

Level 5 Schools 2015–16 Quarter 2 Report: UP Academy Holland

School Information		Student Enrollment and Demographics	
Location	Boston, Massachusetts	Total SY 2015–16 Enrollment	753
Current Status	Level 5	Percentage SWDs	15%
Receiver Name	UP Education Network	Percentage ELLs	37%
Year Designated Level 5	2013	Percentage Black	42%
Year Designated Level 4	2010	Percentage Latino/Hispanic	41%
Grade Span	PK–5	Percentage Asian	4%
Number of Full-Time Staff in SY 2015–16	88	Percentage White	4%
		Percentage Multirace	9%
Priority Areas			
<p>Priority Area 1: Transform the culture of the school into a culture of urgency, high expectations, accountability, excellence, and achievement.</p> <p>Priority Area 2: Enhance the rigor of the curricula, improve the effectiveness of instruction, and strengthen the utilization of assessment data.</p> <p>Priority Area 3: Expand the school day and school year, build in time, deploy resources, develop programs, and create identification and tracking systems to ensure that all students, especially students with disabilities and English language learners, receive the academic and other supports they require to learn and succeed.</p> <p>Priority Area 4: Recruit and hire extraordinary leaders, teachers, and support staff, and build and utilize systems to evaluate, develop, promote, reward, and retain this staff over the long term.</p> <p>Priority Area 5: Fully engage all of the school’s families in the learning of their children.</p>			

Content provided by UP Education Network

Executive Summary

UP Academy Holland continues to refine its practice as it seeks to ensure that “all students acquire the knowledge, skills, and strength of character necessary to succeed on the path to college and to achieve their full potential.” The school leadership team identified four top priorities to improve student learning for this school year: (1) take pride in the physical space of the school; (2) execute well-designed systems and procedures for all student movement (transitions); (3) manage students skillfully and with consistency; and (4) deeply understand reading, writing, and mathematics standards, and effectively execute prioritized lesson structures.

This quarter, every facet of teacher coaching and development has been aligned to these four strategic priorities. In October 2015, the UP Academy Holland leadership team led a five-week professional development cycle focused on addressing strategic priority 3. The school also hired a new Dean of Special Education who provides comprehensive support and coaching for the school’s special education teachers. In addition, the school successfully launched its Parent Council and, after an intensive schoolwide attendance initiative, reported its highest monthly attendance average in school history (94.4 percent). UP Education Network and the school

continue to seek new ways of working together to rapidly and systematically improve curriculum design, instructional delivery, classroom management, data usage, and school operations to help the school achieve its mission outlined in the Turnaround Plan.

Updates on Priority Areas

Priority Area 1: Transform the culture of the school into a culture of urgency, high expectations, accountability, excellence, and achievement.

- **Highlight:** The UP Academy Holland leadership team led a five-week professional development cycle focused on developing a schoolwide vision of excellence for physical engagement, or habits that demonstrate student engagement and focus during instruction (i.e., students visually tracking the teacher, posture, voice, and participation).
- **Highlight:** In October 2015, the school’s deans partnered with the UP Education Network’s Academic Team to provide live coaching and individualized feedback to teachers on implementation of the behavior management system. This is integrated into the teacher observation schedule.
- **Highlight:** Through the school’s instructional observation rounds, the UP Academy Holland leadership team has noted a marked improvement in the consistent implementation of the behavior management system across grade levels. The school is noticeably calmer, with an increased focus on learning.
- **Challenge:** Although teachers at UP Academy Holland are skillfully addressing student behavior escalations, there is still some variation from classroom to classroom in addressing smaller scale behaviors. UP Academy Holland, in partnership with the UP Education Network Academic Team, maintains a continued focus on consistent implementation of the school’s vision for physical engagement and behavior management. For instance, maintenance of physical engagement practices was a focus of the school’s most recent instructional observation round. In addition, the school’s deans provide coaching to individual teachers on reaching 100 percent engagement and “sweating the small stuff” or addressing smaller, seemingly innocuous, behaviors.

Priority Area 2: Enhance the rigor of the curricula, improve the effectiveness of instruction, and strengthen the utilization of assessment data.

- **Highlight:** UP Academy Holland has become a model within the UP Education Network for cognitively guided math instruction (CGI). UP Academy Holland teachers have been highlighted in exemplar math instruction videos across the network. The school’s deans have provided intensive support to teachers as the school has embraced a constructivist approach to math instruction. For instance, the deans designed and led a series of professional development sessions on CGI. They also support their teacher teams in designing, modifying, and refining CGI math units. Coaching has included model teaching, live coaching, and designing teacher development plans. In addition, the UP Education Network Academic Team provided a model CGI math unit to teachers in grades 1–5.
- **Highlight:** In October 2015, the UP Academy Holland leadership team led a schoolwide Data Day during which teachers dissected data from the UP network-developed

benchmark assessments and developed action plans for adjusting instruction. These action plans were developed on the individual teacher, grade, and schoolwide levels. Individual teachers created plans based on student data. Deans supported teacher teams in creating grade-level initiatives while the school leadership team developed a series of schoolwide professional development sessions according to benchmark data.

- **Highlight:** The UP Academy Holland leadership team partners with the UP Education Network Academic Teams to observe classrooms, diagnose issues, and problem-solve through the school's monthly instructional rounds cycle. During instructional rounds, deans are coached on providing additional support to teachers according to each teacher's identified areas of need. Deans, in turn, provide additional coaching to teachers based on observations during the instructional rounds.
- **Challenge:** During observations, the leadership team identified a need for teachers to engage in additional intellectual preparation. In English language arts (ELA), the school's Deans of Curriculum and Instruction (DCIs) continue to support teachers in their intellectual preparation of ELA lessons. This will allow teachers to facilitate deeper, cognitive discussions in ELA as well as react to student misconceptions in real time. The DCIs are coaching teachers on appropriate scaffolding and will begin providing additional support in ELA unit planning. Grade-level teams will also meet during afterschool professional development sessions focused on intellectual preparation.

Priority Area 3: Expand the school day and school year, build in time, deploy resources, develop programs, and create identification and tracking systems to ensure that all students, especially students with disabilities and English language learners, receive the academic and other supports they require to learn and succeed.

- **Highlight:** UP Academy Holland hired and on-boarded a Dean of Special Education who provides comprehensive support and coaching for the school's special education teachers.
- **Highlight:** On the network's recent benchmark assessments, Level 5 Limited English proficient (LEP) students at UP Academy Holland outperformed students with no English Language Development (ELD) designation.
- **Highlight:** The UP Academy Holland leadership team began implementing Behavior Intervention Rounds. These rounds take place every six weeks with members of the UP Education Network Academic Team. Team members observe students to gather behavior data and to ensure behavior intervention plans are executed with fidelity to support struggling students.
- **Challenge:** UP Academy Holland's English as a Second Language (ESL) director began her maternity leave at the end of 2015. A plan detailing how the school will support LEP students in her absence has been developed. The school will receive additional support from the UP Academy Education Network's Director of English Language Learning. One of school's teacher leaders, who is also enrolled in the Network's Dean Preparation Academy, will absorb the ESL director's responsibilities. Also, the school's ESL director's caseload will be divided among the school's ESL certified teachers.

Priority Area 4: Recruit and hire extraordinary leaders, teachers, and support staff, and build and utilize systems to evaluate, develop, promote, reward, and retain this staff over the long term.

- **Highlight:** The school’s leadership team is now fully staffed. UP Academy Holland has hired all but one student-facing role. One paraprofessional role remains unfilled. In addition, 80 percent of UP Academy Holland staff who were employed at the school during the 2014–15 school year returned for the 2015–16 school year.
- **Highlight:** In October 2015, UP Academy Holland staff participated in the school’s beginning-of-the-year, schoolwide staff survey. According to the survey, 86 percent of staff feel supported by their direct manager; for teachers, their manager is the DCI for their grade level.
- **Highlight:** According to the staff survey, 86 percent of staff feel the feedback they receive from their managers helps them get better at their role. Teachers receive weekly coaching touch points from their DCI and are either observed and given feedback, or engage in a one-on-one coaching session at least one time per week. The school leadership team has prioritized supporting the school’s DCIs in logging coaching engagements using the appropriate tracking platform. Anecdotal feedback from staff also suggests that teachers value feedback from their DCI and believe it positively impacts teaching practice.
- **Challenge:** Although the school successfully filled a paraprofessional position during Quarter 2, one paraprofessional position remains unfilled at the school. The UP Education Network talent team continues to prioritize recruitment efforts for this unfilled position. The school has developed a coverage schedule to address this gap.

Priority Area 5: Fully engage all of the school’s families in the learning of their children.

- **Highlight:** In November 2015, UP Academy Holland successfully launched the school’s Parent Site Council. The first meeting attracted more than 40 parents and was led by parent leadership. During this meeting, parents raised both bright spots and concerns for the current school year. The council scheduled a follow-up Parent Roundtable meeting to include the Parent Site Council leadership to develop recommendations for the school leadership team.
- **Highlight:** The UP Academy Holland leadership team led a schoolwide attendance initiative that has resulted in the school reaching its highest monthly attendance average (94.4 percent) in school history. As a part of this initiative, parents signed an “Attendance Pledge” that detailed the school’s vision for attendance. The school also sponsored a number of raffles. Students with perfect attendance each week received a certificate of recognition, and their families also were entered into a raffle for a prize. In January, the school will host a celebration for students with fewer than two total absences and their parents.
- **Highlight:** UP Academy Holland has partnered with Union Capital to launch an iOS application that incentivizes and tracks parent engagement at the school. Participating families can track touch points with the school and/or school staff and earn prizes for engagement. The application is currently being piloted with a subset of UP Academy Holland parents. The Dean of Families and Community contacted the initial group of

families via flyers and phone calls. Parent Site Council members also recruited additional families to the pilot.

- **Challenge:** While attendance continues to improve, there is a core group of students (~30 students) that continues to struggle with tardiness and absenteeism. The Dean of Families and Community has developed an outreach plan for these families. Implementation of this plan began in early October. The dean partners with teachers and the school leadership team to conduct and track family phone calls. For the most at-risk families, the dean conducts and tracks home visits. The UP Academy leadership team reviews attendance data and progress with identified families on a weekly basis.