



**Department of
Education**

Joel I. Klein, Chancellor

**Quality Review Report
Office of Accountability
2008-2009**

Quality Review Report 2008-2009

Knowledge and Power Preparatory Academy VII

Middle School 596

**300 Willoughby Avenue
Brooklyn
NY 11205**

Principal: Rosa Smith-Norman

Dates of review: February 2 - 3, 2009

Lead Reviewer: James Machen

Part 1: The school context

Information about the school

Knowledge and Power Preparatory Academy VII is a middle school with 139 students from grade 6 through grade 7. The school population comprises 85% Black, 13% Hispanic, .07% White, .07% Multi-racial and 1.3% other students. The student body includes 3% English language learners and 1% special education students. Boys account for 41% of the students enrolled and girls account for 59%. The average attendance rate for the school year 2007 - 2008 was 89.6%. The school is in receipt of Title 1 funding with 84% eligibility. The school is in its second year of existence. In September 2009, the school will grow by one grade and will work with its first group of grade 8 students.

Overall Evaluation

This school is underdeveloped with proficient features.

In its second year of existence, Knowledge and Power Preparatory Academy VII is striving to build a strong foundation for future success. Although the school is currently underdeveloped with proficient features overall, the school works closely with parents to convey high expectations for all and to ensure students receive support to achieve academically at home, as well as in school. A well-focused counseling-in-schools program underscores support for the students. Parents endorse the work of the school. One parent stated, "This is a great school academically. I enrolled my daughter in this school so she will have an opportunity to compete for a top high school slot." The school has a laser-like focus on what they hope to accomplish and there are already a number of proficient features to build upon. The school has a number of promising qualities. Creating a climate that is conducive to teaching and learning is the school's focus and the students and staff are proud of the changes and optimistic about the future. Such as, the school provides frequent opportunities for teachers to organize and participate in professional learning communities. The school's allocation of daily common planning to promote collaboration, sharing and exchange of ideas offers valuable opportunities to share knowledge.

The work of the school's inquiry team continues to evolve. The inquiry team has worked hard to identify strategies that will assist in raising academic achievement for under-achieving students. They have had some success in improving the performance of some lower-achieving students, but more work remains. The school recognizes that they will need to take specific actions to address any gaps revealed by these analyses. There are pockets of best practices in the differentiation of instructional activities to match strategies with specific student needs. For example, special education and English language learners receive good support and careful differentiated instruction. However, they have yet to be embedded and shared collaboratively across the school. An example of this is the inconsistent focus on high-achieving students and the use of technology to address individual student learning styles and plans to address differentiated instruction. School-wide planning lacks rigor and there is a lack of consistency in using data to inform instructional decisions. The quality of instruction across the school is not yet at a consistently high level. The enthusiasm, vision, energy, drive and singular focus of the principal, with good support from the teachers and staff, give this school great capacity for continued improvement.

Part 2: Overview

What the school does well

- Through the principal's strong leadership, the vision of the school is clear and reflects the needs and aspirations of its students. (2.4, 5.4)
- The school effectively conveys high academic expectations to students and their parents, which contributes positively to ongoing student performance. (2.4)
- Parents are supportive of the school and are well informed about the progress of their children. (1.3)
- The school provides frequent opportunities for teachers to meet collaboratively both at the grade and department levels and to observe and learn from each other to improve their instructional practice. (4.2)
- The school provides support for special education students and English language learners that allow them to make good progress. (1.2)

What the school needs to improve

- Enhance the climate for learning within the school by displaying student work in all classrooms and in the halls to provide exemplar work to which students can aspire. (2.4)
- Ensure that there is a high degree of consistency between and within departments in terms of setting individual student and class goals. (2.1, 2.3, 5.2)
- Revisit the work started to establish greater uniformity of practice in the collection of data to monitor and track student performance. (1.4)
- Make more rigorous and consistent use of data pertaining to student academic outcomes to plan for continued student achievement. (5.1)
- Consistently challenge and monitor the progress for the highest-achieving students in every class. (3.2)

Part 3: Main Findings

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

Quality Statement 1 – Gather Data: School leaders and faculty consistently gather, generate and analyze information on student learning outcomes and use it to understand what each student knows and can do and to monitor the student's progress over time.

This area of the school's work is proficient.

The school collects various sources of data, including attendance figures, State assessments in all core subjects and Acuity reading and math assessments in order to gauge student performance. This enables administration and faculty to track the progress of all students in a range of areas. Many teachers are new to the school and the accountability initiatives, and in response, the school has devised a system to support teachers by providing a variety of professional development opportunities to meet their needs.

There is a collaborative approach to analyzing and gathering data. Classroom teachers work together to review and use this information to evaluate and make adjustments to class section placement, for example when the students are being moved among the homogeneous grouping structure to separate classes and programs to gain additional instructional time.

The school uses data effectively to identify students for specific intervention programs. For example, the school identified average changes in student proficiency for Levels 3 to Level 4 students and boys' achievement in English language arts as areas for improvement. In response, the school has taken steps to introduce the Renzulli Schoolwide Enrichment Model and purchased new resources to appeal to boys. The school is tracking the impact of these initiatives to assist in planning future intervention strategies, although it is still too early to measure their full effect. A focus on using data to support improved academic performance of the small number of special education and English language learner students is in place. Teachers carefully monitor and review their class work to make instructional adjustments. The fact that all English language learners and special education students have been promoted, attests to the academic interventions that have been offered. The school continuously informs parents about their children's progress through formal and informal means. They feel comfortable with the communication system in place in the school.

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 with proficient features.

The school opened during the 2007-2008 school year and is still organizing and developing leadership structures. The principal has set several goals that help them

direct the school for the school term, however she has not set measurable benchmarks for each goal. These goals include increasing opportunities for students to participate in academic intervention services, expand methods for examining student work, and to deepen the work of the inquiry team to support improved student performance for the bottom third of students. Administration and faculty meet regularly to review progress and adjust programs and interventions accordingly. Regular conversations with teachers and common planning sessions provide good opportunities for the principal and teachers to review student academic progress and needs. Although teachers regularly check student progress towards long-term goals against benchmarks, no interim goals are set for students to measure their progress on long-term and grade goals.

The teachers, parents and students are able to discuss these goals and understand the importance of improving the overall student achievement. The school has been successful in underscoring high expectations to parents and students.

The principal participates weekly, on Fridays, in common planning meetings to keep abreast of grade and subject level instructional issues. She is working on developing the staff's knowledge of data collection and has facilitated staff training on how to analyze the data and use it to set goals for classes and individual students.

Quality Statement 3 – Develop Coherent Instructional and Organizational Strategies: The school uses rigorous curricula, teaching and organizational decision making to engage students and faculty in meeting all students' learning goals.

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

School leaders and faculty have reflected on the quality of the curriculum since the opening of the school in 2007. They are using the work of Dr. Heidi Hayes Jacobs, to create an instructional road map to support teachers in refining the curriculum. The school leaders recognize the need to further develop the curriculum in all the core subjects to engage and challenge students through rigorous and well-planned instruction. The principal has allocated resources to ensure that the school has a nurturing and supportive environment between adults and students by providing the school with additional support personnel. As the principal stated the support provided by the clinical social worker and the art therapist and the community based organization partnerships enrich the curriculum.

The ability of teachers to guide the curriculum offerings effectively are being addressed during common planning meetings and well-designed professional development opportunities are offered. The Renzulli Learning Differentiation Engine is an example of a program the principal touts as undergirding teachers' ability to differentiate instruction to meet the individual needs of students.

The growing responsiveness of the school to students' academic and social needs is resulting in an increase in trust and respect for learning by students. Students mentioned a number of positive comments about the support given by staff and the principal, feel that the school cares for, and listen to them.

The attendance teacher who regularly visits the homes of chronically absent and truant students is addressing attendance and punctuality conscientiously. Systems are in

place to accentuate and reward positive attendance trends. An example is a bulletin board display highlighting schoolwide attendance data.

Quality Statement 4 - Align Capacity Building to Goals: The school aligns its leadership development and structured professional collaboration around meeting the school's goals for accelerating student learning.

This area of the school's work is proficient.

The school continues to grow in the understanding of its current strengths and weaknesses. The principal knows her staff well and continues to observe instruction regularly, providing meaningful feedback, to ensure that there is continuous momentum to improve. The Inquiry Team analyzed summative and formative data and selected the target population. The target population consisted of 35 sixth and seventh grade students who are performing poorly in literacy and math. The team is working to examine the conditions of learning to better understand how to improve specific student outcomes. The team collaborates with classroom teachers so they can reinforce the strategies during the regular school day, extended day and during Saturday Academy. The team works well collaboratively and has a system for helping students improve academically.

Teachers place great value on modeling, mentoring and providing instructional feedback. School leaders recognize where procedures such as these have positive influence on school growth. The use and understanding of data, differentiating instruction, developing are priorities for the school and have been addressed over the year by professional development. Teachers work together in teams, for example, with common planning time in core subjects. This time is used for professional development, for examining students' work and for encouraging teachers to share their experiences and ideas. Some systems have not been as successful and leaders have been courageous enough to make immediate changes. For example, the school adapted its class schedules and organization where necessary to improve opportunities for students to maximize student achievement. Nevertheless, school leaders recognize that the sharing of best practices enables staff to focus on learning in an organized and continuous fashion.

Quality Statement 5 - Monitor and Revise: The school has structures for monitoring and 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 with proficient features.

The school has good structures for evaluating the progress of inquiry students. Data binders are compiled by grade with samples of student work gathered from extended day and classroom instruction. This enables teacher to see clearly what progress has been made and where additional support is required. This does not happen consistently in all core subjects, although folders of students' work were available in the foreign language classes and for the target population students.

The school community has a clear vision for the school, in terms of ensuring that students are able to succeed in a rigorous curriculum and ultimately directed on a path to enroll in a four-year college. Teachers and administrators know all students very well

and use this information to support their focus of student progress throughout the year. However, there is no detailed written plan for how any goals are achieved.

The principal and coordinator/mentor are a strong team and together have begun to identify the strengths and weaknesses of the school to support future planning. They have established a collaborative and open culture, which encourages all staff to contribute to this process. The administrative team uses a range of data effectively, including surveys and student comments, to change systems, revise groupings, and to determine student support and professional development. However, procedures for monitoring the success of goals lack sufficient clarity and focus. At present, interim data is not available in an easily accessible form in most content areas to enable the leadership to regularly evaluate the progress of individuals, groups and classes. As a result, it is challenging to adjust goals or strategies with any accuracy to measure success or hold teachers accountable for student academic outcomes.

Curriculum mapping is developing and is now a collaborative activity. However, there are still too many variations across the school about how to identify core skills and content taught. The principal indicated that, once completed, the curriculum-mapping project will offer a process for documenting these efforts. In addition, all grade levels and subject areas objectives will provide the basis for supporting academic rigor and the quality of instruction.

School name: Knowledge and Power Preparatory Academy VII	△	➤	✓	+
Overall QR Score		X		
Quality Statement 1 – Gather Data: School leaders and faculty consistently gather, generate and analyze information on student learning outcomes and use it to understand what each student knows and can do, and to monitor the student’s progress over time.				
<i>To what extent do school leaders and faculty regularly...</i>	△	➤	✓	+
1.1 collect and analyze actionable information, including assessment results and attendance data, to provide a complete view of the learning outcomes and needs of individual students and groupings of students?			X	
1.2 focus analysis on the learning outcomes and needs of all sub-groups of students?			X	
1.3 engage in an open exchange of information with students and families about students’ learning needs and outcomes, including assessment results and attendance data?			X	
1.4 design or adapt tools to enable school leaders and teachers to organize and analyze student performance, identify trends and inform instructional and organizational decisions, and to enable students and their families to assess and track each student’s progress?		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 student’s learning.				
<i>To what extent do school leaders and faculty...</i>	△	➤	✓	+
2.1 use collaborative and data-informed processes to set measurable, actionable and differentiated learning goals in core subjects for individual students and groupings of students and develop differentiated plans and timeframes for reaching these goals?		X		
2.2 use collaborative and data-informed processes to develop the school’s Comprehensive Educational Plan (CEP)?			X	
2.3 ensure that the achievement of learning goals, and the implementation of plans and timeframes for reaching these goals, is the central focus of school leaders, faculty, students and families?		X		
2.4 communicate high expectations to all students and families, and involve students in developing their learning goals and plans and in taking their next learning steps?		X		
Overall score for Quality Statement 2		X		

DEFINITIONS

“**Analyze**” or “**analysis**” includes, but is not limited to, comparisons of:

- the current and past outcomes of . . . individual students, administrative groupings and sub-groups of students and the school itself in core subjects;
- the outcomes of different classrooms and sub-groups in the same grades and core subjects; and
- the school’s Progress Report and other outcomes to those of peer/other schools

“**Assessment results**” include student outcomes on summative assessments (e.g., state ELA, math, science and social studies tests, NYSESLAT, Regents Exams, and Performance Based Assessment Tasks) and formative assessments aligned to the school’s curriculum (including Periodic, DYO, and teacher-developed Classroom Assessments).

“**Core subjects**” are ELA, math, science, social studies/history, the arts, foreign language, and physical education/health.

“**Data-informed processes**” include analysis of Progress Report, Quality Review, Learning Environment Survey, Inquiry Team findings, assessment results and attendance data

“**Groupings of students**” include classrooms, grade levels and high school cohorts.

“**Organizational decisions or strategies**” refer to a school’s use of budget and resources, staffing, planning, scheduling, grade structure, departments and teacher teams and other aspects of the school’s structure and organization that can affect student outcomes.

“**Sub-groups of students**” include special education students, English Language Learners, the other NCLB sub-groups, boys, girls, and other groups significant to the school.

Quality Statement 3 – Develop Coherent Instructional and Organizational Strategies: The school uses rigorous curricula, teaching and organizational decision making to engage students and faculty in meeting all students’ learning goals.

<i>To what extent do ...</i>	Δ	➤	✓	+
3.1 school leaders and faculty deliver challenging and engaging curricula in core subjects, including the arts, that are aligned to state standards?		X		
3.2 teachers plan and teach lessons that are differentiated to meet the needs of individual students and student groupings and are designed to enable all students to reach their learning goals?		X		
3.3 school leaders make strategic organizational decisions to support a coherent and rigorous instructional approach that enables students to reach their learning goals?		X		
3.4 school leaders maintain a culture of mutual trust and respect and positive attitudes toward learning that support the academic and personal growth of students and adults?			X	
Overall score for Quality Statement 3		X		

Quality Statement 4 – Align Capacity Building to Goals: The school aligns its leadership development and structured professional collaboration around meeting the school’s goals for accelerating student learning.

<i>To what extent do school leaders...</i>	Δ	➤	✓	+
4.1 use their own observation of classroom teaching and the analysis of student outcomes to implement an explicit, differentiated strategy to improve each teacher’s instruction, with a special focus on new teachers?			X	
4.2 encourage teachers to take part in Inquiry Teams and other structured professional collaborations (informed by the examination of student work, assessment outcomes and their own peer observations) and share in the instructional leadership of the school with the goal of improved student learning?			X	
4.3 provide professional development that encourages teachers to continuously evaluate and revise their classroom practices to improve student outcomes?		X		
4.4 utilize youth development, support services and partnerships with families and outside organizations to accelerate the academic and personal growth of students?			X	
Overall score for Quality Statement 4			X	

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

<i>To what extent do...</i>	Δ	➤	✓	+
5.1 the school’s plans for improving student outcomes and its strategies for improving each teacher’s instructional practices include measurable interim goals and suitable time frames for evaluating success and making adjustments during the year?		X		
5.2 school leaders and faculty use interim checkpoints and data to inform lessons, improve curriculum, differentiate instruction and revise student learning plans throughout the year?		X		
5.3 school leaders use data to regularly evaluate the effectiveness of and modify organizational decisions, structured professional collaborations and teacher improvement strategies?			X	
5.4 school leaders and the school community have a clear vision for the future development of the school and implement procedures and systems to support academic, personal and professional growth?			X	
Overall score for Quality Statement 5		X		

Quality Review Scoring Key							
Δ	Underdeveloped	➤	Underdeveloped with Proficient Features	✓	Proficient	+	Well Developed