



**NYCDOE**

**Quality Review: Final Report**

# **The New York City Department of Education**



# **Quality Review Report**

**The Sunset Park School**

**Elementary School 169**

**4305 7th Avenue  
Brooklyn  
NY 11232**

**Principal: Josephine Santiago**

**Dates of review: January 14 - 15, 2008**

**Lead Reviewer: Liz Robinson**

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## Part 1: The school context

### Information about the school

Sunset Park is an elementary school with 1118 students from kindergarten through grade 5. The school population comprises 0.3% Black, 60.6% Hispanic, 5.9% White, and 32.9% Asian students. The student body includes 42.0% English language learners and 12.3% special education students. Boys account for 53.4% of the students enrolled and girls account for 46.6%. The average attendance rate for the school year 2006 - 2007 was 95.5%. The school is in receipt of Title 1 funding with 89.1% eligibility.

## Part 2: Overview

### What the school does well

- Attendance is very high indeed as students love coming to this happy, calm and engaging school.
- The school is a caring and supportive environment where students' academic and personal needs are well planned for.
- The principal and her team work very effectively to ensure that their vision for the school is a reality for the students and their families.
- Teachers cooperate and work well as a team to develop their professional skills and improve outcomes for students.
- A broad curriculum, with its carefully planned thematic approach, engages and supports all students and significantly enhances their learning.
- The staff have a good knowledge of the ability of each student, and track their achievement against grade-level expectations.
- The leadership of the school shows flexibility and creativity in responding to the changing needs of the students.
- The school has a wide range of highly effective partnerships with outside organizations, which support the school in meeting community needs.
- The school is very well organized, with well-established procedures that encourage students to develop high levels of independence.
- The school's high level of engagement with parents and primary carers makes a strong contribution to student learning.

### What the school needs to improve

- Set goals for each individual pupil for their attainment at the end of each year, and regularly assess their progress towards these individualized targets.
- Analyze achievement data relating to special education students and English language learners more rigorously to better understand their progress and identify their next steps in learning.
- Use whole-school data analysis to set consistently specific, measurable goals and time scales for improvement.
- Continue to embed the use of differentiated instruction to match the students' precise needs.

## Part 3: Main Findings

### **Progress made since the last review**

The school has made good progress in addressing the issues identified in the previous Quality Review report.

### **Overall Evaluation**

#### **This school is well developed.**

The vision of the principal and her team for Sunset Park School is the driving force behind the whole school community. This vision is already in place in most respects, and was summed up by a parent who said, "In this school, 'no child left behind' is a reality." The school has been successful in transmitting its values by engaging comprehensively with the parents and community. The school meets creatively the changing needs of the students and their parents, as demonstrated by their high levels of attendance and participation in school activities. The school has developed highly effective and relevant partnerships with external organizations including on-site health services for students and their families. These benefit the community greatly.

The staff are extremely dedicated to, and supportive of, the school. They go beyond their assigned duties to ensure that every student achieves well and is helped and cared for. The biggest concern of the parents is the fact that their children will one day have to leave. The teachers plan learning that is interesting and relevant, and deeply value the work that the students produce. Students have access to a broad and stimulating curriculum, and this is assisted by instruction that makes meaningful links between subjects. As a result, the students are happy and enjoy school.

The school has a good understanding of the achievement of every student. Teachers increasingly use performance data to plan very specifically for every student's individual needs. The inquiry team and school cabinet use data effectively to identify strengths and areas for development to maximize student progress. As yet, the team does not use this information to set sufficiently specific targets based on this progress. The leadership makes good use of data to make strategic decisions, ensuring that the school's resources are very well matched to the needs of the students.

The school has made good progress in the areas of development noted during the last Quality Review. More formal links have been made between the academic intervention team and other staff members. Staff have been trained in the use of a data management system, and are using it to analyze effectively pupil progress data at whole-school, subject and class level. The staff have had specific training in supporting English language learners, and the extended day provision has been very effectively developed to support this target group. However, whole-school analysis of the achievement and progress of this specific group is not yet sufficiently detailed. Following significant training and support, more teachers are now differentiating instruction effectively to support all students, although this is not fully embedded in all classrooms. The school has continued to work to further extend collaboration with parents and caregivers, and has increased the number of English classes as well as computer classes offered to them.

## **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 the student's progress over time.**

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

The school leadership and teachers together fully understand the importance of data for planning work and setting goals. The school uses a broad range of assessment tools, both formal and informal, to create an accurate picture of each student. The staff have a good knowledge of the ability of individual students, and track their progress against grade level expectations. Leaders gather this information, and analyze it effectively to identify trends and patterns for each class and grade. The school has looked in detail at how it performs in comparison with other peer horizon schools and uses the information to learn about and share good practice. The school leaders carefully monitor the progress of the school based on its own past performance and use this information to identify trends in performance. The progress of different ethnic and gender groups is carefully monitored, although analysis of the performance of special education and English language learners is not as rigorous. Teachers have been well supported in developing their skills in the use of data to inform their planning and instruction, and there is an on-going program of training. The school has developed management systems which provide staff with a good range of data about student performance which is straightforward to use. This assists teachers in making meaningful use of the data to improve their classroom instruction.

**Quality Statement 2 – Plan and Set Goals: School leaders and faculty consistently use data to understand each student's next learning steps and to set suitably high goals for accelerating each student's learning.**

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

The school engages exceptionally well with parents to support the learning of the students. A range of classes is offered to kindergarten students, including bi-lingual classes in both Spanish and Chinese, as well as mixed classes. Parents can choose which class their child will join, and therefore how their child's learning needs can best be met. Parents are kept very well informed of their child's progress since all school documentation is available in community languages. Students have high aspirations, aiming for professional jobs and careers. Similarly, very many parents expect their children to go on to college in the future. The school expects every child to achieve well, and supports students in following their own interests and talents.

Most teachers make good use of pupil data to provide for students' specific needs. This is being further enhanced by very effective use of the ACUITY data management system to analyze student achievement and inform planning and instruction. Most staff are very clear about the current target group of students in the school, as identified by the inquiry team, and all have specific plans in place for these groups.

The school does not consistently set formal goals for the progress of individual students and recognizes that this would further refine their practice. Moreover, whole school goals are not based sufficiently on the analysis of data on student progress and achievement.

**Quality Statement 3 – Align Instructional Strategy to Goals: The school aligns its academic work, strategic decisions and resources, and effectively engages students around its plans and goals for accelerating student learning.**

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

The school deeply enriches the curriculum in many ways. There is a strong emphasis on the arts, with regular instruction in music, art, drama and dance. In addition, creative use of the academic intervention time provides an excellent range of enrichment activities for some children, including digital photography, cookery and chess, which interest and excite students. Within lessons, teachers use a wide range of engaging and motivating approaches which further enhance the curriculum for the students. They make meaningful links between different subjects, which enable students to experience depth in their study of particular topics by exploring them from a range of perspectives. For example, students extended their study of Martin Luther King by learning an appropriate song in their music lesson.

Most teachers align instruction closely to the specific needs of individuals and groups, making good use of pupil achievement data to assess the progress of each student. In most classes, teachers use the information to differentiate tasks effectively, although this practice is not yet fully embedded across the school.

Teachers are accountable for the achievement of the students in their class. The cabinet uses their analysis of data very effectively to align resources to meet the needs of the students. An example of this is the introduction of additional bi-lingual classes into kindergarten in order to accelerate the progress of the growing Asian community in the school.

There are excellent relationships across the school community. The principal articulates the importance of trust, and this is clear at all levels in the school. The students have a high level of independence, for example moving around the building unsupervised at times, and they respond by showing a very high level of maturity in their excellent behavior. One student said, “We feel respected, so we show respect back.” The school has very effective initiatives which encourage good attendance.

**Quality Statement 4 - Align Capacity Building to Goals: The development of leadership, teachers and other staff capacity is aligned to the school’s collaboratively established goals for accelerating the learning of each student.**

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

The school works in a very calm, structured and organized way. There is a well-defined staffing structure, which explicitly identifies roles and responsibilities. This means that procedures are followed consistently and tasks delegated to maximise impact on student achievement. The staff are very well supported by the leaders, who identify

areas of development and make very good provision for meeting these needs. The coaches provide strong support for teachers that helps improve instruction and the use of pupil data. Common planning time and an open-door policy encourages collaboration between staff who show a very high level of commitment to their practice, and are open to feedback. They appreciate the opportunities for inter-visitation, and have made good use of this to develop new approaches in the classroom.

The school has developed highly effective and meaningful partnerships with a wide range of outside organisations. These provide an exceptional level of support to the students and families the school community. Examples of this include on-site health provision for students as well as their parents and close links with ethnic community groups, the Brooklyn Arts Council, and the YMCA. The principal has nurtured these relationships, and used them to provide the students with additional resources such as visits to the theatre and with benefits such as cold weather clothing.

**Quality Statement 5 - Monitor and Revise: The school has structures for evaluating each student's progress throughout the year and for flexibly adapting plans and practices to meet its goals for accelerating learning.**

**This area of the school's work is proficient.**

The principal is passionate about her vision for the school, and she articulates this to the whole school community very clearly and effectively. She is making this a reality by living the vision in her everyday work and modeling the behaviors she is expecting to see in others. She has built a very strong team, and developed a model of school leadership which ensures that plans are made a reality.

The school makes good use of student achievement data to adapt its practices to meet student needs. For example, when data showed there was a need for more support for specific ethnic minority groups, the school employed additional parent workers. However, goal setting for individual students is inconsistent, and plans for whole school development do not always include specific success criteria related to student outcomes, or timeframes by which to judge progress towards longer-term goals

Evaluation in the school is a collaborative process, and the cabinet worked effectively to produce an accurate self assessment as a part of the review process. Teachers contribute to the evaluation process by providing information about the progress of students in their classes. The principal and her administration use information from the analysis of student outcomes to identify patterns, and inform their strategic decision making. One of the assistant principals said, "If it is not working, then we've got to do something different!" This approach sums up the school's commitment to continued improvement.

## Part 4: School Quality Criteria Summary

<b>SCHOOL NAME: Sunset Park</b>	Δ	▷	✓	+	◇
<b>Quality Score</b>				X	

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

To what extent do school leaders and faculty provide . . .	Δ	▷	✓	+	◇
1.1 an objective, constantly updated understanding of the performance and progress of each student, classroom, grade level?				X	
1.2 an objective, constantly updated understanding of the performance and progress of special education students?			X		
1.3 an objective, constantly updated understanding of the performance and progress of English language learners?			X		
1.4 an objective, constantly updated understanding of the performance and progress of ethnic groups, gender groups and all other categories of interest to the school?				X	
1.5 a measurement of performance and progress based on the school's own past performance, and among students, classrooms, grades and subject areas?				X	
1.6 a measurement of performance and progress based on comparisons with similar schools?				X	
1.7 training, management systems and structures that support teachers in the use of school data to inform planning and instruction and to track the progress of students?				X	
<b>Overall score for Quality Statement 1</b>				X	

### Quality Statement 2 – Plan and Set Goals: School leaders and faculty consistently use data to understand each student's next learning steps and to set suitably high goals for accelerating each students learning.

To what extent do school leaders and faculty . . .	Δ	▷	✓	+	◇
2.1 engage in collaborative processes to set demanding, objectively measurable goals for improvement, and to develop plans and timeframes for reaching those goals?			X		
2.2 focus 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 identify and improve the performance and progress of those students in greatest need of improvement?				X	
2.4 share whole school goals with all members of the school community to rigorously improve the performance and progress of students?				X	
2.5 convey consistently high expectations to students and their parents/caregivers?				X	
2.6 regularly provide students and their parents/caregivers with information about the goals set for each student, and about each student's progress and performance, and how they can improve?				X	
2.7 invite and enable parents/caregivers to provide useful information to teachers and the school about the learning needs and capacities of their children?					X
<b>Overall score for Quality Statement 2</b>				X	

### Quality Statement 3 – Align Instructional Strategy to Goals: The school aligns its academic work, strategic decisions and resources, and effectively engages students around its plans and goals for accelerating student learning.

To what extent does the school . . .	Δ	▷	✓	+	◇
3.1 select core curricular approaches that facilitate and provide meaningful interim data about progress towards goals and focus on raising the achievement of students?				X	
3.2 provide a broad and engaging curriculum, including the arts, to enhance learning both within and outside the school day?				X	
3.3 hold teachers accountable for the progress and learning of the students in their charge, for making instruction interesting and compelling, and for creating a positive safe and inclusive learning environment?				X	
3.4 ensure that teachers use school, class and student data to plan for and provide differentiated instruction that meets the specific needs of all the students in their charge?			X		
3.5 make budgeting, staffing and scheduling decisions strategically, based on data, to meet the school's academic goals for all students?				X	
3.6 ensure that there is an environment of mutual trust and respect between all staff and students to support personal and academic development?					X
3.7 ensure that there are effective and consistently applied procedures to encourage and monitor student attendance?				X	
<b>Overall score for Quality Statement 3</b>				X	

<b>Quality Statement 4 – Align Capacity Building to Goals: The development of leadership, teachers and other staff capacity is aligned to the school’s collaboratively established goals for accelerating the learning of each student.</b>					
<b>To what extent does the school . . .</b>	<b>Δ</b>	<b>➤</b>	<b>✓</b>	<b>+</b>	<b>◇</b>
4.1 use frequent observations of classroom teaching by the principal and other available information to develop a differentiated strategy for improving the quality of each teacher’s instruction?				X	
4.2 make professional development decisions strategically, based on data, to help meet the improvement goals of students and teachers?				X	
4.3 provide frequent opportunities for teachers to observe each other’s classroom instruction and to meet together in teams to plan, share effective practices, and evaluate one another’s instruction in an open and reflective professional environment?				X	
4.4 develop effective procedures for the induction and support of teachers who are new to the profession or the school?				X	
4.5 align youth development, guidance/advising and other student support services around stated academic and personal development goals?				X	
4.6 consistently implement clear procedures that enable the school to run smoothly and encourage effective student learning?					X
4.7 create effective partnerships with outside entities that support the academic and personal growth of the students?					X
<b>Overall score for Quality Statement 4</b>				X	

<b>Quality Statement 5 – Monitor and Revise: The school has structures for evaluating each student’s progress throughout the year and for flexibly adapting plans and practices to meet its goals for accelerating learning.</b>					
<b>To what extent do . . .</b>	<b>Δ</b>	<b>➤</b>	<b>✓</b>	<b>+</b>	<b>◇</b>
5.1 the school’s plans for improving student outcomes include interim goals that are objectively measurable and have suitable time frames for measuring success and making adjustments?			X		
5.2 the school’s plans for improving teacher outcomes include interim goals that are objectively measurable and have suitable time frames for measuring success and making adjustments?			X		
5.3 teachers and faculty use periodic assessments and other diagnostic tools to measure the effectiveness of plans and interventions for individual and groups of students in key areas?				X	
5.4 teachers and faculty use the information generated by periodic assessments and other progress measures and comparisons to revise plans immediately in order to reach stated goals?				X	
5.5 school leaders track the outcomes of periodic assessments and other diagnostic measures and use the results to makes strategic decisions to modify practices to improve student outcomes?			X		
5.6 school leaders and staff use each plan’s interim and final outcomes to drive the next stage of goal setting and improvement planning?			X		
5.7 the principal and school community have a clear vision for the future development of the school and implement procedures and systems to effect change?					X
<b>Overall score for Quality Statement 5</b>				X	

◇	<b>Outstanding</b>
+	<b>Well Developed</b>
✓	<b>Proficient</b>
➤	<b>Underdeveloped with Proficient Features</b>
Δ	<b>Underdeveloped</b>