

# Quality Review Report 2008-2009

**Knowledge and Power Preparatory Academy**

**International High School 374**

**500 East Fordham Road  
Bronx  
NY 10458**

**Principal: Panorea Panangiosoulis**

**Dates of review: April 30 - May 1, 2009**

**Lead Reviewer: Doris Unger**

## Part 1: The school context

### Information about the school

KAPPA is a high school with 221 students in grades 9 and 10. The school population comprises 35.7% Black, 59.6% Hispanic, 1.8% Asian and 1.8% students of other backgrounds. The student body includes 6.9% English language learners and 8.3% special education students. Boys account for 46.8% of the students enrolled and girls account for 53.2%. The average attendance rate for the school year 2007 - 2008 was 94.2%. The school is in receipt of Title 1 funding with 60% eligibility.

### Overall Evaluation

#### This school is well developed

The school community shares a passion and commitment to serving its KAPPA scholars. Staff regularly communicate with each other about the academic, as well as social and emotional issues that students may be facing. They share these concerns, as well as successes, with parents on an ongoing basis. The principal and teachers meet formally and informally to update each other about student progress, compare data and share anecdotal information to revisit and revise students' short-term and long-term goals. Students are encouraged to actively participate in the process of identifying and monitoring their learning. The analysis of data, in addition to student input, results in informed decision-making with regard to lesson planning, curriculum writing and programming. KAPPA recently went through a rigorous application process and has gained acceptance as an International Baccalaureate (IB) school. Parents and students alike articulate the pride they have in being part of KAPPA, a school that sets high expectations for their scholars in the academic and social arena. One parent compared it to "a private school education in a public school". Another described it as having "won a lottery ticket" when her child was accepted to KAPPA.

The principal and her staff embrace IB principles and have designed a curriculum around IB standards and requirements for graduation. KAPPA is a nurturing environment that encourages its student to be active and reflective participants in their educational experience. Students understand that they have academic as well as social responsibilities, and that the expectation is to strive for excellence. Students voluntarily opt for additional courses during their 'free-periods' to accelerate, attend after-school tutorials, and participate in school sponsored activities in the evenings and weekends. The students enjoy the rigor and camaraderie that KAPPA provides. Through IB, the students take high level courses that culminate in examinations comparable to Advanced Placement exams. The school is an exemplar of a professional learning community, continuously looking for ways to improve student outcomes. This culture is possible only because of the trust and respect that each member of the community has for each other, the principal, staff, students and parents. The school has contracted experts in the field of differentiated instruction to work with them to add to and enhance their repertoire of skills. The teaching staff is made up largely of young professionals who have had a maximum of 2 years teaching experience and yet have been able to incorporate differentiation in their lesson planning. Even so, the school recognizes this as an area in need of further growth.

## Part 2: Overview

### What the school does well

- The principal and her instructional team thoroughly analyze data, including assessment results and attendance data in all subjects and discuss this information with students and their families.
- The instructional team use collaborative and data driven processes to identify areas of student need, to develop differentiated plans and to establish timeframes for reaching their learning goals.
- The school communicates high expectations to all students and families.
- There is a culture of mutual trust and respect and positive attitudes toward learning that support the academic growth of students and staff.
- The school is a professional learning community that engages in inquiry that routinely evaluates and modifies organizational decisions alongside sharing instructional leadership with the goal of improving student learning.
- The school community has a clear vision for the future development of the school as an International Baccalaureate School
- Students and parents have access to immediate feedback through the school website, electronic access to attendance and report card information and direct contact with the principal and her staff by telephone.

### What the school needs to improve

- Improve instructional practices through inter-visitation between teachers to study and enhance implementation of differentiation strategies.
- Use leader's observation of classroom teaching and analysis of teacher data more precisely to construct professional collaborations with a focus on teacher improvement strategies.
- Design and adapt tools to organize and analyze student performance and trends to establish a structure for the development of the school's Comprehensive Educational Plan as the school grows to capacity.

## 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 well developed**

The entire school community is involved in the collection and analysis of data in every subject area. The principal provides common planning time for teachers to meet during and after school. Teachers meet regularly to talk about KAPPA scholars with regard to their attendance, class work and test results. During department meetings, teachers discuss and analyze data specific to their subject matter, conducting item analyses in classes that culminate in Regents examinations. At grade team meetings, teachers look at the curriculum to ensure that there is a scaffolding of skills from grade to grade, which will become increasingly important as the school grows. Teachers have an opportunity to learn more about their students through the advisory period. Staff share information about their scholars during kids-talk sessions when they can attach the social-emotional needs of youngsters to their academic needs. The school has conducted an analysis of its scholars by sub-populations, examining trends by gender, looking for patterns based on ethnicity, their special education students and English language learners. They have determined that there is no significant difference in attendance, performance or outcomes among subgroups. However they do monitor the data regularly to ensure that there are no spikes or dips in the performance of any of these subgroups.

Staff and students meet formally and informally to identify academic strengths and weaknesses and to set goals in all areas that are recorded in each scholar's Individual Academic Plan (IAP). The information is shared with parents. Parent feedback and follow-up conferencing by appointment is welcome as families are true partners in creating their child's IAP. The principal has an open door policy with regard to parents, teachers and students and is always willing to meet with any and all parties, making herself available any day of the week and any time of day. Staff respond to the data by acting on the information and modifying instructional strategies, providing one-on-one as well as group tutoring during and after school, reaching out to parents and making appropriate referrals. The school has not yet put formal structures in place, such as a ladder of referral, to meet the needs of a larger student body as the school grows to include an 11<sup>th</sup> and eventually 12<sup>th</sup> grade.

**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**

KAPPA has adapted a school-wide grading policy. Expectations for behavior, attendance, class participation and test results are specifically identified. The policy is further supported by the work of grade teams and the content area teams through a written curriculum, the use of common rubrics and a calendar of checkpoints. Teachers

created these policies and procedures to monitor effectiveness of practice, to identify and scaffold skill sets and to ensure consistency in expectation in the quality of student work. Reflective of their specific student program, each student has an IAP that states his/her long term goals in each subject area, inclusive of interim benchmarks for reaching those goals. Although it is an academic plan, in consultation with a parent, teacher or guidance counselor, students may have attendance improvement as a goal on their IAP. Part of the action plan for this situation may be a daily signature from the parent in the student's notebook, a daily telephone call or email from the school or a weekly check-in with the social worker.

Through the examination of several sources of data, teachers create differentiated instructional plans for individual students or groups of students within classrooms. Students who are proficient in the knowledge base or skill being taught are provided with enrichment material, reading assignments at a higher level or an alternate assignment that requires higher level thinking. Other "next steps" that KAPPA staff recommend to their students is to attend after-school instruction or Saturday classes. One-to-one tutoring is recommended when there are specific skills that need attention. Mock Regents examinations are used as a predictive and serve to identify areas of concentration that may need additional time to re-teach, alongside building test stamina and familiarizing students with the exam itself. Kappa uses this data to determine and examine pacing and will modify curriculum accordingly.

The principal is committed to a bottom-up structure and encourages all to be involved in creating the Comprehensive Education Plan. The principal expects the KAPPA community, including students and parents, to take part in forming the KAPPA of tomorrow. The leadership listens to all voices in the community when making decisions regarding academics and organization for the school. All constituents are invited to participate in planning the course offerings, electives and after-school programs. Although there is cooperation and a good participation level, the development of the CEP is not yet a fully data-informed process.

**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 well developed**

School leaders and faculty deliver challenging and engaging curricula in all subjects, aligned to New York State standards. The school extends this level of rigor by designing courses that prepare students for the IB curriculum, a global standard for rigorous instruction. In the beginning of the year, the faculty develops course outlines for each subject that is aligned with New York State standards, while meeting IB learning goals.

Teachers analyze diagnostic data that informs initial student groupings and identify entry points. They have conversations with students that further help teachers identify learning styles, student strengths and weaknesses with regard to skills and sub-skills. In all subjects, students are offered project menus that provide the range of opportunities for students to actively participate. Students, in consultation with their teachers, choose projects by interest, reading levels, and learning style. In all subjects, students are provided with supplemental text available at various reading levels and teachers regularly provide feedback that informs students of their progress towards their goals. As a result, all students are carefully monitored to ensure good and consistent progress.

The school-wide grading policy reflects and supports the message that there are high expectations. Students engage in the process of goal setting by actively participating in the development of their own IAP's. The KAPPA staff is committed to delivering a high level of rigor and supporting students to meet the challenges that this brings. Students are committed to themselves and to the school to meet these high levels of expectation. KAPPA students wear their school uniforms with pride.

During the Spring Retreat, parents, faculty and students constructed a list of "instructional non-negotiable", strategies to support student success in the classroom. In all classes, one will find SWBAT (Students will be able to), a formative assessment at the end of each block, the use of "exit slips" to ensure understanding of concepts taught, the instructional objective clearly posted and a word wall to support vocabulary development. Additionally, each household will receive a minimum of 1 telephone call from each teacher per marking period. These consistently applied strategies are having very positive impact on student outcomes. Students who achieve beyond the checkpoints are offered enrichment opportunities. In music, scholars who have a background in music are invited to participate in the Composer's Society where they have multiple opportunities to deepen their experiences in instrumental and vocal music without pulling them out of music class. The music department prepares packets for students who struggle in the area of music. These include graphic organizers and guided questions that support their learning and respond to the fact that they are less exposed to music.

Flexibility in programming and the push to provide opportunities for scholars to accelerate is evidenced in the fact that a Math B class was created in the Spring semester to accommodate those who were excelling in Math A. The school placed students, on a voluntary basis, in Math B while they were concurrently completing the Math A curriculum. Using the results of Mock Regents examinations as a predictive and doing an item analysis, the teacher was able to identify areas of weakness and was then able to determine specific next learning steps for each student.

Parents and caregivers, scholars and staff share a feeling of respect and trust for one other, embrace diversity and possess positive attitudes towards learning. All students are engaged in writing their own SMART goals as part of the IAP. The school invites all KAPPA scholars to participate an annual trip abroad.

**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 well developed**

The principal has built a culture of collaboration and encourages teachers to take leadership roles. As such, leadership development is embedded. Teachers have volunteered to serve in leadership roles on the inquiry team, grade teams, within their departments and as members of the School Leadership Team. Professional development is teacher driven and is focused around accelerating student learning through the development and implementation of strong pedagogical practices, sharing out and reflection. The teachers themselves have developed rubrics for bulletin boards, rubrics for looking at student work, and templates for learning walks and inter-visitations. The administration provides common planning time during which this work can happen. Additionally, teachers volunteer time to meet after school and during their free periods to continue their conversations.

Teachers identify their own professional performance goals and, in consultation with the principal, develop their own professional development agenda for the year. Many teachers identify differentiation of instruction as an area that they would like to improve. The school's support organization provides a staff developer to focus on this area on a bi-monthly basis. The school has contracted with outside experts and consultants to work with the KAPPA staff to enhance their practices. The principal selects and tailors professional development with individual teacher needs, as well as entire staff needs in mind.

Inquiry work is embedded in teacher practices at KAPPA. The inquiry team serves as the model for the work of the classroom teacher. Teachers have adopted this model and have become fluent and very proficient at analyzing and interpreting data. They consistently look at data to guide their instructional decisions, to create appropriate groupings, to monitor student progress and to maximize opportunities to address individual student needs. They also use this information to reflect on their own pedagogical practices and to assess their teaching effectiveness.

Teachers and students establish personal goals that further support academic success. This element is inclusive to their IAP's as part of the school's Comprehensive Education Plan. The school makes students and their families aware of internal, as well as external, support services. The school social worker makes referrals to partner organizations such as Montefiore hospital. KAPPA is an AVID school, meaning that they follow a curriculum that addresses esteem issues, teaches conflict resolution and introduces time management and stress reduction strategies. KAPPA is a nurturing environment that encourages scholars to reach beyond mediocrity and produces confident and motivated young people. Scholars know to reach out to their peers, as well as to adults in the building for both academic and emotional support.

**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 proficient**

The principal is a committed instructional leader with a clear vision towards the pursuit of providing academic excellence. She communicates her vision regularly to the entire school community at all meetings and Parent Teacher conferences. Her message is in the student handbook, as well as on the school website that all parents can access. School leaders establish and design rigorous and measurable interim goals for all the school's instructional practices, regularly evaluating success and modifying timelines or strategies as needed. They consistently analyze data for the purpose of improving student outcomes. The entire school community uses this data for the early identification of students in need of interventions as well as the identification of students in need of accelerated learning opportunities. The KAPPA community meets weekly to discuss individual student progress.

KAPPA staff take pride in their students' accomplishments because they have taken ownership of this work. Many have taken on leadership roles and engage in thoughtful discussion about strengthening their systems in anticipation of gaining 11<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> graders. School leaders have very high expectations for themselves and of their scholars, working tirelessly to develop and implement strategies for further improvement. Everyone works in total collaboration to develop, implement and realize the vision for academic excellence.

# School Quality Criteria 2008-2009

<b>School name: KAPPA High School</b>	Δ	➤	✓	+
<b>Overall QR Score</b>				<b>X</b>
<b>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.</b>				
<i>To what extent do school leaders and faculty regularly...</i>	Δ	➤	✓	+
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?				<b>X</b>
1.2 focus analysis on the learning outcomes and needs of all sub-groups of students?				<b>X</b>
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?				<b>X</b>
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?			<b>X</b>	
<b>Overall score for Quality Statement 1</b>				<b>X</b>
<b>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.</b>				
<i>To what extent do school leaders and faculty...</i>	Δ	➤	✓	+
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?				<b>X</b>
2.2 use collaborative and data-informed processes to develop the school’s Comprehensive Educational Plan (CEP)?			<b>X</b>	
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?				<b>X</b>
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?				<b>X</b>
<b>Overall score for Quality Statement 2</b>				<b>X</b>

## 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.**

To what extent do ...	△	➤	✓	+
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
<b>Overall score for Quality Statement 3</b>				
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.**

To what extent do school leaders...	△	➤	✓	+
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
<b>Overall score for Quality Statement 4</b>				
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.**

To what extent do ...	△	➤	✓	+
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
<b>Overall score for Quality Statement 5</b>				
X				

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