



NYCDOE

Quality Review: Final Report

The New York City Department of Education



Quality Review Report

Knowledge and Power Preparatory Academy II

Middle School 317

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

Principal: Leah Dyer

Dates of review: June 2 – 3, 2008

Lead Reviewer: Kathleen Tuttle

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Part 1: The school context

Information about the school

KAPPA II is a middle school with 195 students from grade 6 through grade 8. The school population comprises 77% Black, 20% Hispanic, 2% White, and 1% Asian students. The student body includes 3% English language learners and 16% special education students. Boys account for 42% of the students enrolled and girls account for 58%. The average attendance rate for the school year 2006-2007 was 89.9%. The school is in receipt of Title 1 funding with 63% eligibility.

This school has had over four administrators in four years that have caused many programs, curricula, initiatives and structures to begin in the school without adequate time for development. Behavior and discipline were out of control and incidents of violence were high. The principal is in her first year as the principal of the school.

Part 2: Overview

What the school does well

- The principal has the capacity to effect change, and the passion she has for her school is evident in all she does.
- New York State standards are visible in the classroom, used in lesson planning and are evident in student work.
- Attendance has increased this year, demonstrating that students like coming to school.
- The school is developing a good arts program integrated with literacy.
- Effective community partnerships are developing to support the academic and personal growth of students.
- High expectations are demonstrated by the honor roll and VIP-Club bulletin boards throughout the school.
- An effective advisory program addresses students' adolescent emotional needs and this has a positive effect on student behavior.
- Budgeting and staffing decisions have been effectively and efficiently aligned with the school's improvement needs.

What the school needs to improve

- Ensure there are suitable interim goals for students that include timeframes and are objectively measurable.
- Ensure that data is consistently gathered and used to understand what students know and can do and to monitor their progress over time.
- Develop a clear vision for the school shared by the principal and school community so that procedures and systems can effect change.
- Find ways of involving parents in the day-to-day life of the school and in gaining an understanding of both school priorities and student goals and achievement.
- Create accountability systems for teachers' goal setting, along with feedback structures for formal and informal observations.
- Extend the professional development opportunities for teachers to share good practice that is standards based.

Part 3: Main Findings

Progress made since the last review

The school has made little progress in addressing the issues identified in the previous Quality Review report.

Overall Evaluation

This school is underdeveloped.

The new principal has quickly assessed the need for more administrative help to support teachers and hired an assistant principal and a dean. In addition, she has instituted an advisory program to begin to meet the emotional needs of the students. Incidents of disruptive behavior have fallen and the principal emphasizes the expectations and boundaries she has imposed. Teachers, parents and students all comment that the school is a safer place, where the emphasis is on education.

The New York State standards are used in lesson planning and are evident in student work. Students in math classes know which performance indicator they are working to improve. Students are assessed regularly in some classrooms and this information is used for class groupings and to identify those in need of specific help. Currently there is little evidence that teachers are using the periodic assessment data to drive their instruction. Student assessments have yet to drive goal setting from school-wide goals through individual student goal setting. Benchmark goals that are objectively measurable with specific timeframes are not yet present. The principal reviews the performance of special education and English language learners, but has not taken the next step of using the information to drive goal setting with suitable timeframes to accomplish the goals.

The progress on last year's Quality Review was most notable in the area of professional development. The principal gave three professional development workshops through the course of the year on differentiating instruction. The result of this professional development was most evident in the collaborative team teaching and math classrooms. Professional development opportunities for these teachers to share their practices and other good practices throughout the school are not yet available. There was also an effort to create school-wide data binder. Teachers shared evidence of their binders and discussed the data that is collected. However, presently there is not consistent practice throughout all content areas to use the data to inform planning and instruction.

The school community all agrees the principal has the commitment to lead the school through the next stages of development, but the current climate of disrespect and lack of mutual trust will impede growth unless changed. Teachers are not yet held accountable for their students' performance or goal setting for their student and themselves. The school's Inquiry Team studied grade 7 students in English language arts with the sub skill of vocabulary. The team used a change strategy of using word walls in all content areas that are now present in the majority of the rooms.

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 the student's progress over time.

This area of the school's work is underdeveloped with proficient features.

The principal has created an individual student profile sheet for each student that contains scale scores, services and other information. This information has not been shared with teachers, or summarized in cohort or class form. The data from the previous year's state tests and the NYSESLAT are used for intervention services, both during the day and after school. Due to the loss of the data specialist in mid-year there is no longitudinal data or whole school analysis available for any data. Each teacher is required to keep a data binder to monitor student's progress and inform instruction. The majority of teachers are using this information to inform their groupings, but have not as yet used the information for long-range planning or goal setting. Students were given the periodic assessments this year, but teacher training on the use of Acuity to drive instruction has not occurred yet.

The principal has an awareness of the performance of special education and English learners. Since the school has so few English language learners, these students received their services from the school downstairs. She has begun tracking the performance and progress of ethnic and gender groups, but has yet to really analyze the data and its implication for student achievement. Visits have been made to similar schools to look at best practices, but no tracking of strengths and weakness has occurred to determine which schools are getting better results in certain areas that Kappa 2 can benefit from.

Quality Statement 2 – Plan and Set Goals: School leaders and faculty consistently use data to understand each student's next learning steps and to set suitably high goals for accelerating each student's learning.

This area of the school's work is underdeveloped.

The principal collects the Acuity, City and State data for the school. This has not been collated in a form that would allow close monitoring of the progress of individuals or groups of students over an extended period of time. There are no targets for students in any content areas for the end of each marking period or topic, so that their progress can be accurately monitored. Neither are there any whole-school goals for improvement over a longer time-scale. Parents are kept informed of their child's progress with parent teacher conferences twice a year and regular progress reports. However, parents are unaware of school goals or ways to support their child's learning at home. Parents involved in the parent organization for the school recognize the need for more parental involvement and continue to work on bringing parents into the school.

The math teachers are assessing by using the New York State performance indicators. Students can explain what the indicators means and they know the expectation is to reach 80% mastery to meet the indicator. However, they are unclear how to meet those indicators. Other content teachers use rubrics so that students know what they are working towards. Students work to receive a mastery percentage of 80% or 90% to be

in the VIP Club. This is one of the many ways high expectations are communicated to students and their parents. The school has a Kappa Creed that all constituents sign upon entering Kappa 2 that clearly states the schools' expectation. The principal writes weekly newsletters to staff and a monthly newsletter to parents to communicate school events as well as expectations. The principal as well as the teachers communicate with parents frequently by phone and email. Students are encouraged to contact their teacher if they need help with homework or have other concerns.

Quality Statement 3 – Align Instructional Strategy to Goals: The school aligns its academic work, strategic decisions and resources, and effectively engages students around its plans and goals for accelerating student learning.

This area of the school's work is proficient.

KAPPA II's mission is to prepare students for college and they use the City's core curriculum to raise achievement of students. The principal is working towards building up the curriculum to include more of the arts. The school currently has art, violin, and voice instruction during the school day and some drama built in as grade 8 exit projects in English language arts. The principal used her budget resources to hire a new assistant principal and dean to work with her in establishing a school with the climate for learning. Attendance is carefully monitored and has shown an improvement over the year. Students report they like to come to school and happily stay for the after-school tutoring and recreation programs.

Lessons are based on the NYS standards with students actively engaged in the work. In some cases, teachers have provided students with scaffold worksheets to follow the lesson plan and they can complete the guided practice directly on the sheet. These sheets are placed in the student binders as a footprint of the learning. However, this is not a consistent practice throughout the school and there is no formal accountability structure that holds teachers accountable for the progress and performance of their students. Students feel that their administrators and teachers respect and support them, academically as well as socially. The adults of the school community haven't realized the same level of mutual respect and trust as the students.

Quality Statement 4 - Align Capacity Building to Goals: The development of leadership, teachers and other staff capacity is aligned to the school's collaboratively established goals for accelerating the learning of each student.

This area of the school's work is proficient.

There has been a high staff turnover in the four years since the school's inception and currently a significant number of teachers are inexperienced. There is a part-time mentor that works with new teachers. The principal meets with new teachers individually to provide guidance. New teachers started the year with a buddy teacher but the relationship was not maintained after mid-year. The principal has worked diligently to get more youth development support in the school. An additional guidance counselor was hired mid-year in addition to instituting an advisory program for all students one day a week. Many different outside agencies partner with the school and provide academic and emotional support for students.

To address the need for differentiated instruction, identified in last year's quality review, the principal led three workshops over the course of the year. The strongest evidence of differentiation is evident in the math classes and the collaborative team-teaching class. A voluntary book study on classroom management was also offered this year. Formal and informal classroom visits are not common practice in the school. Professional development decisions, therefore, are not based on classroom observations as well as student data. Some teachers have visited other schools to see how data is used and gather some classroom management strategies. However, there are few planned opportunities to support teachers' professional development through teacher visitation both in the building and beyond. An outside Australian consultant was hired for nine days to help teachers in English language arts review their pacing calendar for next year.

Quality Statement 5 - Monitor and Revise: The school has structures for evaluating each student's progress throughout the year and for flexibly adapting plans and practices to meet its goals for accelerating learning.

This area of the school's work is underdeveloped.

The principal has spent the year establishing systems and bringing order to the school. However, the staff members do not yet share the principal's vision for the school's future that seeks to educate the whole child. The principal recognizes that this is the next stage of development.

Teachers have the results of Acuity and other periodic assessments, but there is little training to link the data with instructional practices. Some teachers provide students with written feedback on their work, but there is no formal goal setting for long and short-term goals for students, to give them a clear understanding of where they are going or how to achieve the desired results. In addition there is no formalized data tracking system school-wide where the results are used to make strategic decisions to modify practices or set school-wide goals.

Teachers are working hard to ensure the progress and performance of their students. However, teachers are not yet held accountable for their students' performance, and there are no clear links between individual, class, grade and whole-school goals. The Comprehensive Educational Plan is out of date and therefore does not drive the goal setting and school improvement process.

Part 4: School Quality Criteria Summary

SCHOOL NAME: Knowledge and Power Preparatory Academy II	Δ	➤	✓	+	◇
Quality Score	X				

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

To what extent do school leaders and faculty provide . . .	Δ	➤	✓	+	◇
1.1 an objective, constantly updated understanding of the performance and progress of each student, classroom, grade level?		X			
1.2 an objective, constantly updated understanding of the performance and progress of special education students?		X			
1.3 an objective, constantly updated understanding of the performance and progress of English language learners?		X			
1.4 an objective, constantly updated understanding of the performance and progress of ethnic groups, gender groups and all other categories of interest to the school?		X			
1.5 a measurement of performance and progress based on the school's own past performance, and among students, classrooms, grades and subject areas?		X			
1.6 a measurement of performance and progress based on comparisons with similar schools?		X			
1.7 training, management systems and structures that support teachers in the use of school data to inform planning and instruction and to track the progress of students?		X			
Overall score for Quality Statement 1		X			

Quality Statement 2 – Plan and Set Goals: School leaders and faculty consistently use data to understand each student's next learning steps and to set suitably high goals for accelerating each students learning.

To what extent do school leaders and faculty . . .	Δ	➤	✓	+	◇
2.1 engage in collaborative processes to set rigorous, objectively measurable goals for improvement, and to develop plans and timeframes for reaching those goals?	X				
2.2 focus 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 identify and improve the performance and progress of those students in greatest need of improvement?	X				
2.4 share whole school goals with all members of the school community to rigorously improve the performance and progress of students?	X				
2.5 convey consistently high expectations to students and their parents/caregivers?			X		
2.6 regularly provide students and their parents/caregivers with information about the goals set for each student, and about each student's progress and performance, and how they can improve?	X				
2.7 invite and enable parents/caregivers to provide useful information to teachers and the school about the learning needs and capacities of their children?		X			
Overall score for Quality Statement 2	X				

Quality Statement 3 – Align Instructional Strategy to Goals: The school aligns its academic work, strategic decisions and resources, and effectively engages students around its plans and goals for accelerating student learning.

To what extent does the school . . .	Δ	➤	✓	+	◇
3.1 select core curricular approaches that facilitate and provide meaningful interim data about progress towards goals and focus on raising the achievement of students?			X		
3.2 provide a broad and engaging curriculum, including the arts, to enhance learning both within and outside the school day?			X		
3.3 hold teachers accountable for the progress and learning of the students in their charge, for making instruction interesting and compelling, and for creating a positive safe and inclusive learning environment?		X			
3.4 ensure that teachers use school, class and student data to plan for and provide differentiated instruction that meets the specific needs of all the students in their charge?		X			
3.5 make budgeting, staffing and scheduling decisions strategically, based on data, to meet the school's academic goals for all students?			X		
3.6 ensure that there is an environment of mutual trust and respect between all staff and students to support personal and academic development?		X			
3.7 ensure that there are effective and consistently applied procedures to encourage and monitor student attendance and tardiness?			X		
Overall score for Quality Statement 3			X		

Quality Statement 4 – Align Capacity Building to Goals: The development of leadership, teachers and other staff capacity is aligned to the school’s collaboratively established goals for accelerating the learning of each student.					
To what extent does the school . . .	Δ	➤	✓	+	◇
4.1 use frequent observations of classroom teaching by the principal and other available information to develop a differentiated strategy for improving the quality of each teacher’s instruction?		X			
4.2 make professional development decisions strategically, based on data, to help meet the improvement goals of students and teachers?		X			
4.3 provide frequent opportunities for teachers to observe each other’s classroom instruction and to meet together in teams to plan, share effective practices, and evaluate one another’s instruction in an open and reflective professional environment?		X			
4.4 develop effective procedures for the induction and support of teachers who are new to the profession or the school?			X		
4.5 align youth development, guidance/advising and other student support services around stated academic and personal development goals?			X		
4.6 consistently implement clear procedures that enable the school to run smoothly and encourage effective student learning, and effectively address discipline related incidents?			X		
4.7 create effective partnerships with outside entities that support the academic and personal growth of the students?			X		
Overall score for Quality Statement 4					
			X		

Quality Statement 5 – Monitor and Revise: The school has structures for evaluating each student’s progress throughout the year and for flexibly adapting plans and practices to meet its goals for accelerating learning.					
To what extent do . . .	Δ	➤	✓	+	◇
5.1 the school’s plans for improving student outcomes include interim goals that are objectively measurable and have suitable time frames for measuring success and making adjustments?	X				
5.2 the school’s plans for improving teacher outcomes include interim goals that are objectively measurable and have suitable time frames for measuring success and making adjustments?	X				
5.3 teachers and faculty use periodic assessments and other diagnostic tools to measure the effectiveness of plans and interventions for individual and groups of students in key areas?	X				
5.4 teachers and faculty use the information generated by periodic assessments and other progress measures and comparisons to revise plans immediately in order to reach stated goals?		X			
5.5 school leaders track the outcomes of periodic assessments and other diagnostic measures and use the results to makes strategic decisions to modify practices to improve student outcomes?	X				
5.6 school leaders and staff use each plan’s interim and final outcomes to drive the next stage of goal setting and improvement planning?	X				
5.7 the principal and school community have a clear vision for the future development of the school and implement procedures and systems to effect change?	X				
Overall score for Quality Statement 5					
	X				

◇	Outstanding
+	Well Developed
✓	Proficient
➤	Underdeveloped with Proficient Features
Δ	Underdeveloped