

Quality Review Report 2011-2012

Urban Assembly High School of Music and Art at Water's
Edge

High School 350

49 FLATBUSH AVENUE EXTENSION
BROOKLYN
NY 11201

Principal: PAUL THOMPSON

Dates of review: April 03 - 04, 2012

Lead Reviewer: Karen Watts

Part 1: The school context

Information about the school

Urban Assembly High School of Music and Art at Water's Edge is a high school with 409 students from grade 9 through grade 12. The school population comprises 71% Black, 23% Hispanic, 1% White, 2% Asian students and 1% other students. The student body includes 4% English language learners and 21% special education students. Boys account for 42% of the students enrolled and girls account for 58%. The average attendance rate for the school year 2010 - 2011 was 86.3%.

Overall Evaluation

This school is proficient.

Part 2: Overview

What the school does well

- The school provides comprehensive college preparatory curricula, including many offerings in the Arts, which are aligned key standards and offer challenging tasks to engage students so that students' learning outcomes are maximized. (1.1)
 - o As one of the schools in the Urban Assembly Network, the school uses the David Connelly college preparatory curriculum that is aligned to the Common Core State Standards, (CCSS). Thus all curriculum maps, unit plans, lessons, and College-readiness Performance Assessment System (C-PAS) tasks develop students' Key Cognitive Strategies (KCS) of Problem Formation, Research, Interpretation, Communication, and Accuracy/Precision. The curriculum is aligned across grades and subject areas and emphasizes the reading of informational texts, text based discussions, and argumentative writing. Additionally the school offers 12 electives in the Arts where students are given choices based on their interest in visual or performance ARTs. Students also participate in the CUNY at Home courses and in College Now courses offered at nearby City Tech. The curriculum offerings and academic tasks promote the development of students' higher order thinking skills leading to improvements in their learning outcomes and post secondary readiness.
- The school's belief in project based, hands-on student centered instruction promotes active student involvement in their learning leading to improvements in students' academic outcomes. (1.2)
 - o The school holds Project Week and an Extended Art Studio Showcase twice per year where students share the results of independent inquiry and creative projects. Throughout the semester, students are engaged in C-PAS tasks aligned to the CCSS and various tasks in the Arts that lead to the culminating projects. The KCS and C-PAS tasks keep the focus on literacy skill development in the classroom. Students read non-fiction complex text, participate in discussions, and write arguments using evidence from the texts. Across classrooms, students' complete research cards as they read articles that are differentiated according to students' reading levels so that all students including English language learners and students with disabilities can access the content. On each research card students list the source or name of the article, the essential question to be answered, how the article answered the question, what claims and counter claims can be made from the information in the article, quotes and other evidences and supports from the article and the bibliography. Students then use the cards to create TIED (topic sentence, introduction to evidence, evidence, and discussion of the evidence) paragraphs that are linked to becoming argumentative essays. The research cards are also used during discussions so that students readily have evidence that they cite to support an oral argument or defense. These practices promote active student involvement in all lessons that lead to improved academic outcomes.
- Teachers routinely gather and analyze assessment data based on the school's key standards to determine the effectiveness of instructional decisions so that changes are made to drive academic excellence. (2.2)
 - o Teachers develop rubrics at the team level that are aligned to the five KCS so that teachers can easily ascertain whether or not students are making progress

on the key standards that the school has identified. The school uses Jumprope, an electronic grading system, where teachers write the expected learning outcomes for each task, lesson or unit against which students are rated highly proficient (HP), proficient (P) or not yet proficient (NYP). Teachers use information from these assessment tools to modify their lessons so that the quality of the students' work products improves and their academic results move up the rating scale. This relentless focus on helping students self-assess to move their work to higher proficiency ratings promotes the development of a college ready culture where students strive for academic excellence.

- The school provides a safe and respectful learning environment to address students' interests and engage them in learning so that students' performance increases. (1.4)
 - o Students are provided a multitude of opportunities for student self-expression primary through Art but in the core academic subjects as well. They are encouraged to take academic risks in their core subjects and to explore the making of art that is reflective of themselves and their environment in the many art electives. The Arts provide an opportunity for students to participate in the school through areas of interest to them, which results in improvements in scholarship across all subjects.
 - o Students state that during weekly meetings with their advisors they are able to discuss grades, issues they have with teachers or other students, and that their advisors push them to exceed even if they are passing. Consequently, students are motivated to excel and their academic performance increases as evidenced by increases in credit accumulation by students in all grades.
- Teachers regularly analyze students' assessment data and make key instructional decisions to improve their practice so that students' learning increases. (4.2)
 - o Teachers meet weekly in both subject area and grade teams. They collaborate around the development and use of the KCS and CPAS tasks in all classrooms. Teachers analyze assessment data from a variety of sources to make informed instructional decisions that may affect how curriculum is delivered and what instructional techniques will work best for certain activities or groups of students. Teams are led by teacher leaders who meet weekly with the principal to report on the work of each team and to ensure that the team's work is aligned to school wide goals. The work of the teacher teams promotes shared leadership and decision making at the classroom level resulting in improvements in teacher practice and student learning.
- The school provides a wide variety of professional development opportunities to improve teacher effectiveness in the classroom to improve students' academic results. (4.3)
 - o Teachers participate in a wide variety of professional development activities including the development of curriculum, unit and lesson plans based on the KCS and C-PAS tasks, outcome/project based learning, questioning techniques using Blooms' Taxonomy, assessment development including rubrics creation, academic vocabulary development and the use of research cards and TIED paragraphs to write better argumentative essays. Teachers have also received professional development in the creation of tool kits of instructional strategies to use during various classroom activities such as book group discussion, fishbowl, and reverse fishbowl. These professional development opportunities coupled with classroom level feedback from supervisors have increase teacher effectiveness and improved students' academic results.

What the school needs to improve

- Enhance the alignment of the school's resources to meet the needs of all students so that students make adequate academic progress towards college readiness. (1.3)
 - o The school has changed the way it schedules students during the school day to maximize credit accumulation to meet school wide goals, and it has embedded common planning into the schedule so that teachers can collaborate on both grade and subject teams. However, it has not adequately allocated resources for the widespread incorporation of technology use in instruction. Consequently only some teachers use technology resources in their classrooms and student use of technology resources during the school day is minimal thereby hindering further growth in students' outcomes. Additionally, although teacher schedules have been modified to create room for them to teach elective courses, advanced placement courses are not yet offered, limiting students' exposure to college level courses and impacting enhancing their college readiness development.
- Increase teacher peer intervisitation and feedback to promote reflection and growth in teacher practice. (4.1)
 - o Administrators provide frequent and targeted feedback and next steps to all teachers on their knowledge and implementation of the KCS, the KCS sub-statements and C-PAS tasks, learning outcomes expectations and rubrics development using the Danielson Framework for Teaching. However, there are only minimal opportunities for teacher peer intervisitations thereby limiting this important feedback stream for teachers hampering their continued reflection on the improvement of their practice.
- Further involve students and parents during school level planning processes so that school wide goals are shared and supported to increase students' academic success. (3.1)
 - o Students and parents on the school leadership team are involved in crafting the vision, mission, and direction of the school. They participate in creating the Comprehensive Education Plan's goals and action plans that are shared with the school's community. However, some parents report that although they were very aware of their own children's needs they were not aware of the CEP goals or the school's needs as a whole. This limits community wide support of the school's goals negatively affecting students' academic success.
- Enhance parent outreach efforts to ensure that parents can access tools with student performance information so that parents can assist their children. (2.4)
 - o School leaders and faculty communicate frequently by mail and phone calls regarding the academic and behavioral progress of students so that parents are informed of their children's progress. Parents receive progress reports on how well students are developing their KCS and their child's ratings on the C-PAS tasks. Parents who attend the parent-teacher association meetings receive information and directions in using the school's electronic grading and reporting systems. However, since parent involvement at the school is low, the majority of families do not utilize these tools to get timely information on student progress and next steps and consequently students' academic performance does not meet expectations in some areas.

Part 3: School Quality Criteria 2011-2012

School name: Urban Assembly High School of Music and Art at Water's Edge	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>	UD	D	P	WD
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 as evidenced by meaningful student work products?			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>	UD	D	P	WD
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, use on-going assessment practices and analyze information on student learning outcomes to adjust instructional decisions at the team and classroom level?			X	
2.3 Use grading policies and tools to enable school leaders and teachers to organize, aggregate, and analyze student performance trends to inform instruction and curriculum?			X	
2.4 Engage families in school decision-making, activities and an open exchange of information regarding students' progress toward school and class expectations?			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 staff, students and families, and support students and families to achieve them?			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	
1..4 Integrate child/youth development, guidance/advisement 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, with particular attention to the CCLS?			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
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