Quality Review Report
2016-2017

Urban Assembly School for Music and Art
High school 13K350
49 Flatbush Ave. Extension
Brooklyn
NY 11201

Principal: Paul Thompson

Dates of Review:
December 21, 2016 - December 22, 2016

Lead Reviewer: Jennifer Eusanio
The Quality Review Report

The Quality Review is a two-day school visit by an experienced educator. During the review, the reviewer visits classrooms, talks with parents, students, teachers, and school leaders and uses a rubric to evaluate how well the school is organized to support student achievement.

The Quality Review Report provides a rating for all ten indicators of the Quality Review Rubric in three categories: Instructional Core, School Culture, and Systems for Improvement. One indicator is identified as the Area of Celebration to highlight an area in which the school does well to support student learning and achievement. One indicator is identified as the Area of Focus to highlight an area the school should work on to support student learning and achievement. The remaining indicators are identified as Additional Finding. This report presents written findings, impact, and site-specific supporting evidence for six indicators.

Information about the School


School Quality Ratings

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Instructional Core</th>
<th>Area</th>
<th>Rating</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>To what extent does the school...</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>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</td>
<td>Area of Focus</td>
<td>Developing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>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</td>
<td>Additional Finding</td>
<td>Developing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>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</td>
<td>Additional Finding</td>
<td>Proficient</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### School Quality Ratings continued

#### School Culture

**To what extent does the school...**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Area</th>
<th>Rating</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.4 Maintain a culture of mutual trust and positive attitudes that supports the academic and personal growth of students and adults</td>
<td>Additional Finding</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.4 Establish a culture for learning that communicates high expectations to staff, students and families, and provide supports to achieve those expectations</td>
<td>Area of Celebration</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

#### Systems for Improvement

**To what extent does the school...**

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<tr>
<th>Area</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>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</td>
<td>Additional Finding</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.1 Establish a coherent vision of school improvement that is reflected in a short list of focused, data-based goals that are tracked for progress and are understood and supported by the entire school community</td>
<td>Additional Finding</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.1 Observe teachers using the Danielson Framework for Teaching along with the analysis of learning outcomes to elevate school-wide instructional practices and implement strategies that promote professional growth and reflection</td>
<td>Additional Finding</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.2 Engage in structured professional collaborations on teams using an inquiry approach that promotes shared leadership and focuses on improved student learning</td>
<td>Additional Finding</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.1 Evaluate the quality of school-level decisions, making adjustments as needed to increase the coherence of policies and practices across the school, with particular attention to the CCLS</td>
<td>Additional Finding</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Area of Celebration

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Quality Indicator:</th>
<th>3.4 High Expectations</th>
<th>Rating:</th>
<th>Proficient</th>
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</thead>
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Findings

School leaders communicate high expectations for long-term planning and college or career readiness and offer support to staff and students to meet them.

Impact

Staff are held accountable for the schoolwide expectations and students are aware of the pathway towards next-level readiness.

Supporting Evidence

- The school website, emails and other memoranda provide the staff with the expectations as they relate to the school’s goals and instructional focus. The Instructional Handbook provides staff with direction on the five-week planner, the school’s unit plans which change per marking period. The handbook provides teachers with a sample planner and lesson plan as an example of what is expected. Additionally, the handbook provides an overview of the instructional expectations and lists ways staff members can get support to meet them. A review of five-week planners reflect similar structures and planning efforts that align with the instructional handbook expectations.

- Professional learning and debriefs from observations are additional supports provided to staff members. A review of the fall term professional development calendar reflects training during the month of November on incorporating the arts in the final deliverable, a culminating project. A review of five week planners reflects an arts integration, such as, in United States (US) history where students viewed artwork and songs related to expansion, industrialization, and the Civil War. A review of feedback reports reflects recommendations, such as, instilling collaborative discussion groups and prompts to increase the rigor in tasks.

- The guidance counselor and other staff meet with students to discuss opportunities related to college and career readiness. Students report that their teachers go out of their way to make sure they have the proper classes and offer after school support through credit recovery or intervention support to assist them with passing courses. A college ready class is provided to seniors which offer support on resume writing, developing a personal statement and budgeting. Students stated that the support provided by the guidance counselor and teachers help them understand where they stand in terms of graduation.
Findings

The school’s curricula inconsistently emphasizes the planning for rigorous habits in five-week planners. The curricula reflect planning to provide students access to the curricula yet refinement of tasks using student data is in the process of being developed.

Impact

Planning to ensure higher-order thinking skills and cognitive engagement for a diversity of learners has yet to be reflected across all subject areas and grades.

Supporting Evidence

- The school has adopted the Key Cognitive Strategies (KCS) to assist them with the development of rigorous deliverables and allows students to make their thinking visible, deepen their analysis and allow for metacognition. In one Advanced Placement Language and Composition lesson plan, the task focused on the question, “Is Plato right in his critique of Democracy?” The task places students in a Socratic Seminar to respond to this question based on their reading of a secondary resource document. The plan reflects alignment to all five KCS standards. However, some tasks across other subject areas did not reflect the same level of planning to foster rigorous habits.

- Some lesson plan questions and objectives reflect skills where students need to use skills aligned to Webb’s Depth of Knowledge (DOK) Levels 1 or 2. In one US history lesson plan, the aim focuses on the question, “How did Andrew Jackson’s presidency affect different groups of Americans?” The task focused on summarization to prepare for a presentation. In a global history class, the task focused on students identifying the main turning points in global history and their effects.

- A review of some five-week planners reflects planning for accommodations. In a math planner, accommodations consist of reference sheets in folders, additional guidance practice problems and additional small group instruction with a teaching assistant. In a grade twelve math planner, the provision of extra time and questions read aloud was a modification added for students with disabilities. However, the use of data or student work to make these daily accommodations is not reflected in some of the planners or lesson plans.
Additional Finding

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Quality Indicator:</th>
<th>1.2 Pedagogy</th>
<th>Rating:</th>
<th>Developing</th>
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**Findings**

Teaching strategies inconsistently reflect multiple entry points into the curricula where student work products and discussions are uneven.

**Impact**

Work products are in the process of reflecting higher-order thinking skills and full engagement for diverse learners.

**Supporting Evidence**

- In an English class, students were engaged in reading independently. One student stated he was focused on understanding the theme of the story and was monitoring the character using reading strategies his teacher provided to him. Another student was also working on the theme yet decided to use post its to summarize portions of the text to help her keep track of the major events to help her when she presents to the class. In another English class, students were all reading the same text and taking notes on the details in the story and what it tells them about the main character. Several of the students’ responses reflected basic inferences.

- In a grade nine algebra class, students were grouped and working on different math tasks. In some groups, students were focused on their instructor and attempting to solve Regents-like questions. However, in some groups, students were not focused on the task. In addition, some students were complete with their work yet were not provided with additional tasks to further engage them.

- In a grade ten global history class, students were provided prompts as a support to understand key words in Regents-like questions. Prompts such as focus on this key word or what is another name for this, were listed next to each question. In a math class, students were asked to work in groups to solve word problems and were provided different tasks per group. Although, in both classes, students worked to complete their tasks, the level of their responses aligned with DOK Levels 1-2.
Findings
Across classrooms, alternative grading systems, common assessments and rubrics aligned to the curricula are reviewed to determine student progress across grades and subject areas.

Impact
Actionable feedback for students and adjustments in instruction lead to progress towards goals related to academic achievement.

Supporting Evidence
- The school’s grading policy consists of a three-level system of high performance, proficient and not yet proficient. With this grading system, school leaders believe that students never fail but are not yet proficient and can take individual action at any time to demonstrate proficiency. Students report that the grading system is aligned by percentage so they can easily tell whether their grade on a test reflects that they are proficient or not. Online grading tools assist them, which uses these terms, is updated weekly to reflect provide feedback to students on current project work or other grades.

- Teachers provide students with feedback on projects verbally and in writing. Students shared that in some classes, feedback is provided using a web-based tool. Students stated that their teachers write comments at certain parts where they feel they can improve on their work. One student shared feedback from an essay on The Brief Wondrous Life of Oscar Wao. The teacher highlighted sections and asked the student to add more details and explain why the relationship is complicated. Similarly, a review of student work reflects comments at certain sections to encourage reflection and lift the quality of the writing.

- In November, teachers conducted a fall Regents mock assessment to determine student understanding of key skills and prioritize planning for the next marking period in their five-week planners. After administering the assessment in math, grade eleven students demonstrated an understanding of linear and quadratic functions, yet concepts like absolute value are areas of growth for some students. In planning the next unit, the math teacher is using stations to reinforce this math concept to students in need.
## Additional Finding

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Quality Indicator:</th>
<th>4.1 Teacher Support and Supervision</th>
<th>Rating:</th>
<th>Proficient</th>
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### Findings

Feedback related to the Danielson *Framework for Teaching* provides teachers with clear expectations and captures strengths and/or challenges with next steps. There is an effective system for using observation data to assign teachers with professional development and make informed decisions.

### Impact

Observation and professional learning practices improve the implementation of teaching and professional growth.

### Supporting Evidence

- Feedback to teachers occur both informally through coaching conversations and more formally via written reports. Comments offer areas which are noted as commendations and recommendations for support. One feedback report shares that students were engaged in a travel project which contained a real life connection. As a recommendation, the school leader suggested that the teacher use methods such as grouping and a gallery walk to increase student engagement which aligns with the Danielson *Framework for Teaching*.

- A review of observation feedback reflects recommendations to support teachers in planning for rigor and student engagement. Teachers received professional development support through the assignment of lead teachers. Lead teachers meet with their colleagues, new and experienced, to support them in targeted areas based on observation data such as student engagement through Socratic seminar, collaborative discussion groups or the development of scaffolds and other strategies to support students who are struggling. In addition, teachers are sent to professional development to support them with district initiatives that support student academic and personal behaviors and student engagement.

- Teachers report that their feedback provides a clear message of what the schoolwide expectations are on teaching. One teacher reported that she is now working on tasks that move her from more teacher-directed instruction to student centered instruction. Another teacher reported that the feedback provided focused on providing a picture of rigor and what it looks like in a task by providing exemplars and creating activities which allow students to step into the shoes of the author.
# Additional Finding

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<tr>
<th>Quality Indicator:</th>
<th>4.2 Teacher Teams and Leadership Development</th>
<th>Rating:</th>
<th>Proficient</th>
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## Findings

The majority of teachers are engaged in structured, inquiry-based teams which promote the achievement of school goals and maintain distributive leadership structures to build capacity.

## Impact

Strengthen instructional capacity and leadership decision-making lead to improvements in teaching and learning across the school.

## Supporting Evidence

- Teacher teams focus on the review of student data and work products using a Looking at Student work protocol. Each team is currently reviewing and analyzing mock Regents data and monitoring the growth of the students who are not yet proficient on particular skills which is aligned to the school goals. In the grade twelve team, teachers are focusing on revisiting claims, counter claims and citing text evidence. The English teachers have determined that using strategies such as topic sentence, intro evidence, evidence and discuss your evidence (TIED) and the use of graphic organizers for collection of details are assisting students who struggle in this subject area.

- During a meeting, the grade nine team reviewed students’ scores on the most recent multiple choice quiz which focused on inferences and vocabulary. A review of student scores demonstrated a decrease in the number of students having difficulty with inferring based on their last review of data. Therefore, the team decided to focus on word choice and vocabulary in the upcoming lessons to support students who are still struggling with these types of questions. Ideas for instruction to engage students include the use of technology, use of more visuals and creation of a word game.

- Various teacher teams meet to discuss planning for arts integrations and related professional development. Teacher leaders on these teams meet in the cabinet to share ideas, updates on each of the committees’ needs, and next steps. A discussion on the school’s art showcase where students could present fostered professional development during the month of November will assist teachers in integrating art across subject areas in the five-week planner.