each student's progress throughout the year, recognizing weaknesses in its improvement plans and teaching practices, and flexibly adapting plans and practices to meet its goals for accelerating learning.	Ø	✓	+
5.1 All school plans and other interventions include frequent interim goals and diagnostic assessments of progress designed to reveal in objectively measurable ways whether the plan is being effectively implemented and reaching stated goals.	X		
5.2 Comparisons of student progress within and across classrooms and schools are used in making interim diagnostic assessments and measuring the progress of plans and interventions.		X	
5.3 Information generated by periodic assessments and diagnostic measures of progress and comparisons is used to revise plans immediately in order to reach stated goals. Interim and final goals are modified when data objectively demonstrate that revision is required.		X	
5.4 Each plan's interim and final outcomes drive successive phases of goal setting and improvement planning, and each successive phase is characterized by agile and flexible realignment of practices and resources to improve student academic outcomes.		X	
Overall score for Quality Statement 5		X	