



**Department of
Education**

Joel I. Klein, Chancellor

**Quality Review Report
Division of Performance and Accountability
2010-2011**

Quality Review Report 2010-2011

Urban Assembly for Wildlife Conservation

Middle School – High School 372

2024 Mohegan Avenue

Bronx

NY 10460

Principal: Mark Ossenheimer

Dates of review: January 20 - 21, 2011

Lead Reviewer: Myrna Rodriguez

Part 1: The school context

Information about the school

Urban Assembly School for Wildlife Conservation is a Middle/High School school with 324 students from 6 through grade 9. The school population comprises 24% Black, 65% Hispanic, 4% White, and 6% Asian students. The student body includes 9% English language learners and 17% special education students. Boys account for 51% of the students enrolled and girls account for 49%. The average attendance rate for the school year 2009 - 2010 was 92.47%.

Overall Evaluation

This school is developing.

Part 2: Overview

What the school does well

- The leadership's use of resources and other organizational decisions are aligned to the school's instructional goals improving classroom instruction.
 - The school aligns teacher and student time to include an extra period for Math and ELA emphasizing test preparedness, which results in improved scores on teacher created assessments.
 - Teams of teachers, including an Advisor, share the responsibilities for meeting the needs of a small cluster of students, which results in teachers being able to manage and share academic and social behavior data about individual students to improve student outcomes.
- A respectful tone in the school creates a culture that supports academic growth for students and adults.
 - Each student is well known by a group of teachers and administration which includes each student having an advisor which results in improved behavioral outcomes.
 - The school has a safe environment due to mutual respect which is evident throughout the school which includes the openness of the principal to meet with students to discuss concerns and future activities, which results in students and adults being able to engage as a learning community.
- Professional learning opportunities are aligned with school's goals and curricula, resulting in improved teaching strategies and student outcomes.
 - Professional learning opportunities are aligned to the school's instructional goals including exposure to the evolving State standards. The leadership has developed a teacher portfolio to determine the professional development needs of each teacher. This has resulted in differentiated professional development to promote professional growth that supports the instructional needs of their students.
 - Opportunities for leadership growth are increasing as the school grows. Teachers lead grade and subject teams, and teacher leaders meet with the administration to share and make decisions. This results in increased ownership of school goals and willingness on the part of the teachers to reflect on the link between teacher practice and student outcomes.
- School leaders and faculty are building leadership that emphasizes using an inquiry approach to improve student outcomes.
 - A majority of teachers and paraprofessionals are engaged in structured grade and subject inquiry teams. Each teacher within a team targets identified students within the bottom third and sets goals to improve their academic performance. Team members share student outcomes in order

to revise instructional practices in support of students meeting their targeted goals.

- Distributed leadership structures are developing to include teachers in key decisions that affect student learning. Team leaders are members of the steering committee that meets weekly with the leadership to analyze student progress, resulting in greater ownership by teachers of the instructional process.
- The leadership and faculty have a clear vision of the future development of the school which is aligned to identified goals to accelerate student achievement and social-emotional growth.
 - There is a short list of clear, focused school level goals and action plans (annual and interim) apparent in the CEP and other planning documents which are accelerating student learning. The school's goals are for all students to have high school courses before entering ninth grade, as well as to provide all students with college readiness activities which affect both academic and socio-behaviors.
 - The school goals and action plans are developed with the academic and socio-behavior needs of both middle and high school students using varied data including the Progress Report, State assessments, progress and report cards, and Performance Series. This comprehensive data analysis has resulted in changes in the curricula, particularly in 8th grade math, science and English, as well as the creation of additional class periods in these subjects, which is supported by the whole community.

What the school needs to improve

- Develop tools to enable school leaders and faculty to aggregate and utilize a wide range of data to analyze performance trends of all subgroups, in order to improve targeted outcomes.
 - The school leaders and faculty aggregate and organize data with an emphasis on targeting the students in the bottom third on each grade in order to raise student achievement. However, this data is not easily accessible or comprehensive enough to provide a detailed data set of overall trends in student performance in order to inform instructional decisions to meet the needs of targeted populations. Thus, efforts to improve their learning outcomes are limited.
 - Teams of teachers are building capacity to aggregate and organize data to support instructional decisions at the classroom level. However, the lack of these tools hampers teachers' ability to easily assess student trends in order to adjust instructional practices in the classroom for targeted improvements.
- Further develop curricula for a variety of learners, which are aligned to key State standards for each grade to support student growth.
 - Previously, the school aligned its curricula more towards the high school standards. This resulted in more than fifty percent of the 8th grade passing the math and science Regents exams. However, a result of not adhering

to standards by grade and subject, the overall performance scores for all grades decreased dramatically, especially in the state ELA, math and science assessments. The school does not have sufficient data as of yet to determine effectiveness of these changes. Thus, they are limited in revising instructional practices to accelerate student learning. They are awaiting Performance Series results to determine effectiveness of changes to curricula.

- Some curricula and academic tasks emphasize rigorous habits and higher order thinking skills, but are inconsistent across grades and subject areas, resulting in uneven teaching practices, student engagement and learning.

Ensure that teacher pedagogy is aligned to curriculum, engaging and differentiated to enable all students to produce meaningful work products.

- Across classrooms instructional practices are being developed to align to the curricula and reflect a set of beliefs about how students learn best. Low and high achieving students are not, however, fully engaged in all classes, as there are uneven degrees of differentiated entry points, tasks and activities available across the grades and subject areas.
- Across grades and subject areas some lessons are differentiated to support student needs. However, teaching strategies do not consistently engage students in high levels of thinking to accelerate their learning outcomes. Thus, this uneven level of engagement limits student performance as evidenced in sample work products.
- Align assessments to curriculum so that analysis of student outcomes includes strengths and needs of all student subgroups, in order to adjust instructional decisions at the team and class level.
 - The math teams align their assessments to assure that all teachers have the same expectations for all students, but this is not evident in all subject areas, which results in uneven adjustment of instructional decisions at the team level.
 - The school has developed some curricula that are aligned to the State standards. However, the analysis of subgroup data to determine appropriate differentiated instructional strategies is not embedded across classrooms, which hinders efforts to establish students' strengths and areas of need.
- Deepen the use of the classroom observation tool aligned to student data and work products, in order to improve instructional practices.
 - The school has not fully developed a common instructional focus among school leaders and faculty. As a result, a coherent school culture is still not evident in instruction in all classes resulting in uneven student engagement in the academic process.
 - Although the school offers differentiated professional support for all teachers via a menu of topics in the teacher goals portfolio, there is an inconsistent selection of these offerings. The impact of these professional development opportunities are not evidenced in teacher pedagogy in some classes which affects student engagement and learning outcomes.

Part 3: School Quality Criteria 2010-2011

School name: Urban Assembly for Wildlife Conservation	UD	D	P	WD
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>				
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	
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>				
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 Align assessments to curriculum and analyze information on student learning outcomes to adjust instructional decisions at the team and classroom level?		X		
2.3 Use or develop tools to enable school leaders and teachers to organize, aggregate, 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		

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>	UD	D	P	WD			
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					
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>	UD	D	P	WD			
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					
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>	UD	D	P	WD			
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					
Quality Review Scoring Key							
UD	Underdeveloped	D	Developing	P	Proficient	WD	Well Developed