

Quality Review Report 2009-2010

**Urban Assembly Academy of History & Citizenship for
Young Men**

**High School 239
240 East 172nd Street
Bronx
NY 10457**

Principal: Jonathan Foy

Dates of review: December 16 - 17, 2009

Lead Reviewer: Rose-marie Mills

Part 1: The school context

Information about the school

The Urban Assembly Academy of History and Citizenship for Young Men is a high school with 251 students from grades 9 through grade 12. The school population comprises 52% Black, 45% Hispanic, 1% White, 1% American Indian, and 1% Asian students. The student body includes 15% English language learners and 25% special education students. Boys account for 100% of the students enrolled. The average attendance rate for the school year 2008 - 2009 was 78.4%.

Overall Evaluation

This school is proficient.

The Urban Assembly Academy for History and Citizenship for Young Men is a safe and caring environment where both faculty and the administration know the students and their needs. This results in the development of suitable intervention programs and effective partnerships that foster both academic and emotional success. The school uses a web-based grade book, along with mailings and phone calls to facilitate ongoing communication with students and their families. This ensures that all members of the school community are aware of students' strengths, weaknesses, and available interventions. Additionally, the use of learning targets to communicate performance on required skills in core curriculum areas further enhance students' and parents' knowledge of academic progress.

The faculty, students, and families appreciate the inclusive leadership style of the principal and the culture of high expectation it promotes. The school leadership team and the parent association are instrumental in the creation of activities to engage families in students' education. Some teachers see themselves as "custodians of the school" and are very intent in ensuring the maintenance of the culture. The mission of the school is unity, self-determination, collective work and responsibility, cooperative economics, purpose, creativity, and faith. These seven principles are the themes for assemblies, the annual men's conference, and warrior week. Additionally, staff members constantly remind students of these principles during lessons and some staff members use "purpose" instead of aim to introduce lessons. These further facilitate an environment of mutual respect that is dominant in the school.

Creative use of the school-based option provides teacher teams with the opportunity to meet as grade and department teams on a bi-weekly basis. However, the teams do not engage in data analysis on the performance of subgroups and in the sharing of successful instructional practices and pedagogical reflection. This results in the inconsistent delivery of differentiated instruction and there is a lack of a high level of student engagement in many classes. Additionally, the school does not adequately differentiate professional development opportunities and teachers do not see the link between the quality of their instructional practice and student work and outcomes.

At this time, the school does not have transparent systems in place to constantly review and adjust long-term goals and initiatives. In addition, the curriculum is limited to one arts course and one advanced placement course. As a result, high-performing students are not attracted to the school, resulting in the need for numerous interventions and motivational activities. Nonetheless, the school community is intent on making the adjustments needed to continue to improve the school.

Part 2: Overview

What the school does well

- The school is a caring environment where the faculty and administration know the students and their needs resulting in high expectations and the effective alignment of resources.
 - The principal effectively uses the resources to program cohorts of students with teacher teams. The administration and staff review student progress during grade-level and department meetings so they can make decisions regarding academic and emotional supports based on the data. Individual teachers then take responsibility for making outreach to the students and their families. This creates a school community that understands the holistic needs of all students and deepens the home-school relationship.
 - The school uses its resources to ensure that it has effective interventions in place. Consequently, credit recovery, Regents prep, and after-school programs are available resulting in improvement in student performance. Students and their families appreciate the availability of these programs.
- The school utilizes a wide array of communiqués to inform students and parents of progress and the supports available, thus improving student performance.
 - The school uses a web-based grade book, along with frequent mailings and phone calls to keep parents and students aware of academic progress and resources. As a result, parents are engaged in the education of their children and are able to be supportive and responsive in a timely manner.
 - The school is implementing learning targets resulting in students and parents having a deeper understanding of the strengths and weaknesses in the core curriculum areas. More students are now taking responsibility for their learning and seeking assistance to remediate their weaknesses.
- The academic and youth development programs of the school reflect the mission, resulting in high expectations that students and their families appreciate.
 - The school successfully embeds the principles of unity, self-determination, and collective responsibility in school activities. Assemblies, guest speakers' presentations, and the annual men's conference focus on these themes. This promotes a respectful and positive environment that supports the academic and personal growth of students.
 - The collaboration with Lehman College to enlist students in the "College Now" program influences students positively. Students state that the classes broaden their horizon, help them to get ready for college, and motivate them to succeed.

- School leaders and faculty analyze student performance data to establish a clear understanding of performance by cohort and discipline, resulting in the development of appropriate interventions.
 - The school effectively uses the school-based option process to create time for departmental and grade meetings. Staff review attendance and assessment data, as well as credit accumulation. They make decisions regarding the extended day and credit recovery offerings because of the trends identified. This results in the adjustment of school-wide goals to meet the needs of students.
 - The school uses tracking sheets and organizes data on an Excel spreadsheet to analyze the performance of the students by cohort and discipline. This gives a clear view of performance and guides the ability to make instructional adjustments.
- Teacher teams and administrators establish data informed goals for the school and students and make adjustments based on the trends identified.
 - The school reviews trends in student performance data and uses the information to create the Comprehensive Educational Plan as well as to develop the goals of implementing learning targets and advisory. It shares these goals with the school community. Additionally, teacher teams set goals for students based on data and make decisions regarding additional supports.
 - Teacher teams review student data on a regular basis and use the information to determine the availability of credit recovery offerings, interventions, and adjustments needed to the curriculum.
- School leaders and teachers meet in collaborative teams and use data-informed processes to develop plans resulting in shared leadership that promotes professional growth and positively influences students' learning.
 - Teacher teams and administrators analyze student data and create a four-year plan for implementing learning targets, in order to support pedagogy and improve student outcomes. Teachers benefit from professional development including school visits and inter-class visitations.
 - Each teacher team has a leader who facilitates the collaboration. The teams effectively review student performance and make decisions regarding curriculum mapping and assessment.

What the school needs to improve

- Provide ongoing professional development that focuses on differentiated instructional strategies to increase the level of student engagement and meet the academic needs of all students to improve student performance.
 - The school encourages staff to differentiate instruction, but many classrooms do not reflect this practice. Consequently, there is inconsistency in the delivery of engaging lessons and they do not meet

the individual needs of students, especially English language learners and high-performing students.

- The classrooms do not reflect a variety of student work as a motivational tool. Activities do not reflect the learning styles, interest, or mixed abilities of the students.
- Extend the analysis of assessment data in all content areas and engage teachers in deeper pedagogical collaboration and reflection that result in the improvement of instruction.
 - The school analyzes student data to identify the need for interventions, but the analysis does not focus on the trends for subgroups, and instruction at the classroom level. As a result, some students are unchallenged and instruction does not meet their learning needs.
 - The bi-weekly staff grade level and department meetings provide opportunities to discuss the needs of students. However, these meetings do not regularly focus on the discussion of best instructional practices and the link between pedagogy and student outcomes. As a result, staff do not continuously reflect on and revise their work, thus limiting student improvement.
- Sharpen school improvement planning by implementing clear benchmarks and systems for measuring progress, the effectiveness of readjustments, and the evaluation of success.
 - The school has a four-year plan for the implementation of learning targets with annual reviews. The absence of clear systems to evaluate the effectiveness of this plan, along with opportunities to refine and readjust, results in teachers' lack of accountability for the success of the plan.
 - Teacher teams review the goals set for students with the focus of identifying remediation activities needed. The lack of emphasis on the improvement of instructional practices limits the ownership of goal attainment.
- Broaden the curriculum with more offerings of the arts and advanced placement courses, and implement procedures to ensure consistency in the achievement of learning goals in order to attract and engage all students.
 - Presently, the school offers drama as an art elective, and advanced placement English classes. These limited offerings do not attract and engage a broad cross-section of students, creating more need for interventions.
 - Teachers track the achievement of students on periodic assessments but do not use the data to adjust yearly plans. Additionally, classroom level assessments are not common and the level of feedback given to students varies from teacher to teacher. This limits maximizing the achievement of learning goals.

Part 3: School Quality Criteria 2009-2010

School name: Urban Assembly Academy for History and Citizenship for Young Men	Δ	▷	✓	+
Overall QR Score			X	
Quality Statement 1 – Instructional and Organizational Coherence: The school has a coherent strategy to support student learning that aligns curriculum, instruction and organizational decisions.				
<i>To what extent does the school regularly...</i>	Δ	▷	✓	+
1.1 Design engaging, rigorous and coherent curricula, including the Arts, for a variety of learners and aligned to key State standards?		X		
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?		X		
1.3 Make strategic organizational decisions to support the school's instructional goals and meet student learning needs?			X	
1.4 Maintain a culture of mutual trust and positive attitudes toward learning that support the academic and personal growth of students and adults?			X	
Overall score for Quality Statement 1		X		
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.				
<i>To what extent does the school ...</i>	Δ	▷	✓	+
2.1 Gather and analyze information on student learning outcomes to identify trends, strengths, and areas of need at the school level?			X	
2.2 Gather and analyze information on student learning outcomes to identify trends, strengths, and areas of need at the team and classroom level?		X		
2.3 Use or develop tools to enable school leaders and teachers to organize and analyze student performance trends?			X	
2.4 Engage in an open exchange of information with students and families regarding students' learning needs and outcomes?			X	
Overall score for Quality Statement 2			X	

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>	△	➤	✓	+			
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				
Overall score for Quality Statement 3			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>	△	➤	✓	+			
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				
Overall score for Quality Statement 4			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>	△	➤	✓	+			
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				
Overall score for Quality Statement 5			X				
Quality Review Scoring Key							
△	Underdeveloped	➤	Underdeveloped with Proficient Features	✓	Proficient	+	Well Developed