



The New York City Department of Education



Quality Review Report

The Knowledge And Power Preparatory Academy

**Middle School 302
6 Edgecombe Avenue
New York
NY 10030**

Principal: Panorea Panagiosoulis

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Reviewer: Frank Jones

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Part 1: The school context

Information about the school

The Knowledge and Power Preparatory Academy (KAPPA IV) has 292 enrolled students. The majority of students (64%) are from Hispanic backgrounds, 33% are Black and the remaining 3% come from other ethnic backgrounds. Six percent are special education students and there are a similar number of English language learners. There is an imbalance in gender with 16% more girls than boys. Attendance figures, at over 97%, were above those of similar schools and above the City average. The school is Title 1 funded.

The school was opened in 2004 with only grade 6 students and has grown year on year until 2006 when all grades 6 through 8 were present. The principal was appointed prior to the school opening and has been responsible for its development to this time.

Part 2: Overview

What the school does well

- The principal provides charismatic and caring leadership for the school community.
- The principal is passionate about the students and will do whatever is necessary to provide opportunities for them.
- The staff are totally committed to the students and give generously of their time to support them.
- The educational philosophy that pervades the school has the student at its heart.
- The curriculum is broad and varied with numerous exciting enrichment activities.
- Students demonstrate an enthusiasm for and pride in their school.
- Communication with parents at all levels is exceptionally good.
- Pupils are confident and able to clearly articulate the social and moral values developed during their time at the school.
- The behavior of the students is exemplary.
- The principal and staff have successfully built a unique school, in a short space of time with a secure basis for further development.

What the school needs to improve

- Use the analysis of available data to identify, with the student, long-term goals that they can work towards incrementally.
- Improve the differentiation of instruction so the task meets the identified needs of the student.
- Analyze data to ensure that there are no differences in progress for groups of students according to gender, ethnicity and achievement levels.
- Continue to develop the quality of school self-evaluation.

Part 3: Main findings

Overall Evaluation

This is a proficient school.

The school has made significant progress since its inception two and a half years ago. It is a unique educational establishment, which has clearly identified the type of curriculum, and additional activities it wants to provide. The students are proud of their school and are given the opportunity to develop critical thinking skills and explore the values that they hold. Numerous enriching experiences promote the social and academic development of each individual student who confidently expresses their views without fear of censure or ridicule.

The charismatic principal is responsible for developing the philosophy of the school, which is understood and shared by the staff. She is extremely well liked and respected. Through her drive and determination the school has become well established and the seeds for further growth firmly implanted. Strong leadership and direction for the school has enabled it to arrive at this position. The ability to reflect and evaluate progress at all levels is becoming a strength of the school, which is now ideally placed to develop further. The principal has already identified the areas for improvement outlined here as in need of further work.

How well the school meets New York City's evaluation criteria

Quality Statement 1 – Gather Data: School leaders and faculty consistently gather data and use it to understand what each student knows and is able to do and to monitor student progress over time.

This area of the school's work is proficient.

A good analysis of a wide range of data provides a useful picture of student achievement and progress in all subjects and grades. The cabinet and subject teams analyze standardized tests. This increases their skills in data handling and provides information about what each student knows and can do. Princeton assessments are used and analyzed to supplement City and State evaluations. Analysis of informal assessments of students' abilities prior to them starting school are used as a benchmark to measure progress over time and provide early information of students' strengths and weaknesses.

Question analysis of standardized scores and use of the Grow Report illustrate the quality of learning that has taken place within subject areas and identifies further academic need. This is used to inform future instruction programs. The validity of 'level' judgements are supported by a rubric and moderated to provide accuracy and consistency across subjects. This comprehensive analysis of information is supplemented by on going teacher assessments at the end of a topic and informs a school designed report card that is given to parents. There is little depth in the tracking and analysis of data by ethnicity and gender, although that which is done has identified no discernible patterns to date. Individualized education plans are in place for special education students, the majority of whom are taught in a collaborative teaching class. The progress against these plans is carefully monitored and modifications are made accordingly. The analysis of performance data in each subject, grade and class by the principal identifies successes and weaknesses but importantly the reasons for them and what needs to be done as a result.

Useful information is available from comparisons with similar schools. The relative newness of KAPPA IV means there is insufficient data to make insightful judgments in relation to past performance.

Quality Statement 2 – Plan and Set Goals: School leaders and faculty consistently use available data to understand each student’s next learning step. Through collaborative planning and student and parent engagement, they set high goals for improving teaching practice and accelerating each student’s learning.

This area of the school’s work is proficient.

The school leadership team meets in August to reflect on the previous year and to work together to set curricula goals for subjects and grades based on the analysis of student data and the additional information collected. The school also identifies the goals for the year and attendant responsibilities.

Close analysis of the raw scores produced by standardized data identifies those students who have the potential to move up a level. Where this is the case, additional tuition is provided on Saturdays to give them further support. This good feature does not extend to setting clear targets for students within a level. Teacher planning clearly identifies goals within each topic taught and what the student has to learn to achieve them. These broad goals are topic specific but do not necessarily take in to account individual learning needs. Teachers use ‘post-its’ to annotate pupil work. They explain why the work is good and comment on what the student needs to do to improve further. The students welcome this approbation and direction. The teachers have access to students’ accounts on line, analyze their performance and provide further individually tailored assignments in each subject area.

The collection and analysis of social data provides comprehensive information on each student, which is used to provide early intervention, support and enables the school to care for the whole child. This balanced approach ensures each student is given every opportunity to succeed. Special needs students are given specific schedules following an in depth analysis of progress and achievement. The school has devised a very good report form for parents, which explains at what level a student is operating in each subject and the next steps in learning. This information and the individual goals give both parents and students a high degree of involvement and greater understanding of the learning process. Consequently, plans to improve individual student performance drive all members of the school community, in parallel with whole school plans to improve overall student performance. Parents speak positively of the communication with the principal and staff. Students express the view that the school has high expectations of them, feel supported and can contact staff at any time should they need to. Both parents and students, to reflect the commitment the school has to enable students to achieve, used the phrase, ‘staff go the extra mile’.

Quality Statement 3 – Align Instruction: The school aligns its instructional activity and resources, and student engagement around its focused plans for accelerating learning for each student.

This area of the school’s work is well developed.

The school has developed a broad and rich curriculum that reflects the needs of the students and the philosophy of the school. The basic programs of instruction are driven by

the mandated curriculum and New York City standardized tests. In addition to the regular curriculum, students are taught Greek as a foreign language and learn about the work of Greek philosophers. This has a significant impact on developing their critical thinking and understanding of the wider world. All students learn a musical instrument. The curriculum is further enriched through visits to other countries and external theatre and operatic groups.

The school identifies the needs of the students well through comparison of outcomes and provides programs designed to match them. Programs allow for end of topic assessments and provide useful data to identify the next steps in learning and progress made. Assistant principals meet with teachers to set personal goals and progress against them is monitored. Teachers are held to account at subject meetings but the principal has recognized the need to further increase the differentiation of instructional programs to match task to student learning needs, especially for higher achieving students. She has initiated professional development to support teachers in further developing their instructional skills.

Students have open access to the principal. The budget has been used wisely to reduce the pupil teacher ratio thus ensuring that all students receive close attention. Care is taken to ensure that staffing supports the curriculum and other opportunities offered to students. Many teachers are inexperienced and therefore need the support which is available. The weekly information received by teachers on each student provides them with a comprehensive picture from which they make amendments to their instruction. This high level of focus on student needs impacts positively on the good relationships and behavior that are evident throughout the school.

The regular joint planning sessions that take place within subject areas enable staff to identify content areas that need further development, assessment opportunities and compare standards. Students feel challenged by the work they are given and are actively engaged by it. The school operates a flexible schedule which allows support and increased tuition as appropriate for all students. Students are proud of their school, its uniqueness and trust the staff. Parents value the weekly individual reports, which comment on attitude and attendance. Attendance is very closely monitored and absences rapidly followed up by phone calls and where appropriate home visits.

Quality Statement 4 - Build and Align Capacity: The development of instructional leadership, staff, and capacity are aligned around the school's collaboratively established goals for accelerating the learning of each student.

This area of the school's work is proficient.

The principal sets high standards for herself and others and is passionate about improving the opportunities of students in her charge. She is extremely well respected and liked by staff, students and parents. The principal and assistant principals have worked hard together to develop a school from nothing to one which is unique and has the student at its heart. Many teachers are young and keen to develop their instructional skills. The principal has clear criteria when making appointments. They have at their core the need for an empathy with students and a willingness to meet their needs both academic and social. The majority of teachers fulfill these aspirations well.

The school is very much a learning organization and as such puts a keen emphasis on the importance of professional development as a vehicle for improvement. Professional development is closely aligned to the schools' goals and is viewed as a key factor in the

drive to raise standards. Training to maximize the use of smart boards preceded their gradual introduction. Teachers are encouraged to reflect on their own practice and identify personal learning needs. There is a protocol in place for lesson observations. These are undertaken on a regular basis by the leadership team who have a good understanding of the capabilities of all teachers and their development needs. Professional development follows lesson observations and teachers welcome the support it offers. Whole school issues such as classroom management are identified and become a focus for support and discussion.

Subject meetings take place on a regular basis. Teachers welcome the opportunities this affords, to work together and learn from each other. The high quality of subject planning reflects the collaboration that takes place. Teachers view inter-visitations as a useful opportunity to observe and share good practice. This has led to clear improvements in teachers' classroom organization and management strategies. The school has established routines that are quickly learned and understood by students. Close working with external community based organizations provides a range of support and enrichment activities for all students.

Quality Statement 5 - Monitor and Revise: The school has built-in structures for evaluating each student's progress throughout the year, recognizing weaknesses in its improvement plans and teaching practices, and flexibly adapting plans and practices to meet its goals for accelerated learning.

This area of the school's work is proficient.

The leadership team meets prior to the school starting evaluating the progress made during the previous year. They identify what was done well and what was less successful. From this reflection they formulate key targets to inform the Comprehensive Education Plan and the principal's personal targets. Targets are not sufficiently quantified, which makes it difficult for the cabinet to accurately measure progress against some of them as the year progresses.

The school is becoming more self-evaluative and teachers are increasingly effective in their evaluation of planning for each subject. Programs of instruction are drawn up and identify clearly the content of what has to be taught and how long this will take. Teachers subsequently reflect on the impact the instruction has had on student learning and make modifications as appropriate. Tasks are not consistently accurately matched to the learning needs of the student. Academic and social progress is monitored on a daily basis and achievement recorded in the record cards. Using this information teachers target work more appropriately in individual packages that are particular to each student. This modification is communicated to parents who welcome the opportunity to be involved as co-educators and they are appreciative of the care this individual attention demonstrates.

Close observation and monitoring of student progress are used to inform the best approach to meet student need. Diagnostic tests in mathematics and English language arts take place. This information is used to adjust intervention levels for students or groups of students and provide enrichment activities as appropriate. The additional support available through Saturday sessions is an example of this. Continued emphasis on reflection and evaluation of academic and social data is helping the school become a learning organization and identify the next steps in the development of the school, the instructional programs it provides and the quality of teaching required.

Part 4: School Quality Criteria Summary

SCHOOL NAME: KAPPA IV (MS 302)	∅	✓	+
Quality Score		X	

Quality Statement 1 – Gather Data: School leaders and faculty consistently gather data and use it to understand what each student knows and is able to do and to monitor student progress over time.	∅	✓	+
1.1 The school uses available data and generates its own data to provide an objective, constantly updated understanding of the performance and progress of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> each student, classroom, grade level, 		X	
1.2 The school uses available data and generates its own data to provide an objective, constantly updated understanding of the performance and progress of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ethnic groups, English language learners, special education students* 	X		
1.3 The school uses available data and generates its own data to provide an objective, constantly updated understanding of the performance and progress of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> all other categories of interest to the school* 	X		
1.4 Performance and progress are measured based on comparisons with similar schools, with the school's own past performance, and among students, classrooms, grade levels, academic subject areas, ethnic groups, and other groupings of interest within the school.		X	
Overall score for Quality Statement 1		X	

* These criteria are partially aspirational as of now because schools do not have routine access to all of this data. The NYC DOE plans to provide schools with enhanced access to the necessary data in 2007.

Quality Statement 2 – Plan and Set Goals: School leaders and faculty consistently use available data to understand each student's next learning step. Through collaborative planning and student and parent engagement, they set high goals for improving teaching practice and accelerating each student's learning.	∅	✓	+
2.1 Using data, school leaders and faculty engage in a collaborative process to set demanding, objectively measurable goals for immediate and long-range improvement, and to develop plans and timeframes for reaching those goals.		X	
2.2 Goals and plans focus on the school as a whole and on each student, classroom, grade level, academic subject, and group of students whose performance or progress has been identified by the school as a particular focus area.		X	
2.3 Particular attention is given to improving the performance and progress of students in greatest need of improvement.		X	
2.4 High expectations are conveyed to students and parents/caregivers. Students and their parents/caregivers are regularly invited to provide information about each student's performance and how to improve. This information is central to setting challenging goals and developing, evaluating, and revising plans.			X
2.5 Goals and plans for improving student performance and progress drive the activity of all members of the school community: leaders, staff, students, parents, and other partners.		X	
Overall score for Quality Statement 2		X	

Quality Statement 3 – Align Instruction: The school aligns its instructional activity, resources, and student engagement around its focused plans for accelerating learning for each student.	∅	✓	+
3.1 The school selects the curriculum based on how well it aligns with or implements the mandated curriculum and on the curriculum's capacity to generate meaningful interim data about progress towards goals and to support the school's high expectations and improvement plans.			X
3.2 Teachers are accountable for improving instruction and student outcomes. They plan and differentiate their instruction based on the needs revealed by student data and by the focused plan the school has developed to improve each student's and group of students' outcomes.		X	
3.3 Budgeting decisions are driven by the needs revealed by student data and by the focused plan the school has developed to improve each student's and group of students' outcomes.		X	
3.4 Staffing decisions are driven by the needs revealed by student data and by the focused plan the school has developed to improve each student's and group of students' outcomes.		X	
3.5 Scheduling decisions about the use of teacher and student time are guided by the needs that emerge from examining student data and by the focused plan the school develops to improve student outcomes.			X
3.6 Instructional programs actively engage students.			X
3.7 Staff know and respect students and respond to their academic needs, as well as their personal needs that affect academic performance. Each student knows and trusts an adult on the staff who is concerned about him or her.			X
3.8 Student attendance and engagement are high priorities. High rates and patterns of absences trigger immediate intervention.			X
Overall score for Quality Statement 3			X
Quality Statement 4 – Build and Align Capacity: The development of instructional leadership, staff, and capacity are aligned around the school's collaboratively established goals for accelerating the learning of each student.	∅	✓	+
4.1 Leaders, faculty, and staff are selected based on their high expectations for student performance and progress and based on their commitment and capacity to use data, compare outcomes within and across classrooms and schools and develop and revise plans and methods to improve performance and progress.		X	
4.2 Professional development decisions are driven by the needs revealed by student data and by the focused plan the school has developed to improve each student's and group of students' outcomes. Professional development is designed to help leaders, faculty, and staff use data, self- and peer-assessments, and collaboration with peers to achieve goals for improved school and student outcomes. Professional development and self- and peer-evaluation are aligned and overlap.		X	
4.3 The principal frequently observes classroom teaching and has a considered strategy for improving the quality of each teacher's instruction. Teachers frequently observe and support each other's classroom instruction with the goal of improving student outcomes.		X	
4.4 Planning, evaluation of results, and revision of plans takes place in teams. Leaders and faculty inform each other of their goals and results, candidly evaluate themselves and each other, and use what is learned to drive improvement.			X
4.5 The principal is respected and has capacity to effect change.			X
4.6 The school runs smoothly. Procedures are clear, communicated to all, and are generally followed.		X	
4.7 The school aligns youth development and support services around stated academic goals. Partnerships with outside bodies are routinely used to achieve academic goals.		X	
Overall score for Quality Statement 4		X	
Quality Statement 5 – Monitor and Revise: The school has built-in structures for evaluating each student's progress throughout the year, recognizing weaknesses in its improvement plans and teaching practices, and flexibly adapting plans and practices to meet its goals for accelerating learning.	∅	✓	+
5.1 All school plans and other interventions include frequent interim goals and diagnostic assessments of progress designed to reveal in objectively measurable ways whether the plan is being effectively implemented and reaching stated goals.		X	
5.2 Comparisons of student progress within and across classrooms and schools are used in making interim diagnostic assessments and measuring the progress of plans and interventions.		X	
5.3 Information generated by periodic assessments and diagnostic measures of progress and comparisons is used to revise plans immediately in order to reach stated goals. Interim and final goals are modified when data objectively demonstrate that revision is required.		X	
5.4 Each plan's interim and final outcomes drive successive phases of goal setting and improvement planning, and each successive phase is characterized by agile and flexible realignment of practices and resources to improve student academic outcomes.		X	
Overall score for Quality Statement 5		X	