Quality Review Report

2017-2018

Knowledge And Power Preparatory Academy Vi
Junior High-Intermediate-Middle 27Q282
8-21 Bay 25 Street
Queens
NY 11691

Principal: Gary Dumornay

Dates of Review:
April 23, 2018 - April 24, 2018

Lead Reviewer: Carlos Perez
The Quality Review Report

The Quality Review is a two-day school visit by an experienced educator. During the review, the reviewer visits classrooms, talks with parents, students, teachers, and school leaders and uses a rubric to evaluate how well the school is organized to support student achievement.

The Quality Review Report provides a rating for all ten indicators of the Quality Review Rubric in three categories: Instructional Core, School Culture, and Systems for Improvement. One indicator is identified as the Area of Celebration to highlight an area in which the school does well to support student learning and achievement. One indicator is identified as the Area of Focus to highlight an area the school should work on to support student learning and achievement. The remaining indicators are identified as Additional Finding. This report presents written findings, impact, and site-specific supporting evidence for six indicators.

Information about the School

Knowledge And Power Preparatory Academy Vi serves students in grade 6 through grade 8. You will find information about this school, including enrollment, attendance, student demographics, and data regarding academic performance, at http://schools.nyc.gov/Accountability/tools/report/default.htm.

School Quality Ratings

### Instructional Core

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>To what extent does the school...</th>
<th>Area</th>
<th>Rating</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>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</td>
<td>Additional Finding</td>
<td>Well Developed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>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</td>
<td>Area of Focus</td>
<td>Proficient</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>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</td>
<td>Area of Celebration</td>
<td>Well Developed</td>
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### School Culture

To what extent does the school...

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Area</th>
<th>Rating</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.4 Maintain a culture of mutual trust and positive attitudes that supports the academic and personal growth of students and adults</td>
<td>Additional Finding</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.4 Establish a culture for learning that communicates high expectations to staff, students and families, and provide supports to achieve those expectations</td>
<td>Additional Finding</td>
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### Systems for Improvement

To what extent does the school...

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Area</th>
<th>Rating</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.3 Make strategic organizational decisions to support the school’s instructional goals and meet student learning needs, as evidenced by meaningful student work products</td>
<td>Additional Finding</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.1 Establish a coherent vision of school improvement that is reflected in a short list of focused, data-based goals that are tracked for progress and are understood and supported by the entire school community</td>
<td>Additional Finding</td>
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<tr>
<td>4.1 Observe teachers using the Danielson Framework for Teaching along with the analysis of learning outcomes to elevate school-wide instructional practices and implement strategies that promote professional growth and reflection</td>
<td>Additional Finding</td>
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<tr>
<td>4.2 Engage in structured professional collaborations on teams using an inquiry approach that promotes shared leadership and focuses on improved student learning</td>
<td>Additional Finding</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.1 Evaluate the quality of school-level decisions, making adjustments as needed to increase the coherence of policies and practices across the school, with particular attention to the CCLS</td>
<td>Additional Finding</td>
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Area of Celebration

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Quality Indicator:</th>
<th>2.2 Assessment</th>
<th>Rating:</th>
<th>Well Developed</th>
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Findings

Across the vast majority of classes teachers use of rubrics and assessment are aligned with the curricula offering a clear picture of student mastery. The vast majority of teachers reflect a varied use of ongoing checks for understanding including conferencing and student peer and self-assessment.

Impact

Teachers provide actionable and meaningful feedback to all students. Teachers make adjustments to lessons in order to meet the needs of all learning styles.

Supporting Evidence

- Teachers are consistently checking for student understanding throughout all lessons. During the majority of classrooms visited, teachers assessed students as they worked in groups, tracking student responses using predetermined checklists or anecdotal notes. 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. During another lesson, the teacher created a small group of students in order to address some misconceptions students had as a result of the conferencing the teacher engaged in previously. Additionally, teachers take data from conference sessions, exit tickets, and assessments and use this to engage in inquiry and adjust curriculum and future lessons.

- Evidence of feedback to students informed students of their strengths, areas of focus and also included actionable next steps that is specific to the student’s work. For example, feedback to a student’s art project where they needed to name their recent painting included strengths such as “I like how you state that the people are praying, but what is their story? Who are they? How are they dressed?” The teacher also asked the student to think of another way to say the word happiness. Feedback to a student’s English Language Arts (ELA) writing assignment, praised the student for including text-based evidence and offered next steps that included ways for the student to bolster their claim.

- Throughout the majority of the classrooms visited there was evidence of student self-assessment and reflection. 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. Students are regularly sharing work with each other and using checklists to review the work of their peers. During the meeting with students they shared how self-reflection is a regular part of their day. They shared how they use checklists on a regular basis in order to make sure they have included all pertinent information prior to handing in an assignment. Students also shared how valuable they feel the feedback they receive from their peers is and how it “adds another layer to make sure we get the highest grade possible.”
Area of Focus

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Quality Indicator:</th>
<th>1.2 Pedagogy</th>
<th>Rating:</th>
<th>Proficient</th>
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**Findings**
Teaching practices across classrooms reflect the school’s belief in how students learn best, most notably active student collaboration and discussion.

**Impact**
Student discussions and work products reflect high levels of participation, rigor and thinking, yet lack evidence of student ownership.

**Supporting Evidence**

- The school community believes that students learn best by engaging in active discussion, a component of the Danielson *Framework for Teaching*. During an ELA lesson, students analyzed three letters by Anna Deavere Smith and discussed how emulating her ideas and advice support an understanding of her message. During the class students were overheard stating “This to me speaks of empathy or sympathy” and others stated “I like what you said about this particular piece.” During a science lesson, student participation and interaction was witnessed throughout, which made student-to-student discussion straightforward. Students engaged in a laboratory exercise where they were able to clearly articulate to their peers how the wrong blood type could affect the performance of one’s circulatory system. Students were engaged in active conversations throughout the entire lesson. However, this level of student discussion was not seen throughout the vast majority of all classes visited.

- Most but not all student work products evidenced high levels of rigor, thinking, and participation throughout the classrooms visited. Evidence of student writing that supported child labor laws was clear, explicit, and cited classroom conversations. The students stated reasons such as child injuries, exhaustion, and depression as reasons for supporting child labor laws. Another piece of student writing that exhibited high levels of student thinking had students interpreting the quote “I am six years old and instead of celebrating with birthday cake, I chew on a piece of charcoal.” Student responses included “This quote is about a child who faces war and has nothing because of war” and “I think this means that this child has nothing to celebrate about and only uses what they have, like the coal.”

- All of the classrooms visited exhibited classroom protocols for group instruction and partner discussions. Many teachers use flexible and purposeful grouping based on assessment data such as student conferencing. During group work, students have specific roles and assure that all group members stay on task. During an algebra lesson, the teacher created student groups based on prior assessments and on skill level, assuring that each group had at least one student at a high, mid and lower level. Group protocols for discussion were posted throughout the school and students referenced them several times throughout lessons. Evidence of discussion protocols could be heard as students stated “I agree with you and I would like to add,” and “I respect your comment but think that…”
### Additional Finding

**Quality Indicator:** 1.1 Curriculum  
**Rating:** Well Developed

#### Findings

All curricula are aligned to the Danielson *Framework for Teaching* and strategically integrate instructional shifts. Rigor is emphasized through all planning documents and tasks, and are embedded in a coherent way, giving access to all students including English Language learners (ELLs) and students with disabilities.

#### Impact

There is curricular coherence across all grades and subject areas that promotes college and career readiness and assures that all students must demonstrate their thinking.

#### Supporting Evidence

- Curricular documents reviewed displayed Common Core alignment across all subject areas that promote college and career readiness. Staff utilizes a curriculum mapping tool in order to develop curricula in every subject and grade level including the arts, resulting in coherence. Curriculum maps reflect grade level curricula, standards, essential questions, related websites, and assessments. The eighth-grade ELA curriculum map clearly outlines every Common Core Standard that is aligned to a particular task. For example, The College 101 map details the reading skills that students need such as being able to utilize different literary devices in order to create distinct tone. Accelerated curriculum such as this is evident across all subject areas and 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.

- Access to all curriculum for students with disabilities and ELLs is detailed on all curricular documents. An example of supports seen in classrooms were laminated math formula sheets and accountable talk stems on all students’ desks. Another support in use was math manipulatives for determining area of rectangular prisms. All students are expected to handle rigorous curriculum with added support for those who require it. For example, an algebra lesson plan offered students graphic organizers in order to manage each step in solving equations, a math handbook that offers students definitions and helpful tips, and vocabulary cards which assist students in understanding and implementing key vocabulary associated with tasks. An ELA lesson plan uses strategic grouping in order to include at least two ELL students in each of the three student groups.

- 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. A social studies map includes specific academic vocabulary and emphasizes integration and evaluation of multiple sources of evidence. The majority of students have developed the ability to cite text-based evidence in all content areas, which is an instructional shift and promotes coherence. All subject area teachers are required to include various questioning strategies that include essential questions directly connected to planning and instruction. For example, the essential question of an ELA lesson stated, “How can we analyze and draw evidence from quotes to determine the theme of text and what do the quotes reveal to us about the author?” This is planned in order for students to explain how their childhood experiences influences their everyday life. A social studies lesson plan asks students to present findings and specific text-based evidence in order to explain why they have a duty to preserve world wonders for future generations.
Additional Finding

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<tr>
<th>Quality Indicator:</th>
<th>3.4 High Expectations</th>
<th>Rating:</th>
<th>Well Developed</th>
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Findings

School leaders consistently communicate instructional and curricular expectations as well as effectively conveying the academic progress of all students to parents through an online gradebook system.

Impact

School leaders provide training that results in a mutual accountability of all academic expectations. Students are provided with support in order to meet all expectations.

Supporting Evidence

- Parents stated that they feel as if they are partners with the school in their child’s academic success. School leaders and staff maintain several lines of ongoing communication with all parents. The parents agree that the school’s online gradebook system is “extremely helpful” and keeps them actively engaged in what their children are learning and their progress. Parent’s input is valued at the school. Members of the School Leadership Team worked on the school’s Comprehensive Educational Plan. The school holds a four-day grade six orientation before the start of the school year in order to help incoming students acclimate to the school and share academic and positive behavioral policies with students. Several parents explained how they are completely informed about everything at the school, one parent stating (all other agreed) “There is nothing that goes on in the school, or about our children that we are not aware of.”

- There is a culture of mutual accountability that is evident through the interactions with teachers, school leaders, and the school’s Peer Instructional Coaches (PICs). School leaders and PICs meet weekly 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 collaborative instructional rounds to identify best practices and next steps to improve teacher practice. Teachers are often called upon to present to their peers. For example, teachers presented professional learning on how to implement consistent routines in the classroom that will lead to improved student behavior. Additionally, teachers take it upon themselves to meet, in addition to their scheduled team meetings, and discuss their observation feedback and with colleagues and offer each other ways to address the feedback.

- There is a detailed screening process for potential incoming sixth grade students that begins with an interview held in the spring for current fifth graders interested in attending. Teacher, student, and parent input are crucial in this process. Interview committees are comprised of a teacher, a student, and a parent. The committees are provided with a questionnaire and rubric and have an important voice in the admission process, and during the interview begin to communicate how high the expectations will be if they are accepted. There is significant evidence that school leaders, teachers, and staff have established a culture for learning that systematically and strategically communicates a unified set of high expectations for all students. Teachers provide clear, focused, and actionable feedback to students during lessons and while conferring with students. The school’s online gradebook system allows students to track their progress daily. Students shared how they are utilizing the online gradebook system “every single day” as according to students, “It gives a clear picture of what we are missing or how well we are doing in all our classes.”
### Findings

School leaders support the development of all teachers with an effective cycle of classroom observations that captures all classrooms events, identifies teacher’s strengths, and offers clear actionable feedback.

### Impact

Feedback to teachers articulates clear expectations and supports teacher practice and development.

### Supporting Evidence

- Teachers shared how supported they feel through the school’s observation process. Many shared how helpful the feedback is along with the materials and resources that are offered in order to implement that feedback. Other teachers shared that observation results are used to guide and develop professional development (PD) throughout the school. For example, recently school leaders engaged in instructional rounds and found that teachers needed support in questioning strategies. The following Monday school leaders facilitated a PD session on deepening questioning strategies in the classroom. Teachers are so supported by school leaders and the observation process that they often invite school leaders into their classes to share new initiatives and activities.

- Teachers receive feedback that is specific and offers clear next steps. Feedback to a teacher’s math lesson commended the teacher for the improvement in their use of formative assessments as the school leaders noted that the teacher was conferring with students and taking notes on a clipboard. The school leader offered next steps that included implementing five to seven minutes at the end of lessons for students to complete an “anchor problem” which will help the teacher correct any misconceptions with regard to the problem-solving process. Feedback to a teacher’s ELA lesson included commending the teacher for “capturing student interest by showing the movie trailer and then modeling an analysis using the elements of the story.” Next steps included using “Depth of Knowledge levels 3 and 4” questions and integrating writing activities in class discussion in order to deepen student reflection.

- Teachers and school leaders engage in pre- and post-observation conferences. Teacher self-reflect on their observations using the school’s “Post-Observation Conference Form.” The form asks questions such as how successful the teacher thought the lesson was, whether the teacher felt the students learned the intended targets, and how they would teach the lesson again differently if they had the opportunity. This form is brought to every post-observation conference along with student artifacts from the lesson and is considered a valuable tool for discussion and growth for both the teacher and the school leader. These forms are used at the end of each school year for teachers and school leaders to reflect upon and help construct teacher goals for the upcoming year.
Additional Finding

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<th>Quality Indicator:</th>
<th>4.2 Teacher Teams and Leadership Development</th>
<th>Rating:</th>
<th>Well Developed</th>
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Findings

All teachers are engaged in professional inquiry-based collaborations that systematically analyze teacher classroom practice, assessment data, and student work products. Throughout the school, there is evidence of distributed leadership structures embedded throughout.

Impact

Structured professional collaborations result in schoolwide instructional coherence and increased student achievement for all learners. There is effective teacher leadership where teacher voice plays a key role in important schoolwide decisions.

Supporting Evidence

- During team meetings, teachers analyze student work and data on an ongoing basis. A review of agendas shows how teachers look at student work samples and make decisions about next steps for individuals and groups of students, based on needs identified through collaborative analysis. During a grade team meeting, teachers analyzed student work presented by the ELA teacher. The team conferred on strategies and next steps for this teacher that included the use of a graphic organizer and a checklist pertaining to citing textual evidence, which were tools that other teachers in attendance also found useful for their students. Checklists and graphic organizers were two tools that were seen across the vast majority of classrooms and students also shared how checklists are a valuable tool that they use regularly.

- Distributed leadership opportunities for all staff are embedded in the school. According to the principal, “We groom teachers to be leaders here.” This is evident as there are two teachers who are on the school’s instructional leadership team. In addition, teachers have multiple opportunities to take on leadership roles through inquiry. Teachers regularly are the lead in inquiry and run the meeting along with presenting all pertinent information. According to teachers, “We are constantly leading professional learning sessions in the school.” During the meeting with teachers, they all shared how the feeling of being a leader is something each teacher in the school experiences. They shared how leadership is not only “something that is expected” but also something in which they actually want to take part. Teacher voice can be seen in multiple places, starting with the student selection committee that interviews potential incoming students, the school’s hiring committee, as well as the school’s PD committee. Teachers select and implement PD sessions that are specific to their needs and the feedback they receive in observation reports.

- All teachers participate in at least two professional inquiry-based collaborations each week that is devoted to the analysis of student data, student work products, or pedagogical practice that lead to adaption and refinement of Common Core-aligned curricula as well as the fostering of improvements in instructional practice. Teachers use the Tuning Protocol while engaged in inquiry and teachers rotate leadership roles such as the presenter and facilitator each meeting. Teacher teams 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. Regular inquiry work such as this led to a 10 percent in the overall passing rate on the state math exams from 52 percent last year, to 62 percent this year.