



Executive Summary for Sunland Park Academy

The Executive Summary (ES) provides the school an opportunity to describe in narrative form its vision as well as strengths and challenges within the context of continuous improvement. Use this template to complete the responses to the various questions below. The responses should be brief, descriptive, and appropriate for the specific section.

Description

Sunland Park Academy, formerly known as Sunland Park Elementary, is a Title 1 school located in Fort Lauderdale, Florida and located in a lower socio-economic community. The school was founded in 1958 and has approximately 383 students of the following demographic population: 94% African- American, 6% Hispanic, and 2% Multiracial. There are 32 instructional staff members: 78% African American, 9% White, 9% Hispanic and 3% Asian of which 100% are highly qualified.

Sunland Park Academy has undergone significant changes over the past 12 years. In the 2013 school year, a new leadership team was established, initiating the reconstitution process. Additionally, the closure of a nearby school resulted in an enrollment increase of approximately 200 students at the start of the 2014 school year. When classes resumed in August 2013, the school officially adopted the name Sunland Park Academy, serving students from Pre-Kindergarten to Third Grade. That year, the school achieved an A letter grade for the first time in its history.

Sunland Park Academy has faced numerous challenges but continues to make progress. Recent test data indicate that 34% of students are proficient in reading, while 58% are proficient in mathematics. Although parent involvement has increased, it is still not enough. Students require ongoing reinforcement and encouragement to recognize that education is their pathway to a successful future. Our goal is to enhance academic standards while fostering a sense of pride and intrinsic motivation within 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 I. 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 and Chapter One program mentors are assigned to select Pre-Kindergarten through 3rd Grade students, for an hour per week, for a total of 25 weeks. These partnerships have been a positive benefit to the academic and social and emotional support our students need.

Purpose

Sunland Park Academy's purpose and vision 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 everyone (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 during the morning announcements and recited daily by all students and staff to reinforce our vision and mission. Our school embodies these principles by ensuring that all staff engage in Professional Learning Communities and that support staff participate in professional development to effectively enhance student learning.

We focus on current research-based practices, such as accountable talk, reciprocal teaching, and learning goals and scales, to help students become active participants in their education while enabling teachers to provide high-quality instruction. To foster a strong foundation and promote

active discovery, we utilize innovative technology, including laptops during our reading block and various research-based computer applications to improve literacy skills. We explicitly teach our vision and mission, which have become integral to our school culture.

Additionally, we take pride in our Character Education program, facilitated by our guidance counselor. Each month, we highlight one of the nine character traits, teaching it through classroom instruction. At the end of the month, students nominate a peer who exemplifies that trait as a role model. The chosen student receives a certificate and medallion, and their family is invited to celebrate their recognition on the Morning Show, with their name featured in the school newspaper

Notable Achievements and Areas of Improvement

Over the past nine years, Sunland Park Academy has celebrated numerous positive achievements. Transitioning to a Pre-Kindergarten through Third Grade model, the school has placed a greater emphasis on early literacy. Thanks to the hard work and dedication of the VPK and extended day classes, the Readiness Rate Scores for the 2014-2015 school year reached an impressive 98%, leading to the removal of the "Low Performing Provider" designation. Additionally, all kindergarten students consistently achieved 100% proficiency in LNSCP (Letter, Sound, & Concepts of Print Knowledge).

In 2013, Sunland Park Academy benefited from the Comcast Cares Day initiative, which enhanced several areas of the school, including the creation of a vegetable garden and the installation of high-speed internet access. A valuable partnership with the Young at Art Museum has provided all students with art classes twice a month, along with opportunities for field trips to a neighboring Art House, where they can engage in art activities after school five days a week at no cost.

Reading trend data shows continuous improvement at Sunland Park Academy from 2012 to 2025. In 2012, only 16% of third-grade students were proficient in reading, but this increased to 22% in 2013 and 33% in 2014, based on FCAT assessments. In 2013, fourth and fifth graders were recognized by the district for achieving the highest learning gains in mathematics, demonstrating at least one year of academic growth in a single school year.

Sunland Park Academy earned its first-ever A grade in 2013–2014. In 2019–2020, the school again earned an A, with 52% of students achieving proficiency or higher in reading and 73% in math, according to Florida Standards Assessment (FSA) results. Most recently, in 2024–2025, the school reached its highest proficiency levels to date—69% in English Language Arts (ELA) and 74% in Math—earning an A grade for the third time in its history.

The administrative team, teachers, and staff are committed to implementing research-based strategies to promote higher-order and critical thinking skills. Our goal over the next three years is to ensure that third-grade students continue this upward trend in reading, aiming for an overall 72% proficiency on the state's standardized test. We will persist in applying effective research-based strategies and providing additional professional development as needed to support this growth in reading and mathematics.

Additional Information

Thanks to our ongoing efforts and the strong support from the district and stakeholders, enrollment at Sunland Park Academy has steadily increased. As part of a "Promise Neighborhood," modeled after the innovative interventions of the Harlem Children's Zone, our mission is to ensure that all children and youth in the area have access to quality schools and robust family and community support systems. This initiative aims to prepare them for an excellent education and successful transitions to college and careers.

In November 2014, our district secured an \$800 million General Obligation Bond, known as the SMART (Science, Technology, Art, Athletics, Renovations, and Technology) Bond. This significant funding will provide essential resources for all Broward County Public Schools, enabling us to make much-needed improvements to our facilities and update our technology, further enhancing the educational experience for our students.