



**Department of
Education**
Carmen Fariña, Chancellor

Office of School Quality
Division of Teaching and Learning

Quality Review Report

2014-2015

**The Urban Assembly School of Business
for Young Women**

02M316

**26 Broadway
New York, NY 10004**

Principal: Patricia Minaya

**Dates of Review: November 13, 2014
Lead Reviewer: Eva Ostrum**

The School Context

The Urban Assembly School of Business for Young Women is a High school with 412 students from 9 through grade 12. The school population comprises 47.60% Black, 41.00% Hispanic, 1.90% White, and 3.90% Asian students. The student body includes 4.10% English language learners and 19.40% special education students. Boys account for 0.00% of the students enrolled and girls account for 100.00%. The average attendance rate for the school year 2012 - 2013 was 84.00%.

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	Developing
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	Developing
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	Additional Findings	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	Celebration	Proficient

Area of Celebration

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

The majority of teachers are engaged in structured, inquiry-based professional collaborations that promote the achievement of school goals. Strong distributive leadership structures include teachers in key instructional decisions.

Impact

The organization of teacher teams promotes distributed leadership structures that support capacity building and provide teachers with voice in instructional decision-making. Teacher team activity brings the teaching staff together by both grade and department, resulting in cohesive collaboration around instruction and student support.

Supporting Evidence

- Teachers regularly participate in school teams in which they use protocols to analyze data and develop interventions. For example, in a Grade 11 team meeting, teachers used a *Looking at Data* protocol to plan targeted interventions for students who had received failing grades for marking period 1. Teachers state that these team meetings build their professional capacity.
- School leadership has assigned department heads, and a lead teacher provides administrative support. The lead teacher and department heads collaborate with school administrators to develop common assessments for three-week and six-week benchmarks.
- Teachers utilize team discussions and collaborations to develop and refine interventions and strategies to improve student performance. This distributed leadership function provides teachers with a leadership role in the school in a way that affects student learning. For example, after a discussion regarding a student's identified needs at a grade team meeting, a designated teacher follows up with the student directly. The teacher and student then co-create an intervention plan designed to support the student using a holistic approach that includes both academic and social-emotional elements.

Area of Focus

Quality Indicator:

1.2 Pedagogy

Rating:

Developing

Findings

Across classrooms, teaching strategies inconsistently provide multiple entry points into the curricula, and student discussions reflect uneven levels of thinking and participation.

Impact

As teaching strategies across the school do not consistently offer students effective scaffolds, student thinking and participation in appropriately challenging tasks and discussions is hindered.

Supporting Evidence

- Across classrooms, teachers provided students with uneven opportunities for high-level thinking and participation and rich discourse. For example, in a science class, students drew the Lewis structure for ammonia, hydrogen sulfide, carbon dioxide and other molecules, a task that required higher level thinking. However, in a foreign language class, the pattern of interaction was call and response, with limited opportunity for students to engage in rigorous thinking.
- Teachers inconsistently provided multiple entry points into the lesson. For example, an Integrated Co-Teaching math class offered students a choice of two packets from which to work, one of which provided scaffolds. In this class, students had the freedom to move between the two packets depending on their need. However, in an Integrated Co-Teaching science class, students were observed having difficulty accessing the text, and scaffolds and literacy supports were not utilized in the co-teaching model.
- In classes visited, students were not consistently provided with opportunities to engage in high-level discussions with peers. For example, in a science class, students worked together to respond to questions about valence electrons. However, in another class, the teacher directed students to read aloud from a text during the visit, with the lesson plan reflecting that this was the planned pattern of interaction for most of the instructional period.

Additional Findings

Quality Indicator:	1.1 Curriculum	Rating:	Developing
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Findings

Curricula and academic tasks emphasize rigorous habits and higher-order thinking skills inconsistently, and do not reflecting regular planning to provide all students with access to cognitively engage the diverse learners in the school.

Impact

As curricula are not consistently refined to meet the needs of all learners and academic tasks are not structured with consistent rigor, student learning is impacted.

Supporting Evidence

- In an English language arts class visited, the teacher created a conversation tracker to be utilized by students during group discussions. The lesson plan documented that students were to use the conversation tracker to discuss analytical text-dependent questions. In a literacy-based class visited, however, all students were provided with the same graphic organizer that asked for a summary of basic elements of a reading selection. In this class, students were not provided with opportunities for higher-order thinking, and the needs of English language learners and special education students were not strategically addressed.
- In a science class observed, the classroom contained prominently posted curricular supports to which students could refer as needed, such as models of covalent bonding. In a social studies class observed, however, the lesson plan did not provide scaffolded supports for all learners to meet the designated lesson objective, which was, “Students will analyze the progress of the expanding women’s rights movement in the nineteenth century by creating one paragraph on women’s rights.”
- Not all language and literacy-based classes gave students the opportunity to engage with text. In a science class observed, the academic task was based on a text to which students had to refer. In a foreign language class observed, however, the lesson plan reflected no use of text as a source for information or practice exercises, the absence of which detracted from the rigor of the lesson.

Findings

Across classrooms, teachers provide inconsistent actionable feedback to students through grading, assessments, and rubrics. The instructional team inconsistently incorporates checks for understanding and instructional adjustments.

Impact

Across content and grade levels, limited checks for understanding and inconsistent actionable feedback to learners hampers student progress towards goals.

Supporting Evidence

- Some teachers were observed using rubrics and exit slips. However, teacher feedback via rubrics did not always contain actionable next steps. For example, a reading response rubric provided task-level feedback to students focused on what the response was missing, but did not provide guidance on how to improve the student work.
- While some teachers were observed incorporating checks for understanding into their lesson plans via questioning and exit slips, teachers did not consistently adjust their teaching to meet student needs during instructional time. For example, in an English language arts class visited, the teacher modeled the task and then followed up with comprehension questions before having students engage in independent work. However, in an Integrated Co Teaching math class, the teacher did not stop during the observed portion of the class to check for student understanding. A student from that class shared that she did not understand what the teacher at the front of the room was presenting, and had to ask the co-teacher for individual assistance.
- Students in a foreign language class used a self-assessment tool to evaluate their own participation in the day's class. The tool included responses such as, "I have answered at least 3 prompts", "I have recorded at least one fact that each student has shared". Students in a science class were asked to self-assess their participation in a science lab by rating the percentage of the lab that they completed, the degree to which they read through and followed the procedure, the degree to which they stayed on task and focused, and the extent to which they could demonstrate an understanding of the topic. However, students were not asked to evaluate their own progress or performance in other classes observed.

Quality Indicator:	3.4 High Expectations	Rating:	Proficient
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Findings

School leaders consistently communicate high expectations to the entire staff, provide training to support those expectations, and work with teacher teams to share these high expectations with students.

Impact

School leaders and teacher professional collaborations build mutual accountability, and refine the instructional core of the school in a way that establishes a school-wide culture of learning.

Supporting Evidence

- The principal communicates high expectations to staff, and has collaborated with the leadership team to create a professional development plan around collaboratively identified school goals. For example, the school's instructional goals include improving student literacy and expanding teacher capacity on asking higher-order questions, both topics that the professional plan for the year addresses consistently. Department leaders map out professional development that connects to the school's instructional focus.
- Students shared that college readiness is embedded across school life and culture. For example, a grade nine student shared that he received support from the college advisor. A grade 11 student shared that the school prepares students for college ready writing. Another grade 11 student said that she was earning college credit through the College Now program.
- Students benefit from career-oriented internships. For example, a grade 11 student spoke about her participation in an internship with Union Bank of Switzerland (UBS), a banking and financial services group. Other school internship relationships include Goldman Sachs, Deloitte, The Federal Reserve Bank, Girls Who Code, and The Women's Bond Club.