



The New York City Department of Education



Quality Review Report

Knowledge and Power Preparatory Academy VI

Middle School 282

**8 - 21 Bay 25 Street
Queens
NY 11691**

Principal: Peter Dalton

Dates of review: March 27 - 28, 2008

Lead Reviewer: Nick Butt

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Part 1: The school context

Information about the school

The Knowledge and Power Preparatory Academy VI is a middle school with 154 cadets from 6 through grade 7. The school population comprises 75% Black, 19% Hispanic, 3% White, and 3% Asian cadets. The student body includes 1% English language learners and 2% special education students. Boys account for 44% of the cadets enrolled and girls account for 56%. The average attendance rate for the school year 2006 -2007 was 96.6%. The school is in receipt of Title 1 funding with 76% eligibility.

The school has an Air Force theme. Students are referred to as cadets and they are grouped into six squadrons. The teachers are referred to as professors. The school opened in September 2006 as part of the network of Knowledge and Power Preparatory Academy schools. It is planned as a grade 6 through 8 school, and shares a building with local high schools.

Part 2: Overview

What the school does well

- The principal's inspirational vision for the school empowers and energizes parents, professors and cadets alike.
- Easily accessible data systems give professors a very clear understanding of cadets' progress and performance.
- The exemplary work of the inquiry team helps professors to understand and meet the needs of cadets at risk of underachieving academically.
- The school constantly conveys its high expectations of cadets, parents and staff building a distinctive identity.
- Professors make instruction interesting and engaging for cadets through offering a broad, rich curriculum.
- Cadets and professors enjoy very positive relationships, creating a strong family atmosphere in the school.
- Attendance and punctuality stay very high because of the school's meticulous and rigorous procedures.
- The school gives the professional development of its staff a high priority, and makes effective use of inter-visitations to improve instruction.
- Highly consistent rituals and routines establish the school as an extremely orderly and harmonious learning community.
- School leaders use data most effectively to make strategic changes to optimize cadets' progress.

What the school needs to improve

- Incorporate the successful work of the inquiry team when setting detailed academic goals for all cadets.
- Ensure that best practice in planning lessons to meet cadets' different learning needs is adopted by all staff.
- Refine goals for the professional development of professors to become more objectively measurable.

Part 3: Main Findings

Progress made since the last review

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

Overall Evaluation

This school is well developed.

The Knowledge and Power Preparatory Academy VI makes its high expectations for its students and their parents clear even before they officially start. A week's induction course for candidates in the summer culminates in graduation as cadets. The values of the school focus on honesty, self-discipline, maturity and respect, with the highest standards expected from professors and cadets alike. Parents speak enthusiastically of the transformation they have seen in their children's attitude to school. One commented, "This is the first time she's ever been excited about a school." Another parent said, "KAPPA VI will not tolerate nonsense and I love that!"

The principal has a passionate vision for the school that pursues excellence uncompromisingly. He says, "I want for their children what I want for my own." The whole school community enthusiastically supports his approach, and this gives the school its distinctive identity, an orderly and harmonious learning environment where every individual matters. The excellent attendance of cadets reflects their great enjoyment of school and the rigorous procedures that are in place to monitor them.

Much has been achieved since the last review, including the appointment of an assistant principal as data specialist, who has introduced effective systems for presenting and interpreting data. The "Understanding by Design" model of instruction is well-established, with professors often grouping cadets by learning ability. Not all come up to the practice of the best yet, and there is still room for growth in planning for differentiation of lessons. Assessment is much more consistent in all content areas, and the Comprehensive Education Plan sets out the school's long-term goals well. Interim goals ensure leaders measure progress incrementally towards reaching their aims.

The inquiry team has made outstanding progress in understanding the needs of its target group of fifteen at-risk cadets. Collaborating closely with the professors who teach them, team members have analyzed cadets' areas of need, put in place support, evaluated the outcomes based on data, and made further recommendations. Each cadet has clearly measurable goals, which are challenging and specific. The team is in a strong position now to apply the understanding it has gained to embrace all cadets, when reviewing their goals and performance.

Staff benefit from high quality professional development and the expert support of the staff developer. All the professors visit one another's classrooms and have a clear focus for observations aligned to the California Professional Teaching Standards. They have goals for their own development, but not all of these are objectively measurable yet.

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 well developed.

Professors have a good understanding of the progress and needs of the cadets because the assistant principal has introduced very effective data systems. These present information in easily accessible graphs and charts and link to an electronic database. The school compares the performance of cadets at classroom, squadron, subject and grade level. It undertakes detailed analysis based on gender and ethnicity, and has found that more boys than girls are working at Level 1 and 2. The school monitors closely how each cadet is doing and looks at past trends. This is particularly effective for the very few special education students and the one English language learner, as they receive individual attention.

As a new school, it does not have a large body of data to compare with other similar schools yet, but leaders visit one another's schools to look at good practice. Professors have developed the skills to make good use of data concerning their own cadets. The work of the inquiry team, with its school-wide survey of fifteen struggling cadets, is helping them to see the bigger picture across grades and subjects.

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 well developed.

In this small school, staff meet together often to discuss individual cadets and to compare their progress. They know the cadets very well, and use advisories to set personal and academic goals with them. Exemplary practice by the inquiry team ensures that the most struggling cadets have specific targets to reach, based on close analysis of the impact of interventions to support them. This ensures that they make rapid progress. The school is in the process of applying the same level of rigor to all its cadets, particularly in ensuring that their end of year targets are challenging but also realistic. The school leadership team has undertaken a similar exercise with whole school academic goals, setting targets for each trimester and keeping them under review. It sets effective interim goals within the Comprehensive Education Plan with clear timeframes to measure them. Staff and cadets know these well.

The "Morning Ritual", when the whole school assembles for the start of the day, is an opportunity to reinforce high expectations and celebrate achievement. A professor said, "We focus on creating their future, not just on passing their grade." The strict uniform code, motivational posters and subject specific chants at the commencement of lessons, are aspects of the KAPPA experience that remind cadets they are valued and held accountable. One cadet commented, "They teach you to grow up, to put childish ways behind you." All cadets, their professors and parents must sign a "commitment to excellence" contract at the start of each year, which sets out very clearly what the school expects from each party and what it offers them. There are very effective procedures for informing cadets and their parents about how well they are doing. Up to six reviews a year give parents plenty of opportunity to share with staff information about their children.

The parent/cadet handbook explains the curriculum and sets out the school's vision and expectations clearly.

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

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

Professors plan engaging and interesting lessons for cadets, often dividing them up into groups and setting practical tasks to make learning active. Sometimes, but not always, these groups take full account of cadets' different learning needs. The curriculum is broad and includes musical instrument tuition for every cadet. They also learn a foreign language. The school has introduced the Core Knowledge curriculum into grade six this year, highlighting inter-disciplinary connections. Every cadet takes part twice per week in a good range of clubs built into the school day. The choices include chess, dance, visual arts, music, drama, technology and publishing. A cadet said, "We get to learn other talents that we never knew we had." Each classroom has a similarly attractive learning environment, with "word walls" of key vocabulary and examples of cadets' work. The administration holds professors accountable for the progress of their cadets and monitors closely the quality of their work.

The principal uses the budget well to make careful staffing and scheduling decisions. The assistant principal and dean have teaching responsibilities and the guidance counselor doubles up as parent coordinator. The school shares tuition for physical education and English as a second language with one of the neighboring high schools. Relationships between professors and cadets are extremely positive with a high level of mutual respect, enhanced by the school's small size and structured approach. A parent said, "You can tell that the professors care." Cadets take on responsibility within their squadrons and run peer mediation sessions for those experiencing difficulties. They develop leadership qualities and self-esteem through serving one another. The school updates its attendance boards daily and calls parents immediately if cadets are absent or late. It maintains high levels of attendance because the cadets love school and through a transparent system of rewards and sanctions.

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 well developed.

The principal and assistant principal use regular observations and 'snapshots' of teaching to build up a comprehensive picture of the strengths and needs of instruction. The staff developer plays a valuable role in working with individuals to enhance particular aspects of their craft. Professors meet together frequently, sharing good ideas and visiting one another's classrooms on a regular basis. They use the California Professional Teaching Standards to agree on a focus for their observations and subsequent discussion. High quality professional development sessions follow clear protocols to make the best use of the available time.

The school supports its cadets well in overcoming barriers to learning and in becoming good citizens. They form close links with high schools and several colleges to raise their aspirations. As they enter the school each morning, cadets walk beneath the slogan,

“Through these doors walk today’s children and tomorrow’s leaders.” Cadets take part in community service activities, such as cleaning up the local beach and “pennies for patients”. The guidance counselor runs an “academic success group” to improve study skills for cadets who are struggling. One cadet said, “They want us to make the best of our lives. They want us to succeed.” The school runs like clockwork because it is so well organized, with policies and procedures honed to precision and consistently applied by all staff. Routines such as moving about the school to classical music contribute to its calm and harmonious environment. Outside organizations contribute successfully to the cadets’ education, including lead partner, the Knowledge Network, through professional development of staff. The school is combining with Oasis on a 21st Century Grant to offer a summer camp and after-school program to cadets.

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 well developed.

Since the last review, the school has improved the Comprehensive Education Plan considerably to include interim goals and timescales that make it a useful development tool. It has set challenging targets for cadets to reach, expecting real growth on each assessment cycle. So far it is on course to meet them. The work of the inquiry team has been influential in supporting professors to consider the progress of their cadets across all subjects. They are measuring carefully the impact of interventions of support and finding out what works and what can be improved. Professors make timely changes to programs in the light of data, such as an increased emphasis on higher-order questioning. They are using graphic organizers more to help cadets to draft short and extended responses. Professors have long-term goals for their own development, but some of the steps to reach them are not yet objectively measurable.

School leaders use data to make strategic decisions that will help to meet whole school goals. They have formed an advanced class in grade seven to prepare for advanced Regents next year. They have also introduced the Core Knowledge curriculum to broaden learning across the full range of content areas. The principal’s reflective and proactive approach to his role means he is constantly finding ways to improve the school and maintain the rapid momentum of change. His very powerful vision is being realized in the daily experiences of the cadets, whose confidence, like the school’s motto, is “soaring to new heights.” The commitment of professors, parents and cadets to this vision is creating a school that is truly “flying high.”

Part 4: School Quality Criteria Summary

SCHOOL NAME: KNOWLEDGE AND POWER PREP ACADEMY VI	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 cadets 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 cadets?				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 cadets, 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 cadets?				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 cadets 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 cadets 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 cadets 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 cadets?				X	
2.5 convey consistently high expectations to cadets and their parents/caregivers?					X
2.6 regularly provide cadets 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 cadets 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 cadets?				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 cadets 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 cadets 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 cadets?				X	
3.6 ensure that there is an environment of mutual trust and respect between all staff and cadets 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 cadets 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 cadets?				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 cadets 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