

Level 5 Schools 2015-2016 Quarter 1 Report: UP Academy Holland

School Information		Student Enrollment and Demographics ^a	
Location	Boston, Massachusetts	Total SY 2015–16 Enrollment	752
Current Status	Level 5	Percentage SWDs	16%
Receiver Name	UP Education Network	Percentage ELLs	43%
Year Designated Level 5	2013	Percentage Black	42%
Year Designated Level 4	2010	Percentage Latino/Hispanic	43%
Grade Span	PK–5	Percentage Asian	3%
Number of Full-Time Staff in SY 2015–16	88	Percentage White	1%
		Percentage Multirace	10%
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>			

^a Student demographic data, including percentages of students with disabilities (SWDs) and English language learners (ELLs) is from the 2014–15 school year due to the movement of students at the start of the school year. These data will be updated to reflect the 2015–16 school year in Quarter 2 reports.

Content provided by UP Education Network

Executive Summary

UP Academy Holland has laid a foundation for rapid improvement in student learning and achievement during SY 2015–16. The school engaged in a root-cause analysis of last year's performance and identified four top priorities to improve student learning for this school year: take pride in the physical space of the school; execute well-designed systems and procedures for all student movement (transitions); manage students skillfully and with consistency; and deeply understand reading, writing, and mathematics standards, and effectively execute prioritized lesson structures. Every session during staff orientation in August 2015 was tied to one of these priorities. In addition, the hiring of two new deans of curriculum and instruction, who bring a wealth of content knowledge and coaching experience, will support teacher development and student learning this year, particularly related to instructional standards and lesson structures.

The school has hosted a family orientation and had staff call families to build positive relationships and lay the foundation for a strong partnership for the year.

UP Education Network’s recruitment team continues to search for a dean of special education, an important role at the school. UP Education Network and the school continue to seek new ways of partnering 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. This mission is 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.”

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:** In August 2015, staff participated and demonstrated enthusiasm for a full-day training on implementing Dovetail Learning, which provides a set of tools and language to support students’ development of important social and emotional skills.
- **Highlight:** Staff orientation in August 2015 had a significant focus and priority on systems, routines, and implementation of the behavior management system.
- **Highlight:** In an August 2015 orientation, educators learned the important shifts they need to make in instructional delivery to meet the high bar required by the new benchmark assessments.
- **Challenge:** Continue to experience variability in the implementation of systems in some classrooms and at some grade levels.

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

- **Highlight:** UP Education Network developed the first English language arts and mathematics units for UP Academy Holland, providing a model for future unit and lesson plan development.
- **Highlight:** UP Academy Holland hired and onboarded two new deans of curriculum and instruction who provide high-quality coaching to the teachers that they manage.
- **Highlight:** In July 2015, UP Education Network and UP Academy Holland staff met for training on the most effective steps a school leadership team can take to prepare for effective data days, with a focus on root-cause analysis and strategic action planning.
- **Challenge:** To date, the team has prioritized data access; with increased access, staff must now systematically improve data usage during the school year to continue to increase student learning.
- **Challenge:** Coaching capacity constraints and the large number of teachers supported by each dean of curriculum and instruction have meant that they have not been able to provide the level of support to each educator that they believe is needed. The number of teachers managed by each dean of curriculum and instruction is higher than they would like it to be because one position for the dean of special education is vacant. While this final dean position is being filled, the current deans each support special education teachers who, eventually, will be supported by the dean of special education. Two dean

of special education candidates have been invited to a final interview and one could be hired soon.

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 has reconfigured substantially separate classrooms for students with disabilities so that students are more effectively grouped based on need and ability, enabling the school to provide more targeted instruction. The school examined academic (STEP for literacy and teacher-designed assessments for mathematics), cognitive (school psychologist evaluations), and behavioral data for each student to identify the most appropriate classroom.
- **Highlight:** UP Academy Holland realigned the schedules across grade bands so that limited English proficient students could be grouped by language ability level rather than by grade to allow for more appropriate English as a second language (ESL) instruction from teachers.
- **Highlight:** The retention rate among UP Academy Holland educators who completed RETELL training and dual certification during the 2014–15 school year was high; 83 percent of these staff returned. This will provide a strong base of knowledge for educators to serve the schools English language learners.
- **Challenge:** UP Academy Holland’s ESL director will be beginning maternity leave at the beginning of 2016. Plans are currently in development for completing activities for which she is responsible in her absence. As the plans are finalized, they will be communicated to staff well in advance of her leave.

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:** UP Academy Holland had a high rate of retention of staff; 80 percent of staff from the 2014–15 school year returned for the current school year (2015–16).
- **Highlight:** UP Academy Holland hired two new deans of curriculum and instruction, who will use their teaching and learning expertise to manage and support teachers in the lower elementary and upper elementary grades.
- **Highlight:** Through partnership with UP Education Network's talent team and the BPS payroll department, the school has successfully transitioned staff to the first year of the alternative compensation system.
- **Challenge:** UP Academy Holland still needs to hire a dean of special education to manage and support the school’s special education teachers. In addition, two paraprofessional positions remained unfilled at the start of the school year. In the first month of school, one of these positions was filled.

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

- **Highlight:** UP Academy Holland had a family orientation in August 2015 for all of the incoming students. More than 100 families attended the orientation.
- **Highlight:** Already, school staff have logged a minimum of 586 calls to families, working to build positive relationships and start the school year with a good foundation for these school–home relationships.
- **Highlight:** Initial conversations with a number of families at the start of the school year have been positive; families have shared how happy they are to return to the school for a second year. It is expected that teachers will communicate with the family of every student in their class an average of twice per month, and school leadership team members will monitor these communications on a monthly basis.
- **Challenge:** Finalizing student enrollment and class rosters was a challenge at the start of the school year. The overassignment of students to the school by Boston Public Schools contributes to difficulty in determining whether absentee students are planning to attend UP Academy Holland or will instead be attending a charter or parochial school. Boston Public Schools assigned 110 percent of the target student enrollment to the school based on historic enrollment figures. In addition, a small subset of families planned vacation schedules around the traditional Boston Public School year calendar; thus, these students missed the early start at the school. The staff at UP Academy Holland placed many phone calls to the homes of absent students during the first week of school to confirm why the student had not attended and whether they would be attending for the remainder of the school year.