

# **Quality Review Report**

## **2009-2010**

**Kappa V**

**Middle School 518**  
**985 Rockaway Avenue**  
**Brooklyn**  
**NY 11212**

**Principal: Dellie Edwards**

**Dates of review: November 9 - 10, 2009**

**Lead Reviewer: Michael L. Schurek**

## Part 1: The school context

### Information about the school

Kappa V is a middle school with 263 students from grade 6 through grade 8. The school population comprises 89% Black, 9% Hispanic and 1% Asian students. The student body includes less than 1% English language learners and 22% special education students. Boys account for 47% of the students enrolled and girls account for 53%. The average attendance rate for the school year 2008 - 2009 was 95%.

### Overall Evaluation

#### **This school is proficient.**

The principal has established a welcoming and positive atmosphere which permeates the school's hallways and classrooms. Students, staff and parents work cooperatively to provide a respectful and nurturing learning environment which has resulted in high attendance rates and increasing standardized test scores. Communication with parents has improved over the past year resulting in more opportunities for parents to contribute ideas. Many teachers are now using Engrade, an online system to assist parents in monitoring their child's progress and goals, allowing parents to become partners and actively assist their children in the achievement of their learning goals.

Data is routinely gathered at the classroom and school levels and disaggregated in the areas of English language arts and math to identify trends and areas of need. In addition to informing instruction, this data is used to formulate goals and target academic intervention in small group tutorials and individually designed classroom push-in/pull-out activities so that students receive support that is tailored effectively to their needs. However, the school has not yet expanded this practice to social studies where test scores lag behind. Curriculum teams have begun to use inquiry to solve identified problems although this practice is not sufficiently focused on finding ways to raise student achievement. These collaborations have, however, provided a forum for teachers to share effective techniques and, as a result, good practice has spread more widely across all grades and curriculums.

The current curriculum is standards based but is not sufficiently differentiated to challenge all students. Higher-achievers have academic goals but they are not provided with specific next learning steps to raise the quality of their work in all subjects. The school uses beginning-of, middle-of and end-of-year assessments in English language arts and math to monitor and evaluate progress and make program adjustments as needed, such as changing student tutorial groups, and this has resulted in a decrease in the numbers of level 1 and level 2 students.

The administration has created effective tools, such as the "snapshot sheet", to help teachers identify their own strengths and weaknesses. This has led to professional development activities that are closely matched to staff and school needs. Classroom inter-visitations and learning walks have led to an increase of effective practices such as cooperative learning. The principal's collaborative approach has secured the full support of staff. By harnessing their readiness to adjust and improve their practice the school is well on the way to raising student achievement.

## Part 2: Overview

### What the school does well

- The school has developed well-honed strategies to establish a respectful environment where students learn and are encouraged to grow socially and emotionally.
  - The school organizes biweekly grade-level formation meetings. Students recite the school's creed, receive valuable information about school programs and events, and teachers celebrate students' progress. This ensures that students stay motivated and well-focused on their learning and flourish in their personal growth.
  - Students indicate that teachers know them well. The resulting culture of mutual trust and support, underpinned by teachers' generous personal commitment, helps ensure that students grow both personally and academically.. One student shared that, "The teachers will even help you on their free time."
- Administrators use a wide range of assessment data to monitor school-level performance trends and student progress and identify needs, develop effective academic intervention services for students in need of additional support and keep parents better informed of progress.
  - The school administers benchmark diagnostic tests at the beginning, middle and end of year in order to identify students' needs. This ensures that students are placed on the most appropriate of the school's varied intervention programs to meet their needs.
  - The teachers' use of an online system, accessible to parents, to monitor student progress and goals. As a result parents have become more closely involved in helping students reach their goals.
- The administrative team has established effective systems for monitoring teaching practice with a clear focus on improving instructional practice.
  - Administrators visit each teacher's classroom twice per week and use the 'On-the-Spot' snapshot sheet to provide immediate feedback to staff. This practice, along with formal observations, is used to identify teachers' strengths and weaknesses and has enabled the school to differentiate professional development for individuals and groups of teachers. As a result instructional practice, such as the inclusion of more hands-on activities in the new science lab, has spread more widely and student learning has improved.
  - Teachers and administrators regularly conduct learning walks and, as a result, they have identified areas of academic rigor on which to build further.
- Professional collaboration is high priority and faculty members profit from varied opportunities to share and develop strengths as individuals and members of the teaching community.

- Regularly scheduled biweekly curriculum teacher team meetings, led by the principal, provide opportunities for faculty members to discuss and share best practices. These sessions establish a forum for improvement, build collegial trust and result in a strong and cohesive instructional team.
- Through a variety of processes, teachers learn and share good practice. For example, administrators teach student classes on a daily basis to model effective classroom practices, teachers have regular opportunities to attend differentiated professional development sessions and the on-site UFT center coach provides professional development based on their needs. In addition, teachers are encouraged to lead professional development activities as an outgrowth of their team meeting discussions and observation feedback, which develops distributive leadership, empowers teachers and boosts morale.
- Individual and groups of students identified with particular needs benefit from targeted, caring support according to their needs and so achieve success.
  - Intervention services including individual and group tutorials as well as push-in and pull-out activities, have yielded a decrease in students performing on Levels 1 and 2, and an increase of Level 3 achievers in recent English language arts and math standardized exams.
  - Teachers make good use of periodic assessment and bi-weekly classroom assessments to track student progress, providing information which administrators use to initiate or modify the intervention services for their students. As a result, the school reacts flexibly and to students' changing needs and ensures that they are supported by the most appropriate of the school's various intervention services to meet their current needs.
- The principal's positive leadership, embraced by staff, is a driving force for change, encouraging continual reflection on progress towards goals and resulting in programs which are responsive to student need and focused on improving student performance. (5.3)
  - The school has recently adjusted its use of the extended-day time to emphasize the development of basic skills in math and English language arts in order to better meet student needs.
  - The principal has created a 'How Am I Doing' survey which seeks their feedback on her performance. This models and encourages teachers to seek and act on feedback from their colleagues, improve their own practice and meet their professional goals.

## What the school needs to improve

- Promote greater consistency in differentiated instruction based on data so that lessons reflect purposeful groupings, students are challenged, tasks accommodate different learning styles and questioning extends thinking so that student learning is maximized.
  - The school does not provide reading material at varying degrees of difficulty in English language arts classes to match students' reading levels and support their literacy development. Current practice whereby an entire classes read the same novel at one time using 'round robin' reading techniques does not challenge higher achievers sufficiently or meet the needs of others, especially lower achievers.
  - Learning tasks are not differentiated or matched to student need which leads to uneven levels of students' engagement. For example, students in some humanities, special education and math classes sit in groups performing the exact same tasks with low levels of interaction and engagement.
- Extend the school's practice of disaggregating English language arts and math data to social studies to identify trends in student performance to enhance content area classroom practices and raise student achievement.
  - While the school has effective practice in analyzing and using student data to drive improvements in English language arts and mathematics, this is not a practice in social studies. Since the gains made in scores on the standardized social studies exam are lower than on the English language arts exams, the school should disaggregate the data to find out why and remedy the situation.
- Expand the use of rubrics in the classrooms to provide consistent feedback to students with detailed reasons for their success and clear next steps for improvement to help them set and achieve their goals
  - Teachers in all grades and subjects use rubrics to display student project work in the hallways; however, too few of the rubrics are used to rate work and indicate next learning steps for students. As a consequence, students miss opportunities to raise the quality of their work through reflective practice and explicit suggestions for improvement.
- Use the inquiry process during teacher team collaborations to develop specific strategies to improve instruction and student outcomes.
  - School administrators and teachers engage in biweekly teacher team meetings to discuss individuals and groups of students; however, the teams do not look at student work to develop classroom strategies that improve student achievement.

## Part 3: School Quality Criteria 2009-2010

School name: Kappa V	Δ	▷	✓	+
<b>Overall QR Score</b>			<b>X</b>	
<b>Quality Statement 1 – Instructional and Organizational Coherence: The school has a coherent strategy to support student learning that aligns curriculum, instruction and organizational decisions.</b>				
<i>To what extent does the school regularly...</i>	Δ	▷	✓	+
1.1 Design engaging, rigorous and coherent curricula, including the Arts, for a variety of learners and aligned to key State standards?			<b>X</b>	
1.2 Develop teacher pedagogy from a coherent set of beliefs about how students learn best, and ensure that it is: aligned to the curriculum, engaging, and differentiated to enable all students to produce meaningful work products?		<b>X</b>		
1.3 Make strategic organizational decisions to support the school's instructional goals and meet student learning needs?			<b>X</b>	
1.4 Maintain a culture of mutual trust and positive attitudes toward learning that support the academic and personal growth of students and adults?				<b>X</b>
<b>Overall score for Quality Statement 1</b>			<b>X</b>	
<b>Quality Statement 2 – Gather and Analyze Data: School leaders and faculty consistently gather, analyze and share information on student learning outcomes to understand school and student progress over time.</b>				
<i>To what extent does the school ...</i>	Δ	▷	✓	+
2.1 Gather and analyze information on student learning outcomes to identify trends, strengths, and areas of need at the school level?			<b>X</b>	
2.2 Gather and analyze information on student learning outcomes to identify trends, strengths, and areas of need at the team and classroom level?			<b>X</b>	
2.3 Use or develop tools to enable school leaders and teachers to organize and analyze student performance trends?		<b>X</b>		
2.4 Engage in an open exchange of information with students and families regarding students' learning needs and outcomes?			<b>X</b>	
<b>Overall score for Quality Statement 2</b>			<b>X</b>	

<b>Quality Statement 3 – Plan and Set Goals: School leaders and faculty consistently engage the school community and use data to set and track suitably high goals for accelerating student learning.</b>							
<i>To what extent does the school ...</i>	Δ	➤	✓	+			
3.1 Establish a coherent vision of future development that is reflected in a short list of focused, data-based goals that are understood and supported by the entire school community?			X				
3.2 Use collaborative and data informed processes to set measurable and differentiated learning goals for student subgroups, and students in need of additional support?			X				
3.3 Ensure the achievement of learning goals by tracking progress at the school, teacher team and classroom level?			X				
3.4 Communicate high expectations to students and families, engage them in decision-making, and promote active involvement in the school community?			X				
<b>Overall score for Quality Statement 3</b>			X				
<b>Quality Statement 4 – Align Capacity Building: The school aligns its leadership development and structured professional collaboration around meeting the school’s goals and student learning and emotional needs.</b>							
<i>To what extent does the school...</i>	Δ	➤	✓	+			
4.1 Use the observation of classroom teaching and the analysis of learning outcomes to elevate school-wide instructional practices and implement strategies that promote professional growth and reflection, with a special focus on new teachers?			X				
4.2 Engage in structured professional collaborations on teams using an inquiry approach that promotes shared leadership and focuses on improved student learning?		X					
4.3 Provide professional development that promotes independent and shared reflection, opportunities for leadership growth, and enables teachers to continuously evaluate and revise their classroom practices to improve learning outcomes?			X				
4.4 Integrate child/youth development, support services and partnerships with families and outside organizations with the school-wide goals to accelerate the academic and personal growth of students?			X				
<b>Overall score for Quality Statement 4</b>			X				
<b>Quality Statement 5 – Monitor and Revise: The school has structures for monitoring and evaluating progress throughout the year and for flexibly adapting plans and practices to meet its goals for accelerating learning.</b>							
<i>To what extent does the school...</i>	Δ	➤	✓	+			
5.1 Evaluate the quality of curricular, instructional and organizational decisions, making adjustments as needed to increase the coherence of policies and practices across the school?			X				
5.2 Evaluate systems for assessing students, organizing data, and sharing information with student and families, making adjustments as needed to increase the coherence of policies and practices across the school?			X				
5.3 Establish and sustain a transparent, collaborative system for measuring progress towards interim and long term goals and making adjustments during the year and over time?			X				
5.4 Use data to regularly evaluate the effectiveness of structured professional collaboration, capacity building and leadership development strategies?			X				
<b>Overall score for Quality Statement 5</b>			X				
<b>Quality Review Scoring Key</b>							
Δ	<b>Underdeveloped</b>	➤	<b>Underdeveloped with Proficient Features</b>	✓	<b>Proficient</b>	+	<b>Well Developed</b>