



# **Executive Summary**

**Sunland Park Academy**

**Broward County Public Schools**

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## **Introduction**

Every school has its own story to tell. The context in which teaching and learning takes place influences the processes and procedures by which the school makes decisions around curriculum, instruction, and assessment. The context also impacts the way a school stays faithful to its vision. Many factors contribute to the overall narrative such as an identification of stakeholders, a description of stakeholder engagement, the trends and issues affecting the school, and the kinds of programs and services that a school implements to support student learning.

The purpose of the Executive Summary (ES) is to provide a school with an opportunity to describe in narrative form the strengths and challenges it encounters. By doing so, the public and members of the school community will have a more complete picture of how the school perceives itself and the process of self-reflection for continuous improvement. This summary is structured for the school to reflect on how it provides teaching and learning on a day to day basis.

## **Description of the School**

**Describe the school's size, community/communities, location, and changes it has experienced in the last three years. Include demographic information about the students, staff, and community at large. What unique features and challenges are associated with the community/communities the school serves?**

Sunland Park Academy

### Description of the School

Sunland Park Academy, formerly known as Sunland Park Elementary, is a Title 1 school located in Fort Lauderdale, Florida and is predominately African-American in a lower socio-economic community. The school was founded in 1958, and has approximately 520 students of the following demographic population: 94% African- American, 2% Hispanic, and 2% white. Ninety-eight percent of the students are economically disadvantaged receiving free or reduced lunch. There are 37 instructional staff members: 60% African-American: 4% White; and 4% Hispanic of which 100% are highly qualified and 9% have advanced degrees. Ten percent of the teachers are first year teachers, sixty-two percent have one to five years of teaching experience and forty-five percent have six or more years of teaching experience.

Sunland Park Academy has experienced significant changes over the past 10 years. Unfortunately, there have been 5 principals during this period and the school consistently earned a State grade of D or F. During the 2013 school year, the leadership team changed and the school began the process for reconstitution. Also, a nearby school was closed and Sunland Park Academy's enrollment increased by approximately 200 students at the beginning of the 2014 school year. When school resumed in August 2013, the school's name was officially changed to Sunland Park Academy and the student population ranged from Pre-Kindergarten to Third Grade. That year, the school earned a letter grade of an A for the first time in the school's history.

There are many challenges at Sunland Park Academy. The most recent test data show that 30% of the students tested on the State's assessment are proficient in reading. Students are not receiving the support needed at home to close the achievement gap quickly. Parent involvement has increased; however, it is still not sufficient. The students need constant reinforcement and encouragement to understand that education is their vehicle to a successful future and to improve academic standards while developing a sense of pride and intrinsic motivation in the school and community.

Sunland Park Academy has received support from the state, school district, and several business and community organizations to help improve literacy with students. As a result, the school is able to provide after school extended learning opportunities for at least 200 targeted students in grades kindergarten - third, which is funded in part by the United Way of Broward County via Community Based Connections, Inc. and Title 1. Support staff is utilized during the literacy block to provide targeted push-in and/or pull-out intervention(s) for struggling readers. Enrichment groups are provided to meet the needs of those students at/or above grade level(s). Through the United Way initiative, Reading Pal mentors are assigned to select Pre-Kindergarten through First Grade students, for an hour per week, for a total of 25 weeks. Students in kindergarten and first grade utilize iPads, iPods and MP3 players as a part of the Innovation for Learning (IFL) initiative, to improve early literacy skills.

Strong partnerships have been established with the Young at Art Museum for the past 3 years. Through this partnership students are afforded the opportunity to self-express as well as improve literacy through art. Another one of our mentoring partnerships is with Listen to

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Children, which matches children with a caring adult spending 30 minutes per week at school to develop self-esteem, promoting positive attitude towards school, encouraging positive choices, increasing social skills and talking about issues affecting a child's success. This partnership has been a positive benefit to the social and emotional support our students need.

## School's Purpose

**Provide the school's purpose statement and ancillary content such as mission, vision, values, and/or beliefs. Describe how the school embodies its purpose through its program offerings and expectations for students.**

Sunland Park Academy's purpose is to provide high quality, education supporting the needs of the whole child through rigorous curriculum, increased technology, strong foundations, active discovery, developmentally appropriate practices and personalized pathways to success. Our vision is to provide a quality prescriptive social and academic education so that all students are able to reach their full potential within a caring, secure environment.

The mission of Sunland Park Elementary School is to make a difference in the lives of students by providing learning experiences and opportunities for them to achieve high levels of academic performance. Through fostering positive growth in social, emotional, and work behaviors, students will be able to learn the necessary skills to become successful adults in the workplace.

### BELIEFS

We believe that every student is entitled to an equal educational opportunity.

We believe that it is every ones (students, parents, teachers and administrators) responsibility to enable students to succeed and become the best they can be.

We believe that individuals should be treated with dignity.

We believe that the degree of commitment and level of involvement in the decision making process from the student/ community/home/ school will determine the quality of education.

We believe that decisions should be based on the needs of students.

We believe our students will rise to our level of academic and social expectation.

We believe that students should be taught to learn how to learn.

We believe that the education process should be a coordinated system of services and programs.

We believe that students must be provided with routine and regular access to technology both from school and home.

We believe it takes a village to raise a child.

### SCHOOL PLEDGE

I believe that I can be a good student. I believe that I can succeed. I will work hard each to do my best. I can learn! I will learn!

This pledge is broadcast on closed circuit TV as a part of the morning announcements and recited every morning by all students and staff to reinforce the vision and mission of each student and teacher.

Our school embodies our purpose by ensuring that all staff members participate in Professional Learning Communities as well as requiring all support staff members to attend professional develop to be able to support the teaching and learning of students. We focus on current research based practices such as accountable talk, reciprocal teaching, and learning goals and scales to help our students become active participants in their learning and to help teachers provide high quality instruction. In an effort to build a strong foundation and enhance active discovery in our students, we use innovative technology such as iPads, iPods, and MP3 players within our reading block and various research based computer applications to help improve our students' literacy. We explicitly teach the vision and mission to our students and as a result our mission and vision has become a part of the fiber of our school's culture.

We also take pride in Character Education, which is facilitated by our guidance counselor. There are nine character traits and one is highlighted each month. Students are taught the character trait by the classroom teacher and at the end of the month a student is nominated by his or peers to be an exemplary role model for that trait. The student receives a certificate and medallion, the child's family is invited to

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watch their child being recognized on the Morning Show and their name is highlighted in the school's newspaper.

## **Notable Achievements and Areas of Improvement**

**Describe the school's notable achievements and areas of improvement in the last three years. Additionally, describe areas for improvement that the school is striving to achieve in the next three years.**

There are many positive achievements that have occurred over the last three years. Sunland Park Academy has become a Pre-Kindergarten through Third Grade and has an increased focus in early literacy. It has increased from having two Pre-Kindergarten ESE classes and 2 Head Start full day classes to 5 additional Head Start/VPK full day classes and 1 extended day class. As a result of the hard work and dedication of the VPK and extended day classes, the Readiness Rate Scores for the 2014-2015 school year was 98%, no longer considering Sunland Park Academy to be a "Low Performing Provider". Consistently, all kindergarten students have attained 100% proficiency rates in LNSCP (Letter, Sound, & Concepts of Print Knowledge) understanding.

In 2013, Sunland Park Academy became the recipients of the Comcast Cares Day initiative, which granted beautification in several areas of the school to include a vegetable garden and high-speed internet access. A great partnership with Young at Art Museum was formed to provide art classes to all students twice per month for one hour each session. Students are also afforded the opportunity to take field trips to their neighboring Art House where they experience art afterschool 5 days per week, free of charge.

Reading trend data has increased continuously from 2012 - 2014. In 2012, only 16 percent of our students were proficient. In 2013, 22 percent of students were proficient. In 2014, 33 percent of students were proficient based on FCAT assessments in 3rd grade.

Also in 2013, 4th and 5th grade students were identified by the school's district as having the highest learning gains in mathematics showing academic growth of at least one year or more, within one school year. In 2013-2014 Sunland Park Academy earned a grade of an A for the first time in school history.

Teachers are committed to utilizing research based strategies to promote higher order and critical thinking skills. Classrooms are equipped with Smart boards, Document Cameras, projectors, laptops and iPads. Students in kindergarten and first grade utilize iPads, iPods, and MP3 players to improve literacy skills. Sunland Park is also a Teacher Incentive Fund (TIF) school, which allows teachers to receiving funding for staff development and retention bonuses.

Within the next three years our goal is for our third grade students to continue the upward trend in reading and achieve 70% proficiency on the state's standardized test. We will continue to implement the research based strategies that have allowed our students to show growth in reading and mathematics as well as provide additional staff development as needed.



## **Additional Information**

**Provide any additional information you would like to share with the public and community that were not prompted in the previous sections.**

Through all of our efforts and continued support from the district and stakeholders the enrollment at Sunland Park Academy has continued to increase. We are a part of a "Promise Neighborhood", which is based on the innovation and interventions of the Harlem Children Zone. The goal is to make sure that all children and youth growing up in the Promise neighborhood will have access to great schools and strong systems of family and community support that will prepare them to attain an excellent education and successfully transition to college and career.

During the elections of November 2014, our district received an \$800 million General Obligation Bond also known as the SMART (Science, Technology, Art, Athletics, Renovations and Technology) Bond which will provide critically needed funding for all of Broward County Public Schools. We will be able to receive much needed improvements to our school as well as updated technology.