

**Urban Assembly Academy Of Business And Community Development**

**The Urban Assembly Academy Of Business And  
Community Development**

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Brooklyn  
NY 11216**

**Principal: Mr. Clyde Cole**

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# Urban Assembly Academy of Business and Community Development

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## Part 1: The School Context

### Information about the school

This is an Urban Assembly school in its first year of operation. There are 76 students on roll, all 6<sup>th</sup> grade and almost all boys of Black heritage. It is the only all boys middle school in the New York City public school system. All students come from the immediate area, which is one of social deprivation. Almost 85 percent of students are Title 1 Eligible.

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## Part 2: Overview

### What the school does well

- The leadership of the Principal is very sharply focused on taking the school forward. He has a well-developed understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses and is putting in place strategies to build on the schools' strengths and address the weaknesses.
- The wide range of well-developed partnerships links allow students many exciting opportunities to contribute to the wider world and experience and explore the business curriculum at all levels.
- Analysis of data at all levels is providing the detailed information the leadership needs to ensure expectations of students and teachers are high.
- There are well-developed systems for monitoring students' progress between marking periods and identifying their performance goals.
- There is a well-developed, high quality curriculum overview for each grade that introduces some innovative elements and very detailed curriculum plans that clearly demonstrate the scope and sequence for each subject and make well-developed links between literacy and other subjects such as social studies.
- There are well-developed systems for monitoring students' behavior and analyzing infractions by student, class and subject.
- Teachers have a well-developed, collegiate approach to their work, sharing ideas and systems well.
- Daily community meetings bring a shared culture, which is well supported by the wide range of visitors who provide motivational examples for students.

### What the school needs to improve

- Improve teachers' lesson planning so that work is better aligned to the needs of students.
- Improve the behavior of students by developing and implementing a commonly agreed system of rewards and sanctions, consistently applied by all teachers.
- Create a cabinet system that will support the work of the Principal and share the responsibility for monitoring and evaluating the work of the school.
- Raise expectations for students' writing and presentation across all subjects to improve quality and bring greater efficiency in their work.
- Introduce an effective advisory system to support the development of students' attitudes and behavior that includes a mentoring approach to reinforce good models.

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## Part 3: Main Findings

### Overall Evaluation

#### **This is a proficient school.**

This is a proficient school that provides a clear focus in its work towards creating a business focus. Areas for improvement have been identified and the school is beginning to develop clear strategies for improvement. The well-developed partnerships that exist between the school and business give students many opportunities to experience the wider world of work. The well-developed curriculum also provides many opportunities for good links between subjects and the skills students need.

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

**Quality Statement 1: School leaders and faculty consistently gather data and use it to understand what each student knows and is able to do and to monitor and facilitate the student's progress over time.**

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

The school gathers and uses available data but being in its first year of operation there is little beyond their 5<sup>th</sup> Grade results on entry, the quarterly marking period assessments and the written progress cards completed by teachers every five weeks. The data on entry shows that many students have difficulties in basic skills. The systems for grading students' work are developing well and provide much of the detail needed to track their progress between marking periods. While most students are at or close to grade level in mathematics, many fewer are at this standard in English Language Arts (ELA) and many are as much as two grade levels below the expected level of proficiency. Tracking evidence from entry into the school does demonstrate improvements in students' performance, particularly in ELA but less so in mathematics. Much of the other information is anecdotally shared between the teachers and the leadership of the school. Because class sizes are small teachers have good personal knowledge of students' attainment. However, not enough of this is committed to writing and as a consequence; valuable information can be lost in the system. That said; the Principal has a good understanding of students' performance in each class and by subject. Because there are only African-American boys in the school there is no comparison of differential attainment other than that of the special education students.

There are well-developed systems for collecting data to monitor students' behavior and analyze infractions by student, class and subject. However, there is no clear program aimed at improving the behavior of some students. There is a need to develop a common set of rules and expectations that can be used consistently by all teachers, supported by a positive, reward-based system that recognizes improvements in attitude and behavior.

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

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

The data from assessments is being used to accurately group students in English, particularly humanities, and in mathematics. However, there is work still to be done in assessing in detail students' skills and knowledge at the time of entry and using this information to set out a progressive scope and sequence in the curriculum for all students. While this is evident in recent work done in ELA, it is less so in mathematics and science, although in science, students have some success because of the practical nature of the subject. However, further work needs to be done in analyzing students' performance in these subjects and calibrating this across classes and between teachers to give accuracy and consistency of judgments. There is a tendency for many of the lessons to be aimed more at the average grade student, than the higher or lower performing and there is a need for work to be more accurately aligned to meet the needs of all in the class group. These developments would enable the school and the teachers to prepare work more precisely targeted to the needs of individuals or identified groups of students. There are examples of well-developed feedback in a number of classes/subjects. However, this is not consistent and there is a need for further professional development so that it is all at the level of the best seen in school and gives clear guidance to students on what they need to do to improve their performance.

**Quality Statement 3: The school aligns its instructional activity and resources around its focused plans for accelerating learning for each student.**

**This area of the school's work is well-developed.**

There are many positive features of the school's work in this area. The daily whole school community meeting is a powerful strategy for bringing the school together and developing a strong, shared culture. The school also has a well-developed system and structure to expanding students' understanding of the wider world and the potential they have. Regular guest speakers and college tours (each class is named after a college and has the opportunity to visit) are used to enhance students' motivation and show them life beyond their normal experiences. The school works with many different partners and plans programs and events and marketing approaches. Good community links involve public agencies, youth services and colleges where students can develop and understanding of business. On the private providers' side, there have been fewer lasting developments. There is a need to develop these links and use these to create an effective advisory system to support the development of students' attitudes and behavior that includes a mentoring approach to reinforce good models. Some mentoring has taken place but there is limited opportunity in the immediate local area and this is an aspect the school is working hard to improve.

There is a well-developed curriculum overview that shows progression across all grades. There are also some quite innovative plans such as introducing Latin and modern foreign languages as students progress through the school. The detailed scope and sequence for Language Arts to Social Studies creates a well-developed and coherent program. There is also a clearly laid out progression for students' development in the business curriculum.

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The longer school day is used to enable students to complete homework assignments in school, something they were poor at doing if left to their own devices. It has also enabled the school to develop work in extended study in areas such as business links. However, there is a need to ensure that instructional approaches engage some of the boys more actively and that the highest attaining students are well provided for and continue to reach the expected standards.

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

**This area of the school's work is overall proficient with some well-developed aspects.**

The size and newness of the school means that not all teachers are working in the areas of their greatest strength, either grade level knowledge or subject area. However, the Principal has developed a range of strategies aimed at supporting this and improving aspects of the school's work. As well as the more formal observations, there are regular, informal walk-through and drop-in opportunities that enable him to evaluate the quality of instruction and keep a check on discipline. A simple and straightforward but well constructed checklist evaluates all aspects of teachers' professional skills. Additionally, the Principal provides a number of demonstration lessons and opportunities for teachers to visit other classes to observe other approaches to instruction and planning. This is instrumental in spreading good practice.

While teachers are involved well in discussions around student performance, there is no leadership group to evaluate outcomes other than the Principal – at present a one-person cabinet. This makes it more difficult for others in the school to have an overview that would take them beyond their own area of subject expertise and see how the school functions as a whole. There is a need to create a cabinet system that will support the work of the Principal and share the responsibility for monitoring and evaluating the work of the school. This will become increasingly important as the school develops and grows over the next few years. At present, the size of the school enables a quick response to any issues that arise; however, this will not always be the case. As the school grows the systems will need to grow with it and respond to the increasing demands.

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

**This area of the school's work is proficient with some well-developed features.**

Students at present underachieve, although there is evidence of improvement in performance. The subjects needing most improvement currently are mathematics and humanities. Having identified this through the available data, the school is putting into place strategies aimed at improving these through more directly targeted instruction and the development of students' study skills and their ability to organize their work. There is also a need to determine what skills students will need as they progress through school and develop the scope and sequence of the curriculum to address these. There are proficient systems by which all staff is effectively involved in assessing and evaluating

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students' progress. Students' report cards are detailed and regularly reviewed to look for weaknesses that can be addressed. As a result, students receive additional tutoring, staff can be reassigned or schedules modified to address these needs.

While there is a strong drive to raise students' performance, attention also needs to be given to improving the overall presentation of their work and quality of their writing. This would improve their work rate and help to raise their self-esteem.

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## Part 4: Evaluation Criteria Grade Summary

<b>Quality Statement 1: School leaders and faculty consistently gather data and use it to understand what each student knows and is able to do and to monitor and facilitate the student's progress over time.</b>	o	✓	+
<p>1.1 The school uses available data (e.g., diagnostic, formative, and summative assessments, students work products, standards-based portfolios, attendance, descriptive review, security data, etc.) and generates its own to provide an objective, constantly updated understanding of how well each student, classroom, grade level, and other important categories of students and the school are:</p> <p>(1) currently performing, and (2) progressing over time, on English Language Arts, mathematics, and other important academic subjects.</p> <p>Criteria for measuring student progress are “objective” when they are</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• standards-based,</li> <li>• consistent across students,</li> <li>• capable of revealing progress or a lack of it over time and ways to close the gap between current and expected practice,</li> </ul> <p>and when they allow</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• the performance of different students to be compared, and</li> <li>• learning activity to be broken down into component parts so strengths and weaknesses on each sub-activity may be identified.</li> </ul>		X	
<p>1.2 The school makes effective use of the data to assess the performance and progress of students by racial and ethnic groups, English Language Learners and special education students, and all other categories of interest to the school.</p> <p>{This criterion and the next are partially aspirational as of now. City and State Report Cards and Division of Accountability and Assessment reports provide only some of the necessary data. The NYC DOE will soon provide schools with fuller access to better data.}</p>		X	
<p>1.3 Performance and progress are measured based on comparisons with similar schools, with the school's own past performance, and among students, classrooms, grade levels, academic subject areas, racial and ethnic groups, and other groupings of interest within the school.</p>		X	
<b>Quality Statement 2: School leaders and faculty consistently use available data to understand each student's next learning step. Through collaborative planning and student and parent engagement, they set high goals for improving teaching practice and accelerating each student's learning.</b>	o	✓	+
<p>2.1 Using data, school leaders and faculty engage in a collaborative process to set demanding, objectively measurable, goals for immediate and long-range improvement, and it develops plans and timeframes for reaching those goals.</p>		X	
<p>2.2 Goals and plans focus on the school as a whole and on each student, classroom, grade level, academic subject and group of students whose performance or progress has been identified by the school as warranting attention.</p>		X	
<p>2.3 Particular attention is given to improving the performance and progress of students in greatest need of improvement.</p>		X	
<p>2.4 High expectations are conveyed to students and parents. Students and their parents/caregivers are regularly invited to provide information about each student's performance and how to improve. That information is central to setting reasonably challenging goals and developing, evaluating, and revising plans.</p>		X	
<p>2.5 Goals and plans for improving student performance and progress drive the activity of all members of the school community: leaders, staff, students, parents, and other partners</p>		X	

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<b>Quality Statement 3: The school aligns its instructional activity and resources around its focused plans for accelerating learning for each student.</b>	0	✓	+
3.1 The school selects the curriculum based on how well it aligns with the school's high expectations and improvement plans and on the curriculum's capacity to generate meaningful interim data about progress towards goals.			X
3.2 Decisions about the use of teacher and student time are based on the organization of the day and week needed to inform teachers about each student's performance and next learning steps, set goals and plans for improved student learning, and implement and continuously improve plans for reaching stated goals.			X
3.3 Staffing decisions are driven by the needs that emerge from examining student data and by the focused plan the school develops to improve student outcomes.			X
3.4 Budgeting decisions are driven by the needs that emerge from examining student data and by the focused plan the school develops to improve student outcomes.			X
3.5 Teachers are accountable for student outcomes. The Principal frequently observes classroom teaching and has a considered strategy for improving the quality of each teacher's instruction. Teachers frequently observe and support each other's classroom instruction with the goal of improving student outcomes.		X	
3.6 Staff know and respect students and respond to their academic needs as well as their personal needs that affect academic performance. Each student knows and trusts an adult on the staff who is concerned about him or her.			X
3.7 Student attendance and engagement are high priorities. High rates and patterns of absences trigger immediate intervention.			X
3.8 Instructional programs actively engage students.		X	
3.9 The school aligns youth development and support services around stated academic goals. Partnerships with outside bodies are routinely used to achieve academic goals.			X

<b>Quality Statement 4: The development of instructional leadership, staff, and capacity are aligned around the school's collaboratively established goals for accelerating the learning of each student.</b>	0	✓	+
4.1 Leaders, faculty, and staff are selected based on their high expectations for student performance and progress and based on their commitment and capacity to use data, compare outcomes within and across classrooms and schools and develop and revise plans and methods to improve performance and progress.			X
4.2 Professional development is designed to help leaders, faculty, and staff use data, self- and peer-assessments, and collaboration with peers to achieve goals for improved school and student outcomes. Professional development and self- and peer- evaluation are aligned and overlap.			X
4.3 Leaders, faculty, and staff share the same goals and frequently evaluate themselves, their interventions and each other's plans and interventions, including, when possible, by comparing outcomes across classrooms and schools. The school monitors its performance and tackles weaknesses. Even in areas where the school is successful, leadership is not complacent, but aims to improve further. The goal in all cases is to improve student and school performance and progress.			X
4.4 Planning, evaluation of results and revision of plans takes place in teams.		X	
4.5 The Principal is respected and has capacity to effect change.			X
4.6 The school runs smoothly. Procedures are clear and are generally followed.			X

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Quality Statement 5: The school has built-in structures for evaluating each student's progress throughout the year, recognizing weaknesses in its improvement plans and teaching practices, and flexibly adapting plans and practices to meet its goals for accelerated learning.	o	✓	+
5.1 All school plans and other interventions include frequent interim goals and diagnostic assessments of progress designed to reveal in objectively measurable ways whether the plan is reaching stated goals.		X	
5.2 Comparisons of student progress within and across classrooms and schools are used in making interim diagnostic assessments and measuring the progress of plans and interventions.			X
5.3 Information generated by interim assessments and diagnostic measures of progress and comparisons is used to revise plans immediately in order to reach stated goals. Interim and final goals are modified when data objectively demonstrate that revision is required.			X
5.4 Each plan's interim and final outcomes drive each successive phase of goal setting and improvement planning, and each successive phase is characterized by agile and flexible realignment of practices and resources to improve students' academic outcomes.		X	