

# **Quality Review Report 2008-2009**

**Knowledge and Power Academy II**

**Middle School 317**

**144-176 East 128 Street  
New York  
NY 10035**

**Principal: Sean Dunning**

**Dates of review: February 24 - 25, 2009**

**Lead Reviewer: Anita Skop**

## Part 1: The school context

### Information about the school

Kappa II is a middle school with 196 students from grade 6 through grade 8. The school population comprises 75% Black, 23% Hispanic, 1% White, and 1% Asian students. The student body includes 6% English language learners and 20% special education students. Boys account for 42% of the students enrolled and girls account for 58%. The average attendance rate for the school year 2007 - 2008 was 90.6%. The school is in receipt of Title 1 funding with 63% eligibility.

### Overall Evaluation

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

Kappa II is a school in transition. The new principal, in his first year, has implemented a number of initiatives designed to improve the tone of the building, increase instructional rigor and raise the achievement of students. Data has become more of a driving force at Kappa II. The school collects and analyzes a wide range of summative and formative data from State English language arts and math assessments, periodic assessments and content area unit tests and projects on an individual student basis. While the school does analyze data for some subgroups, and has looked at gender carefully, analysis of subgroups on interim assessments and detailed evaluation of trends is not yet consistently in place. The school utilizes ARIS well and shares a copy of each student's individual printout with parents who attend parent teacher conferences in the fall. It has recently introduced a school-wide goal setting protocol for both interim- and long-term goals, and is now beginning to incorporate this into the school culture. These changes, coupled with the addition of mid-semester report cards have begun to provide teachers, parents and students with more in depth information and focus the school on increased achievement. The school's single inquiry team has focused on the lowest third students in last year's seventh grade, with no expansion this year.

The school offers a diverse curriculum including Regents level classes, music, stringed ensemble, art, Hebrew language classes, and a model United Nations program. However, more than half the teaching staff consists of first year and/or second year teachers and the level of rigorous, differentiated instruction varies widely from classroom to classroom. Therefore, the school has begun to develop a targeted professional development program, with the new teacher mentor using the Santa Cruz evaluation model. Scheduling issues have a negative impact on these efforts. The principal is aware of this and it is part of the focus of the school's planning retreat this spring. Parents, teachers and students still see safety as a concern at the school, though the tone of the building has shown marked improvement since the last Quality Review. The school has implemented an anti-bullying program and has two teachers trained in a crisis intervention program, which is about to be turn keyed to the entire staff.

Teachers, parents and students believe that the principal has the vision to move the school forward, but the lack of stability in leadership, over five administrators in five years, has created a sense of uncertainty. The principal is working diligently to address this morale issue by sharing a long-term vision of constantly improving student achievement with all members of the school community.

## Part 2: Overview

### What the school does well

- School leaders and faculty collect and evaluate a wide range of data, including summative and formative assessments, student work, surveys, and anecdotal evidence to identify and address student needs.
- The principal has initiated a long-range vision of school stability, high expectations and ever-increasing student achievement, sharing it with all members of the school community.
- Project based learning and enrichment opportunities, in sports and in the arts, both within and outside the school day consistently enhance the curriculum.
- Suitable protocols and programs have been developed and are being implemented that address attendance, lateness, and discipline issues, ensuring a safe and secure environment.
- Budgetary and organizational decisions reflect a commitment to improving student achievement and reaching school wide goals.

### What the school needs to improve

- Consistently utilize data to analyze and define subgroup trends and progress, and establish instructional goals, which address these needs.
- Ensure that measurable goals are consistently established, assessed and evaluated within specific timeframes throughout the year for all students.
- Ensure that all students and parents are aware of student interim goals and the next steps needed to reach those goals.
- Provide targeted differentiated instruction, as aligned with individual student data and defined goals, throughout all classes and in all content areas.
- Expand and deepen the level of inquiry study to reflect greater teacher participation as part of the school wide culture.

## Part 3: Main Findings

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

**Quality Statement 1 – Gather Data: School leaders and faculty consistently gather, generate and analyze information on student learning outcomes and use it to understand what each student knows and can do and to monitor the student's progress over time.**

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

Kappa II has improved its use of data substantially since the last Quality Review. The school collects and analyzes data from a wide range of sources including the State English language arts and math assessments, the City periodic assessments, teacher formative assessments in all content areas, and extensive evaluation of student work. Both administration and staff utilize ARIS, well. In addition, this year the school has purchased the Degrees of Reading Assessment 2 as a benchmarking mechanism for all students, three times a year, and a math mastery standards based inventory system also tracks student progress effectively. Further, the school has administered the Renzulli learning styles survey to all students. This data has provided the school with an understanding of the needs of individual students and has informed the administration of the necessity of targeting discrepancies in gender achievement. The school is addressing this need through two single sex classes in seventh grade. However, while it is targeting this subgroup, careful and ongoing evaluation of data for trends is not yet consistent in every subgroup, so that the school does not fully address these areas of need.

The administration has developed and implemented a series of suitable protocols, which has increased parental awareness of student achievement data and its use in determining student success. The school has disseminated copies of student ARIS data profile sheets to all parents who attended the fall parent-teacher conferences. In addition, Kappa II has developed mid-semester report cards, which it distributes quarterly in between each citywide report card cycle, thus providing student progress feedback to parents eight times a year.

**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 underdeveloped with proficient features.**

The administration has recognized the need to set measurable, actionable and timely interim and long-term goals for all students. It has recently implemented a goal setting and tracking protocol that requires teachers to reflect on student progress at set times throughout the year. Each student has two separate sheets that reflect interim and long-term goals in teacher data binders. Using this format, teachers are beginning to utilize student conferences as a component of goal setting and focusing on the next steps needed to achieve set goals. However, this process has not yet permeated the school culture and its implementation is inconsistent across classrooms so that students and parents do not fully understand goals and next steps. Mid-semester report cards, which align with these goals, are also serving as a mechanism to integrate this process into the

fabric of the school, and provide parents with student learning targets and strategies to help students reach their targets.

The former administration compiled the school's present Comprehensive Educational Plan but did not share it with the current principal. However, careful evaluation of all data has enabled the school to target three key areas collectively. These are those of academic rigor, differentiation of instruction, and school tone and safety. These focal points, shared with all members of the school community, and aligned with the Knowledge and Power Academy philosophy, have helped to raise the level of expectation within the building and change the tone of the school. The school has planned a collaborative spring retreat to analyze and assess student data and prepare for the development of the Comprehensive Educational Plan for the next school year.

**Quality Statement 3 – Develop Coherent Instructional and Organizational Strategies: The school uses rigorous curricula, teaching and organizational decision making to engage students and faculty in meeting all students' learning goals.**

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

Kappa II is committed to its philosophical goal of preparing students to progress to college and effectively utilizes a project based learning protocol in all content areas to support this vision. This focus is also the basis for all budgetary and organizational decisions, evident in the purchase of the Glencoe literacy anthology for all students and in the creation of two same sex classes. The school implements balanced literacy protocols in English language arts and Impact math in all grades. It offers higher achieving students Regents math and earth science classes in eighth grade. Violin instruction is part of the music program as is a string ensemble group. Selected classes study Hebrew and after school programs offer students track and basketball teams, with the principal serving as coach, rounding out a rich curriculum that engages students.

Twelve out of seventeen of the teachers are either new to the field or in their second year. This has resulted in a very limited implementation of differentiated instruction, so that the school is not consistently targeting student needs. Math mastery assessments, aligned with the standards, have enabled some teachers, especially in the self-contained special education class, to target student needs individually. There is evidence of some differentiation of product in rubric-assessed student projects and presentations.

The school has enhanced the levels of mutual respect and addressed safety concerns through the instruction support center's anti-bullying program, "Connect to Kids". In addition, the school has two teachers trained in conflict resolution. This focus, coupled with the high expectations seen throughout the building, has made the school a far more welcoming place for the entire school community.

**Quality Statement 4 - Align Capacity Building to Goals: The school aligns its leadership development and structured professional collaboration around meeting the school's goals for accelerating student learning.**

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

The size of the school and its small faculty has made professional development a challenge at Kappa II. The administration has developed consistent observation protocols, pre-observation checklists and observation recommendations that target strategies for each teacher and provide next steps for improvement. They evaluate work

in alignment with this process. The school surveys new teachers to assess their needs and a part time mentor, utilizing the Santa Cruz evaluation continuum, provides support for inexperienced staff. However, the large number of new teachers makes this support somewhat limited. Scheduling blocks provide consistent instructional time for students, but leave little or no common planning time. While some teachers have visited Kappa IV, most have not participated in intervisitations. The result is that the instruction is inconsistent and teachers are often unclear as to protocols. The principal is addressing this through a series of “Lunch and Learn” workshops as well as several professional development sessions that he conducts personally. The school plans to review the scheduling pattern and professional development at the May retreat where the administration, faculty and parents analyze school data and plan collaboratively for the coming school year.

The single inquiry team has all new members. It has targeted the lowest third students selected last year but with no further expansion. Findings from this work, however, have caused the school to focus on “vocabulary in context” school wide, with an increase in the quality of student oral language and writing because of this initiative. The school has developed a partnership with the Stanley Isaacs Center, to provide additional programs after school and on weekends, enhancing the current academic support provided.

**Quality Statement 5 - Monitor and Revise: The school has structures for monitoring and 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.**

Kappa II has begun to develop a culture of accountability and reflective use of goal setting. The school is in transition on a number of levels. The majority of the staff and both of the administrators have been at the school for less than two years. Professional development in the use of interim data and common planning time to reflect on monitoring and revising goals has been limited. As a result, most teachers do not yet consistently use interim checkpoints to inform instruction. However, the school has defined these processes as a priority. The principal has shared with the staff protocols for improving student outcomes that include goal review and revision in a timely manner, at specified intervals throughout the school year. Interim data analysis, the use of goal setting sheets and rubric based assessments have all been put into place and are beginning to be implemented though the full impact has yet to be seen.

Data analysis has begun to drive key instructional and organizational decisions such as the seventh grade single sex classes and instructional blocks that target independent reading and ensure that Impact math games are included in instruction. It is currently too early to evaluate their impact on student success but the school has planned detailed analysis during the retreat.

The principal’s has shared his positive vision of stability, high expectations and consistent growth in student achievement with all constituencies. While the uncertainty of the past five years still exists, teachers, parents and students are beginning to believe that this school can help them to achieve success. To quote a seventh grader, “Some teachers push me and help me do better. They know I can be challenged.”

# School Quality Criteria 2008-2009

<b>School name: Knowledge and Power Academy II</b>	Δ	➤	✓	+
<b>Overall QR Score</b>		<b>X</b>		
<b>Quality Statement 1 – Gather Data: School leaders and faculty consistently gather, generate and analyze information on student learning outcomes and use it to understand what each student knows and can do, and to monitor the student’s progress over time.</b>				
<i>To what extent do school leaders and faculty regularly...</i>	Δ	➤	✓	+
1.1 collect and analyze actionable information, including assessment results and attendance data, to provide a complete view of the learning outcomes and needs of individual students and groupings of students?			<b>X</b>	
1.2 focus analysis on the learning outcomes and needs of all sub-groups of students?		<b>X</b>		
1.3 engage in an open exchange of information with students and families about students’ learning needs and outcomes, including assessment results and attendance data?			<b>X</b>	
1.4 design or adapt tools to enable school leaders and teachers to organize and analyze student performance, identify trends and inform instructional and organizational decisions, and to enable students and their families to assess and track each student’s progress?			<b>X</b>	
<b>Overall score for Quality Statement 1</b>			<b>X</b>	
<b>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.</b>				
<i>To what extent do school leaders and faculty...</i>	Δ	➤	✓	+
2.1 use collaborative and data-informed processes to set measurable, actionable and differentiated learning goals in core subjects for individual students and groupings of students and develop differentiated plans and timeframes for reaching these goals?		<b>X</b>		
2.2 use collaborative and data-informed processes to develop the school’s Comprehensive Educational Plan (CEP)?		<b>X</b>		
2.3 ensure that the achievement of learning goals, and the implementation of plans and timeframes for reaching these goals, is the central focus of school leaders, faculty, students and families?		<b>X</b>		
2.4 communicate high expectations to all students and families, and involve students in developing their learning goals and plans and in taking their next learning steps?		<b>X</b>		
<b>Overall score for Quality Statement 2</b>		<b>X</b>		

## DEFINITIONS

“**Analyze**” or “**analysis**” includes, but is not limited to, comparisons of:

- the current and past outcomes of . . . individual students, administrative groupings and sub-groups of students and the school itself in core subjects;
- the outcomes of different classrooms and sub-groups in the same grades and core subjects; and
- the school’s Progress Report and other outcomes to those of peer/other schools

“**Assessment results**” include student outcomes on summative assessments (e.g., state ELA, math, science and social studies tests, NYSESLAT, Regents Exams, and Performance Based Assessment Tasks) and formative assessments aligned to the school’s curriculum (including Periodic, DYQ, and teacher-developed Classroom Assessments).

“**Core subjects**” are ELA, math, science, social studies/history, the arts, foreign language, and physical education/health.

“**Data-informed processes**” include analysis of Progress Report, Quality Review, Learning Environment Survey, Inquiry Team findings, assessment results and attendance data

“**Groupings of students**” include classrooms, grade levels and high school cohorts.

“**Organizational decisions or strategies**” refer to a school’s use of budget and resources, staffing, planning, scheduling, grade structure, departments and teacher teams and other aspects of the school’s structure and organization that can affect student outcomes.

“**Sub-groups of students**” include special education students, English Language Learners, the other NCLB sub-groups, boys, girls, and other groups significant to the school.

**Quality Statement 3 – Develop Coherent Instructional and Organizational Strategies: The school uses rigorous curricula, teaching and organizational decision making to engage students and faculty in meeting all students’ learning goals.**

<i>To what extent do ...</i>	△	➤	✓	+
3.1 school leaders and faculty deliver challenging and engaging curricula in core subjects, including the arts, that are aligned to state standards?			X	
3.2 teachers plan and teach lessons that are differentiated to meet the needs of individual students and student groupings and are designed to enable all students to reach their learning goals?		X		
3.3 school leaders make strategic organizational decisions to support a coherent and rigorous instructional approach that enables students to reach their learning goals?			X	
3.4 school leaders maintain a culture of mutual trust and respect and positive attitudes toward learning that support the academic and personal growth of students and adults?			X	
<b>Overall score for Quality Statement 3</b>			X	

**Quality Statement 4 – Align Capacity Building to Goals: The school aligns its leadership development and structured professional collaboration around meeting the school’s goals for accelerating student learning.**

<i>To what extent do school leaders...</i>	△	➤	✓	+
4.1 use their own observation of classroom teaching and the analysis of student outcomes to implement an explicit, differentiated strategy to improve each teacher’s instruction, with a special focus on new teachers?			X	
4.2 encourage teachers to take part in Inquiry Teams and other structured professional collaborations (informed by the examination of student work, assessment outcomes and their own peer observations) and share in the instructional leadership of the school with the goal of improved student learning?		X		
4.3 provide professional development that encourages teachers to continuously evaluate and revise their classroom practices to improve student outcomes?		X		
4.4 utilize youth development, support services and partnerships with families and outside organizations to accelerate the academic and personal growth of students?			X	
<b>Overall score for Quality Statement 4</b>		X		

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

<i>To what extent do...</i>	△	➤	✓	+
5.1 the school’s plans for improving student outcomes and its strategies for improving each teacher’s instructional practices include measurable interim goals and suitable time frames for evaluating success and making adjustments during the year?		X		
5.2 school leaders and faculty use interim checkpoints and data to inform lessons, improve curriculum, differentiate instruction and revise student learning plans throughout the year?		X		
5.3 school leaders use data to regularly evaluate the effectiveness of and modify organizational decisions, structured professional collaborations and teacher improvement strategies?		X		
5.4 school leaders and the school community have a clear vision for the future development of the school and implement procedures and systems to support academic, personal and professional growth?			X	
<b>Overall score for Quality Statement 5</b>		X		

**Quality Review Scoring Key**

△	<b>Underdeveloped</b>	➤	<b>Underdeveloped with Proficient Features</b>	✓	<b>Proficient</b>	+	<b>Well Developed</b>
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