

Quality Review Report 2011-2012

Knowledge and Power Preparatory Academy VII

Middle School K596

**300 WILLOUGHBY AVENUE
BROOKLYN
NY 11205**

Principal: Lisa Reiter

Dates of review: April 04-05, 2012

Lead Reviewer: Barbara Freeman

Part 1: The school context

Information about the school

Knowledge and Power Preparatory Academy VII is a middle school with 188 students from grade 6 through grade 8. The school population comprises 84% Black, 15% Hispanic, 1% White, 1% Asian students and 0% other students. The student body includes 4% English language learners and 12% special education students. Boys account for 52% of the students enrolled and girls account for 48%. The average attendance rate for the school year 2010 - 2011 was 88.8%.

Overall Evaluation

This school is developing.

Part 2: Overview

What the school does well

- School leaders gather and analyze school data measuring student performance to identify strengths, weaknesses, targeted subgroups and areas of need. (2.1)
 - o School leaders collect and analyze state assessment, course grades, safety, referrals, classroom observations reports and student work data to identify the strengths and weaknesses school-wide. Areas of need, targeted students and the achievement gap between students with disabilities and over aged students with their general education counterparts are identified and tracked. Misaligned course grades with student performance on assessments are closely monitored and discussed with teachers enabling the school to track student progress throughout the year.
 - o Intentionally selected data focused on attendance, discipline, and English language arts is used to evaluate major organizational and instructional decisions to address these areas of need. Teachers discuss English language arts data with administration in one-to-one conferences and in teacher teams to receive feedback on instructional practices and strategies. Public displays such as the attendance bulletin board highlighting increased student attendance, highlights of double-digit reductions in student discipline infractions in the daily morning minutes and increased student performance on reading assessments enables school leaders to leverage positive changes to evaluate the success of educational and administrative decisions.
- The school continues to create opportunities to engage families in decision-making and other activities to provide information about school and class expectations and their children's progress. (2.4)
 - o While parent involvement overall is low, the parent coordinator has created parent newsletters to inform parents of events and information important to the school community. Several active parents participate in the Parents Association and the School Leadership Team (SLT) and work in collaboration with the school to determine annual goals and align budget allocations as well as plan activities for parents to support the integration of the Common Core Learning Standards (CCLS), resulting in structures to support the school's ability to provide information on the expectations for all students.
 - o Although the use of ARIS is limited, parents have been using DataCation, a school wide on-line grading tool, in larger numbers. The program informs parents of current projects, students' grades, and teacher comments in real time. Parents have the opportunity to directly email teachers to discuss student work. Teachers, administration and the school's data specialist are available to assist parents in accessing and navigating the site, enabling families to retrieve additional information so that they may collaborate in their child's learning experience.
- The school has a vision that includes future plans and is reflected in targeted goals based on data that are understood and supported by the school community. (3.1)
 - o "If we commit to doing things differently, then we will get different results," is the theory of action undergirding new and strengthened structures. With a focus on

- supporting students' social and emotional needs, the school restructured its schedule to provide additional time for focused advisories based on character development and positive choice making. Double-blocked periods for math and English language arts, designed to support the integration of CCLS, provide additional teaching time devoted to the lowest performing content areas. This has resulted in acceleration of student learning progress as measured by reading assessments and a reduction of behavioral disruptions in the classroom.
- o After completing a lengthy needs assessment based on multiple sources of data, preliminary goals are drafted and prioritized in order to identify major foci for the year. Action plans were developed to include interim goals and benchmarks to measure progress throughout the year. Goals, action plans and timetables were discussed in faculty and grade conferences. Teacher leaders are utilized as crucial links between the SLT and the larger community providing feedback formally and informally. This has impacted the delivery of services to English language learners to include co-teaching settings and revamping of the extended day program to accelerate learning for target populations of students.
 - School leaders use classroom observations and their analysis of student learning outcomes to elevate instructional practices across the school that emphasize professional growth with special attention to the large number of new staff. (4.1)
 - o School leaders conduct formal and informal observations using short, frequent visits. Teachers are observed approximately every two weeks and provided feedback within 48 hours. Using Danielson's framework for enhancing professional practice as their research-based rubric, teachers receive feedback that describes their next steps in development. Teachers have professional opportunities to work with administration in reviewing the domains pertinent to school goals focused on student engagement, questioning and managing behaviors as well as support from external consultants and network personnel to enhance content knowledge and pedagogical strategies. New staff is paired with a mentor to support their development throughout the year ensuring all staff is on a trajectory of improvement and growth.
 - o Observation cycles are based on prior observation reports and their analysis. Staff is informed of the findings and is an integral part of determining the emphasis for the next observation cycle. This occurs in faculty and grade conferences as well as frequent reminders during daily morning meetings and memos. Teachers and school leaders discuss the improvement in specific English language arts interim data to illustrate their professional growth is having an impact on student achievement motivating them to continue their work. School leaders compile this information in order to make decisions on future professional development opportunities, additional supports, future staff placements and tenure decisions enabling optimal staff placement to maximize instructional and learning prospects for teachers and students.
 - The school is developing professional development opportunities that enable teachers to evaluate and revise their classroom practices. (4.3)
 - o The schools' professional development plan for the year focuses on building content knowledge and pedagogical skills of staff and the integration of the CCLS in math and English language arts. Discussions have begun to differentiate professional opportunities for staff during the next phase of development especially in the content areas of science and social studies. Attention and focus has been on developing consistency across classrooms and disciplines aligned to school goals. As additional students' needs are unearthed through data

indicators such as the need to increase students' academic vocabulary, network and external consultant partnerships are secured to support teachers in enhancing skills to elevate teacher and classroom practices.

- o All adults are learners in the school community with teachers being provided multiple opportunities to increase their content and pedagogical knowledge and school leaders receiving training and support from the network and external partnerships such as Teachers College and the Council of Supervisors and Administrators to support their growth. Development opportunities to support paraprofessionals are planned for the future. Templates are also being designed to facilitate classroom intervisitation and peer discussions about student work and teacher practice enabling staff to sharpen their content expertise.

What the school needs to improve

- Ensure the school has designed curriculum including the Arts that is rigorous and engaging for all learners. (1.1)
 - o The school has invested time to identify key state standards and begun the integration of CCLS. A new balanced literacy framework has been introduced, enabling all teachers in every discipline to have literacy objectives based on citing key ideas and details in text. Curriculum maps have been reviewed and revised to support heightening rigor and incorporating performance tasks in literacy and mathematics. Students were resolute, however, that there needed to be additions to the curriculum such as music, art and extracurricular activities and believed they could be challenged more in their core subjects, illustrating the curriculum is not engaging or challenging all learners in the school community.
 - o The school defines student engagement as students' ability to discuss and defend their work through a variety of configurations and groupings. As one teacher stated, "Quiet classrooms do not equate to learning; there should be some noise." Art exploration classes are scheduled for students participating in integrated collaborative team teaching classes provided by an external partner accessing students' natural instinct to explore and move about the classroom in ad hoc groups to complete tasks. The program and others like it are not offered to the majority of students prohibiting a larger portion of the student population from experiencing other intellectually engaging programming.
- Consistently align curriculum with beliefs of how students learn best so all students may produce meaningful work samples. (1.2)
 - o The school believes that students should be active in their own learning process. Conversations with students about effort and rigor are happening more regularly. To support their belief, some teachers have incorporated mini-lessons, increased teacher modeling, authentic writing tasks and independent reading time. The school is still developing these and other structures of what actions should be visible to classroom observers, which will result in more consistency across classrooms and constituencies of teachers.
 - o The school is focused on providing students more choice by letting them explore topics on their own. Teachers incorporate their Depth of Knowledge training by revising their questioning to include more open-ended questions to deepen student thinking. Teachers are also revising student tasks and rubrics to reflect differentiation of instruction as well as the integration of the CCLS. The school is developing and strengthening structures to support this new work. However, further development of structures involving analysis of student work products and

teacher observation reports is needed to ensure that high levels of student thinking is occurring and it is resulting in improved outcomes for students.

- Evaluate effective organizational decisions that support school goals and meet student needs that result in more rigorous tasks and student work products. (1.3)
 - o School leaders conducted an assessment of classroom resources and determined that textbooks needed to be supplemented with magazines and primary source documents. Classrooms were also in need of updated libraries including additional informational text. Ten additional desktop computers have been purchased to support new technology initiatives such as Renzulli Learning. However, no meaningful student work samples could be cited as evidence to illustrate alignment to school targets, diminishing the school's ability to determine if these decisions support school goals being met.
 - o Teachers meet with administration to identify professional goals aligned to school goals. Teachers are also asked to rank their students by performance in order to monitor class and student trends and supports necessary to ensure school goals are being attained. However, grade and class goals have not been identified yet, lessening the impact of mutual responsibility and accountable collaboration.
- Align assessments to curriculum and adjust data analysis in order to make instructional decisions at the grade and classroom level yield to accurate information on student progress. (2.2)
 - o Teacher teams are beginning to create teacher assessments in order to provide interim data to monitor student progress toward benchmarked goals. Instructional adjustments are made according to the results. Teams establish subgroups within data sets to identify what is occurring within certain subgroups and they then devise plans for supporting them. However, the inconsistency across teams of creating teacher assessments results in an incomplete view of students' performance that could lead to inaccurate or less-effective instructional decisions.
 - o "Quick thumbs up," student conferences and exit slips are the methods of checking for understanding that were evident in classrooms and there is a school wide effort to ensure that rubrics for reading and writing are coherent grade to grade. Teacher feedback to students is based on rubrics and demonstration exemplars for performance tasks but the practice is inconsistent, limiting the school's ability to set next steps for students and to make adjustments to instructional practices to meet the learning needs of all students. (c)
- Ensure the evaluation of systems for assessing students and organizing data to share with families are monitoring student progress and evaluating the attainment of student mastery to increase consistency of policies and practices school-wide. (5.2)
 - o School leaders engage in conversations with teachers about student assessment data. Conversations have also begun to discuss the norming of Level 3 and 4 work school wide. There has been an increase of the number of exemplars and anchor paper samples utilized in order to isolate needed skills to complete performance tasks and to provide examples for students of what is needed to attain proficiency on tasks. However, limited discussions have occurred about the results of students' performance tasks and the needed supports and the gaps in students' knowledge as the integration of the CCLS work deepens, thus limiting the information disseminated to families in order to support the school goals and ensure student progress.

- o The school has focused on changing student perceptions about assessments and their value in determining next steps in helping them progress academically. Structures are being developed to support how success is redefined in the school and how to message this to parents with the integration of the more rigorous CCLS. Parents receive progress reports as well as student report cards but limited parental contact hinders the school's effectiveness in connecting with families to provide consistent information on students' progress so that parents are partners in student success.

Part 3: School Quality Criteria 2011-2012

School name: Knowledge and Power Preparatory Academy VII Middle School	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 as evidenced by meaningful student work products?		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, use on-going assessment practices and analyze information on student learning outcomes to adjust instructional decisions at the team and classroom level?		X		
2.3 Use grading policies and tools to enable school leaders and teachers to organize, aggregate, and analyze student performance trends to inform instruction and curriculum?		X		
2.4 Engage families in school decision-making, activities and an open exchange of information regarding students' progress toward school and class expectations?		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 staff, students and families, and support students and families to achieve them?		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		
1..4 Integrate child/youth development, guidance/advisement 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, with particular attention to the CCLS?		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
-----------	-----------------------	----------	-------------------	----------	-------------------	-----------	-----------------------