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Carlos Rosario International Public Charter School - Sonia Gutierrez Campus

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Some buildings are described as letting in an abundance of natural light. When you first enter the brand new Sonia Gutierrez Campus of the [Carlos Rosario International Public Charter School](#) the first impression you get is that light graciously allowed steel to be erected around it. The facility appears to sail, as if it is not made of classrooms and offices but is instead comprised of four stories of wings delicately layered upon one another.

I had the amazing opportunity to tour the site yesterday morning. Most of us are already familiar with Carlos Rosario. It is the award winning adult education school for immigrants that has served over 60,000 people since it began as a community organization in 1970. 2,500 students a year now pass through its doors. My wife and I still talk about the [gala](#) honoring founder Sonia Gutierrez which we attended a little over a year ago. It was perhaps the best organized event we have been to in the nation's capital.

Tuesday, two reporters and I received an introduction to Carlos Rosario in the second floor boardroom from Allison Kokkoros, the school's chief academic office. The guests were provided with a general overview of the history of the charter. We then learned about this new building which just opened late last month. The structure is 50,000 feet in size, was an old warehouse located near the Rhode Island Avenue metro station, and is filled with over 500 students on any particular day. It was now time to embark on a tour with Principal Dr. Jorge Delgado.

After spending 30 seconds with Dr. Delgado you learn that he must have won a prize for enthusiasm at some period in his life. His face beamed as he showed us classroom after classroom, all located off gleaming white corridors, which were uniformly filled with state-of-the-art equipment. We passed computer rooms full with students following lessons projected on smart boards. I marveled at the humongous stainless steel kitchen which was a perfect replica of those found at the Culinary Institute of America. Since I work in healthcare, I was especially interested in watching in another part of the building certified nurse assistant trainees trying to perfect applying a splint to the leg of a mannequin.

Dr. Delgado repeated common themes throughout our time together. For each subject area, whether it is information technology, English as a second language, the culinary arts, or preparing pupils to pass their G.E.D. examination, he revealed that the campus relies on best practices and data to drive instruction. One employee specializes in obtaining needed social services for the student body. A job placement office finds positions for those who have completed coursework at the school.

We stopped by the cafeteria, again all in white, with the sun reflecting off every surface of the space. Dr. Delgado took us to an area divided off from where the majority of the tables were located. He explained that this was their café where students learn how to master the skills of becoming excellent waiters.

We then had the opportunity to say hello to Ms. Gutierrez. She joked that after opening this building she was ready to turn over her work to someone else. I told her that was impossible since she had to create campus number three. She said that she would but she has bigger plans. "People want us to replicate across the country because they yearn for what they see here," the Carlos Rosario founder explained. Based upon my experience, I'm sure her presence is wanted in each of the 50 states.

Online: <http://www.examiner.com/article/carlos-rosario-international-public-charter-school-sonia-gutierrez-campus>