



**NYCDOE**

**Quality Review: Final Report**

# **The New York City Department of Education**



# **Quality Review Report**

**KAPPA IV**

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

**Principal: Briony Carr**

**Dates of review: May 1 - 2, 2008  
Lead Reviewer: Jacqueline Grossman**

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## Part 1: The school context

### Information about the school

The Knowledge and Power Preparatory Academy IV (KAPPA IV) is a middle school with 289 students from grade 6 through grade 8. The school population comprises 39% Black, 59% Hispanic, 1% White and 1% Asian and other students. The student body includes 9% English language learners and 10% special education students. Boys account for 41% of the students enrolled and girls account for 59%. The average attendance rate for the school year 2006-2007 was 95.6%. The school is in receipt of Title 1 funding with 72% eligibility.

The school is in its fourth year. It is modeled after the Knowledge is Power Preparatory Charter schools, and shares a building with two other schools. Students are selected through an application process that includes an interview. Students and parents are required to sign contracts committing themselves to meeting all expectations of the school with regard to attendance, punctuality, behavior and academics. The school day begins at 7:30 am and ends at 4:00 pm.

## Part 2: Overview

### What the school does well

- The principal passionately believes in the students and in the mission of the school, and models this for the staff.
- The school has successfully created a culture of striving, with very clear academic and behavioral expectations for students, staff, and parents.
- Staff members are deeply committed to the school's purpose and willingly give the extra time required by its extended day.
- Staff and administration are highly accessible to parents, welcome their input, and ensure that communication is ongoing.
- There is a strong push-in and pull-out program for English Language Learners that provides deeply individualized instruction for students.
- Instruction in foreign language, vocal music, instrumental music, and theater are engaging and enriching for all students.
- The teaching staff are highly supportive of one another, and they are eager to hone their practice.
- Routines, rituals and clear procedures help to create an environment in which the students feel safe, cared for and understood.
- The school's inquiry team and its "critical friends" group are developing a solid foundation for the school in data analysis of individual students.
- Systems for addressing attendance concerns and disciplinary issues are firmly in place and are clearly understood by all.

### What the school needs to improve

- Increase the use of objective data to support goal setting and planning for individual students, groups of students, and the school.
- Refine systems of communication between grades and departments so that instruction is driven by clearly understood and identified student needs.
- Increase opportunities for teachers to refine their practice in data collection, assessment and differentiated instruction.
- Engage in whole-school strategic planning and review to ensure that the clearly articulated vision, with academic rigor at its core, is fully implemented.

## Part 3: Main Findings

### **Progress made since the last review**

The school has made little progress in addressing the issues identified in the previous Quality Review report.

### **Overall Evaluation**

#### **This school is underdeveloped with proficient features.**

The principal, in her first year, has been with the school since its inception and has previously served as both a teacher and the assistant principal. She is passionately committed to the students and has deeply invested in their success. The teaching staff are also eager to fulfill the mission of the school.

The extended length of the school day enables the school to offer instruction in vocal and instrumental music that is one of the hallmarks of the school. All students study Greek language and culture, and there is the feeling of a Greek academy permeating throughout the school. Students begin classes and end each day by reciting chants that help them internalize the school's expectations. Parents express that they are always welcome at the school. Students, teachers, and parents all described the vision of the school as one of "striving" for high achievement, both academically and in terms of character.

The school has not yet deepened its use of data to drive instruction and there has been limited impact of professional development in the arenas of instruction and data analysis. A good feature can be seen in the school's developing inquiry team, which is examining trends and learning targets in mathematics. Some teachers are also engaged in a "critical friends" group, which is starting to drive goal setting and reflection in the school. However, the school does not have a sufficiently systematic approach to setting and reviewing goals at whole-school, grade or class levels. The sixth grade team is especially cohesive and spends a great deal of time analyzing data and planning lessons together, resulting in a more cohesive experience for students. The principal considers this a model which she would like to see replicated in the other grades.

### **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 the student's progress over time.**

#### **This area of the school's work is underdeveloped with proficient features.**

School leaders and teachers have recently begun to use more forms of objective data to analyze the strengths and weaknesses of students' learning. All students have been assessed using the Acuity system, and that information has been used to determine instructional targets for some students. In addition, teachers are responsible for

administering standards-based classroom assessments after each unit of study or theme. Results of standardized State exams are used to determine participation in intervention services or in after-hours or weekend small-group instruction. School leaders have also analyzed student classroom data to determine which individuals are ready for more advanced coursework such as Regents-level math or science.

The school tracks the achievement and progress of its special education students. English language learners are especially well supported and given individualized instruction and feedback based on assessments, such as the Degrees of Reading Assessment or the Qualitative Reading Inventory. The school has not looked, in sufficient depth, at trends in data with regard to gender, ethnicity, or in comparison to other schools. They have minimally explored differences between classes. There are no consistent systems for collection and analysis of objective data. Training and management systems in data collection and its uses in instruction are not embedded throughout the school.

**Quality Statement 2 – Plan and Set Goals: School leaders and faculty consistently use data to understand each student’s next learning steps and to set suitably high goals for accelerating each student’s learning.**

**This area of the school’s work is proficient.**

The school has a deep, abiding, and abundantly evident commitment to bringing out the best in each student. High expectations are conveyed to prospective students and their families during the admissions process, and continue to be conveyed during summer orientations and throughout each day. The ten-period school day, uniform clothing and “binder requirements”, the “KAPPA Loot” initiative and a behavior reinforcement system all set the tone for high levels of achievement. There are many rituals that emphasize the privilege of attending the school. Copies of the school’s mission statement, vision, and chant are posted all over the hallways, classrooms and even the stairwells. Students are taken on college assimilation visits as early as the seventh grade, and these raise their aspirations.

Mastery of standards at a minimum level of 80% is the goal expected on classroom assessments, tests and quizzes. The school distributes progress reports in the middle of each marking period. Teachers track standards-based progress via classroom assessments. Students are required to reflect upon and select a variety of examples of their work to submit to their portfolio, including tests, written work, and samples of projects, but there is little consistency about what constitutes an appropriate choice for inclusion in the portfolio.

Students are offered additional support through one-on-one assistance. They may also be expected to attend extra classes on Saturdays. Teachers generously give of their time, including their lunch time, to assist students. There is no common preparation time in the schedule, so some teachers frequently plan together on their off hours. The school is aware of the need to incorporate common planning time for grades and departments into the school day. Although the overwhelming majority of students and families adhere to the expectations of the school, the school’s leaders are aware of the need to assist those students not accepted to the school through the interview process in acculturating to the norms of the school to ensure that behavioral and academic expectations are shared by all.

**Quality Statement 3 – Align Instructional Strategy to Goals: The school aligns its academic work, strategic decisions and resources, and effectively engages students around its plans and goals for accelerating student learning.**

**This area of the school’s work is proficient.**

The school utilizes a balanced literacy approach in English language arts and implements *Impact Math*. The staff spend significant time mapping the curriculum in all content areas and this has enabled them to align standards and concepts across grades. They have instituted a “backwards planning” model based on *Understanding by Design*, and all teachers are expected to follow this format. Classrooms clearly display each lesson’s objectives so that students are aware of the expected outcomes.

Some teachers make an effort to create lively and exciting lessons, although there is very little evidence of differentiated instruction throughout the school. Most teachers ably utilize technology in the presentation of their lessons. Teaching at the school requires a commitment and a desire to work the extended hours and to be accessible to students and their families in the evenings and on weekends, over the telephone and through email. It also requires a commitment to the unique culture of the school and its high expectations. The administration takes great care, as do prospective teachers, when considering potential employment at the school.

The school has a well-developed, comprehensive cultural program. Each student receives instruction in vocal music as well as instrumental music each year. Students study Greek as a foreign language, and the school infuses aspects of Greek language and culture in many aspects of daily life, including student participation in presentation of Greek drama. These offerings not only engage the students, but they reap academic benefits for the students as well. Classes in visual arts are greatly valued by the students and parents, as are additional enrichment opportunities after school. There are some clubs, such as a book club, service club and step club, in which can students participate but there are not sufficient options to cover the requirements of all students.

The high level of student attendance is reinforced by telephone calls home when students are not present. The early start time of the school has resulted in some ongoing lateness, but the school is diligently working to reinforce its expectations in this regard to all students and families.

**Quality Statement 4 - Align Capacity Building to Goals: The development of leadership, teachers and other staff capacity is aligned to the school’s collaboratively established goals for accelerating the learning of each student.**

**This area of the school’s work is proficient.**

The principal spends a lot of time in classrooms. There is an expectation that the purpose of every lesson be very clear. Teachers express a desire to receive more formal and informal feedback from administration, but also feel professionally empowered and supported to try new techniques or strategies in their classrooms.

Opportunities to attend training workshops have increased but individual steps for professional growth have not been strategically planned. Teachers share best practices with one another during staff meetings but have limited opportunities to visit each other's classrooms. The teaching staff are relatively inexperienced and there are no content-based staff developers working with the school at the present time. The teachers have been assisted by consultants from Teaching Matters, who have helped them advance their skills in the use of technology. New teachers are warmly supported by colleagues, who readily help one another, although they are not mentored in a formal, reflective manner.

Guidance is very strong and students feel supported by the school. The school's valuable partnership with Columbia Presbyterian Hospital provides comprehensive medical, dental and emotional care at its on-site clinic. The music program is enriched by a partnership with The Manhattan School of Music. The school has also instituted a character development program.

Procedures and routines are very clear across all domains in the school. Beautiful music piped in during change of classes makes this a quiet, peaceful time. Classes line up orderly and respectfully at dismissal. On Fridays, students do not have to wear their uniforms – instead, they happily don “business attire,” and report to school in professional clothing. This reflects both the desire of the school to raise the aspirations of the students as well as the desire to create a serious learning environment.

**Quality Statement 5 - Monitor and Revise: The school has structures for evaluating each student's progress throughout the year and for flexibly adapting plans and practices to meet its goals for accelerating learning.**

**This area of the school's work is underdeveloped with proficient features.**

The school's Comprehensive Education Plan is being completely revised by the new principal. There are several disparate plans at the school, and the staff understand the need to create a unified plan with articulated, benchmarked goals. The inquiry team and the “critical friends” group have been working on short-term and long-term goal setting for identified students, and the school intends to expand this practice in the future. The progress reports distributed regularly assist teachers in flexibly adapting their plans to meet student needs. The school's curriculum mapping process is successful in aligning work across grades and content areas with the standards, although it lacks goal-setting and benchmarking components.

The principal has a keen understanding of the school's readiness for the next phase of growth. She has already begun to plan for school wide-implementation of timeframes and benchmarks for student, class, grade and school goals. The active school leadership team focuses on strategic planning. The principal is engaging the staff in a process that is examining all aspects of school's systems and curriculum, and their impact on student achievement. She, along with the entire staff, is highly reflective. As the staff deepen in experience, the school's goal is to maintain its unique culture while strengthening and elevating the level of academic rigor to match the students' evident abilities.

# Part 4: School Quality Criteria Summary

<b>SCHOOL NAME: KAPPA IV</b>	Δ	➤	✓	+	◇
<b>Quality Score</b>		X			

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

To what extent do school leaders and faculty provide . . .	Δ	➤	✓	+	◇
1.1 an objective, constantly updated understanding of the performance and progress of each student, classroom, grade level?		X			
1.2 an objective, constantly updated understanding of the performance and progress of special education students?		X			
1.3 an objective, constantly updated understanding of the performance and progress of English language learners?			X		
1.4 an objective, constantly updated understanding of the performance and progress of ethnic groups, gender groups and all other categories of interest to the school?		X			
1.5 a measurement of performance and progress based on the school's own past performance, and among students, classrooms, grades and subject areas?		X			
1.6 a measurement of performance and progress based on comparisons with similar schools?		X			
1.7 training, management systems and structures that support teachers in the use of school data to inform planning and instruction and to track the progress of students?		X			
<b>Overall score for Quality Statement 1</b>		X			

**Quality Statement 2 – Plan and Set Goals: School leaders and faculty consistently use data to understand each student's next learning steps and to set suitably high goals for accelerating each students learning.**

To what extent do school leaders and faculty . . .	Δ	➤	✓	+	◇
2.1 engage in collaborative processes to set rigorous, objectively measurable goals for improvement, and to develop plans and timeframes for reaching those goals?		X			
2.2 focus 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 identify and improve the performance and progress of those students in greatest need of improvement?			X		
2.4 share whole school goals with all members of the school community to rigorously improve the performance and progress of students?		X			
2.5 convey consistently high expectations to students and their parents/caregivers?				X	
2.6 regularly provide students and their parents/caregivers with information about the goals set for each student, and about each student's progress and performance, and how they can improve?			X		
2.7 invite and enable parents/caregivers to provide useful information to teachers and the school about the learning needs and capacities of their children?			X		
<b>Overall score for Quality Statement 2</b>			X		

**Quality Statement 3 – Align Instructional Strategy to Goals: The school aligns its academic work, strategic decisions and resources, and effectively engages students around its plans and goals for accelerating student learning.**

To what extent does the school . . .	Δ	➤	✓	+	◇
3.1 select core curricular approaches that facilitate and provide meaningful interim data about progress towards goals and focus on raising the achievement of students?			X		
3.2 provide a broad and engaging curriculum, including the arts, to enhance learning both within and outside the school day?				X	
3.3 hold teachers accountable for the progress and learning of the students in their charge, for making instruction interesting and compelling, and for creating a positive safe and inclusive learning environment?			X		
3.4 ensure that teachers use school, class and student data to plan for and provide differentiated instruction that meets the specific needs of all the students in their charge?		X			
3.5 make budgeting, staffing and scheduling decisions strategically, based on data, to meet the school's academic goals for all students?			X		
3.6 ensure that there is an environment of mutual trust and respect between all staff and students to support personal and academic development?				X	
3.7 ensure that there are effective and consistently applied procedures to encourage and monitor student attendance and tardiness?				X	
<b>Overall score for Quality Statement 3</b>			X		

<b>Quality Statement 4 – Align Capacity Building to Goals: The development of leadership, teachers and other staff capacity is aligned to the school’s collaboratively established goals for accelerating the learning of each student.</b>					
<b>To what extent does the school . . .</b>	<b>Δ</b>	<b>➤</b>	<b>✓</b>	<b>+</b>	<b>◇</b>
4.1 use frequent observations of classroom teaching by the principal and other available information to develop a differentiated strategy for improving the quality of each teacher’s instruction?			X		
4.2 make professional development decisions strategically, based on data, to help meet the improvement goals of students and teachers?			X		
4.3 provide frequent opportunities for teachers to observe each other’s classroom instruction and to meet together in teams to plan, share effective practices, and evaluate one another’s instruction in an open and reflective professional environment?			X		
4.4 develop effective procedures for the induction and support of teachers who are new to the profession or the school?		X			
4.5 align youth development, guidance/advising and other student support services around stated academic and personal development goals?			X		
4.6 consistently implement clear procedures that enable the school to run smoothly and encourage effective student learning, and effectively address discipline related incidents?				X	
4.7 create effective partnerships with outside entities that support the academic and personal growth of the students?			X		
<b>Overall score for Quality Statement 4</b>					
			X		

<b>Quality Statement 5 – Monitor and Revise: The school has structures for evaluating each student’s progress throughout the year and for flexibly adapting plans and practices to meet its goals for accelerating learning.</b>					
<b>To what extent do . . .</b>	<b>Δ</b>	<b>➤</b>	<b>✓</b>	<b>+</b>	<b>◇</b>
5.1 the school’s plans for improving student outcomes include interim goals that are objectively measurable and have suitable time frames for measuring success and making adjustments?		X			
5.2 the school’s plans for improving teacher outcomes include interim goals that are objectively measurable and have suitable time frames for measuring success and making adjustments?			X		
5.3 teachers and faculty use periodic assessments and other diagnostic tools to measure the effectiveness of plans and interventions for individual and groups of students in key areas?		X			
5.4 teachers and faculty use the information generated by periodic assessments and other progress measures and comparisons to revise plans immediately in order to reach stated goals?		X			
5.5 school leaders track the outcomes of periodic assessments and other diagnostic measures and use the results to makes strategic decisions to modify practices to improve student outcomes?		X			
5.6 school leaders and staff use each plan’s interim and final outcomes to drive the next stage of goal setting and improvement planning?		X			
5.7 the principal and school community have a clear vision for the future development of the school and implement procedures and systems to effect change?		X			
<b>Overall score for Quality Statement 5</b>					
		X			

◇	<b>Outstanding</b>
+	<b>Well Developed</b>
✓	<b>Proficient</b>
➤	<b>Underdeveloped with Proficient Features</b>
Δ	<b>Underdeveloped</b>