



**Department of
Education**

Joel I. Klein, Chancellor

**Quality Review Report
Division of Performance and Accountability
2010-2011**

Quality Review Report 2010-2011

Sunset Park Prep

Middle School 821

**4004 4th Avenue
Brooklyn
NY 11232**

Principal: Lola Padin

Dates of review: October 18 - 19, 2010

Lead Reviewer: Anita Skop

Part 1: The school context

Information about the school

Sunset Park Prep is a middle school with 500 students from grade 6 through grade 8. The school population comprises 04% Black, 83% Hispanic, 02% White, and 09% Asian students. The student body includes 13.2% English language learners and 17% special education students. Boys account for 51% of the students enrolled and girls account for 49%. The average attendance rate for the school year 2009 - 2010 was 97.4%.

Overall Evaluation

This school is proficient.

Part 2: Overview

What the school does well

- The school is a nurturing, learning community where all constituents are valued, share opportunities to grow both academically and socially, and achieve their personal best.
 - In response to concerns surfaced in the Learning Environment Survey, the school has instituted advisory classes, which are implemented early in the year for all students. Additionally, trained peer mediators, identifiable by their blue shirts, are available in the lunchroom every day to support students in using appropriate channels to handle any issues that arise. These structures have created a positive environment where parents and students universally call their school a “safe and secure” place.
 - The principal’s “open door policy,” along with teachers who voluntarily come to school early and stay late to meet and work with students, ensure that every student is well known to the school community. Students eagerly seek support from teachers and comment that their teachers “keep teaching until you understand.”
- The school’s exceedingly collaborative environment has promoted the growth of teacher-driven, rigorous inquiry teams that have deepened instructional practice and enhanced leadership development.
 - 95 percent of teachers are actively engaged in departmental and core inquiry teams that reflectively assess student work across classrooms and develop strategic instructional practices specifically aligned to data-defined needs. These changes have led to higher levels of student success especially in the area of vocabulary.
 - The teacher led teams routinely rotate facilitation roles and work as highly autonomous units. As a result, teachers have developed powerful leadership skills and a degree of confidence in their capacity to positively impact student achievement.
- All aspects of the school, including student support services, community outreach and family partnerships are consistently aligned to school wide philosophical and academic goals and promote student achievement.
 - A well-developed partnership with the Morningside Center for Social Responsibility has trained teachers to provide ongoing support for student mediation and conflict resolution, resulting in a caring, inclusive school community that respects all constituents and expects academic success.
 - The school provides college tours for students, most of whom will be the first in their family to graduate from high school, and offers extensive support with the high school application process. This exemplifies the school’s commitment to high levels of student success and encourages parents and students to develop higher levels of personal ownership for their future.

- The judicious choices of the principal and the dedication of the staff enable the school to consistently utilize a myriad of resources to enhance learning support, resulting in improved student achievement.
 - Despite budgetary constrictions, the school has already purchased and integrated into the curriculum non-fiction libraries aligned to the goals of the Common Core Standards, deepening the level of instruction and better preparing students for more rigorous expectations.
 - Teacher candidates for the school undergo a rigorous selection process conducted by school leadership and a hiring committee, to ensure their capacity aligns with schoolwide goals. Teacher placement also reflects this priority; this year content specialists push into two self-contained classes and intensify the level of instruction in response to summative data, a strategy that has already enhanced student growth.
- A variety of well aligned assessments, both teacher-created and technological, enable the school to aggregate and evaluate data to precisely define student needs and accurately implement strategic instruction.
 - To better monitor the needs of English language learners, the Inquiry Team developed and administered a series of practice New York State English as a Second Language Achievement Tests and conducted low inference observations to assess the use of targeted instructional strategies. These strategies are now implemented school wide with consistent success as reflected in an analysis of ESL student data.
 - In response to a careful analysis of summative and formative classroom data, the school has developed a universal protocol for the introduction of academic vocabulary in all content areas. This practice has resulted in higher levels of achievement and oral language for all students.
- Teacher observations and reflections on student data provide the foundation for pedagogical evaluation and support, ensuring that the school has a coherent and consistent instructional focus aligned to school wide goals.
 - The school is committed to the use of the workshop model across all grades and content areas. As a result, small group or individualized instruction is seen in all classrooms, frequently enhanced by push-in teachers. This has enabled the school to target student needs and improve student success rates.
 - Reflecting on frequent formal and informal observations and student data to define teacher needs, the principal provides teachers with a range of mentoring, intervisitations and collaborative planning opportunities. Coaches meet with new or targeted teachers weekly, as do teacher leaders, who mentor their colleagues, providing aligned support that has deepened instructional skills and led to a high staff stability rate.

What the school needs to improve

- Enhance the curriculum to provide students with a broader range of experiences and extensive learning opportunities across all content areas.

- While the school has a rich curriculum in most content areas, including the arts, the curriculum in technology is somewhat limited and mundane. This hinders the opportunity for higher levels of technological learning to intensify the skills students already bring to the table. As a result, college and career readiness aptitudes are not as keenly honed as needed for the twenty-first century, impacting the ability of students to receive individualized instruction to meet these goals.
- Enhance the consistency and rigor of differentiation in all content areas and across all grade levels, especially for subgroup students.
 - While the school universally follows the workshop model and provides small group instruction in all content areas, the range of learning opportunities provided is not consistent for all teachers, especially in special needs classrooms, limiting the depth of student support. The school is aware of this and has initiated a push-in program with content teachers, thus deepening the levels of instruction in these classes.
 - Although differentiation continually addresses the needs of at-risk and lower achieving students, support for higher achieving students is not as consistently challenging or universally rigorous. As a result, students at this level do not always work up to their full potential.
- Intensify the degree of community outreach to improve communication and deepen the level of parental involvement in school wide decision making.
 - Although school leaders and the Parents Association offer a variety of potential opportunities for parents to engage in school events and planning, very few parents are engaged in school leadership and decision making venues. This limits the input from the community and the development of reciprocal conversations school wide.
 - The school consistently hosts a large number of events, which are publicized by the Parent Coordinator and the president of the Parents Association, as well as the school itself. Although some of these may be well attended, few actually involve parental leadership, hindering the growth of parental empowerment.
- Implement a specified, clearly defined system which uses data to monitor the success of professional collaborations and leadership development.
 - School leaders utilize cabinet meetings and other established structures to assess the success of specific teams. However, the school has not yet fully developed a structured protocol which uses quantifiable student results to measure the success of specific teams. This hampers the ability of the school leaders to consistently evaluate the workings of the numerous teams within the building.
 - Department and inquiry teams universally rotate leaders and encourage growth in all participants. However, the school is just developing structures to assess the success of support for distributive leadership and the levels of teacher growth. Consequently, gaps and strengths in the system are not readily diagnosed.

Part 3: School Quality Criteria 2010-2011

School name: Sunset Park Prep	UD	D	P	WD
Overall QR Score			X	
Quality Statement 1 – Instructional and Organizational Coherence: The school has a coherent strategy to support student learning that aligns curriculum, instruction and organizational decisions.				
<i>To what extent does the school regularly...</i>	UD	D	P	WD
1.1 Design engaging, rigorous and coherent curricula, including the Arts, for a variety of learners and aligned to key State standards?			X	
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?			X	
1.3 Make strategic organizational decisions to support the school's instructional goals and meet student learning needs?				X
1.4 Maintain a culture of mutual trust and positive attitudes toward learning that support the academic and personal growth of students and adults?				X
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.				
<i>To what extent does the school ...</i>	UD	D	P	WD
2.1 Gather and analyze information on student learning outcomes to identify trends, strengths, and areas of need at the school level?			X	
2.2 Align assessments to curriculum and analyze information on student learning outcomes to adjust instructional decisions at the team and classroom level?				X
2.3 Use or develop tools to enable school leaders and teachers to organize, aggregate, and analyze student performance trends?			X	
2.4 Engage in an open exchange of information with students and families regarding students' learning needs and outcomes?			X	

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>	UD	D	P	WD
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?			X	
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?			X	
3.3 Ensure the achievement of learning goals by tracking progress at the school, teacher team and classroom level?			X	
3.4 Communicate high expectations to students and families, engage them in decision-making, and promote active involvement in the school community?			X	

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>	UD	D	P	WD
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?			X	
4.2 Engage in structured professional collaborations on teams using an inquiry approach that promotes shared leadership and focuses on improved student learning?				X
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?			X	
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?				X

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>	UD	D	P	WD
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?			X	
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?			X	
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?			X	
5.4 Use data to regularly evaluate the effectiveness of structured professional collaboration, capacity building and leadership development strategies?			X	

Quality Review Scoring Key							
UD	Underdeveloped	D	Developing	P	Proficient	WD	Well Developed