



NYCDOE

Quality Review: Final Report

The New York City Department of Education



Quality Review Report

The Sunnyside School

Public School 150

**40-01 43 Avenue
Queens
NY 11104**

Principal: Carmel Parache

Dates of review: June 5 - 6, 2007

Reviewers: John Hudson and Lysbeth Bradley

Content of the report

Part 1: The School Context

Information about the school

Part 2: Overview

What the school does well

What the school needs to improve

Part 3: Main Findings

Overall evaluation

How well the school meets New York City's evaluation criteria

Part 4: School Quality Criteria Summary

Part 1: The school context

Information about the school

Sunnyside School provides education for approximately 1250 students from pre-kindergarten through grade 6. About half the student enrollment is Hispanic and just over a third is Asian. Thirteen percent of students are White and a very small proportion is Black. Spanish and English are the main languages spoken although over 30 other languages are represented within the school. English language learner students account for 27% of the enrollment and 11% have special education needs. Ninety-nine percent of students have Title 1 eligibility, which is much higher than similar and City school averages. Attendance, at 95%, is higher than most City and similar schools.

To enable the school to make best use of available space, pre-kindergarten and kindergarten classes were moved to the school's nearby Early Childhood Center in September 2006.

Part 2: Overview

What the school does well

- The principal, who is leading the school through a process of necessary curriculum change and improvement, is highly respected by students, parents and the substantial majority of her staff.
- Collaborative teams make effective use of a broad range of performance data to gain a good understanding of the ever changing learning needs of students.
- The principal, her administration, staff and parents share high expectations of student achievement and progress.
- The school takes very great care to ensure students at greatest risk of underachievement are encouraged to realize their full potential.
- A rapidly developing integrated curriculum, with good enrichment opportunities and regular assessment events, enables students to extend their skills and talents and raise their achievement.
- The principal makes very good use of the resources available to the school to ensure everything is done to encourage high standards of student achievement.
- Highly effective procedures for hiring new staff are enabling the principal to build capacity rapidly.
- The principal, her assistant principals and coaches work collaboratively with teachers to ensure lessons are interesting and students are fully engaged in learning.
- Promoting high levels of attendance is a very high priority for the school.
- The school is a calm, safe and student-focused learning environment where procedures are clear and followed by all.

What the school needs to improve

- Continue to improve data management systems to ensure teachers have easy access to frequently updated student performance data in all subject areas.
- Extend the setting of demanding, objectively measurable interim goals so that student progress can be regularly and precisely tracked towards the achievement of long-term goals in all subject areas and grades.
- Develop the capacity of all teachers to scrutinize frequently updated performance data, and use their analyses to plan differentiated instruction to meet the needs of all learners.

Part 3: Main findings

Overall Evaluation

This is a proficient school with well-developed features.

The school, which is a nurturing and child-centered learning environment, takes particular care over the needs of all individual students, including English language learners, students who have a background of low achievement and very high achievers. The principal and her senior team have used the wealth of data available in the school to develop a very good understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses. They have embarked upon an ambitious program to raise the achievement of all students, in all subject areas and at all grade levels. To further this goal, the school is developing an integrated curriculum. In their endeavors to continuously raise student achievement the administration is strongly supported by the substantial majority of students, parents and staff who hold high expectations for student success.

The school is investing in the capacity of its teaching staff to deepen their understanding of the performance and progress of each individual student, and to use their knowledge to plan stimulating, highly engaging lessons and instruction that is differentiated to the ever changing needs of all individuals. Student engagement is high and attendance is excellent. The quality of students' work on display around the school is outstanding.

How well the school meets New York City's evaluation criteria

Quality Statement 1 – Gather Data: School leaders and faculty consistently gather data and use it to understand what each student knows and is able to do and to monitor student progress over time.

This area of the school's work is well developed.

The school uses a very broad range of regularly updated data to gain a deep understanding of student learning. Performance is measured from month to month as well as from year to year so that progress can be tracked and trends identified at an early stage. The principal and her staff scrutinize data to identify students whose progress between successive assessment events is unsatisfactory and who are in danger of underachievement. The school pays particular attention to the achievement and progress of special education students and English language learners. The school is improving access to data so that information from all sources feeds into a common data bank.

Through this tracking process the school has identified other groups of students who are at risk of underachievement. These include students who remain at the school for a relatively short time, students who have remained at level 1 or low level 2 for too long, Hispanic students, boys, and special education English language learners. Strategies to enrich the curriculum to meet the needs of these students include dual language classes for Spanish speakers and an increase in the range of non-fiction work in classroom libraries and the school library to encourage boys to read more. The school recognizes that other potentially underachieving groups benefit from this extension of reading material. The school is also developing the way classrooms are organized to enhance student learning. For example, English as a second language classes are currently grouped by grade level but the school is considering grouping by English language proficiency next year. Good use of the workshop model is already enabling students to be more engaged in classroom activities.

Asian students and non-Hispanic White students achieve more highly and the school is seeking ways to raise the achievement of other groups of students to these higher levels.

Although more data is currently available to track the achievement and progress of students and groups of students in English language arts and mathematics, the developing integrated curriculum is beginning to provide good opportunity for tracking performance in science and social studies. The principal works closely with the principal of a similar school to ensure achievement across the school remains high.

Quality Statement 2 – Plan and Set Goals: School leaders and faculty consistently use available data to understand each student’s next learning step. Through collaborative planning and student and parent engagement, they set high goals for improving teaching practice and accelerating each student’s learning.

This area of the school’s work is proficient.

Teachers and collaborative teams pay particular attention to improving reading stamina for students in all grade levels. They assess achievement against short-term targets so that progress can be tracked towards demanding long-term goals. Plans and timeframes are fine tuned so that long-term goals are met. Students who struggle towards their interim targets are identified and given special support. Regular benchmarks, with corresponding plans and timeframes, are set for individual students in all subjects but the progress of classrooms and grade levels are not tracked so frequently. This reduces the probability of trends being identified sufficiently quickly, placing continuous improvement at risk. The progress of groups of particular interest to the school is tracked more frequently, however.

The principal shares very high expectations of student achievement with staff, students and parents. Many parents are closely involved in raising student achievement, and have high expectations, particularly in students’ use of grammar and vocabulary. Parents are encouraged to take part in school activities, including the recently introduced involvement of parents in classrooms. Parents also take part in the selection of learning materials, including books. Parent involvement in the school leadership team and the parent teacher association is very strong.

Parents feel that the school has moved a long way in two years. This point of view is shared by students and a significant majority of teachers and other staff. Supported by the overwhelming majority of the school community, the principal, her assistant principal and coaches are driving towards ambitious goals to continuously enrich the learning experience and improve the achievement of all students, including reading strugglers and high achievers, in all areas of the school curriculum.

Quality Statement 3 – Align Instruction: The school aligns its instructional activity and resources, and student engagement around its focused plans for accelerating learning for each student.

This area of the school’s work is well developed.

Collaborative grade level meetings support the administration and review the curriculum to ensure it remains aligned to the mandated curriculum and enables teachers to assess student performance against regular checkpoints throughout the academic year. Where necessary, as in mathematics and science, teaching programs are changed to accelerate student progress and raise achievement.

Teachers consider themselves responsible for the quality of their lesson planning and instruction and for the engagement and academic outcomes of the students they teach. There are many examples of very good practice in the organization of classrooms, planning of lessons and differentiation of instruction to target the specific needs of individual learners. While this practice is very apparent in some classrooms, its use is inconsistent across the whole school. Levels of engagement, though generally high, are consistently higher in those classrooms where students are grouped appropriately to their achievement and the aims of the lesson, where lesson planning enables the teacher to ensure all are actively engaged in learning and where instruction specifically targets individual student needs.

The principal uses the resources available to the school to great effect. Decisions on how financial resources are used to keep class sizes at appropriate levels, where additional staffing and services can be used to raise achievement and what learning resources are of highest priority are clearly based on student performance data and the goals of the school.

The school is a very calm, safe, student focused learning environment. Students are known by name and relationships between staff and students are excellent. Students feel cared for and are confident that if they need either academic or personal help, there are plenty of adults in the school to turn to. Student attendance is excellent, is widely celebrated and remains a very high priority for the school.

Quality Statement 4 - Build and Align Capacity: The development of instructional leadership, staff, and capacity are aligned around the school's collaboratively established goals for accelerating the learning of each student.

This area of the school's work is well developed.

Teachers are selected on the basis of their professional expertise, their enthusiasm for working with children, their ability to work with others as part of an effective team and their capacity to learn. New colleagues are given additional mentoring support and the support of coaches and other senior staff.

The principal and her assistant principals routinely observe classroom teaching and have high expectations that all teachers will gain an objective, constantly updated understanding of students' performance in all subject areas. All staff are required to develop their skills in assessing student achievement and analyzing student performance data. Professional development also supports teachers in their use of these analyses to identify students' next learning steps, plan effective lessons and differentiate their instruction to the ever changing needs of learners. A majority of teachers use a range of opportunities, including collaborative meetings with peers, classroom visitations, self and peer-evaluations, meetings with coaches and attendance at courses to extend their professional skills in these areas. The administration recognizes that a small minority of colleagues is unenthusiastic about change and will need particular support.

Collaborative teams are highly effective in analyzing student achievement, identifying next learning steps, planning programs to raise student achievement and reviewing and revising these plans based on performance data. Staff work cooperatively, decisions are made promptly and agendas covered on time. Team members share their knowledge and collectively identify best practice to drive continuous school improvement. The school makes excellent use of partnerships, particularly to enrich students' experience of the arts. The quality of student work displayed in hallways and around the school is outstanding.

Quality Statement 5 - Monitor and Revise: The school has built-in structures for evaluating each student's progress throughout the year, recognizing weaknesses in its improvement plans and teaching practices, and flexibly adapting plans and practices to meet its goals for accelerated learning.

This area of the school's work is proficient.

The administration and collaborative teams, including subject teams and grade level teams, use data very effectively to compare student progress within and across classrooms and schools . They have well established procedures for evaluating the impact of goals and the effectiveness of plans. They use this knowledge to revise goals and realign plans whenever there is a need to do so. However, there is a strong recognition of the need to extend the setting of demanding, objectively measurable interim goals so that student progress can be regularly and precisely tracked towards the achievement of long-term goals in all subject areas and grades.

School practice is particularly effective for longer-term goals, such as State test outcomes and student attendance. Some practice is exceptional, such as in an early years reading program where assessment is embedded into the course on an almost daily basis leading to very frequent realignment of goals and plans and rapid improvements in student achievement.

The principal and her senior team have an excellent understanding of the school's current strengths and weaknesses. This they share with the school leadership team, which has developed a clear vision of how the school will progress. One significant area of growth is the school's integrated curriculum, which includes appropriate assessment events to track student performance in all subject areas at frequent benchmark events through the academic year. The Comprehensive Education Plan is a much used working document, shared by administration, staff and parents, which leads the school through successive phases of change and improvement.

Part 4: School Quality Criteria Summary

SCHOOL NAME: The Sunnyside School PS 150	∅	✓	+
Quality Score		X	

Quality Statement 1 – Gather Data: School leaders and faculty consistently gather data and use it to understand what each student knows and is able to do and to monitor student progress over time.	∅	✓	+
1.1 The school uses available data and generates its own data to provide an objective, constantly updated understanding of the performance and progress of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • each student, classroom, grade level, 		X	
1.2 The school uses available data and generates its own data to provide an objective, constantly updated understanding of the performance and progress of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ethnic groups, English language learners, special education students* 			X
1.3 The school uses available data and generates its own data to provide an objective, constantly updated understanding of the performance and progress of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • all other categories of interest to the school* 			X
1.4 Performance and progress are measured based on comparisons with similar schools, with the school's own past performance, and among students, classrooms, grade levels, academic subject areas, ethnic groups, and other groupings of interest within the school.			X
Overall score for Quality Statement 1			X

* These criteria are partially aspirational as of now because schools do not have routine access to all of this data. The NYC DOE plans to provide schools with enhanced access to the necessary data in 2007.

Quality Statement 2 – Plan and Set Goals: School leaders and faculty consistently use available data to understand each student's next learning step. Through collaborative planning and student and parent engagement, they set high goals for improving teaching practice and accelerating each student's learning.	∅	✓	+
2.1 Using data, school leaders and faculty engage in a collaborative process to set demanding, objectively measurable goals for immediate and long-range improvement, and to develop plans and timeframes for reaching those goals.		X	
2.2 Goals and plans focus on the school as a whole and on each student, classroom, grade level, academic subject, and group of students whose performance or progress has been identified by the school as a particular focus area.		X	
2.3 Particular attention is given to improving the performance and progress of students in greatest need of improvement.			X
2.4 High expectations are conveyed to students and parents/caregivers. Students and their parents/caregivers are regularly invited to provide information about each student's performance and how to improve. This information is central to setting challenging goals and developing, evaluating, and revising plans.			X
2.5 Goals and plans for improving student performance and progress drive the activity of all members of the school community: leaders, staff, students, parents, and other partners.			X
Overall score for Quality Statement 2		X	

Quality Statement 3 – Align Instruction: The school aligns its instructional activity, resources, and student engagement around its focused plans for accelerating learning for each student.	∅	✓	+
3.1 The school selects the curriculum based on how well it aligns with or implements the mandated curriculum and on the curriculum's capacity to generate meaningful interim data about progress towards goals and to support the school's high expectations and improvement plans.			X
3.2 Teachers are accountable for improving instruction and student outcomes. They plan and differentiate their instruction based on the needs revealed by student data and by the focused plan the school has developed to improve each student's and group of students' outcomes.		X	
3.3 Budgeting decisions are driven by the needs revealed by student data and by the focused plan the school has developed to improve each student's and group of students' outcomes.			X
3.4 Staffing decisions are driven by the needs revealed by student data and by the focused plan the school has developed to improve each student's and group of students' outcomes.			X
3.5 Scheduling decisions about the use of teacher and student time are guided by the needs that emerge from examining student data and by the focused plan the school develops to improve student outcomes.			X
3.6 Instructional programs actively engage students.			X
3.7 Staff know and respect students and respond to their academic needs, as well as their personal needs that affect academic performance. Each student knows and trusts an adult on the staff who is concerned about him or her.			X
3.8 Student attendance and engagement are high priorities. High rates and patterns of absences trigger immediate intervention.			X
Overall score for Quality Statement 3			X
Quality Statement 4 – Build and Align Capacity: The development of instructional leadership, staff, and capacity are aligned around the school's collaboratively established goals for accelerating the learning of each student.	∅	✓	+
4.1 Leaders, faculty, and staff are selected based on their high expectations for student performance and progress and based on their commitment and capacity to use data, compare outcomes within and across classrooms and schools and develop and revise plans and methods to improve performance and progress.			X
4.2 Professional development decisions are driven by the needs revealed by student data and by the focused plan the school has developed to improve each student's and group of students' outcomes. Professional development is designed to help leaders, faculty, and staff use data, self- and peer-assessments, and collaboration with peers to achieve goals for improved school and student outcomes. Professional development and self- and peer-evaluation are aligned and overlap.		X	
4.3 The principal frequently observes classroom teaching and has a considered strategy for improving the quality of each teacher's instruction. Teachers frequently observe and support each other's classroom instruction with the goal of improving student outcomes.			X
4.4 Planning, evaluation of results, and revision of plans takes place in teams. Leaders and faculty inform each other of their goals and results, candidly evaluate themselves and each other, and use what is learned to drive improvement.			X
4.5 The principal is respected and has capacity to effect change.			X
4.6 The school runs smoothly. Procedures are clear, communicated to all, and are generally followed.			X
4.7 The school aligns youth development and support services around stated academic goals. Partnerships with outside bodies are routinely used to achieve academic goals.			X
Overall score for Quality Statement 4			X
Quality Statement 5 – Monitor and Revise: The school has built-in structures for evaluating each student's progress throughout the year, recognizing weaknesses in its improvement plans and teaching practices, and flexibly adapting plans and practices to meet its goals for accelerating learning.	∅	✓	+
5.1 All school plans and other interventions include frequent interim goals and diagnostic assessments of progress designed to reveal in objectively measurable ways whether the plan is being effectively implemented and reaching stated goals.		X	
5.2 Comparisons of student progress within and across classrooms and schools are used in making interim diagnostic assessments and measuring the progress of plans and interventions.			X
5.3 Information generated by periodic assessments and diagnostic measures of progress and comparisons is used to revise plans immediately in order to reach stated goals. Interim and final goals are modified when data objectively demonstrate that revision is required.			X
5.4 Each plan's interim and final outcomes drive successive phases of goal setting and improvement planning, and each successive phase is characterized by agile and flexible realignment of practices and resources to improve student academic outcomes.		X	
Overall score for Quality Statement 5		X	