

# **Quality Review Report 2009-2010**

**Urban Assembly Institute of Math and Science for  
Young Women**

**Secondary School 527**

**283 Adams Street  
Brooklyn  
NY 11201**

**Co-Principals: Kelly DeMonaco and Kiri Soares**

**Dates of review: October 28 - 29, 2009**

**Lead Reviewer: Ainslie Cumberbatch**

## Part 1: The school context

### Information about the school

The Urban Assembly Institute of Math and Science for Young Women is a secondary school with 242 students from grade 6 through grade 9. The school population comprises 86% Black, 10% Hispanic, 2% White, 1% Asian and 1% American Indian students. The student body includes 1% English language learners and 6% special education students. Boys account for 0% of the students enrolled and girls account for 100%. The average attendance rate for the school year 2008 - 2009 was 93.9%.

### Overall Evaluation

#### **This school is well developed.**

The Urban Assembly Institute of Math & Science for Young Women (UAI) continues to develop and improve since its opening four years ago. A strong partnership with the Urban Assembly provides the school with a fountain of knowledge and resources that support its growth. It shares a building with one other small school and a District 75 program. The school currently serves students in grades 6 to grade 9 as it grows through to grade 12. A highly motivated staff team do a good job of fulfilling the school's goal to encourage and foster the achievement of young women in math, science and technology, through its rigorous college preparatory curriculum. The school uses an interdisciplinary, inquiry-based instructional model that engages students in active learning. Students also participate in community service projects and an advisory system that serves to enhance their leadership capacity. The school successfully uses the College-readiness Performance Assessment System (C-PAS) that identifies five key cognitive strategies associated with success in college courses. Teachers reinforce the use of these key cognitive strategies in class and as a result, students experience significant success, specifically around tasks involving problem solving and reasoning.

School leaders and faculty provide a culture of high expectations and achievement. This is notably visible in the rigorous course offerings and electives available to students and the strong support structure that its integrated partners, Carrerra and Girls Inc. offer. The school's very effective use of data, coupled with its subject and grade teams structure, enable staff to monitor student progress and design programs and initiatives to support their growth. However, at present, timelines for annual goals and interim benchmarks are not consistent across key planning documents to ensure students' growth. Team leaders and committee chairs participate in a distributed leadership model that includes teachers in the school decision-making process and serves to develop teacher leaders. The school provides academic support to students in a study hall structure that they describe as "clinics". This support system includes remediation and enrichment and enhances student capacity to be more successful in class. However, students do not always receive sufficient information about units of study to enable them to be truly reflective regarding their progress and to plan next steps.

The school has an active parent base and is continuously trying out new initiatives to encourage parental participation. However, the school primarily accepts feedback from parents but is not currently engaging parents in school decision-making.

## Part 2: Overview

### What the school does well

- School leaders make informed and effective organizational decisions across all aspects of the school to support improvements in learning.
  - Teachers throughout the school receive focused support in targeting and addressing individual student learning needs following the hiring of an assistant principal to focus on instruction. One new teacher states, “The school is more than I expected. The professional development every week is good.”
  - School scheduling allows time for teachers to meet regularly to review student progress towards mastery of the standards articulated by their scope and sequence. As a result, teachers work to investigate the root causes of the weak areas, develop strategies that address the causes in all classes across grades and review the outcomes of these applied strategies.
- The school generates a good range of data to enable it to track students’ progress effectively.
  - Teams of teachers compile data on student learning outcomes from “clinics”, Acuity assessments and the school’s database of referrals, kid talk and diagnostic assessments. In addition, they use information from advisory, an assessment recording system, portfolios, class exit interviews at the end of a lesson, data from ARIS and individual education plans to identify trends in student performance. Subsequently, teachers are able to use this information for planning lessons, grouping students, refining curricular and differentiating their instruction.
- Teachers work collaboratively and enthusiastically to collect and share data, ideas and good practice, to improve student learning.
  - Teachers make good use of the assessment recording system to share academic information within the school and with students and parents. Subject area teams review all the student data including Progress Report data, exit interview information, portfolios and performance based results for eighth graders after three years at the school. This process allows teachers access to student information that they use to search out trends in student development across student groups and as a resource to make informed instructional decisions.
- Student success drives the actions of the entire school community.
  - The school administers diagnostic assessments in every subject at the beginning of each unit and interim assessments during the unit. As such, teachers are able to evaluate student progress, adjust instructional and organizational decisions, and focus support to allow students to meet their goals.

- School leaders create effective systems for monitoring teaching practice with a clear focus on improving instructional techniques.
  - Administrators use a common observation rubric following the Santa Cruz model to evaluate and identify support for classroom instruction. The school administration provides all teachers with time and support for weekly professional development, subject and grade team and kid talk meetings, in addition to a new teacher induction seminar in the summer. Because of these meetings and feedback from administrators, teachers are able to collectively plan units, exchange their teaching experiences, and develop the culture of the school throughout each classroom.
- The school develops strong partnerships that provide students with high-quality enrichments to support their academic and social development.
  - Fully integrated partnerships with community organizations such as Carrerra and Girls Inc. include a focus on tutoring, social issues, financial literacy, empowerment, and course electives. These programs provide comprehensive academic support and remove barriers to learning so that students can excel.
  - Staff participate in weekly school-based, staff driven professional development coupled with external training provided by Urban Assembly and outside agencies. Consequently, teachers appear confident and collaborative creating a positive atmosphere in classrooms. They work well with school partners to facilitate a seamless support system.
- School staff are reflective, seeking to continually develop, and use data to plan realistically for future improvements with students as the focus.
  - Teachers participate in weekly subject and grade teams to review student data, undertake classroom observations, and engage in reflective practice. Five school committees, teaching and learning, scheduling and programming, hiring and recruitment, student discipline and student activities exist to address essential aspects of school functioning. Team leaders report to administrative liaisons and the cabinet that comprises of the chairs of all committees and all administrators. This structure allows administrators to measure and monitor team progress, assess teacher needs and develop school plans that affect instruction in a distributed leadership model.

### **What the school needs to improve**

- Expand the work with students to develop reflective practices to help them assess their own progress and growth needs within units of study.
  - Students do not have sufficient information related to the units of study to allow them to be truly reflective and identify the next steps in their learning based on their current performance.
- Refine school level goals and action plans to ensure alignment across planning documents with an eye to raising student achievement.

- There is a lack of consistency in the identification of annual and interim goals across the school to ensure effective communication and alignment of resources.
- Extend the level of parent engagement to include consistent opportunities for parents to participate in school decision-making.
  - The school does not engage parents in school decision-making thereby limiting the extent to which parents can participate. Parents remark, “The school is open to feedback from parents but does not solicit it”.

## Part 3: School Quality Criteria 2009-2010

<b>School name: UAI of Math &amp; Science for Young Women</b>	<b>Δ</b>	<b>➤</b>	<b>✓</b>	<b>+</b>
<b>Overall QR Score</b>				<b>X</b>
<b>Quality Statement 1 – Instructional and Organizational Coherence: The school has a coherent strategy to support student learning that aligns curriculum, instruction and organizational decisions.</b>				
<i>To what extent does the school regularly...</i>	<b>Δ</b>	<b>➤</b>	<b>✓</b>	<b>+</b>
1.1 Design engaging, rigorous and coherent curricula, including the Arts, for a variety of learners and aligned to key State standards?				<b>X</b>
1.2 Develop teacher pedagogy from a coherent set of beliefs about how students learn best, and ensure that it is: aligned to the curriculum, engaging, and differentiated to enable all students to produce meaningful work products?				<b>X</b>
1.3 Make strategic organizational decisions to support the school's instructional goals and meet student learning needs?				<b>X</b>
1.4 Maintain a culture of mutual trust and positive attitudes toward learning that support the academic and personal growth of students and adults?				<b>X</b>
<b>Overall score for Quality Statement 1</b>				<b>X</b>
<b>Quality Statement 2 – Gather and Analyze Data: School leaders and faculty consistently gather, analyze and share information on student learning outcomes to understand school and student progress over time.</b>				
<i>To what extent does the school ...</i>	<b>Δ</b>	<b>➤</b>	<b>✓</b>	<b>+</b>
2.1 Gather and analyze information on student learning outcomes to identify trends, strengths, and areas of need at the school level?				<b>X</b>
2.2 Gather and analyze information on student learning outcomes to identify trends, strengths, and areas of need at the team and classroom level?				<b>X</b>
2.3 Use or develop tools to enable school leaders and teachers to organize and analyze student performance trends?				<b>X</b>
2.4 Engage in an open exchange of information with students and families regarding students' learning needs and outcomes?			<b>X</b>	
<b>Overall score for Quality Statement 2</b>				<b>X</b>

**Quality Statement 3 – Plan and Set Goals: School leaders and faculty consistently engage the school community and use data to set and track suitably high goals for accelerating student learning.**

<i>To what extent does the school ...</i>	Δ	➤	✓	+
3.1 Establish a coherent vision of future development that is reflected in a short list of focused, data-based goals that are understood and supported by the entire school community?			X	
3.2 Use collaborative and data informed processes to set measurable and differentiated learning goals for student subgroups, and students in need of additional support?				X
3.3 Ensure the achievement of learning goals by tracking progress at the school, teacher team and classroom level?				X
3.4 Communicate high expectations to students and families, engage them in decision-making, and promote active involvement in the school community?			X	
<b>Overall score for Quality Statement 3</b>			X	

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

<i>To what extent does the school...</i>	Δ	➤	✓	+
4.1 Use the observation of classroom teaching and the analysis of learning outcomes to elevate school-wide instructional practices and implement strategies that promote professional growth and reflection, with a special focus on new teachers?				X
4.2 Engage in structured professional collaborations on teams using an inquiry approach that promotes shared leadership and focuses on improved student learning?				X
4.3 Provide professional development that promotes independent and shared reflection, opportunities for leadership growth, and enables teachers to continuously evaluate and revise their classroom practices to improve learning outcomes?				X
4.4 Integrate child/youth development, support services and partnerships with families and outside organizations with the school-wide goals 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 progress throughout the year and for flexibly adapting plans and practices to meet its goals for accelerating learning.**

<i>To what extent does the school...</i>	Δ	➤	✓	+
5.1 Evaluate the quality of curricular, instructional and organizational decisions, making adjustments as needed to increase the coherence of policies and practices across the school?				X
5.2 Evaluate systems for assessing students, organizing data, and sharing information with student and families, making adjustments as needed to increase the coherence of policies and practices across the school?			X	
5.3 Establish and sustain a transparent, collaborative system for measuring progress towards interim and long term goals and making adjustments during the year and over time?				X
5.4 Use data to regularly evaluate the effectiveness of structured professional collaboration, capacity building and leadership development strategies?				X
<b>Overall score for Quality Statement 5</b>				X

<b>Quality Review Scoring Key</b>							
Δ	<b>Underdeveloped</b>	➤	<b>Underdeveloped with Proficient Features</b>	✓	<b>Proficient</b>	+	<b>Well Developed</b>