



**Department of
Education**
Carmen Fariña, Chancellor

**Office of School Quality
Division of Teaching and Learning**

Quality Review Report

2014-2015

Knowledge and Power Preparatory Academy VI

Middle School Q282

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

Principal: Gary Dumornay

**Dates of review: March 19, 2015
Lead Reviewer: Jean McKeon**

The School Context

Knowledge and Power Preparatory Academy VI is a/an Middle school with 263 students from 6 through grade 8. The school population comprises 57% Black, 33% Hispanic, 3% White, and 6% Asian students. The student body includes 5% English language learners and 8% special education students. Boys account for 43% of the students enrolled and girls account for 57%. The average attendance rate for the school year 2013-14 was 97.3%.

School Quality Criteria

Instructional Core		
<i>To what extent does the school...</i>	Area of:	Rating:
1.1 Ensure engaging, rigorous, and coherent curricula in all subjects, accessible for a variety of learners and aligned to Common Core Learning Standards and/or content standards	Additional Findings	Well Developed
1.2 Develop teacher pedagogy from a coherent set of beliefs about how students learn best that is informed by the instructional shifts and Danielson Framework for Teaching, aligned to the curricula, engaging, and meets the needs of all learners so that all students produce meaningful work products	Focus	Proficient
2.2 Align assessments to curricula, use on-going assessment and grading practices, and analyze information on student learning outcomes to adjust instructional decisions at the team and classroom levels	Additional Findings	Well Developed
School Culture		
<i>To what extent does the school...</i>	Area of:	Rating:
3.4 Establish a culture for learning that communicates high expectations to staff, students, and families, and provide supports to achieve those expectations	Additional Findings	Well Developed
Systems for Improvement		
<i>To what extent does the school...</i>	Area of:	Rating:
4.2 Engage in structured professional collaborations on teams using an inquiry approach that promotes shared leadership and focuses on improved student learning	Celebration	Well Developed

Area of Celebration

Quality Indicator:	4.2 Teacher teams and leadership development	Rating:	Well Developed
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Findings

The vast majority of teachers are engaged in inquiry based structured professional collaborations that strengthen teacher instructional capacity and promote the achievement of the school's goals and the Common Core Learning Standards. Teacher teams systematically analyze assessment data and student work to adjust curricula and instruction.

Impact

Structured professional collaborations result in school wide instructional coherence and increased student achievement for all learners. Teacher team work results in shared improvements in practice and mastery of goals for groups of students.

Supporting Evidence

- A detailed meeting schedule details the day of the week, time, team and expected participants. Teams schedule includes content and grade teams, instructional and administrative cabinets, and attendance. A monthly professional learning calendar is available through March and includes the professional learning focus for Monday afternoon sessions and inter-visitations, schedule. The school also has two in-house Peer Instructional Coaches that are model teachers and coaches. Teachers completed an online professional learning survey identifying their interests and needs for future meetings.
- All teachers participate in at least two team/inquiry meeting each week devoted to inquiry and the analysis of data that lead to adaption and refinement of curricula and foster improvements in instructional practice. Teacher teams engage in inquiry, adapt curricular resources including tasks and rubrics, and engage in student data analysis. Each team has a grade leader that meets with the Instructional Team weekly to discuss grade team goals and next steps.
- During team meetings, teachers analyze student work and data on an ongoing basis using the Tuning Protocol. Meeting documents, including student work samples and agendas, show the use of this protocol by all professional learning teams. Teachers look at student work samples and make decisions about next steps for individual and groups of students, based on needs identified through collaborative analysis. During one meeting a grade team analyzed student work presented by the science teacher. The team conferred on strategies and next steps for this teacher that included a graphic organizer and use of a four square organizer that the mathematics and Spanish teacher also found useful for their students.
- The principal stated that New York State (NYS) standardized assessment data is analyzed for student and teacher strength and areas in need of attention. The 2013-14 NYS data in English language arts (ELA) and math shows a marked increase from students entering in grade 6 and their performance at the end of grade eight. Students' performance increased over ten percentage points in ELA and fourteen percentage points in math by the time they graduate from Kappa VI.

Area of Focus

Quality Indicator:

1.2 Pedagogy

Rating:

Proficient

Findings

Teaching practices across classrooms are aligned to the curricula and reflect the school's core beliefs around student learning. Teaching strategies include some multiple points of entry, scaffolds, and questioning that support student learning.

Impact

While across classrooms, multiple access points support student engagement in rigorous tasks, strategic supports and extensions are not always evident, so that all learners, including English language learners and students with disabilities have opportunities to be highly engaged and to demonstrate critical thinking.

Supporting Evidence

- In most classrooms visited, lessons were aligned to the Common Core Learning Standards and informed by the Danielson Framework for Teaching. For example, in one English class student groups discussed the prompt "Is John Wilson a step-mother character?" The teacher stated that students were homogeneously grouped for this activity based on assessment data. The guiding prompts for each group were differentiated with supports and the teacher monitored discussions. The teacher reminded the students to skim and scan the text for evidence before responding to the discussion. Evidence of text-based answers included students challenging and extending peer responses as exemplified by "I don't necessarily think you're right. Let's read and find out." Second student responding "It says here . . ."
- Across classrooms visited, student discussion and participation in collaborative activities were observed. In one class students led the summary for the problem of the day at the white board. Two student leaders displayed examples on the board and called on peers to solve and explain their thinking. Other students then critiqued the responses with feedback such as "I disagree, that would be perimeter, we are talking about volume". Another student added she agreed and added her explanation. However, discussion in some classrooms missed opportunities for high levels of student thinking and participation. In one classroom the teacher led the students through a discussion posing the questions and accepting one or two student responses. This practice limited the student-to-student dialogue and opportunities for deeper thinking.
- Most classrooms demonstrated evidence of structured protocols for small group and/or partner discussions. Teachers use flexible grouping based on classroom and assessment data to create opportunities for students to struggle with tasks. For example, in one ELA classroom, students worked in groups to classify articles. Ambassadors from each group then visited other tables to assess and verify responses. However, in another classroom students working with partners "called" across groups and several completed the task quickly with limited teacher follow-up. However, in another classroom, student working with partners called out loud to other students disrupting their work. Several of the students in this classroom completed the task quickly, and did not have instructions or teacher follow-up for next steps.

Additional Findings

Quality Indicator:	1.1 Curriculum	Rating:	Well Developed
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Findings

School leaders and faculty align curricula to the Common Core Learning Standards, are deliberate in the integration of the instructional shifts across subject areas, and plan units that consistently emphasize rigorous work habits.

Impact

As a result, the school ensures that the instructional shifts are woven throughout curriculum maps, units of study, and lesson plans that address priority standards in all subject areas. In addition, rigorous and challenging academic tasks are incorporated into lessons where students have opportunities to demonstrate their thinking and understanding.

Supporting Evidence

- The school offers comprehensive common core aligned curricula in all subject areas that promote college and career readiness. Curriculum maps are developed through *CurriculumMapper.com* and are available in every subject and grade level including music, band and art. Maps reflect grade level curricula, standards, essential questions, related websites and assessments. Differentiation and access for students with disabilities and English language learners are detailed on the maps. An example of supports seen in classrooms was laminated math formula sheets and accountable talk stems on students desks. Another support in use was math manipulatives for determining area of rectangular prisms. An accelerated curriculum ensures that all middle schools students are prepared for and take Regents exams in Algebra, Living Environment and Spanish proficiency by the end of eighth grade.
- The instructional shifts are strategically addressed in the curriculum. Teachers collaborate to continuously refine and update maps. Each map requires delineation of the standards and specific skills addressed. All subject area teachers are required to include “literacy experiences” in their planning and instruction. A social studies map includes specific academic vocabulary and emphasizes integration and evaluation of multiple sources of evidence. The majority of students have developed automaticity in citing text-based evidence in all content areas.
- Rigorous academic vocabulary is evident in curriculum maps, lesson plans, the classroom environment, and in daily instruction in all content areas. The music/band teacher’ maps included the essential question “What new vocabulary and music theory can be found in ‘The Tempest’ and ‘Ultimatum?’” Music vocabulary included *marcato*, *staccato*, *forte*, and *mezzo-forte*. In an English language arts classroom the essential question stated “In what ways do specific vocabulary words emphasize the tone within a survival-themed text?”

Quality Indicator:	2.2 Assessment	Rating:	Well Developed
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Findings

Across the vast majority of classrooms, teachers design and use assessments, rubrics and grading policies that are aligned with the schools curricula. The school uses common assessments to create a clear picture of student progress towards goals across grades and subjects, track progress, and adjust curricular and instructional decisions.

Impact

As a result, students are provided with actionable and meaningful feedback concerning their achievement and are able to articulate their next learning steps.

Supporting Evidence

- All the teachers visited were assessing students as they worked in groups, tracking student responses throughout the lesson. Several teachers monitored student progress and collected data by taking notes on clipboards. In one classroom the students completed an end of lesson exit ticket that was answered individually. This activity assessed students understanding of the tasks and encouraged them to reflect on their learning. Teachers stated that the data collected during instruction informs their grouping and planning.
- The vast majority of teachers administer pre- and post- assessments every six weeks to identify the common Core Learning Standards strengths and areas of concern that need to be revisited. School leaders create quarterly exam schedules so that all constituents are apprised of the timeline. Teacher Teams analyze this data and adjust curriculum maps and instruction to address areas of concern. This continuous flow of data also assists school leaders and teacher teams to develop action plans for individual and small groups of students to immediately address intervention. School intervention strategies include AIS lunch time café, after school tutoring, Saturday Academy and small group instruction. The Scantron system provides teachers with immediate assessment feedback, broken down by skills, that enables them to give targeted instruction and intervention. Science and social studies teams use Engage NY for resources including instructional modules and assessment examples.
- Student self-assessment and reflection were seen in the majority of classrooms visited. Through post-assessment review, students engage in self-reflection and self-assessment on both formative and summative levels. These reflections provide an open dialogue between student and teacher so that students are aware of their next steps as measured by student accessible rubrics.

Quality Indicator:	3.4 High Expectations	Rating:	Well Developed
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Findings

School leaders ensure that all staff is consistently informed of the school's high expectations through ongoing communication and differentiated professional learning opportunities. Within the school community, all stakeholders take responsibility in positioning students on a path to college and career readiness.

Impact

As a result of ongoing and transparent communication from school leaders, teachers are fully aware of the expectations around teaching and learning and provide collegial support to one another through a variety of professional learning opportunities. Through the home-school connection, staff and families work collaboratively to support student's academic success.

Supporting Evidence

- School leaders and two Peer Instructional Coaches (PIC) meet every Monday to analyze teacher performance through Advance data. The PICs adjust the professional learning plan to address specific needs and break down the Danielson Framework for Teaching competencies with teachers to improve practice. This team also participates in collaborate Instructional rounds to identify best practices and next steps to improve teacher practice. Teachers are often called upon to present to their peers; the ELA team conducted a workshop on incorporating ELA strategies in all content areas and the music teacher on the use of summative and formative assessments.
- Parents stated that they are active partners in their child's academic success. Kappa VI maintains several lines of ongoing communications with all parents. The parents agree that Engrade Pro is a valuable resource and link to what their children are learning and progress. Parent's input is valued at the school. Members of the School Leadership Team worked on the school's Comprehensive Educational Plan and most recently on the cell phone policy. Parents partner with the school on the attendance policy and creating extended time for parent teacher conferences. The school holds a four-day grade six orientation in late August where academic and positive behavioral policies are shared with students. The Parent Survey results from 2013-14 confirm their high level of satisfaction in the instructional core, improvements strategies and culture with 95% approval in all three categories.
- It is evident in all aspect of Kappa VI life that the school leaders, teachers, and staff have established a culture for learning the systematically and strategically communicates a unified set of high expectations for all students. They continuously provide clear, focused, and effective feedback to students during classroom conversations, through online platforms, on clear rubrics, and in formal progress reports. Students know what they need to do to improve and feedback is student friendly, meaningful and actionable. Students stated they utilize Engrade Pro where teachers communicate expectations, homework and can also email teachers.
- The screening process for potential sixth grade students begin with an interview held in the spring for current fifth graders interested in attending Kappa VI. Teacher, student, and parent input are crucial in this process. Interview committees are comprised of a teacher, student, and parent. The committees are provided with a questionnaire and rubric and have an important voice in the admission process.