

# Quality Review Report 2010-2011

**The Sunset Park School**

**Elementary School K169**

**4305 7<sup>th</sup> Avenue  
Brooklyn  
NY 11232**

**Principal: Josephine Santiago**

**Dates of review: March 8 - 9, 2011**

**Lead Reviewer: Anita Skop**

## Part 1: The school context

### Information about the school

The Sunset Park School is an elementary school with 1,341 students from Kindergarten through grade 5. The school population comprises 1% Black, 55% Hispanic, 5% White, and 39% Asian students. The student body includes 44% English language learners and 11% special education students. Boys account for 53% of the students enrolled and girls account for 47%. The average attendance rate for the school year 2009 - 2010 was 96.2%.

### Overall Evaluation

**This school is proficient.**

## Part 2: Overview

### What the school does well

- The principal skillfully employs all available resources, including time, budget, staff, materials and space to target improved student achievement.
  - The school leadership wisely utilizes all personnel to provide learning opportunities for students. The school library is manned by a trained paraprofessional, and a technology intern provides support for the extensive number of computers and Smart boards in use throughout the building. As a result, students have a wider range of choices for independent reading, and technology is used productively school wide, without complaints of down time or breakage.
  - A school based option enables the school to run from 8:20 am until 3:10 pm. However, the principal's judicious programming enables all students in grades 3 through 5 to attend school for an additional hour daily, with their own classroom teacher. This "extended day" and consistency of instruction has resulted in greater levels of language development and improved achievement on interim measures.
- The extraordinary culture of the school, reflective of a warm nurturing community that honors diversity and sees the potential in all children, strongly supports all aspects of student growth and achievement.
  - Despite its large size, the school has an extremely low rate of suspensions and very high levels of attendance. This is a result of the extensive support and outreach provided by two guidance counselors, two bilingual family workers and a focus on "Respect for All" that is practiced year round. Consequently, parents delightedly state that "for a very large community, we are a very intimate school."
  - Student leaders, selected by a rigorous process of recommendation, interviews and rationale essays, serve as morning monitors and are highly respected by other students. They spearhead "loving care" projects all year long, such as Penny Harvest and canned food drives. Students schoolwide, thereby develop a sense of community and caring that encourages achievement and social responsibility.
- A broad range of summative and teacher generated, formative assessments, aligned to key standards, enables the school to assess and address the academic strengths and needs of each student.
  - In alignment with the Common Core Standards and the school's focus on Reader's workshop, a team of teachers, supported by the coach, has revised the school's benchmark assessments. This has resulted in more rigorous standards, a more accurate understanding of student needs and greater levels of focused support to meet these needs. Accordingly, student achievement has improved on running records.
  - Teacher teams reflectively analyze student work, as measured against uniform rubrics to assess the progress of students at all the grade levels.

“Guided writing groups” are then formed which enable teachers to develop diverse mini-lessons and more accurately target the needs of students. Student writing has consequently shown consistent growth, despite the school’s large English language learner population.

- School leaders consistently engender and communicate high expectations for all members of the school community, involving parents in decision making, and developing a shared vision of student success.
  - The school strategically conducts outreach using a trilingual approach to address the needs of its unique blend of Asian and Hispanic students. The school’s principal, a member of the community, serves as a role model as do the faculty members who represent a range of ethnicities. Consequently, parents see living proof of the results of student achievement and are committed to high expectations for their children.
  - Parents state that they are consistently included in the school’s decision making process. This is exemplified by parental requests for an enrichment class on the upper grade levels. This request was discussed by the principal and the School Leadership Team and implemented, enabling the strongest achieving students to be challenged at even higher levels and improving achievement.
- Observations are strategically employed to define and direct needed support and provide opportunities for building teacher capacity.
  - The school has a strong commitment to the Reader’s and Writer’s workshop model. This focus on small group instruction, coupled with an equally consistent focus on language development is seen in all classrooms and across content areas, creating a coherent culture and a highly collaborative staff that has raised levels of student success as evidenced by scale score growth.
  - Well written formal observations are the cornerstone of professional development at the school. Identified needs are addressed through diversified, targeted support from coaches, consultants, and mentor colleagues, enabling teachers to build instructional skills and meet the needs of students. As a result, teachers state that “they receive the support they need,” and there is a low turnover rate at the school.
- The school’s outstanding array of community partnerships and collaborations provides goal aligned supports that strategically address the physical, social-emotional and academic needs of students.
  - A conflict resolution teacher provides support to students and models strategies for teachers, creating an environment where the needs of the whole child are addressed and academic achievement is celebrated. Consequently, students state “This is not a good school, it is a great school!” This has also resulted in attendance that is consistently high.
  - The school serves as a hub of the community with partnerships that offer in school dental, along with medical and counseling services. Additional collaborations enable students to experience art enrichments such as hip hop and ballroom dance, as well as curriculum aligned options such as the “Seeds to Trees” program from the Parks Department. These options have enhanced learning and improved student success.

## What the school needs to improve

- Enhance the level of academic rigor, and the use of meaningful work products in all classrooms, to align with the evolving State standards.
  - Although the school has carefully aligned curriculum to targeted key standards, such as writing and language development, and is already piloting Junior Great Books in line with the critical thinking demands of the evolving State standards, levels of academic rigor are not yet sufficiently stimulating across all classrooms. Therefore, some students are not sufficiently challenged to produce highly meaningful work products.
- Ensure that the differentiation of instruction provided, consistently ensures that student subgroups have challenging opportunities for academic growth.
  - Differentiation is one of the hallmarks of the school's commitment to supporting growth in each student. Targeted interventions enable students to receive support in areas of need and teachers are provided with opportunities to collaborate and reflect on the success of specific strategies. However, the level of rigor in differentiated learning opportunities is not consistent. As a result, some students are not sufficiently challenged with highly significant academic explorations.
- Deepen the level of scrutiny given to subgroup data so as to more thoroughly align instruction in response to identified trends.
  - Teacher teams and classroom teachers use common assessments such as the Development Reading Assessments (DRA), Periodic Assessments and curriculum aligned rubrics to set goals for students and measure progress at key intervals throughout the year. In addition, the school provides feedback to families at key intervals and in three languages. Despite these protocols which focus intensely on the individual child, analysis of subgroup data is somewhat less reflective. Consequently, the school's ability to measure progress towards subgroup goals is limited to some extent.
- Expand the protocols for reflection on the work of teacher teams to ensure that the inquiry process is more deeply embedded across all teams.
  - School leaders and coaches serve on virtually all of the school's grade level and inquiry teams. As such, they are able to monitor the progress and protocols used by each of the teams and evaluate the student data that is a result of the work of the teams. Furthermore, the leadership demonstrates its confidence in its staff by "entrusting responsibility and empowering people." Nevertheless, structured, uniform protocols which provide specific opportunities to consider the progress of teams at defined intervals and share proven strategies are not utilized as frequently. This hinders the school's capacity to share successes and positively impact greater numbers of students.

## Part 3: School Quality Criteria 2010-2011

<b>School name: The Sunset Park School</b>	<b>UD</b>	<b>D</b>	<b>P</b>	<b>WD</b>
<b>Overall QR Score</b>			<b>X</b>	
<b>Quality Statement 1 – Instructional and Organizational Coherence: The school has a coherent strategy to support student learning that aligns curriculum, instruction and organizational decisions.</b>				
<i>To what extent does the school regularly...</i>	<b>UD</b>	<b>D</b>	<b>P</b>	<b>WD</b>
1.1 Design engaging, rigorous and coherent curricula, including the Arts, for a variety of learners and aligned to key State standards?			<b>X</b>	
1.2 Develop teacher pedagogy from a coherent set of beliefs about how students learn best, and ensure that it is: aligned to the curriculum, engaging, and differentiated to enable all students to produce meaningful work products?			<b>X</b>	
1.3 Make strategic organizational decisions to support the school's instructional goals and meet student learning needs?				<b>X</b>
1.4 Maintain a culture of mutual trust and positive attitudes toward learning that support the academic and personal growth of students and adults?				<b>X</b>
<b>Quality Statement 2 – Gather and Analyze Data: School leaders and faculty consistently gather, analyze and share information on student learning outcomes to understand school and student progress over time.</b>				
<i>To what extent does the school ...</i>	<b>UD</b>	<b>D</b>	<b>P</b>	<b>WD</b>
2.1 Gather and analyze information on student learning outcomes to identify trends, strengths, and areas of need at the school level?			<b>X</b>	
2.2 Align assessments to curriculum and analyze information on student learning outcomes to adjust instructional decisions at the team and classroom level?				<b>X</b>
2.3 Use or develop tools to enable school leaders and teachers to organize, aggregate, and analyze student performance trends?			<b>X</b>	
2.4 Engage in an open exchange of information with students and families regarding students' learning needs and outcomes?				<b>X</b>

**Quality Statement 3 – Plan and Set Goals: School leaders and faculty consistently engage the school community and use data to set and track suitably high goals for accelerating student learning.**

<i>To what extent does the school ...</i>	<b>UD</b>	<b>D</b>	<b>P</b>	<b>WD</b>
3.1 Establish a coherent vision of future development that is reflected in a short list of focused, data-based goals that are understood and supported by the entire school community?				<b>X</b>
3.2 Use collaborative and data informed processes to set measurable and differentiated learning goals for student subgroups, and students in need of additional support?			<b>X</b>	
3.3 Ensure the achievement of learning goals by tracking progress at the school, teacher team and classroom level?			<b>X</b>	
3.4 Communicate high expectations to students and families, engage them in decision-making, and promote active involvement in the school community?				<b>X</b>

**Quality Statement 4 – Align Capacity Building: The school aligns its leadership development and structured professional collaboration around meeting the school’s goals and student learning and emotional needs.**

<i>To what extent does the school...</i>	<b>UD</b>	<b>D</b>	<b>P</b>	<b>WD</b>
4.1 Use the observation of classroom teaching and the analysis of learning outcomes to elevate school-wide instructional practices and implement strategies that promote professional growth and reflection, with a special focus on new teachers?				<b>X</b>
4.2 Engage in structured professional collaborations on teams using an inquiry approach that promotes shared leadership and focuses on improved student learning?			<b>X</b>	
4.3 Provide professional development that promotes independent and shared reflection, opportunities for leadership growth, and enables teachers to continuously evaluate and revise their classroom practices to improve learning outcomes?			<b>X</b>	
4.4 Integrate child/youth development, support services and partnerships with families and outside organizations with the school-wide goals to accelerate the academic and personal growth of students?				<b>X</b>

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

<i>To what extent does the school...</i>	<b>UD</b>	<b>D</b>	<b>P</b>	<b>WD</b>
5.1 Evaluate the quality of curricular, instructional and organizational decisions, making adjustments as needed to increase the coherence of policies and practices across the school?			<b>X</b>	
5.2 Evaluate systems for assessing students, organizing data, and sharing information with student and families, making adjustments as needed to increase the coherence of policies and practices across the school?			<b>X</b>	
5.3 Establish and sustain a transparent, collaborative system for measuring progress towards interim and long term goals and making adjustments during the year and over time?			<b>X</b>	
5.4 Use data to regularly evaluate the effectiveness of structured professional collaboration, capacity building and leadership development strategies?			<b>X</b>	

**Quality Review Scoring Key**

<b>UD</b>	<b>Underdeveloped</b>	<b>D</b>	<b>Developing</b>	<b>P</b>	<b>Proficient</b>	<b>WD</b>	<b>Well Developed</b>
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