Quality Review Report

2019-2020

Knowledge and Power Preparatory Academy
International High School (Kappa)
High school 10X374
500 East Fordham Road
Bronx
NY 10458
Principal: Panorea Panagiosoulis

Dates of Review:
January 8, 2020 - January 9, 2020

Lead Reviewer: Phyllis Siwiec
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 International High School (Kappa) serves students in grade 9 through grade 12. 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

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Instructional Core</th>
<th>Area</th>
<th>Rating</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>To what extent does the school...</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>1.1 Ensure engaging, rigorous, and coherent curricula in all subjects, accessible for a variety of learners and aligned to State standards and/or content standards</td>
<td><strong>Area of Celebration</strong></td>
<td><strong>Well Developed</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.2 Develop teacher pedagogy from a coherent set of beliefs about how students learn best that is informed by State standards and the 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><strong>Additional Finding</strong></td>
<td><strong>Well Developed</strong></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><strong>Area of Focus</strong></td>
<td><strong>Well Developed</strong></td>
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</tbody>
</table>
## School Culture

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>To what extent does the school...</th>
<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>
<td>Well Developed</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>
<td>Well Developed</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

## Systems for Improvement

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>To what extent does the school...</th>
<th>Area</th>
<th>Rating</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.3 Make strategic organizational decisions to support the schools instructional goals and meet student learning needs, as evidenced by meaningful student work products</td>
<td>Additional Finding</td>
<td>Well Developed</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>
<td>Well Developed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.1 Observe teachers using the Danielson Framework for Teaching along with the analysis of learning outcomes to elevate schoolwide instructional practices and implement strategies that promote professional growth and reflection</td>
<td>Additional Finding</td>
<td>Well Developed</td>
</tr>
<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>
<td>Well Developed</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 State standards</td>
<td>Additional Finding</td>
<td>Well Developed</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Area of Celebration

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Quality Indicator:</th>
<th>1.1 Curriculum</th>
<th>Rating:</th>
<th>Well Developed</th>
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</table>

**Findings**

Rigorous habits and higher order skills are emphasized, planned, and refined using student work and data. Curricula and academic tasks are embedded in a coherent way through the alignment of International Baccalaureate Diploma Program (IBDP) courses with Regents courses across content and grade levels.

**Impact**

All learners must demonstrate their thinking. Individual and groups of students have access to the curricula and are cognitively engaged.

**Supporting Evidence**

- Curricula correspond to the mastery-level rigor and complexity that are the basis of the school's grading policy, which is used to rate progress in five levels, from Mastery Below (MB) to Mastery Exceeds (ME). As the scoring increases, the criteria become more complex, requiring longer commitments of time. Levels of complexity also apply to IBDP, Regents, and non-Regents courses. Teachers use a High-Quality Work Review Protocol to assess the level of the task, learning targets, and the resulting student work to ensure rigor and challenge for all students. Differentiated supports are included in lesson plans. For example, an algebra Integrated Co-Teaching (ICT) lesson with the learning objective, “I can use my current level of mastery to set and practice appropriate goals” has four differentiated review sheets with corresponding tasks to prepare students for their mid-term test. Although the review sheets have different topics and levels of complexity, all students begin the practice with review sheet A. They work for 15 minutes, then move on to review sheet B, and so on. The lesson plan states: “Rationale: Students have different strengths and struggle spots, [they] should be encouraged to work at their own pace. Math is not a race.”

- School leaders, teachers, and students shared that to prepare all students for the rigor of IBDP in grades 11 and 12, the EL Education (formerly Expeditionary Learning) program was adopted for grades nine and ten. That program supports student achievement in diverse communities across the country, and ensures that all students master rigorous content, develop positive character, and produce high-quality work. School leaders also shared that in order to ensure higher-order skills and rigor, teachers of an ICT, English as a New Language (ENL) team stay together and become better at working together, writing appropriate curricula and learning to support each other and their students. In addition, professional development (PD) focused on differentiation strategies is offered across departments. In a grade-nine ICT/ENL global studies class studying six different modern world issues, students are grouped by interest areas. Since the groups are heterogeneous, differentiation occurs by reteaching to individual partner groups using strategic monitoring, translated texts, extended time, and modified handouts with larger font.

- Lesson plans for an International Baccalaureate (IB) Biology class describe stations that are to be used by both assess students’ working knowledge about analyzing cell structure, function, and evolution, and to prepare follow-up tasks to support challenge areas and to identify areas of proficiency. With six different stations, the students would begin by self-evaluating levels of understanding, and then develop an action plan for those areas where they need the most support. The lesson plan lists specific students and their scaffolding needs. The lesson plan incorporates the use of a tracking tool, with the note that “By the end of class, the teacher and students can have a picture of what the class needs the most work on to target further review during lab …”
Findings

Teachers use common assessments that are tracked, with a focus on introducing new integrated data systems, to continue to create a clear picture of student progress toward goals and to adjust curricular and instructional decisions. In the vast majority of classrooms, teachers consistently reflect the varied use of checks for understanding and student self- and peer- assessment.

Impact

All students, including Multilingual learners (MLLs) and students with disabilities, demonstrate increased mastery. Teachers make effective adjustments that meet all students' learning needs by enabling them to be aware of their next learning steps.

Supporting Evidence

- Teachers use a reading baseline program in the fall to establish levels of support for students, along with standards-based mastery-level rubrics. This creates a clear picture of student progress toward goals across grades and subjects, so that all students demonstrate increased mastery. The staff uses a wide-range of data to indicate student mastery and progress. A comparative analysis of several data categories from 2014 to 2016 with 2017 to 2019 indicates increases in student progress. Specifically, the number of Advanced Regents diplomas earned increased by 11.2 percentage points; College Ready Math scores increased by 21.6 percentage points, and College Ready English Language Arts (ELA) scores increased by 9.4 percentage points. Similar data analysis for the same time interval on IB course participation and results reveal that IB scores of 4+ on all exams increased by 14.8 percentage points, and exams scoring 5+ increased by 2 percentage points, while IB diploma graduation rates increased by 30.7 percentage points. In another comparative analysis of Advanced Placement (AP) Calculus exams from 2017 to 2019, the average mock test score was 1.43, while the average actual AP exam score was 2.86, with 57 percent of students earning a 3+ score in the final administration. Although the staff uses multiple sites to store their data, there is limited accessibility for data to be analyzed in larger collections across grades, content, and programs. The school community is focused on introducing and integrating new systems, with the goal to improve data access.

- Teachers use common assessments to monitor student progress, including subgroup analysis for English Language Learners (ELLs) and students with disabilities. In social studies, the first assessment of a standard that states “I can analyze the causes and effects of an historical event” was assessed an average of three times, with a scale of one to four for 107 students in grades 10 and 11 in the fall of 2019. Data illustrate that all demographic groups represented within the student community exhibited increased mastery. Every two weeks, each student receives a success report that lists points earned for attendance, effort, and conduct on a 100-point scale. Further, each current course is listed with the mastery levels in five ratings, from MB, the lowest rating, to ME, the highest rating for each course. Also included are scores that speak to completing assignments on time, using time effectively during class, being organized and ready to learn, and setting and striving for goals.

- Teachers embed checks for understanding as a formative assessment, through the use of exit tickets and teacher check-ins, as seen in lesson plans. Student self- and peer-assessments include the topic or theme studied, such as in an Apartheid project, with the guiding question, “Was justice achieved in South Africa after apartheid?” Other topics included Education Reform, Land Reform, and The Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC), a court-like restorative justice body assembled in South Africa after the end of apartheid. Students stated whether or not their project was successful and if justice was served.
**Additional Finding**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Quality Indicator:</th>
<th>1.2 Pedagogy</th>
<th>Rating:</th>
<th>Well Developed</th>
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**Findings**

Across the vast majority of classrooms, teachers strategically provide multiple entry points and high-quality supports. Student work products and discussions reflect high levels of student thinking, participation, and ownership.

**Impact**

Teaching strategies, including station-based learning, coupled with differentiated group assignments and extensions, ensure that students are engaged in appropriately challenging tasks. Student work products reflect high levels of student thinking, participation, and ownership.

**Supporting Evidence**

- Teachers across the vast majority of classrooms use strategies to provide multiple entry points and high quality supports and extensions that include students needing to “grapple”, or struggle, with content at all levels, and use the topic, evidence, analysis and reasoning (TEAR) strategy in ELA and humanities classes. An IB grade-eleven English class tasked with writing a comparative analytic essay focused on the American Dream through the eyes of two different authors and their texts. When asked about whether or not the texts were challenging, a student responded, “The teacher pushes us and provides ways to understand and guide our interpretations, so I am learning more than if I just read these books on my own.” Using the checklist for success, student-selected novels, and a differentiated rubric, some students were checked-in by the teacher more frequently than others by design. A grade-nine global history class, co-taught with an ENL teacher, provided specified MLL students with additional supports. However, students were in self-selected interest groups of three as a level of support. Differentiation included reteaching to specific groups that needed more support using translated texts or extended time, and modified handouts with larger font. Each group created a poster that illustrated a researched global issue to be shared with the rest of the class.

- The IB program offers challenging courses that students enroll in during their junior and senior years. In an IB Biology class with grade-eleven students, stations were set up as a review process to prepare for their final exam. The students began the lesson with a self-assessment of all topics, where they each evaluated their own current level of mastery using a 1 - basic knowledge, 2 - some knowledge, and 3 - I am confident in my knowledge rating scale. Translated materials were available for students who needed to read information in Spanish. The results were used to create individualized plans in order to use the review process more effectively. Students engaged in tasks at the stations they needed to visit. Students who were most confident of their knowledge had to complete five to six activities, while those who were most challenged completed two or three. Each of the six stations had guided questions. Students discussed answers with their group members to clarify any confusion, inform each other, and agree or disagree with answers.

- Student ownership was demonstrated in a discussion about challenging work and how each overcame the challenge. In one example, a student was intimidated by writing an analytical essay in response to a play that had been read. The student became focused on metacognition and the feeling of being overwhelmed. Showing perseverance, the student moved forward, and by deciding to organize the play into short phrases, successfully navigated the essay. Another student had to take a test with many scientific ecology words. Studying the words and the context for each, visiting the teacher during office hours, and staying focused during the actual testing event led to a higher score, a sense of accomplishment, and increased confidence. The student had owned the challenge, and devised methods to overcome obstacles.
## Findings
School leaders consistently communicate high expectations to the entire staff using multiple strategies. School leaders and staff successfully partner with families.

## Impact
School leaders provide training that promotes a culture of mutual accountability among staff. The partnership with families supports student progress toward college and career expectations.

## Supporting Evidence
- School leaders clearly articulate high expectations to staff members through their faculty handbook, weekly KAPPA Faculty Staff Bulletin, PD sessions, teacher-team minutes, regular lead teacher and department meetings, and summer professional learning (PL). These expectations were also apparent during ongoing PL sessions, and in individual and team conversations. In addition, the staff handbook details expectations related to instruction, PD, school culture, and operations, as in the grading policy. School leaders and teachers have collaboratively developed a PD plan in response to teacher observation reports and teacher surveys that is aligned to school-wide goals. PL sessions on instructional components of the Danielson Framework for Teaching, especially using assessment in instruction, deepen teachers’ understanding of the expectations for quality instruction, with the support of partner organization coaches.

- Mutual accountability between teachers, their colleagues, and school leaders occurs in several ways. Teachers attend department meetings that are facilitated by a teacher-leader, where lessons and unit plans are presented and discussed for feedback from the school leader who is present, the department leader, and teacher colleagues. There are frequent intervisitations that are teacher-organized, using a bulletin board where teachers post specific times in the week when they will be presenting practice that others are invited to observe. Teachers then sign up to attend, and the process begins with scheduling, the visit, and then by visitors sharing feedback to the host teacher, with more detailed discussions to follow. Teachers are also surveyed by school leaders regarding PD feedback. In addition, teachers set goals with school leaders, have a mid-year check-in with student work samples and performance data, and an end of year discussion focused on goals that were achieved with evidence, and next steps for the following year.

- Effective communication from school leaders and teachers to parents is ongoing and keeps parents informed regarding academic progress and schoolwide activities. Teachers shared that they are in constant communication with parents on a regular basis through phone calls, emails, texts, and letters. The school’s guidance counselors also assist teachers with communication, and help to facilitate meetings with parents, as needed. All parents interviewed praised the school leaders and staff for effective communication. They cite, as an example, student success reports every two weeks. Parents shared that they partner with school leadership and staff in many ways, particularly through the college awareness activities, campus visits, and the college application process.
Additional Finding

| Quality Indicator: | 4.1 Teacher Support and Supervision | Rating: | Well Developed |

Findings

Clear expectations and effective feedback that accurately captures teachers’ strengths, challenges, and next steps are provided, using the Danielson Framework for Teaching. A strategic, transparent system drives the use of teacher observation data in the design and facilitation of PD and succession plans.

Impact

Official observations and consistent school-wide classroom walk-throughs lead to written feedback aligned to teachers’ professional goals and the PD plan, which is designed to meet teachers’ needs. The strategic systems lead to improved quality of student work products.

Supporting Evidence

- Observation reports include effective feedback that enables teachers to improve their practice and impact on student success. Next steps are directly connected to the teachers’ instructional goals. For example, one observation report included feedback referring to the teacher’s goal to improve assessment practices as a priority, noting that the teacher confered with students, but not with the co-teacher. Next steps included setting up a circulation path around the classroom so that each of the co-teachers could check-in with 10 students between the two teachers within two minutes. The report read, “How will you move? Practice by planning the space and to whom you each will visit in order to move strategically. This will help establish an efficient method to provide feedback and monitoring while looking for trends you notice. You can mention the trend to the whole class with follow-up afterwards.” Other feedback advised a teacher, whose goal was to build on student engagement, to ask students more open-ended questions and provide them with more talk time. It stated, “In this way you can take a coaching/facilitator stance, where you invite students to explain their thinking and to justify their answers”, instead of utilizing class time for teacher talk.

- School-based leaders and coaches conduct walkthroughs to identify patterns in classroom instruction and use this data to inform what they will discuss or practice during Friday PD time. A walkthrough tracking tool is used to record observations of learning targets and checks for understanding, with specific indicators noted. The highest rated items in two distinct sessions included that learning targets were posted throughout the class or on every audio-visual slide, and that the learning target was written in student-friendly language. The least observed target was “At least 80 percent of tasks serve as assessments for learning in which the purpose is tightly aligned with lesson’s learning target.” A discussion of feedback from the walkthrough was followed by a review of the expectations for why learning targets and formative assessments are used. Teachers shared that during department meetings, exit tickets were also looked at to see how well they correlated to the learning targets, and that as a follow-up, the exit tickets were tweaked to provide a better connection. Teachers use observation data to assess progress toward professional goals and select additional PD opportunities aligned to these goals.

- An important aspect of the succession plan is the use of a transparent system for managing PD, whereby a calendar of focus areas for both the grade-team and the grade-team leader’s work is developed, based on prioritized areas of focus for each month. Grade-team leaders provide leadership training and guidance, building coherence across the school to improve the quality of student work, including setting success criteria, enrichment offerings, and academic interventions.
## Additional Finding

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<tr>
<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

The vast majority of teachers are engaged in inquiry-based, structured professional collaborations. They also participate in embedded distributed leadership opportunities.

### Impact

Teacher instructional capacity is strengthened, thereby increasing school-wide instructional coherence and student achievement for all learners. Teachers have effective leadership roles as department team leaders, playing a key role in decision-making that affects student learning across the school.

### Supporting Evidence

- All teachers serve on department content-based teacher teams. Some teachers also participate in mixed-grade teams. The question for the Network for Success Improvement (NSI) team, which drives the work, is “Why are our first year KAPPA students, who historically pass Regents exams, and attend school regularly, not hitting an 80+ Grade Point Average (GPA) at the end of ninth grade?” The NSI team uses student data to evaluate the reasons why certain students are not succeeding, and how to better support them. A review of meeting minutes revealed that the team compared data found in the success reports, analyzed core values, and compared how behavior correlated to grades and attendance to see if patterns existed. As an ongoing inquiry project, the team is scheduled to meet regularly throughout the year to study, analyze, propose, and enact interventions to support students in this study.

- School leaders and teachers shared that teachers are strengthening their instructional capacity through their work on collaborative teams. Together, they analyze individual lesson plans, share feedback, and strengthen learning targets. Department teams establish solid learning targets, and refer to the curricular scope and sequence and the vertical alignment of skills. IB teachers analyze level of rigor once each marking period. Some teachers have received extensive outside PD through teacher partnership programs, or as an IB grader or Regents scorer. Teachers learn what the expectations are for specific written projects and Regents exams through their participation in these roles. This information is shared with the rest of the staff, so all students benefit. Teachers ask their colleagues for focused intervisitations, post requests and responses, and set up times and places to observe each other and share feedback. As one teacher shared, the low inference feedback is “shockingly helpful”, along with a description of everything that happened. The teacher added, “I can see student engagement.”

- Teacher-team leaders determined the strategies that each team would use as a focus area across all grades within their respective content areas. Teachers’ votes determined which inquiry process would be used across the school. Teachers played a key decision-making role that added more time for their enrichment period, while wanting more time for crew sessions, which are small groups of students who meet with an adult crew leader for weekly sessions dealing with social-emotional issues and concerns. They also researched and proposed restorative justice procedures. Various coping practices, such as mindful minutes, were initiated as a result of teacher input and are evident in each classroom. In addition, the School Leadership Team (SLT) develops and distributes the annual school-wide goals. As a Progressive Redesign Opportunity Schools for Excellence (PROSE) school, teachers voiced their acceptance and agreement to participate, with the majority voting for the opportunity to assert more autonomy in decision-making as a PROSE school.