Level 5 Schools 2016–17 Quarter 3 Report: UP Academy Holland

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| **School Information** | **Student Enrollment and Demographics** |
| **Location** | Boston, Massachusetts | **Total SY 2016–17Enrollment** | 759 |
| **Current Status** | Level 5 | **Percentage SWDs** | 13% |
| **Receiver Name** | UP Education Network | **Percentage ELLs** | 33% |
| **Year Designated Level 5** | 2013 | **Percentage Black**  | 43% |
| **Year Designated Level 4** | 2010 | **PercentageLatino/Hispanic** | 42% |
| **Grade Span** | PK–5 | **Percentage Asian** | 5% |
| **Number of Full-Time Staff in SY 2016–17** | 86 | **Percentage White** | 4% |
| **Percentage Multirace** | 6% |
| **Priority Areas** |
| **Priority Area 1:** Transform the culture of the school into a culture of urgency, high expectations, accountability, excellence, and achievement.**Priority Area 2:** Enhance the rigor of the curricula, improve the effectiveness of instruction, and strengthen the utilization of assessment data.**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.**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.**Priority Area 5:** Fully engage all of the school’s families in the learning of their children. |

# Content provided by UP Education Network.

# Executive Summary

In the last quarter, UP Academy Holland focused on four key areas to support students’ continued academic and social and emotional development:

* Ensuring educators have effective intellectual preparation that leads to conceptual instruction;
* Deepening teacher understanding of key parts of lesson components;
* Strengthening teacher ability to deliver individualized instruction; and
* Developing adult capacity to help children learn to manage their emotions.

A key initiative that supports rigorous intellectual preparation is Drop Everything and Prepare (DEAP), a time of day in which teacher teams prepare for the next day’s lessons by reviewing what they are going to do and say in each part of the lesson, scripting out key teaching points, and planning strategies to uncover and address misconceptions. Recently, teachers attended a professional development session in which they were guided through DEAP by the instructional leadership team and engaged in the lesson in authentic ways that mirrored the student experience. Teams are now replicating this process in their own DEAP sessions. This work is occurring daily and is improving the quality of instruction.

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:** Eighty-five percent of teachers have safe, warm, and positive classroom environments that are focused on learning, as defined by the teaching pathway. UP Academy Holland has shifted its professional development focus to supporting teachers in developing clear instruction skills, as defined by the teaching pathway. The remaining teachers still working on the stable culture outcome are being coached more intensively by their deans of curriculum and instruction (DCIs).
* **Highlight:** Educators’ work to keep students in school has yielded positive outcomes, with year-to-date suspensions down by 43% compared to the same time last year. Currently, 6.3% of students have been suspended compared to 11% of students who were suspended at the same point during the last school year.
* **Highlight:** Teachers and support staff have been using Dovetail Learning tools daily to assist students in developing social–emotional skills so they can succeed in the classroom. This has resulted in a 53% decrease in the number of referrals out of class compared to the start of the school year.
* **Challenge:** The school is working to meet the needs of five to seven scholars who are facing significant behavior challenges. The current behavior intervention plans have not been effective, so the school is seeking out alternate strategies to support these students.

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

* **Highlight:** With 85% of its teachers meeting the stable culture outcome, the school has moved from focusing on a stable culture to clear instruction. Within clear instruction, teachers are digging into student mastery rather than procedure and process. This means that teachers are focused on building conceptual knowledge rather than focusing on student-facing step-by-step directions on how to complete a task.
* **Highlight:** In January, the school reviewed its data from the second round of benchmark assessments, and educators collaboratively identified specific changes to their practice. Based on trends seen in English language arts (ELA), math, and science, teacher teams developed action plans that focused on creating and communicating clear teaching points to students and helping students develop strong self-monitoring skills while reading. The action plans focused on forward-facing instructional shifts rather than remedial shifts.
* **Highlight:** Teachers are using Fountas & Pinnell and STEP data to create reading conference schedules and guided reading groups. The data also help to inform teachers about what to focus on during reading conferences and groups. Teachers assess all students three to four times per year and guided reading groups are changed based on the data that emerge from the assessments. Students who score below level are assessed as often as deemed appropriate by their teacher; they meet to conference with teachers at least twice weekly and up to every day to practice literacy skills. Students who are on reading level conference with teachers at least once weekly to practice literacy skills.
* **Challenge:** Currently, a significant number of students are still developing their reading skills. The school continues to provide additional supports and remediation for these students while also working to ensure they can access grade-level content. Additional supports include pulling some below-level readers into intervention groups and having others work in groups with support staff.

**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:** Walk-through processes for both special education and English as a second language (ESL) have strengthened instruction for students with disabilities (SWDs) and English language learners (ELLs). The dean of student supports and a teacher of a substantially separate classroom have led three walk-throughs, which have developed the teacher’s coaching skills while simultaneously continuing coaching on inclusion practices for other classroom teachers. The dean of student supports conducts walk-throughs daily to look for areas of strength and growth within special education at the school. The ESL walk-throughs, which are done biweekly, have led to strong ELL results in Grades 3 and 5 as they have led to the identification of teams with strong planning practices for ELLs, such as standardizing planning agendas with questions about ELLs and access. The next step for the ESL dean of curriculum and instruction, the coordinator, and director of ESL is to lead the implementation of those practices across all grades.. Over time, the school may move to additional professional development or modeling in classrooms depending on the effect of the planning meeting shifts.
* **Highlight:** The principal has approved one Social and Academic Remediation (SAR) class to be moved into inclusion next school year. To prepare students for the transition, they will spend more time in inclusion settings from now until the end of the year, with a high level of parent engagement and extensive data collection to verify that this is the best fit for the students. These inclusion trials will allow students to learn from and engage with their nondisabled peers.
* **Highlight:** Similar to general education teams, SAR teams also are focused on intellectual preparation as they have weekly meetings in which they problem-solve, celebrate successes, and discuss whole-program challenges. As a result, instruction has strengthened as shown by movement on the teaching pathway. Most SAR teachers are now working on engagement, and they are using those meetings to refine and share best practices.
* **Challenge:** Special education teachers are creating the curriculum on an ongoing basis to ensure it is responsive to student needs. This “just in time” curriculum creation has, at times, been a challenge. For the rest of this year, the SAR team is working to draw on materials from their general education colleagues so they are not creating all materials from scratch and to free up time for intellectual preparation. UP Education Network is currently considering adopting an established curriculum to address this challenge for the next school year.
* **Challenge:** UP Academy Holland has had challenges ensuring thatBoston families receive accurate information about ELL programs through the Boston Public Schools (BPS) enrollment process. UP Education Network has proactively worked with the district and the community to convey accurate information about the school’s ELL programs.

**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 leadership team for the 2017–18 school year was 100% staffed as of February 23, 2017. There will be no changes to the leadership model. Most leadership team members are returning, with the exception of the director of operations and the fourth- and fifth-grade DCI.
* **Highlight:** The UP Teaching Fellows program has four fellows at UP Academy Holland. All four fellows passed the simulation assessment run by Sposato Graduate School of Education in December, which indicates that they are on track to become effective new teachers if they are hired into a full-time role next year. One fellow has been hired as a second-grade teacher and another fellow is being considered for a paraprofessional role. The other two fellows are working closely with Sposato to interview for teaching positions.
* **Highlight:** Midyear vacancies have been filled within 6 weeks. The average time to fill a vacancy is 19 calendar days. There have been nine vacancies this school year: five teachers, two paraprofessionals, one special projects coordinator, and one office manager.
* **Challenge:** To accommodate additional SWDs assigned to the school in February, UP Academy Holland added a paraprofessional role on February 10, 2017. This role has not yet been filled as of March 22, 2017. The school has made an offer to a qualified professional and if this individual declines, there are more high-potential prospects in the talent pipeline.

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

* **Highlight:** UP Academy Holland hosted a middle school fair for fifth graders to explore their options; 15 school representatives were present, including Boston Public Schools, charter schools, and private schools. Thirty families attended and provided positive feedback on the experience. There were opportunities for students to submit enrollment applications, and Vietnamese and Spanish interpreters were available.
* **Highlight:** UP Academy Holland hosted two School Site Council meetings with its five elected members: one in December 2016 and one in February 2017. In the meetings, the School Site Council voted on its bylaws, and discussed Title I funding and upcoming and potential family events.
* **Highlight:** The Winter Performance took place in December and showcased scholars and their work in their arts classes; 200 families attended.
* **Challenge:** Tardiness is a challenge for UP Academy Holland, as 27.5% of UP Academy Holland students have been late to school 15 or more times during this school year. The coordinator of community and family relations is leading the initiative to increase communication with families with chronic tardiness and to log communications into the school’s tracking system.