



**Department of  
Education**  
*Carmen Fariña, Chancellor*

Office of School Quality  
Division of Teaching and Learning

# Quality Review Report

## 2014-2015

**The Sunset Park School**

**Elementary School K169**

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

**Principal: Eujin Jaela Kim**

**Date of review: May 4, 2015  
Lead Reviewer: Anita Skop**

## The School Context

The Sunset Park School is an elementary school with 1670 students from grade K through grade 5. The school population comprises 1% Black, 43% Hispanic, 4% White, and 52% Asian students. The student body includes 45% English language learners and 12% special education students. Boys account for 52% of the students enrolled and girls account for 48%. The average attendance rate for the school year 2013-2014 was 96.0%.

## School Quality Criteria

<b>Instructional Core</b>		
<i>To what extent does the school...</i>	<b>Area of:</b>	<b>Rating:</b>
1.1 Ensure engaging, rigorous, and coherent curricula in all subjects, accessible for a variety of learners and aligned to Common Core Learning Standards and/or content standards	<b>Celebration</b>	<b>Well Developed</b>
1.2 Develop teacher pedagogy from a coherent set of beliefs about how students learn best that is informed by the instructional shifts and Danielson Framework for Teaching, aligned to the curricula, engaging, and meets the needs of all learners so that all students produce meaningful work products	<b>Focus</b>	<b>Proficient</b>
2.2 Align assessments to curricula, use on-going assessment and grading practices, and analyze information on student learning outcomes to adjust instructional decisions at the team and classroom levels	<b>Additional Findings</b>	<b>Proficient</b>
<b>School Culture</b>		
<i>To what extent does the school...</i>	<b>Area of:</b>	<b>Rating:</b>
3.4 Establish a culture for learning that communicates high expectations to staff, students, and families, and provide supports to achieve those expectations	<b>Additional Findings</b>	<b>Proficient</b>
<b>Systems for Improvement</b>		
<i>To what extent does the school...</i>	<b>Area of:</b>	<b>Rating:</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>Additional Findings</b>	<b>Proficient</b>

## Area of Celebration

**Quality Indicator:**

**1.1 Curriculum**

**Rating:**

**Well Developed**

### Findings

Across subject areas and grades, curricula are well aligned to Common Core Learning Standards and instructional shifts. The school engages in ongoing refinement of Common Core aligned curricula to incorporate tasks that promote college and career readiness skills for all students.

### Impact

The school's commitment to continuously reviewing and adjusting curricula results in coherently sequenced Common Core aligned units of study across disciplines, with academic tasks designed to accelerate learning by all students in all grades.

### Supporting Evidence

- The school's curriculum binders highlight grade level pacing calendars and detailed curriculum maps that chart cross-discipline outcomes for writing, reading, listening, and speaking, across classrooms. Documents from the binder show Common Core aligned units and tasks derived from revisions of past units, adjustment of lessons from Engage NY and use of curriculum resources such as *Ready Gen* (K-2), *Go Math* (K-5), and *Expeditionary Learning*, (Grades 3-5). Pacing calendars aligned to the New York City scope and sequence guide instruction in social studies and science. In addition, the use of complex texts allows for strategic integration of the instructional shifts in units of study that incorporate science and social studies content in literacy based instruction that addresses focus standards for each grade level. Further, *Go Math* curriculum guides include sample tasks requiring students to solve complex math problems, and illustrate homework tasks that are designed to reinforce academic vocabulary for all grades and content areas.
- Using analysis of student work and data, teachers plan academic tasks that push students to engage in tasks in which they analyze and evaluate information from various sources. Interdisciplinary units of instruction illustrate targeted standards for each grade and sample writing tasks that address each standard, including tasks requiring students to engage in activities such as composing explanations of inferences from texts, using textual evidence to demonstrate comprehension of texts, preparing summaries of reading selections, and writing on topics across genres. In addition, school leaders and faculty collaborated to modify *Expeditionary Learning* and *Ready Gen* curricula, incorporating tiered vocabulary and creating additional opportunities for all students to engage in extended writing.
- The school's curricula incorporate specific instructional materials for English language learners and students with disabilities. These include use of tiered tasks, Bilingual dictionaries for translations for English language learners, manipulatives and "Grab and Go" kits in math. iPads, laptops, videos, audio resources for listening centers and text based software also serve as tools for enrichment, intervention and differentiation of instruction for all learners, particularly English language learners and students with disabilities, and provide for high levels of student engagement, with multiple forms of access to content across disciplines. Unit and lesson plans also contain scaffolding strategies for English language learners and students with disabilities.

## Area of Focus

<b>Quality Indicator:</b>	<b>1.2 Pedagogy</b>	<b>Rating:</b>	<b>Proficient</b>
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### Findings

Across classrooms, teaching strategies and academic tasks immerse all students in rigorous work and discussions that foster higher-order thinking and learning. However, instructional strategies do not illustrate optimal use of extensions to evoke student ownership of learning.

### Impact

While academic tasks promote student progress towards being college and career ready, there are missed opportunities to further deepen student learning via completion of tasks that allow all students, including students with disabilities and English language learners, to demonstrate high levels of ownership of learning.

### Supporting Evidence

- A range of modalities supports student learning so that all students have access to the curriculum. For example, in a first grade Integrated Co-Teaching classroom, two SMARTboards were in use supporting students in two groups. While one group worked with the teacher to discuss space and reference a poem about space, the teacher used definition cards with pictures to support English language learners with comprehension. The other group worked on questioning words showing the text on the SMARTboard and pulling information to demonstrate questions the text answered. Students needed teachers to prompt them to engage in higher-order thinking questions. Teachers set up learning stations and direct or group students at stations.
- In order to guarantee that all voices are heard, a teacher in a second grade Integrated Co-Teaching class used a ball of yarn and rolled it to each student in her group so that a visual web was created ensuring that the conversation included all students. Further, station teaching throughout the classroom enriched this social studies lesson as students in one group “panned for gold” and noted the steps in the process while in another group, students worked in pairs and annotated text from a SMARTboard to prove that gold would make people immigrate to America. Technology was also well utilized as students in a fourth group worked on laptops researching the Gold Rush.
- Even the youngest students were engaged in rich discussion as evidenced by a kindergarten class where students conducted a seminar generating a discussion about “why it is important to have a job.” Students called on other students for “comments and compliments” and were encouraged by their teacher to expand their comments and say it, “loudly and proudly.”

## Additional Findings

<b>Quality Indicator:</b>	<b>2.2 Assessment</b>	<b>Rating:</b>	<b>Proficient</b>
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### Findings

Analysis of student work and assessment data provides staff and students with feedback on students' performance and informs adjustments to curricula and instruction. Students receive feedback relative to their performance and progress on a variety of assessments.

### Impact

Regular use of data from assessments results in curricula and instructional adjustments that target ongoing improvement in student achievement across grades and content areas.

### Supporting Evidence

- Teachers administer assessments such as Measures of Student Learning baseline assessments in literacy and math and literacy assessments such as Developmental Reading Assessment, Teacher's College assessments and Fountas and Pinnell, Running Records which are used to determine students' independent reading levels and identify skills to be taught in small-group instruction. Embedded assessments such as end of chapter and end of unit assessments linked to *Go Math*, *Ready Gen*, and *Expeditionary Learning*, further support a program of assessment that is aligned to curricula and relevant standards. Additionally, across classrooms teachers use assessments, including "quick check" questions in math and on demand writing in literacy. Teachers have also implemented guided reading conferences in analyzing students' strengths and learning needs as related to skills, content and standards assessed.
- All teachers use a school-wide grading policy and task-specific rubrics aligned to curricula to provide students with feedback on their performance in all disciplines. For example, an "Opinion/Argument Rubric", an "Expository Writing Evaluation Rubric" and an "Editing Checklist for Self-and Peer Editing" provided feedback on work seen on some bulletin boards and in some students' folders. Further, in describing a piece of work that they were "proud of", during the student meeting students displayed rubrics and checklists from their portfolios and explained how teachers use the rubrics to show them what they have to do before completing a task. Students noted that the rubric score and teacher comments on the completed task showed them what they had done well or were missing.
- Minutes and agendas of team meetings indicate that all administrators and other staff regularly engage in analysis of assessment data. They use the data to determine individual student progress across assessments as well as class, grade and school level performance trends in math and English language arts. Using "Progress Monitoring", "Student Profile Overview", "Instructional Grouping Profile" and "Intervention Screener" reports from I-Ready, an online assessment tool, the principal illustrated the use of data to inform instructional adjustments such as re-grouping, re-teaching and enrichment activities. Curricula adjustments include refinement of math curricula to incorporate content and tasks that deepen coverage of the major work of the grade, and the addition of writing units from Teachers' College curricula to infuse more extended writing tasks across all content areas.

<b>Quality Indicator:</b>	<b>3.4 High Expectations</b>	<b>Rating:</b>	<b>Proficient</b>
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**Findings**

The principal and her assistant principals consistently communicate high expectations, in line with the elements of Danielson Framework and connected to a path to college and career readiness for all students to the entire staff through training and feedback.

**Impact**

The commitment to professionalism, instruction and communication with families has resulted in a system of accountability for school staff, and ongoing feedback and information sharing that helps students and families understand student progress towards the defined expectations.

**Supporting Evidence**

- Utilizing the Danielson Framework expectations of greater student ownership, the principal has worked extensively with her staff to deepen the level of student discourse and inquiry across all classrooms and for all students. Observations with feedback conferences have served to instill this expectation in all staff, as has the high quality professional development with consultants such as Ellin Keene and even a scheduled presentation to the staff by the Chancellor. These consistently clearly defined set of expectations has resulted in student seminars such as the one evidenced in the kindergarten class on community workers and the hands on experiential learning that was seen in the second grade.
- Parent engagement has focused on extensively math this year as there was a demonstrated need for parents to understand Common Core aligned instructional practices. This instructional shift was problematic for some parents who, because of their own school experience, were not familiar with the idea that student work was not just about getting the right answer, but about building conceptual mathematical thinking. Parent workshops around math units of study, with materials to help child at home have addressed this issue and shown parents that there is more to math learning than the speed and accuracy of computation.
- Two parent coordinators, one who is bilingual in Chinese and one who is bilingual in Spanish as well as a multilingual staff support parents in understanding the needs of their children and the school-wide expectations. In addition, parents proudly comment on their ability to meet with teachers, the monthly newsletters and the school’s “Parent Support Team.” “Coffee with the Principal,” another monthly event, instituted by this relatively new principal enables school leaders to share their expectations directly with parents. Students also benefit from clearly defined feedback. For example, across classroom visits there was extensive evidence of student writing across the content areas, with written feedback defining student specific needs.

<b>Quality Indicator:</b>	<b>4.2 Teacher teams and leadership development</b>	<b>Rating:</b>	<b>Proficient</b>
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**Findings**

The majority of teachers are engaged in structured, inquiry-based professional collaborations that target school-wide goals, consistently analyze assessment data and student work for grade level students or students with a shared focus and create distributive leadership structures that build teacher leadership.

**Impact**

These professional collaborations promote the achievement of school-wide goals and the implementation of the Common Core Learning Standards by strengthening the instructional capacity of teachers, moving progress towards goals for targeted groups of students, and providing teachers with a voice in key decisions that affect student learning.

**Supporting Evidence**

- The daunting size of this school, sixteen hundred and seventy students, with over one hundred and twenty staff members has led the principal to judiciously create two grade levels cohorts of teachers per grade who each meet as a team weekly. Each of these teams is led by a teacher cohort leader who is then part of a vertical cohort leader team which enables teachers and teams to share ideas across classrooms and across grades. Minutes from these meetings are shared electronically with staff and the administration. Teams consistently reflect on student work and assessment data and use the information to define trends at the grade level and identify strategies to address these trends. Evidence of this work was seen in the “Carousel Walk” of student work where teachers circled a table with a common student assignment and took notes. The observations then generated a focused discussion on the need to encourage more student questioning skills, in line with the school wide focus on greater student discourse and ownership of learning.
- As a result of the team exploration of the school-wide focus, third grade teachers have initiated a protocol that asks students to undertake both self and peer-reflection on their work. This initiative has surfaced that students are actually harder on themselves than their teachers and has already resulted in greater levels of student discussion and interaction and stronger written work products. Further, teachers see the impact on their own pedagogy: “We are no longer boxed in” .... “We now share kids work and we grow by doing that.” “We adjust (instruction) as needed” .... “We are all still learning,” are some of the highly positive comments that teachers made about their own practice.
- Distributive leadership and teacher opportunity for growth and voice were clearly evidenced in both team meetings. In meeting with the Cohort Leader team, teachers commented that the “School culture focuses on adult learning through inquiry; we learn from each other.” In addition, lower grade team reflections on the quality of student work and the accessibility of the literacy program for English language learners and students with disabilities has resulted in the selection of Core Knowledge to replace ReadyGen in the fall for the early childhood grades. As one teacher put it, “Our concerns were heard. We are now partners in the discussion.”