

Quality Review Report 2010-2011

The New Preparatory Academy

Middle School Q008

**108-35 167th Street
Queens
NY, 11433**

Principal: Angela Green

Dates of review: November 3 - 4, 2010

Lead Reviewer: Elyse Doti

Part 1: The school context

Information about the school

The New Preparatory Middle School is a middle school with 750 students from grade 6 through grade 8. The school population is comprised of 66% Black, 16% Hispanic, 1% White, and 12% Asian students. The student body includes 5% English language learners and 17% special education students. Boys account for 52% of the students enrolled and girls account for 48%. The average attendance rate for the school year 2009 - 2010 was 89%.

Overall Evaluation

This school is developing.

Part 2: Overview

What the school does well

- The principal makes strategic organizational decisions to support teachers in working collaboratively to meet the needs of their students.
 - The school funds a full time UFT Teacher Center professional developer to provide coaching and modeling for teachers and to support the alignment of the Inquiry Teams and Data Team to the vision and goals of the school. As a result, teachers feel supported in their work to meet the needs of their students.
 - The principal made a strategic decision to “core” classes which limits the number of students each content teacher works with. This year teachers work with approximately 60 students, nearly half as many as last year. As a result teachers are able to better focus in on the needs of their particular students and work to improve the development of challenging academic tasks for all learners.
- The principal and key staff members work as team to create a safe and orderly environment for learning to take place.
 - Students are known well by a variety of staff members at the school. The administration and youth development staff actively walk the halls during the transition of class. The principal greets students every morning outside the school and is present outside at dismissal each day. This concerted effort has led to a five percent reduction of infractions in and out of classroom. As a result students arrive to class more prepared to learn and “feel safer now than before.”
- Teachers benefit from structured collaborations which provide them opportunities to share ideas and best practices, with a desire to improve student outcomes.
 - Teachers across grades, content areas and academies meet as a data team to identify trends and resources to support student learning. Teachers within academies are programmed to meet as inquiry team members and in content area teams. These collaborations afford teachers an opportunity to look at student data, share practices and identify resources and materials for purchase to support learning for cohorts of students. Hence, teachers see themselves as key decision-makers and are motivated to take ownership of student learning.
- The administration and staff welcome and promote active engagement from parents and students in school-wide decision making in order to foster a stronger learning community.
 - The principals has opened the doors of the school to a team of parents who actively work with the new parent coordinator and two community associates to engage other parents in the school. Parents report that the principal has “never once said ‘no’ to any of their ideas or suggestions, including a campaign to make the school’s newly adopted motto, “Journey towards Excellence,” alive and known by the school community. As a result, parents feel strongly that their voice and ideas are welcomed and well represented in the school.

- Practical student support services and collaborations provide students with a wide range of opportunities to grow academically and socially
 - The principal consistently models strategies for positive student-adult interaction and organized professional development on peer mediation and conflict resolution. As a result, students report, “teachers treated students with more respect.”
 - The staff targets students for several programs, including a one-on-one student-adult mentoring initiative called the Safe Orderly Learning Environment Proud Choices program, Achieve Now for overage students and Success Academy for Level 1 students, in order to provide academic and social and emotional supports. These external and internal programs ensure that students’ academic and socio-emotional needs are addressed. Consequently, some students feel that they are making “smart decisions about [their] future.”

What the school needs to improve

- Expand the analysis of student data to better align the curriculum across content areas to identify key standards and concepts to accelerate learning toward the school-wide goals.
 - The school identified writing as a key standard to emphasize across content areas. This ensures that there is a unified instructional approach toward meeting the school-wide goal of increasing performance in English Language Arts. However, the school has not yet identified key standards in Math to assure that math instruction is focused and targeted to address the students’ specific Mathematical skill deficit areas. As a result, math instruction is not focused on accelerating developing students’ understanding of specific concepts and skills.
 - The school’s curricula and academic tasks are aligned to State standards. This ensures that students are offered standards-based instruction. However, academic learning experiences which require high levels of cognitive demand are inconsistent across classrooms and grades. Therefore, there is little opportunity for students to consistently engage in high order thinking skills in order to increase student achievement.
- Promote greater consistency in differentiated instruction based on data so that lesson planning reflects purposeful groupings, students are challenged, tasks accommodate different learning styles and questioning extends thinking, to maximize student learning at all levels.
 - The school’s use of the workshop model as an instructional approach is rooted in its belief that students learn best by “collaboratively doing the work.” This provides teachers with an instructional structure that supports students learning. However, there is little understanding and implementation of the key components of the workshop as a learning tool to ensure that students spend most of the time actively engaged in higher order critical thinking activities. As a result each child is not challenged to his or her highest level or empowered to own and engage in learning.
 - Many classrooms promote collaborative groupings and use it as a daily instructional strategy. This enables students to share learning experiences.

However, classroom practices have not yet begun to differentiate learning opportunities within these groupings based on unit level formative assessments in order to specifically address the learning needs of all students. Doing this would accelerate learning for targeted groups of students based on specific intervention strategies aligned to students current abilities.

- Develop a cohesive system of assessments to ensure that all teachers know the strengths and needs of individual and groups of students across all classrooms on an ongoing basis to support targeted instruction.
 - Teachers regularly use summative and periodic data, including State assessment and school-wide quiz results. This information is used to inform instruction. However, there is little evidence of teachers using unit assessment data to determine what students know and need to know about a unit of study. As a result, teachers do not have a clear portrait of individual students' strengths and areas of need to adjust instructional practices in order to accelerate student learning for sub groups and individual students.
- Refine and ensure that all goals include specific short and long term measurable outcomes to monitor progress for individual and groups of students.
 - The school uses periodic assessments to understand students' performance levels. However currently there is no clear process to use that data to measure the school's interim progress towards the school wide or teacher team goals. Developing a systematic approach to evaluate effectiveness would assist the school and teacher teams in making targeted adjustments and tracking benchmarked progress for subgroups and individual students towards all goals.
- Further expand the use of the school's observational tools to provide feedback to teachers that intentionally aligns teacher goals with school wide goals and professional development to ensure continued strategic improvements in all classrooms.
 - The principal currently has teachers self identify instructional goals. This provides teachers the opportunity to own their learning towards student outcomes. However, these goals are not strategically aligned to the school wide instructional goals or professional development and therefore learning experiences are not targeted to build teacher capacity in order to support instruction toward school wide goals. Similarly, a strategic alignment between school wide goals, individually identified teacher needs and professional development would create an opportunity to accelerate teacher learning that would directly impact student learning and progress towards school wide goals.

Part 3: School Quality Criteria 2010-2011

School name: The New Preparatory Academy	UD	D	P	WD
Overall QR Score		X		
Quality Statement 1 – Instructional and Organizational Coherence: The school has a coherent strategy to support student learning that aligns curriculum, instruction and organizational decisions.				
<i>To what extent does the school regularly...</i>	UD	D	P	WD
1.1 Design engaging, rigorous and coherent curricula, including the Arts, for a variety of learners and aligned to key State standards?		X		
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?		X		
1.3 Make strategic organizational decisions to support the school's instructional goals and meet student learning needs?		X		
1.4 Maintain a culture of mutual trust and positive attitudes toward learning that support the academic and personal growth of students and adults?		X		
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.				
<i>To what extent does the school ...</i>	UD	D	P	WD
2.1 Gather and analyze information on student learning outcomes to identify trends, strengths, and areas of need at the school level?		X		
2.2 Align assessments to curriculum and analyze information on student learning outcomes to adjust instructional decisions at the team and classroom level?		X		
2.3 Use or develop tools to enable school leaders and teachers to organize, aggregate, and analyze student performance trends?		X		
2.4 Engage in an open exchange of information with students and families regarding students' learning needs and outcomes?		X		

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.

<i>To what extent does the school ...</i>	UD	D	P	WD
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	

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.

<i>To what extent does the school...</i>	UD	D	P	WD
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		

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.

<i>To what extent does the school...</i>	UD	D	P	WD
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		

Quality Review Scoring Key							
UD	Underdeveloped	D	Developing	P	Proficient	WD	Well Developed