

Quality Review Report 2011-2012

**Providing Urban Learners Success In Education High
School**

High school 319

**560 EAST 179th STREET
BRONX
NY 10457**

Principal: CAROL WIGGINS

Dates of review: May 23 - 24, 2012

Lead Reviewer: Carron Staple

Part 1: The school context

Information about the school

Providing Urban Learners Success in Education is a transfer high school with 168 students from grade 9 through 12. The school population comprises 45% Black, 54% Hispanic, and 1% White. The student body includes 7% English language learners and 16% special education students. Boys account for 40% of the students enrolled and girls account for 60%. The average attendance rate for the school year 2010 - 2011 was 65.0%.

Overall Evaluation

This school is proficient.

Part 2: Overview

What the school does well

- The school provides student support services that provide students with a range of real-world learning opportunities and academic support. (4.4)
 - o In addition to the internal structures, PULSE has provided for students with after-school tutoring, clubs, and guidance advisories. Additionally, the school has established partnerships with extensive organizations ranging from Bronx Community College, to the Weill Music Foundation, Carnegie Hall, and the New York Hall of Science, that provide opportunities for paid hands-on internships, health awareness, student and family counseling, and personal and academic intervention services. As a result there is improved attendance and greater accumulation of credits leading to high school completion, key for over-age students. Additionally every 10 weeks school leaders and staff meet with each student to have a Student Performance Review (SPR) so that progress in school and at the work-site is discussed, consequently making students feel supported and informed.
- The principal, teachers, and team leaders, gather and analyze a variety of data to determine the needs of students and to adjust instructional decisions that help to support and improve academic outcomes. (2.1)
 - o The principal and school teams meet weekly to discuss student needs, and track student progress every 10 weeks with the help of a color-coded graduation tracker called Datcation. After gathering data from a variety of assessments, such as projects, tests, essays, and Regents' scores, information is input into the tracker and information is shared with students and families to relay strategies on how to improve. Teachers use this information to further evaluate the assignments created, and to identify patterns of strength or weakness in student work. Consequently, students are aware of the instructional decisions that are being made to support their progress, and teachers are aware of the strategies they need to employ to support each student's success. Regents and scholarship data, as well as weekly assessments, and cycle projects, are also evaluated to inform teachers and students about progress.
- The principal works collaboratively with teachers to make effective organizational decisions that support student and adult learning across all aspects of the school. (1.3)
 - o The principal strategically organizes her school by hiring staff that have double licensure in special education and a specific content area. The hiring committee consists of staff collaborating with the principal to choose staff not only properly licensed but who also understand the needs of over-age students in a transfer school. The school is programmed so teachers have time to meet with each other to plan, have student conferences, conduct intervisitations, and work with students off-site at Bronx Community College on Campus Fridays. The school budget is adeptly allocated for services by community organizations, Network support, classroom technology, professional development, and external consultants/partners, all of which provide enhanced student instruction and support for teachers, thus supporting student and staff learning.

- The school has a safe, respectful, and orderly environment where students are supported with their social-emotional and academic needs. (1.4)
 - o Social-emotional needs of students are addressed through a formalized and personalized approach that places students at the center of all learning. The established culture is based on the belief that students should be allowed to express themselves openly and honestly without feeling judgment or criticism. Students expressed the ability to speak to every adult in the building for academic or emotional support, which aligns to the principal's belief that adults are assessors of students' problems, managers of services, providers of direct academic and support services, advocates for students, and developers of linkages to other entities through the learning-to-work component. Thus, the school works to ensure graduation and success long-term.
- The principal and her school team share and reflect the belief that students learn best by doing, and that there must be relevance in everything students learn and do so they can make connections to the real world. (1.2)
 - o The school strongly believes that all students should be active participants in a learning-to-work environment that promotes critical thinking and allows students to receive hands-on training. In every classroom visited it was clearly evident that students were making connections between the classroom and the world at-large, which resulted in students experiencing suitable higher level academic experiences and opportunities to thoughtfully interact with their peers.
- The principal, using teacher input, makes effective instructional and organizational decisions across all aspects of the school that support student achievement. (1.1)
 - o Math and English language art teachers have incorporated Common Core Learning Standards (CCLS) into their unit planning and modifications and strategic interventions are employed when needed. The teachers create performance tasks based on argumentation and align these tasks to non-fiction and fiction texts. Math teachers use CCLS exemplars to help create units where students are required to use systems of equations to solve real-life scenarios. The curricula employ print, visual, and audio media to engage and stimulate response from the diverse student population. Student responses are then used to tailor informational and critical texts using templates as guidelines and students are involved in determining the design of the products they create, allowing them to collaborate in their learning as they receive targeted support.

What the school needs to improve

- Implement an effective research-based framework for monitoring teacher effectiveness to ensure elevated teacher practice. (4.1)
 - o While the school engages in conversations around elements of Kim Marshall's framework for teacher effectiveness in their professional practice, the institution of a common framework for monitoring teacher effectiveness that would create a tone and foster a sense of ownership is not yet evident. Thus the development of pedagogical skills is hindered.
- Ensure that teacher leaders and teams refine the data they gather, analyze, and disaggregate, so that the needs of all students, including subgroups, are planned for instructionally to ensure that students are cognizant of their next learning steps. (2.2)

- o Teachers regularly assess student understanding through questioning, mini-projects and presentations, but the limited use of self-assessments during instruction, reduces the amount of students who are self-assessing their own progress, thereby cutting down on the collaborative reflection that teachers and students engage in relative to next learning targets.
- Ensure that teachers set data-informed goals for every student, including subgroups, which are measurable, modified where needed, and differentiated to accelerate and support student learning. (3.2)
 - o Although data-informed goals are set for every student every 10 weeks, there is no indication that the community as a whole is tracking how the students with special needs, or English language learners are performing as a subgroup. Currently, the school does not set measurable and differentiated goals for relevant subgroups, thus minimizing teachers setting interim learning targets and/or benchmarks in a granular way to inform instruction.
- Ensure that teachers are provided with an increased amount of professional development that builds their capacity and improves their pedagogical skill and effectiveness in the classroom. (4.3)
 - o While it is exemplary that the teachers meet every day during their scheduled lunch period to discuss students' progress and plan units, time for regular and sustained professional development is not yet embedded into the weekly schedule to support the instructional initiatives and goals of the school. Thus, the improvement of teachers' skills and building leadership capacity is not yet at optimum capacity.

Part 3: School Quality Criteria 2011-2012

School name: Providing Urban Learners Success In Education	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	
4.4 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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