



**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 International**

High School X374

**500 East Fordham Road
Bronx
NY 10458**

Principal: Panorea Panagiosoulis

**Date of review: April 22, 2015
Reviewer: Mimi Fortunato**

The School Context

Knowledge and Power Preparatory International is a high school with 473 students from grade 9 through grade 12. The school population comprises 33% Black, 60% Hispanic, 2% White, 1% American Indian or Alaskan Native, 1% Native Hawaiian/Other Pacific Islander, and 2% Asian students. The student body includes 15% English language learners and 14% special education students. Boys account for 44% of the students enrolled and girls account for 56%. The average attendance rate for the school year 2013-2014 was 87.0%.

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	Celebration	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	Additional Findings	Well Developed

Area of Celebration

Quality Indicator:	3.4 High Expectations	Rating:	Well Developed
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Findings

School leaders consistently communicate high expectations to the staff, provide opportunities for professional development and collaboration, and have a system of accountability for established expectations. School leaders, faculty and staff provide detailed feedback, guidance, and advisement supports for all learners.

Impact

The school's culture exemplifies mutual accountability for shared high expectations. Guidance and advisement supports ensure that all students own their educational experience and are prepared for success in college.

Supporting Evidence

- The principal has established a system of reciprocal communication regarding high expectations for members of the school community. Teachers stated that they frequently communicate with the principal regarding their accountability for progress towards individual and shared goals. All teachers develop individual professional goals aligned to the Danielson Framework for Teaching and the school's instructional goals. Recurrent shared reflection with the principal and assistant principal on video-taped lessons and observation report data provide actionable feedback to teachers. All teachers are engaged in ongoing professional development and collaborations in which school leadership and teachers assume mutual accountability for meeting established expectations. For example, model teachers assume responsibility for mentoring colleagues, plan targeted professional development aligned with the school's instructional goals, and turnkey their learning through the facilitation of workshops for colleagues.
- The school's high expectations are aligned to the instructional mission of providing all students with an opportunity to engage in a rigorous, college and career readiness learning environment that incorporates the International Baccalaureate curricula. This philosophy permeates the school, with students referring to teachers as professors and teachers referring to students as scholars. There is a uniform policy, and a school pledge that communicates the school's values and community expectations. Students affirmed that they are aware of the school's core values of inquiry, compassion, integrity, and commitment, and the school's core behaviors of open-mindedness, curiosity, empathy, citizenship, diligence, self-regulation, perseverance, and zest. Students shared that teachers and the principal celebrate student accomplishments and provide students with a high level of motivation to meet established expectations.
- All students participate in advisory, and every teacher assumes the advisor role for a group of fifteen students. The school created an advisory curriculum that provides support to students in building social/emotional and college and career readiness skills. In addition, the school has implemented an online grading system that provides students with on-demand access to real-time data regarding their progress in attendance, character development, and standards-based performance. Students, including English language learners and students with disabilities, shared that they access this system on a regular basis to determine their status and next steps towards credit accumulation and graduation.

Area of Focus

Quality Indicator:

1.2 Pedagogy

Rating:

Proficient

Findings

Across many classrooms, teaching strategies consistently provide multiple entry points into the curricula. However, teacher practice across some classrooms does not always include the implementation of strategic instructional supports and opportunities for learning extensions. In some classes, discussions did not reflect high levels of student ownership.

Impact

All learners, including English language learners and students with disabilities are engaged in appropriately challenging tasks and demonstrate higher-order thinking skills in student work products. However, in some classes, higher achieving students do not always have opportunities for learning extensions and some learners, including English language learners and students with disabilities, do not always have opportunities to assume ownership of peer discussions.

Supporting Evidence

- Opportunities for learning extensions were not observed in some classrooms. For example, in two classes, students completed the task and sat with hands raised, waiting for next steps. When asked what they were expected to do when they completed assigned tasks, the students shared that they were expected to wait for the teacher's directions.
- In a Global History lesson on the Scientific Revolution, the task was to fill in a graphic organizer and match the claim evidence to the text. In this class, the lesson plan indicated that differentiation would include students working at their own pace, completing as many topics on the Scientific Revolution as time would allow. While the general education and special education teacher circulated around the room clarifying the task, they were not observed providing the diverse learners in the class with strategic supports other than a brief glossary. Students were grouped based on the teachers' determination of how well they worked together rather than identified instructional need. An English language learner who was paired with a native English speaker was not able to begin his work until his partner translated the task and text for him. As a result, the discussion in this group and in other groups observed did not reflect high levels thinking or the connection to the larger global understanding.
- The principal has developed structures to strengthen teacher pedagogy in the use of questioning and discussion techniques. Students were observed in peer-to-peer discussion in an Earth Science laboratory class where students displayed a high level of student ownership in their group discussions and in the experiment, using heat labs to simulate the sun and a cup and thermometer to simulate the earth. In a Socratic Seminar in an International Baccalaureate English class, students transcribed their peers' responses and shared these with their peers following each Socratic cycle. In this class, most students were engaged in the discussion, making claims and citing textual evidence. In an Algebra class on linear and quadratic functions, students were observed in peer discussion regarding the task and in sharing their strategies for solving the assigned problems with their peers. However, the peer discussions in this class were primarily procedural, and students in this class were not able to articulate the purpose for the quadratic equation investigation.

Additional Findings

Quality Indicator:	1.1 Curriculum	Rating:	Well Developed
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Findings

School leaders ensure that curricula are aligned to the Common Core Learning Standards and the instructional shifts, and that rigorous habits and higher-order skills are emphasized in curricula and academic tasks for all learners across grade levels and subject areas.

Impact

Curricula and academic tasks emphasize rigorous habits and higher-order skills, and promote college and career readiness for all learners. A high level of rigor ensures that all learners, including English language learners and student with disabilities must demonstrate their thinking.

Supporting Evidence

- The school offers courses that scaffold college readiness aligned curricula and build competencies for all learners. Teacher teams align curricula across all content areas with the International Baccalaureate courses, promoting coherence in the grades 9 through 12 continuum. The school offers the comprehensive International Baccalaureate curricula as an option for students in grades 11 and 12, in addition to a wide range of courses such as Forensics, Anthropology, and Anatomy. The school has implemented the A2i New Visions math curricula and all students participate in an additional math class titled Math Study, a course designed to deepen students' math fluency.
- The principal has established a key instructional goal of preparing all students for college success, with teachers incorporating non-fiction and expository text and writing on demand activities to deepen student preparedness for high-level college work. Teachers work collaboratively to ensure a high level of rigor across content areas to ensure that higher-order skills are emphasized across grades and for all learners. For example, in an English as a second language lesson on the second amendment, the lesson plan called for students to craft individual responses to writing prompts on laptops using a google doc. In this class, the text was a scholarly article, *Guns in Schools, A Second Amendment Right*, and all students were expected to craft their responses to the text and incorporate textual evidence to support their claims.
- The school places a priority on the skills of analysis, synthesis, and evaluation, and teachers work collaboratively to ensure a high level of rigor across grade levels and content areas, and to embed higher-order skills across grades for all learners. In an Earth Science class serving a diverse group of learners including English language learners and students with disabilities, the lesson plan indicated that student groups would design experiments investigating a key question about a factor that impacts insulation, determine a variable that would affect the outcome of the experiment, and write a detailed explanation on their process and findings, ensuring that all students had an opportunity to demonstrate their thinking and build skills through collaboration with peers.

Quality Indicator:	2.2 Assessment	Rating:	Well Developed
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Findings

Across the vast majority of classrooms, teachers use or create assessments, rubrics, and grading policies that are aligned with the school’s curricula and offer a clear portrait of student mastery. The school uses common assessments to determine student progress toward goals, across grades and subject areas, and the results are used to adjust curricula and instruction.

Impact

Assessment structures that include a mastery-based grading system provide actionable feedback to students and teachers regarding student achievement, and provide actionable feedback to students and teachers regarding student achievement. Teachers adjust curricular and instructional decisions so that all learners, including English language learners and students with disabilities demonstrate increased mastery.

Supporting Evidence

- The school has implemented a mastery-based grading learning policy designed to provide teachers and students with an accurate portrait of each student’s level of proficiency regarding skills and content. This system is embedded as part of the school culture, with teachers assuming responsibility for designing multiple opportunities for students to demonstrate proficiency. The JumpRope mastery-based grading program allows students to access information that shares their current progress towards skill and content mastery in each class, as well as their progress towards consistent demonstration of the school’s core values.
- The school places a high priority on providing detailed feedback on student work, and teachers meet frequently with students to discuss their progress in class or on assignments. Teachers create and use assessments and rubrics to evaluate their students’ work. Targeted feedback from teachers across content areas and grade levels is provided to every student. For example, on a student’s essay on the Defense of Marriage Act, the teacher’s feedback stated, “Be sure to quote directly from the first and fifth amendments to highlight the clauses that you are applying to this case, then analyze how others have applied these amendments to this situation (you’ll need to find credible sources for this, too).” In some classes, teachers provide students with feedback using google docs during class time, offering students targeted feedback and clear next steps in real-time.
- Through the school’s participation in the Department of Education’s Progressive Redesign Opportunity for Schools of Excellence initiative (PROSE), students have opportunities to audit course extensions that allow them to receive a grade of NU (no grade) on their transcript for the course that they have failed, move on to the next course and simultaneously be programmed for a small instruction class. Once the student has demonstrated mastery of the standards, they then receive the passing grade for the audited course. Across classrooms, teachers offer all learners multiple opportunities to demonstrate mastery. For example, in all classes, students have the opportunity to participate in tutoring sessions and retake assessments. In 2014, the school exceeded the city’s targets for student achievement, closing the achievement gap, and for college and career readiness, and met the target for student progress. In addition, the January Regents pass rate for English language learners increased from an average of 63% in 2014 to an average of 68% in 2015, and the January pass rate for the United States History Regents for special education students increased from 49% in 2014 to 71% in 2015.

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

School leadership ensures that the vast majority of teachers engage in inquiry based, structured grade level and content area professional collaborations that promote the implementation of Common Core Learning Standards and instructional shifts, and align practice to the school's instructional goals. An embedded distributed leadership structure provides opportunities for effective teacher leadership.

Impact

Ongoing teacher collaborations strengthen teacher instructional practice, promote school-wide coherence, and ensure continued progress toward goals for all learners. Effective teacher leadership provides opportunities for teachers to assume an integral role in key decisions that affect student learning across the school.

Supporting Evidence

- Teachers meet regularly in grade, content specific, and inquiry teams, using established protocols to analyze student work, identify student needs and inform goals for students. The vast majority of teachers are engaged in ongoing professional reflection and collaborations, and have developed a process to look at the outcomes of assessments, identify student needs, and develop an action plan to address next steps. For example, a cross content inquiry team with a shared focus goal of reading was observed using a modified Tuning Protocol to review baseline assessment data, determine area of need, and plan for next instructional steps. Team minutes consistently include time bound next steps, and teachers assume accountability for team growth and progress towards school instructional goals.
- A distributed leadership structure is embedded as part of the school culture. The assistant principal was one of the founding teachers at the school, and a number of teachers are enrolled in leadership programs. Teacher leaders facilitate department, grade level, and cross-content inquiry team meetings, and teachers assume an integral role in supporting colleagues. For example, experienced teachers act as support for less experienced teachers through coaching, modeling, and mentoring. In addition, teachers plan and facilitate targeted professional development for peers, and teachers are engaged in fishbowl teacher inter-visitation cycles where teachers invite colleagues to observe their class with an instructional lens such as questioning and discussion in mind.
- Teachers stated that they have significant voice in key instructional decisions and stated that their perceptions and findings are taken into consideration. As an example, teachers stated that they are engaged in ongoing instructional decisions that impact student programming and curricula development. In addition, teacher teams are responsible for developing common rubrics and assessments and protocols for inquiry work, and lead ongoing curricula refinements to ensure vertical and horizontal alignment.