

Quality Review Report 2011-2012

Knowledge and Power Preparatory Academy VI

Middle School Q282

**8-21 Bay 25 Street
Queens
NY 11691**

Principal: Gary DuMornay

Dates of review: October 18-19, 2011

Lead Reviewer: Michele Lloyd-Bey

Part 1: The school context

Information about the school

Knowledge and Power Preparatory Academy VI is a middle school with 258 students from grade 6 through grade 8. The school population comprises 66% Black, 26% Hispanic, 4% White, and 2% Asian students. The student body includes 3% English language learners and 7% special education students. Boys account for 45% of the students enrolled and girls account for 55%. The average attendance rate for the school year 2010 - 2011 was 96.0%.

Overall Evaluation

This school is proficient.

Part 2: Overview

What the school does well

- School leaders consistently make purposeful decisions regarding curriculum that sufficiently integrate the Common Core Learning Standards (CCLS) tasks and result in higher order skills in all grades. (1.1)
 - Meticulous curriculum maps are well aligned to the CCLS and revised to include significant instructional elements, such as interdisciplinary components. Vertical and horizontal instructional coherence in all grades and subjects support staff in effectively planning instruction. Since the inception of a modified curriculum, professors deepen their instruction, through the integration of subjects, enabling cadets across all grades to benefit from lessons that include the New York State Standards, aligned to the CCLS, and result in improved writing by strengthening skills in non-fiction informational texts.
 - The school's coherent curriculum includes academic tasks and rigorous essential questions that deepen cadets' thinking based on Depth of Knowledge. Customized rubrics, graphic organizers, and assessments are integrated into the school's curriculum and ensure content and instruction meets the needs of all students, including subgroups. In a grade 7 math class, cadets engage in a two week rigorous math assignment involving exponents that integrate literacy. Cadets engage in peer editing, maintain journals that include reflections and next steps. Hence, enhanced teacher and student higher order questioning in a coherent curriculum promote exemplary interdisciplinary work products.
- The principal skillfully ensures that cadet work products reflect resources that are well aligned with the school's instructional goals and long-range action plans that result in improved student achievement. (1.3)
 - An expert instructional coach supports the school's long range plans to improve literacy across the school and help professors improve their practice in areas such as the workshop model. Foreign language, music (band) and art ensure that cadets receive a comprehensive, interdisciplinary instructional program to consistently absorb them in learning. Cadets are well supported in their use of various kinds of technology and instructional software that are utilized across the school, extend to the home and are well aligned to their individual needs as well as the instructional goals of the school. As a result, high level exemplary persuasive and informational writing are produced in all subjects.
 - Professors push into classrooms and tutor cadets at least three times a week and collaboratively plan targeted instruction. Cadets benefit from additional individualized tutoring and homework support during lunch periods. Saturday and extended day activities ensure that cadets are challenged based on their individual needs while receiving well tailored instruction in literacy and math from professors best qualified to address their needs. Hence, teachers hold themselves accountable for the performance of their cadets and progress is observed on literacy and math formative classroom assessments.
- Teams and individual teachers sufficiently use their time to analyze various kinds of assessment data on subgroups and identify trends, needs and make adjustments that improve cadet outcomes. (2.2)

- Teachers of all disciplines use and create quarterly assessments that align with State exams. Assessments reflect the rigorous work done by cadets within each quarter and are used to identify academic gaps, including subgroups' learning. The June 2011 fourth quarter assessment results reflect disaggregated percentages of all subgroups' performance in every subject across the school. In response to cadets' writing needs, teachers adjust their instructional practice to include a push-in instructional model that offers cadets direct small group instruction, customized rubrics and differentiated support. As a result, teachers have a clear picture of the performance of each cadet, including subgroups, and formative writing and math assessments reflect ongoing improvement in student performance.
- The English as a Second Language professor uses a tracking flipchart that highlights cadet goals, strengths, needs, established benchmarks, and assessment results for every English language learner (ELL). The grade 8 team identified ELLs and students with disabilities as having difficulty forming thoughts to complete coherent sentences. As a result, grade 8 professors analyze student writing, written reflections, and journals to adjust their pedagogy based on the CCLS to include increased modeling, direct instruction and differentiated graphic organizers. Teachers link their analysis of students' goals to product outcomes and continue to modify their pedagogy that result in their keen ability to make instructional decisions, such as developing word walls in all classrooms that has helped strengthen cadets' academic language so that essays reflect improved descriptive language.
- The principal consistently communicates high expectations that result in exemplary work products, attendance and a strong school culture for all students including subgroups. (3.4)
 - Constituents acknowledge the principal's passion for cadet and adult excellence. Assembly programs that honor student scholarship, effort and attendance is ongoing. Parents are ecstatic about the supportive school culture that engages them in informational sessions, and high school and college tours. Specialized high school workshops and the College Readiness program begin in grade 6 to prepare students and families for postsecondary experiences as early as possible. Hence, all constituents are fully apprised of the expectations set forth by school staff, and as a result, cadets, including subgroups and their families, hold themselves accountable as they are effectively prepared for the next level.
 - Teacher teams and individual teachers meet regularly and discuss the performance of their students and identify various ways to support cadet achievement. Professors volunteer their time and tutor students throughout the school day. Cadet community service, such as beach clean-up, promotes civic responsibility. Many forms of communication ensure that parents are sufficiently informed regarding the school's high expectations and the progress that cadets make towards successful completion of high school and college.
- The leadership provides continuous and direct feedback to teachers that support their professional growth for next steps and align to a research-based framework, that result in improved teacher instructional practice. (4.1)
 - Frequent cycles of classroom observations are routine, and the consistent analysis of a variety of data sources and student work ensure that the leadership

is able to support the development of teachers and offer next steps. In a grade 8 literacy class, constant focused feedback from the leadership and coach enabled the teacher to engage cadets in a technology-based lesson that analyzes persuasive writing through the analysis of newspaper editorials. Evidence from observations indicates that the close strategic alignment of student data and teacher support has been effective in obtaining improved student progress in understanding context clues. New teachers are afforded ample opportunities to discuss their practice with the leadership and peers, who are scheduled to push into their classrooms and offer support on a weekly basis during one-to-one conferences and instructional planning periods. Professors' comment that collaborative walkthroughs, teacher modeling and routine peer-to-peer support, has effectively strengthened their level of questioning as well as integrate literacy into their curriculum, resulting in improved pedagogy and elevated rigor for all cadets.

- Professors meet with the leadership immediately preceding the observation of classrooms to receive feedback that aligns with a common framework, the school's professional goals of improving literacy, and focuses on developing a coherent curriculum. The targeted conversation regarding their pedagogy in literacy, led to the grade 8 teacher team's success in identifying and supporting a second group of students who were missing "deep meaning", such as inferences, in their reading and enabled them to identify next step strategies, for instance the implementation of centers that address comprehension skills in classrooms. As a result, professors have expanded their skills to teach literacy and use what they know about cadets to plan next steps in comprehension skills.
- The school has very effective processes for collecting and analyzing a comprehensive range of data so that an extensive understanding of learning outcomes results in highly effective tracking of all students. (2.1)
 - School leaders and faculty judiciously analyze a range of summative data, discipline, referral reports, and assessments for every grade and subject. The assistant principal creates specific value added spreadsheets that provide a data summary on all professors based on the school's quarterly cadet assessments, resulting in the school's ability to change cadets' classes and assign staff to support cadets on a daily basis based on clear and precise information.
 - The leadership tracks all students, including subgroups, in every subject to determine the average for individual students, squadrons and each grade. The leadership uses this information, as well as classroom level data, to strategically adjust their practices. For example, the school's co-teaching model was adjusted to reflect an emphasis on enrichment. As a result, cadet progress monitoring by administration for the first quarter have yielded improvement in comprehension skills over last year's progress at this same time for cadets across the school.

What the school needs to improve

- Enhance teacher pedagogy to ensure that the school's coherent set of beliefs leads to strategically differentiated routines and high levels of student thinking that result in all students having supports and extensions into the curricula. (1.2)
 - Classroom routines are consistently differentiated and reflect diverse student groupings, varied methodologies and the use of research-based technology

programs and tools to support individualized learning. However, not all lessons are strategically differentiated so that all students have extensions into the curricula, limiting cadets' ability to further accelerate their academic progress.

- Grade 6 students participate in a highly engaging, technology based science lessons about topography. Various kinds of higher order questions push cadets' thinking on geography and mathematical concepts about the earth. However, high-levels of student thinking that are reflected in all classrooms are still general and result in diminished academic cadet performance.
- Strengthen teacher team work and leadership structures that result in the strategic sharing of teams' success school-wide. (4.2)
 - All teacher teams are engaged in the inquiry approach and professors are highly collaborative, however the sharing of each team's work is mainly informal. As a result, the school's ability to know exactly which instructional strategies consistently have the greatest impact on all cadets across all grades and classes is hindered.
 - Distributed leadership structures are in place, where teachers serve as facilitators on teacher teams and have a voice in key decisions regarding student learning. However, not all facilitators are secure in their role, resulting in a leadership structure that is not embedded to reflect teachers playing an integral role in the decision making across the school.
- Strengthen family engagement in order to continually enhance parents' knowledge of their child's learning and the progress they are making towards attaining goals and next steps in their learning. (2.4)
 - School leaders and faculty engage cadets and families in reciprocal discussions about cadet progress and next steps directly following classroom and quarter assessments periods. Cadet's progress reports, report cards, and parent-teacher meetings give insight into how they are performing. However, opportunities for parents to strengthen their knowledge regarding the CCLS and the link to tools, such as ARIS Parent Link, are only partially reflected in the school's planning throughout the year. As a result, parent information regarding CCLS to better support their child's academic achievement is limited.
- Enhance systems to regularly evaluate the effectiveness of teacher teams to ensure that collaborative processes constantly support the professional growth of teacher leaders. (5.4)
 - Team facilitators share data, assessments, strategies, and the progress of students during team and cabinet meetings with the principal and other team facilitators to make improvements such as implementing practices that improve cadets' literacy skills. However, in the absence structures that regularly evaluate the effectiveness of each team's leadership ability, the school struggles to monitor the growth potential of teacher leadership.

Part 3: School Quality Criteria 2011-2012

School name: Knowledge and Power Preparatory Academy VI	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				
4.4 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