



**Department of
Education**

Joel I. Klein, Chancellor

**Quality Review Report
Division of Performance and Accountability
2010-2011**

Quality Review Report 2010-2011

KAPPA

**Middle School 215
3630 Third Avenue
Bronx
NY 10456**

Principal: Sheri Warren

Dates of review: December 6 - 7, 2010

Lead Reviewer: Jill Herman

Part 1: The school context

Information about the school

Kappa is a middle school with 431 students from grade 5 through grade 8. The school population comprises 43% Black, 49% Hispanic, 2% White, and 6% Asian students. The student body includes 14% English language learners and 7% special education students. Boys account for 43% of the students enrolled and girls account for 57%. The average attendance rate for the school year 2009 - 2010 was 94.0%.

Overall Evaluation

This school is proficient.

Part 2: Overview

What the school does well

- Curricula aligned to State standards emphasizing rigorous habits, engage and challenge students resulting in high levels of achievement that narrows the achievement gap.
 - The standards based curricula integrates art into the content areas. Teachers design scope and sequence with carefully selected concepts and skills that includes reading various genres including non-fiction, and developing stamina in writing, resulting in accelerated learning and students' high levels of achievement, as evidenced by their acceptance into public and private high schools.
 - Higher order skills and rigorous habits that include foci on critical thinking and questioning are embedded into classroom lessons. Students are engaged in their work and provide evidence, revise their work, and make connections across subject areas, demonstrating a coherent and understanding of learning.
- Across classrooms, teachers demonstrate a set of beliefs about teaching and learning that is aligned to curriculum and results in students receiving well-matched instruction.
 - Most classes begin with a review, move into a teacher-direct lesson, and end with students practicing a new skill, thus providing reinforcement of learning. Teachers walk around, checking for understanding, and sit with various groups resulting in a high degree of engagement and the ability for teachers to provide clarity.
 - Students' folders, portfolios, journals, and notes in most subject areas include authentic samples of work. Student writing reflects different genres, multiple drafts that students can easily explain and discuss, and math work shows skills practice, concept development, and writing, all demonstrating student engagement and depth in their accomplishments.
- School leaders make informed and effective decisions that support and strengthen student learning.
 - Teachers are assigned to grades based on academic and social/emotional needs of students resulting in a match that supports all aspects of child development. An additional skills class was instituted for incoming grade 5 students as they did not have the math skills to move on conceptually in math. Technology has grown with an increase of Smart Boards, 200 laptops, and staff training for math and science teachers, which enables the school to provide high levels of technology to students.
 - Block programming provides staff members who teach the same group of students to be free at same time thus allowing for discussions around their students and planning of curriculum leading to improved student learning and teacher practice.

- Teachers align assessments to curricula and consistently examine results in order to adjust classroom level decisions and improve student outcomes.
 - Teachers use summative data and a diagnostic test administered at the beginning of the school year to plan curriculum and adjust instruction. In addition, they use weekly assessments, and school-wide periodic assessments to identify strengths and areas of need of their students. This allows for constant and consistent monitoring of student achievement that strengthens every learner.
 - Teachers use a conferring system that provides dates, detail observations, instructional plans, and next steps, in order to support student learning. Running records surface students' needs, such as, "lead sentence is suspenseful and hooks the reader; next steps: needs to work on dialogue to show character development and transitional words," and highlight needed differentiation to improve student learning.
- School leaders examine a range of data when making decisions regarding teachers' evaluations in order to raise instructional practices as well as support professional development.
 - School leaders' focused observations are based on rigor, engagement, and creating a risk free environment. Evidence of writing, standards based curriculum, as well as student work and State tests are considered and reviewed in order to assess where students are and where they need to be by end of year. Coherent feedback strengthens teachers in particular areas to improve their delivery of instruction.
 - During the summer, the entire school community uses data to plan, align curriculum, and set yearlong goals. This year, as writing is a major focus for all subject areas, content area planning reflects written components that are reinforced across content areas, resulting in raising student achievement as evidenced by interim assessments and student work products.
- There is a clear, coherent set of goals that are data driven and designed to accelerate student learning.
 - Multiple data sources, including a diligent needs assessment, provide the school community with information that guides and improves instructional planning and results in good goal setting. The Learning Environment Survey is used to create goals in art, technology, and grade 8 attendance, and State assessments guide goals in reading, writing, and math. Additionally, data relative to English language learners and special education students is examined in order to accelerate their learning.
 - School level goals, as evidenced in the Comprehensive Education Plan, teachers' curriculum maps, schedule of classes, and records of classroom visits, are focused and provide a cohesive and scaffolded plan that is evidence of high standards to accelerate student learning. A thorough analysis of State exam results, in English language arts and math, identified writing and extended responses, and grade 5 math skills as areas of student deficits. This led to extra classes in order to provide remediation so that students can catch up.

What the school needs to improve

- Formalize collaborative structures that will deepen opportunities to link teacher practice with student work and strengthen teacher leadership.
 - Teachers meet in grade content teams to plan curriculum and discuss what worked and what did not. Although they look at student outcomes, they do not have any protocols to examine student work relative to the assignment thus limiting teachers' ability to reflect and enhance their own development and development of student learning.
 - Informally, staff have a lot of input, however, there are no team leaders, and teachers do not participate in the cabinet hindering teachers' development of and practicing leadership skills.
- Develop systems and structures that regularly evaluate and support teacher teams in order to build capacity.
 - Currently teacher teams are evaluated by outcomes. However, a process, to assess planning, including value-added by each member, is not part of the system, thus limiting adult learning.
 - Although many teachers step forward with initiatives and ideas that are embraced by staff, there is no organized structural plan or strategy that identifies and broadens distributive leadership. As a result, strengthening of teacher leadership is limited.
- Develop structures that evaluate grading practices to ensure integration of evolving State standards.
 - Currently, projects, tests, and quizzes are used as one category for grading. In light of the evolving standards, the school does not yet have reflective mechanisms to develop a system that highlights values of inquiry and performance-based student work products, thus limiting its adjustment of grading practices.
 - Parents are kept current regarding their child's progress and achievement. Examining and reflecting on structures that would enhance collaboration is not evident and thereby contributes to reticence or avoidance on the part of families whose children are not doing well.
- Expand and structure work of teacher teams to focus on inquiry in order to promote shared leadership and identify leverage points to accelerate and support student learning.
 - Teachers do not meet in content areas across the grades, which limit their opportunity to view strengths and weaknesses more globally and their ability to offer school-wide adjustments.
 - Distributed leadership is not embedded into teacher teams and staff do not systemically conduct their own data driven work nor develop hypotheses for groups of students, hindering further improving student learning.

Part 3: School Quality Criteria 2010-2011

School name: KAPPA	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