



**Department of
Education**

Joel I. Klein, Chancellor

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

Quality Review Report 2010-2011

Urban Assembly School for Criminal Justice

20K609

**4200 16th Avenue
Brooklyn
NY 11204**

Principal: Mariela Graham

Dates of review: December 5-6, 2011

Lead Reviewer: Karina Costantino

Part 1: The school context

Information about the school

The Urban Assembly School for Criminal Justice is a MS/HS school with 378 students from grade 6 through grade 10. The school population comprises 34% Black, 21% Hispanic, 10% White, and 35% Asian students. The student body includes 15% English language learners and 17% special education students. Boys account for 0% of the students enrolled and girls account for 100%. The average attendance rate for the school year 2009 - 2010 was 93%.

Overall Evaluation

This school is developing.

Part 2: Overview

What the school does well

- Through the use of a wide range of data, school leaders evaluate the progress and performance of individuals by group, which identifies areas of need resulting in modifying instruction and practice to increase student outcomes. (2.3)
 - The principal and her cabinet analyze standardized test scores, item skills analysis, incident reports, and attendance and evaluate the results from CPAS (The College Readiness Performance Assessment System). This supports a targeted effort towards preparing the middle and high school students with college readiness skills. An example of a change in organization to improve academic outcomes made by the principal is the structuring of A.M. remedial classes in areas of need for middle and high school students in order to move them to mastery. Consequently, student progress on the New York City progress report reflects moving students in the bottom third from 31.4% to 36.5%.
 - All teachers and teams use a data tracking system called Jupiter Grades which tracks all the data accumulated by the staff and is effective in monitoring and analyzing student performance. As a result of this process, trends for students' needing more support in making inferences were surfaced. It was also evidenced that fewer students answered questions about inferences and foreshadowing correctly than the number of students who correctly answered questions about knowledge recall and fact acquisition. This led to the implementation of specific lessons to build these skills in the middle and high school where there has been an increase in student mastery in this area.
- School leaders consistently analyze and collect summative and formative assessment results to identify trends in student achievement resulting in instructional and educational modifications for success. (2.1)
 - As a result of reviewing all formative and summative assessments, instructional and non-instructional, the principal, assistant principal and dean, who extensively use ARIS, have a comprehensive view of where the areas of need in the building exist. This results in changes during the year, not only in programming, but services provided to students in both the middle and high school in academics and social emotional support. One such change this year for all sub groups is the focus on critical analysis in reading and writing which has resulted in higher scores on the first CPAS (College Readiness Performance Assessment) which was administered this fall.
 - Based on an analysis of the data from OORS for incident reporting of last year, the school was able to target specific infractions occurring during the lunch periods as an area of need in the school. As a result, each administrator monitors the lunch periods, which has resulted in a decrease in the number of incidents in the lunchroom and reports entered into OORS incident reporting system.
- The school has established effective systems for monitoring teacher practice using an adaptation of the Danielson rubric to improve instruction and reflection in order to support professional growth and increase academic outcomes for all learners. (4.1)

- The school uses the instructional round protocol recommended by Richard Elmore and they have created a template for peer and mini-observations aligned to the researched based Danielson rubric. Each week, after teacher team and department meetings focusing on the tasks that will be taught in the classroom during the week, teachers conduct low level peer observations of each other. Through clarifying and probing questions, the teachers give each other feedback about how to improve the lesson and the task, specifically through the lens of increasing rigor and critical thinking. Mini observations conducted by the administration have the intended outcome of improving teacher practice and strengthening and focusing on teacher collaboration. This results in rich conversation and reflection for clear expectations around effective instructional practices, in addition to informing next steps towards the professional goals set by the teachers, as evidenced by 96% of the teachers indicating on the Learning Environment Survey (LES) that they are supported by school leadership for professional growth.
- The school provides guidance/advisement supports and facilitates partnerships with outside organizations in order for students to find or stay on the path to postsecondary readiness. (4.4)
 - From the first day the students enter the building, they are learning about the many postsecondary opportunities available to them. Throughout the year students visit universities and the school partners with various organizations and invite successful women leaders to speak to them on Career Day, such as the Commissioner of Family Services, the NYPD SWAT Team and Morgan Stanley. In addition, they also conduct an event for parents in December entitled “College: Behind the Scenes”. All of this results in students and parents having a clear understanding of college expectations, not only academic, but social as well.
 - The guidance counselor, whose focus is college readiness, prepares families for the college application process and what usually appears beyond just academics. She then facilitates community service and/or special clubs that can be used in the college application format. Consequently, students feel that they are on the path to college readiness as evidenced by 99% responding to “My teachers expect me to continue my education after high school” on the Learning Environment Survey.
- The school promotes high expectations to encourage parent involvement and support learning so that the school, students and its families have the opportunity to work towards meeting the school’s goals. (3.4)
 - The school regularly celebrates student achievements, such as a Perfect Attendance Luncheon and an Awards Ceremony Dinner highlighting positive student accomplishments. They also offer incentives to students to encourage them to do their very best each day. This results in communicating high expectations to families and the parents indicate that they appreciate that the principal “goes the extra mile” to build community and share with them how they can help their children. In addition, the principal has an open door policy to encourage empowerment of all members of the school community. Satisfaction with this open communication policy is evidenced by 94% of the parents indicating that the school provides many opportunities to be involved in their child’s education as indicated on the Learning Environment Survey.

- The school and all teachers participate in an on line communication system, called Jupiter, which allows students, faculty and parents to communicate with each other on all academics and informs them of school activities. In addition, the guidance counselor and the dean reach out to parents when concerns or questions arise. These supports provide on-going opportunities to communicate with parents and assist students in achieving their academic goals.

What the school needs to improve

- Promote greater consistency in delivering differentiated instruction based on the data so that lesson planning reflects purposeful groupings and all students are challenged. (1.2)
 - Although teacher teams and individual teachers plan lessons with the focus on rigorous strategies for all students, differentiation of instruction is not a consistent practice across all classrooms, especially in the 9th and 10th grades. Lessons do not always challenge students at their own level, - namely English language learners (ELL's) and Students With Disabilities (SWD). This results in a lack of support for all students, including those with varying entry points into each lesson, in order to allow them to reach their full academic potential. Consequently, the lack of appropriately differentiated lessons, limits students in meeting their particular learning needs, as evidenced in poor student work products.
- Improve the alignment of assessments with curriculum and integrate on-going learning checks during lessons to adjust instructional practices for increased academic outcomes. (2.2)
 - Although the school has begun to implement cross department and grade conversations for implementing successful strategies in the content areas, supplemented by an analysis of a variety of formative assessments, there is little evidence of learning checks during classroom lessons to ensure student understanding and thereby adjust teaching strategies to adapt to student learning challenges. As a result, teachers are hindered in making timely adjustments to the lessons in order to engage all learners.
- Refine and extend the existing curriculum using student work and assessments for key subgroups to better engage all learners. (1.1)
 - Although the school gathers and analyzes a great deal of formative and summative data for school level decisions, there is little evidence that the school uses this key data to engage key subgroups and design curriculum that supports higher order thinking and challenging engagement. This results in missed planning opportunities to refine tasks that are scaffolded, with rigorous entry points for all learners to perform at higher levels of proficiency.
- Include measurable long term outcomes with interim checkpoints in all goals across the school to monitor progress and growth for teachers and students. (5.1)
 - Although there are meaningful discussions at teacher team and department meetings about student work and progress overall, there is no school structure in place to evaluate and benchmark their progress or effectiveness towards meeting the school's goals toward Common Core Learning Standards (CCLS)

and student learning needs. In addition, while the principal has purchased Smartboards throughout the building, in some classes they are not being used effectively to promote student interaction or support entry points for sub-groups to increase student performance. Subsequently, the lack of school wide systems to regularly monitor curricular development, instructional practices and the effective use of resources, hinders timely adjustments for student progress.

- Align the school's organizational decisions to support a professional learning community of teachers while increasing their instructional capacity and promoting a systemic emphasis on rigor to ensure improved academic outcomes. (1.3)
 - Although the administration has structured time for teachers to meet and collaborate and the focus is on critical thinking and higher order questioning, resources are not allocated to differentiate and tier professional development to those teachers struggling with the school's goals resulting in less meaningful work products among sub groups. This is evidenced in student work products as well as student performance on summative assessments in ELA and math on the current Progress Report.
 - Although school leaders have begun to put systems in place to increase the alignment between hiring practices, teacher assignments and the school's overall instructional goals, there are few teachers who grow from the intermediate school and continue to teach at the high school setting. Consequently, there is a missed opportunity to provide consistency of practice to students by teachers who shared the responsibility for meeting the needs of the same group of students in middle grade. This hinders the development of leadership capacity among the professional staff as the school begins its journey to gradually add high school grades.

Part 3: School Quality Criteria 2010-2011

School name: Urban Assembly School for Criminal Justice	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?		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 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