



**Department of
Education**
Carmen Fariña, Chancellor

Office of School Quality
Division of Teaching and Learning

Quality Review Report

2014-2015

**The Urban Assembly School for Collaborative
Healthcare**

High School K764

**999 Jamaica Avenue
Brooklyn
NY 11208**

Principal: Kevin Bradley

**Date of review: May 21, 2015
Lead Reviewer: Donald Conyers**

The School Context

The Urban Assembly School for Collaborative Healthcare is a high school with 73 students in grade 9. The school population comprises 50% Black, 23% Hispanic, 4% White, and 10% Asian students. The student body includes 7% English language learners and 5% special education students. Boys account for 32% of the students enrolled and girls account for 68.0%. The average attendance rate for the school year 2013-14 is not available due to new school status.

School Quality Criteria

Instructional Core		
<i>To what extent does the school...</i>	Area of:	Rating:
1.1 Ensure engaging, rigorous, and coherent curricula in all subjects, accessible for a variety of learners and aligned to Common Core Learning Standards and/or content standards	Additional Findings	Proficient
1.2 Develop teacher pedagogy from a coherent set of beliefs about how students learn best that is informed by the instructional shifts and Danielson Framework for Teaching, aligned to the curricula, engaging, and meets the needs of all learners so that all students produce meaningful work products	Focus	Developing
2.2 Align assessments to curricula, use on-going assessment and grading practices, and analyze information on student learning outcomes to adjust instructional decisions at the team and classroom levels	Additional Findings	Proficient
School Culture		
<i>To what extent does the school...</i>	Area of:	Rating:
3.4 Establish a culture for learning that communicates high expectations to staff, students, and families, and provide supports to achieve those expectations	Celebration	Proficient
Systems for Improvement		
<i>To what extent does the school...</i>	Area of:	Rating:
4.2 Engage in structured professional collaborations on teams using an inquiry approach that promotes shared leadership and focuses on improved student learning	Additional Findings	Proficient

Area of Celebration

Quality Indicator:	3.4 High Expectations	Rating:	Proficient
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Findings

The principal consistently communicates high expectations to the teachers and parents of the growing school community connected to a path to college and career readiness.

Impact

As a result of the principal's system of accountability, teachers are accountable to the school-wide instructional expectations and respond to training and communications. The principal's feedback to parents regarding student progress results in families receiving information along the path to college and career readiness.

Supporting Evidence

- The principal has established a foundation of high expectations for this brand new school where students will graduate with Career and Technical Education (CTE) endorsements on each Regents diploma. The principal utilizes the CTE teacher and an instructional specialist from Urban Assembly to offer professional development. Some examples of professional development include project-based learning across core content and CTE, use of Cornell notes and other Avid Strategies, and building an accountable community to address cycles of continuous improvement.
- During the parent interview, parents boast about student led conferences that enable them to understand the strengths and areas of difficulty in learning. Additionally, parents reported that they access Skedula to receive information about student learning along with the eight times that they receive feedback from progress reports and report cards. All parents and students spoke about teachers being accessible and communicative via telephone to support student emotional and academic learning.
- The principal supports teacher planning and peer reflection as essential pieces of the school's success equation. The principal sends weekly writing communication to the teachers to provide instructions, to motivate and celebrate accomplishments. He has made four essential questions the drivers for deeply understanding planning, teaching, and assessment of student progress toward college and career readiness. The principal's essential questions are: What do we want students to learn? How will we know when they learn it?, How will we respond when they didn't learn it? How will we respond when they already know it?
- As a solid step toward college and career readiness, the teachers inform parents of the school's belief in several practices that will promote the academic and personal behaviors determined to be necessary for positive college readiness. The practices include a study of the seven habits of highly effective teens, use of Cornell note, use of planners to improve organization, and goal setting.

Area of Focus

Quality Indicator:

1.2 Pedagogy

Rating:

Developing

Findings

While teaching practices are beginning to align with the expectations of the Danielson Framework for Teaching and the school's beliefs about how students learn best, teaching practices inconsistently engage all students, promote student thinking, and generate meaningful discussions among students.

Impact

Teaching practices result in uneven opportunities across classrooms for all students to be appropriately challenged through academic tasks and discussions. This thwarts increased achievement opportunities for all students.

Supporting Evidence

- The lessons viewed made attempts to emphasize academic vocabulary. Some lessons observed also emphasized writing. However, despite well-crafted lesson plans not all students are benefitting from high levels of academic tasks and expectations of the school beliefs to promote accountable talk. For example, in the English class, students were reading Baz Luhrmann's *Romeo and Juliet*; the lesson plan supported a build up to the point where students would analyze Juliet's character through her interaction with her mother. The students were placed in 'expert groups' of four and were given the task of reading Act 1, Scene 3 from pages 68-105. This was a jigsaw activity and students were expected to answer two questions based on their portion of assigned reading, and share through discussions within the group. The group was given the opportunity to ask questions about the answers provided. However, there were no student discussions. Additionally, there was a missed opportunity for the quick write during class time.
- In the Algebra classroom, students were completing worksheets to differentiate directional words in applying concepts to polynomials and quadratic equations. This Integrated Collaborative Teaching (ICT) class of students worked in pairs attempting to solve examples provided by the teachers. Several students were off task and disconnected from the lesson. The teacher had not provided immediate support for students that were off task. Furthermore, several students could not explain the real world reason to apply quadratic equations.
- In the Living Environment, Anatomy and Physiology class, students were engaged in a lab. Each group had members with roles such as reader, responder, and leader. In this ICT class, the students were conducting a controlled experiment regarding lung capacity. The teacher used guided notes to introduce needed vocabulary. Students created hypotheses, tested the hypotheses, discussed actions taken during the experiment, and results of the experiment. Students wrote an analysis of the experiment requiring them to use multiple data points to support whether the hypothesis was supported by the group's data collected. This type of student discussion was consistently observed across classrooms visited.

Additional Findings

Quality Indicator:	2.2 Assessment	Rating:	Proficient
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Findings

Teachers use or create assessments, rubrics, and grading policies that are aligned with the school's curricula. The school uses common assessments to determine student progress.

Impact

Classroom teachers use assessment results to track student progress, adjust instruction, and provide actionable feedback to students.

Supporting Evidence

- The principal and classroom teachers utilize the grade eight proficiency ratings from grade 8 New York State examinations in English and Mathematics, grade 8 course grades, a 2014 fall term-baseline mathematics placement exam, and on-demand writing to understand student strengths and needs. The data results revealed that a great number of students were not ready for the rigors of Algebra and there was a great need for literacy development. The teachers responded by creating an Algebra Intervention class for students who were subsequently able to move into Algebra class with less difficulty. Additionally, the teachers included literacy across all subjects focusing on text annotation, academic vocabulary, and writing skills.
- The school staff has constructed school-wide grading policy to promote greater student participation and has placed a 30% weight on assessments that gauge student knowledge and understanding of content and concepts. These assessments highlight the student need for content understanding as well as the literacy development. For example, after reading, *Bodega Dreams* by Ernesto Quinonez, in the English class, students were asked to write an assessment about Chino's situation. They also created journal entries in response to the text. The responses were rated against a rubric provided by the teacher.
- In an effort to understand student progress, the teachers administer the Degrees of Reading Power (DRP) three times a year to track reading levels and provide benchmark examinations in all courses four times for the year. Teachers use results to make adjustments ensuring that students have better understanding of learning. For example, the teachers began in the fall, administering the Local Measures of Student Learning (MOSL) in English and student results caused the teachers to work extensively across subjects to improve argument essay.

Quality Indicator:	4.2 Teacher teams and leadership development	Rating:	Proficient
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Findings

The teacher team consistently analyzes assessment data and student work products. They build their leadership capacity while participating in the distributive leadership structure set up by the school.

Impact

Teachers are routinely updating their awareness of student challenges and acting upon the assessment results in order to improve student learning. Teachers make key decisions that affect student learning for all students.

Supporting Evidence

- The teacher team uses a tuning protocol to guide their work of presenting student work and assessment results for discussion. The teachers discuss expected outcomes and compare them to the actual student results. Subsequently, the presenting teacher will speak about the plan of action on behalf of the students. During the observed teacher team meeting, the science educator presented the results of the Living Environment mock Regent. The teacher presented the results of the multiple choice and the short answer sections. The teacher performed an analysis of the results and identified the questions that were improperly answered by the majority. The teacher went a step further to display the response frequency of the incorrect responses. Additionally, he linked the incorrect responses to the New York State Key ideas and identified the specific topic within the key idea in need of attention. This led to the construction of a unit plan based upon the major student inaccuracies on the mock Regent exam.
- The teachers administered the Preliminary Scholastic Assessment Test (PSAT) to all grade 9 students in October. The team received the results and identified writing and critical reading as the most critical areas to support. As part of the learning experiences, teachers met with the students to discuss the PSAT results. Students examined the “your skills” section of the PSAT score report to identify 2-3 areas of strength based on the number correctly answered questions and 2-3 areas of growth based on incorrect responses. Students set goals to ensure improvement. Additionally, the English teacher began to dedicate time during the do now portion of the lesson to PSAT released questions. Curricula examined indicated teacher team planned to address 2 questions with a focus on writing conventions.
- As a new, small school, all teachers play important roles in promoting the career and college readiness espoused in the school vision. As such, they assume leadership roles that promote the school’s interest. Teachers are Avid leads, dean of school culture, partnership coordinator, teacher team facilitator, project based learning lead, and hiring team agents. In an effort to plan for the upcoming school year, all teachers collaboratively make decisions about adjustments to curricula.

Quality Indicator:	1.1 Curriculum	Rating:	Proficient
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Findings

The principal and teachers ensure that curricula are aligned to the Common Core Learning Standards and integrate the instructional shifts. Curricula and academic tasks emphasize rigorous habits for all students to include the English language learner and students with disabilities.

Impact

The school faculty makes purposeful decisions to build coherence and to promote college and career readiness for all students and ensures academic tasks deepen learners' critical-thinking skills.

Supporting Evidence

- All teachers write unit plans that support student academic needs. Unit and lesson plans identify content and language objectives for the English language learners and supports for students with disabilities. Plans also identify extension work for higher achieving students. All plans encourage and support the use of Cornell notes and the workshop paradigm.
- The school's instructional focus of literacy across the disciplines is evident in unit and lesson plans. There is a strong emphasis in all subject plans on academic vocabulary and writing. The plans highlight the three text types of explaining, information, and argument. Student work products displayed around the school highlighted students' argumentative writing. For example, in the Living Environment class, the unit plan provided evidence that students were going to study genetic engineering. Students were asked to take a position about genetic engineering of babies and defend it. Accordingly, high-quality student work products provided evidence that learners have opportunities to enhance their higher-order skills.
- The Public Health class curricula highlighted students confronted with various topics for which they would read, research, write, discuss, debate, compare, and evaluate conditions. Some of the topics included teenage pregnancy, the spread of the Ebola virus, cultural biases, and cultural sensitivities within the health profession. Lesson plans include activities that promote rigorous habits. For example, in a Health task, students were asked to annotate case studies, and answer the question: why does cultural competence matter in healthcare?