



Office of School Design and Charter Partnerships  
2013-2014

**THE EQUITY PROJECT CHARTER SCHOOL  
ANNUAL COMPREHENSIVE REVIEW REPORT**

**2013 – 2014 SCHOOL YEAR**

## Part 1: School Overview

### School Information for the 2013-2014 School Year

Name of Charter School	The Equity Project Charter School
Board Chair(s)	David Coleman
School Leader(s)	Zeke Vanderhoek
Management Company (if applicable)	N/A
Other Partner(s)	N/A
District(s) of Location	NYC Community School District 6
Physical Address(es)	549 Audubon Avenue, New York 10040
Facility Owner(s)	DOE

### School Profile

- The Equity Project Charter School (TEP) is a middle school which served 487 students<sup>1</sup> in grades 5-8 during the 2013-2014 school year and is fully at scale. It opened in 2009-2010 and is under the terms of its second charter.
- The school is located in publicly-operated facilities in Manhattan within Community School District (CSD) 6.<sup>2</sup>
- TEP enrolls new students in grade 5 but backfills students in grades 6-7. There were 206 students on the waitlist after the Spring 2013 lottery.<sup>3</sup> The average attendance rate for the 2013-2014 school year to date as reported in February 2014 was 96.3%.<sup>4</sup>
- TEP was renewed during the 2012-2013 school year for a full term (five years), and is consistent with the terms of its renewal application.
- The school leadership includes Zeke Vanderhoek, Principal; Casey Ash, Assistant Principal; and Shelly Gupta, Director of Finance and Operations. The Principal has been with the school since 2009.
- TEP had a student to teacher ratio of 16:1 in the 2013-2014 school year, and served 16 sections across all grades, with an average class size of 31.
- The lottery preferences for TEP's 2013-2014 school year included the New York State Charter Schools Act required preferences of returning students, students residing in the community school district of the school's location and siblings of students already enrolled in the charter school, as well as students with disabilities (SwDs) and English Language Learners (ELLs).<sup>5</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Enrollment reflects ATS data from 10/31/13.

<sup>2</sup> NYC DOE Location Code Generation and Management System database.

<sup>3</sup> Self-reported information from school-submitted data collection form on 2/14/14.

<sup>4</sup> Self-reported information from school-submitted data collection form on 2/14/14.

<sup>5</sup> TEP's 2013-2014 lottery application

## Part 2: Summary of Findings

### Essential Question 1: Is the school an academic success?

#### Overview of School-Specific Data through 2012-2013

#### ES/MS Students scoring at or above Level 3 on NYS assessment, compared to CSD, NYC, and State averages

% Proficient in English Language Arts				
	2009-2010	2010-2011	2011-2012	2012-2013
The Equity Project Charter School	24.2%	30.6%	33.6%	14.2%
CSD 6	33.2%	33.4%	32.4%	13.5%
Difference from CSD 6	-9.0	-2.8	1.2	0.7
NYC	46.2%	46.3%	46.9%	25.7%
Difference from NYC	-22.0	-15.7	-13.3	-11.5
New York State	53.2%	52.8%	55.1%	31.1%
Difference from New York State	-29.0	-22.2	-21.5	-16.9

% Proficient in Math				
	2009-2010	2010-2011	2011-2012	2012-2013
The Equity Project Charter School	37.4%	48.6%	56.0%	23.3%
CSD 6	48.9%	48.2%	50.5%	15.0%
Difference from CSD 6	-11.5	0.4	5.5	8.3
NYC	59.7%	59.5%	60.6%	27.3%
Difference from NYC	-22.3	-10.9	-4.6	-4.0
New York State	61.0%	63.3%	64.8%	31.1%
Difference from New York State	-23.6	-14.7	-8.8	-7.8

\* All comparisons to either the CSD or NYC take into account only grades the school itself served.

#### Performance on the NYC Progress Report

Progress Report Grade	2009-2010	2010-2011	2011-2012	2012-2013
Overall Grade	-	B	A	A
Student Progress	-	B	A	A
Student Performance	-	C	A	B
School Environment	-	A	A	A
Closing the Achievement Gap Points	-	5.5	4.5	5.6

#### Progress Towards Attainment of Academic Goals

- According to its 2012-2013 Annual Report to New York State Education Department (NYSED), TEP fully met two out of seven of the academic performance goals identified in its charter, and did not meet five out of seven of these goals.

## Responsive Education Program & Learning Environment<sup>6</sup>

- TEP has instituted a year-round calendar that incorporates extended breaks during the school year (along with a shorter summer) aimed at building long-term sustainability by providing teachers and staff with regular opportunities to rest, reflect (during three planning institutes over the course of the year) and rejuvenate.
- To ensure that it continues to serve percentages of students qualifying for free or reduced-price lunch, students with disabilities, and English Language Learners that are proportional to those of CSD 6, this year the school implemented a revised admissions lottery and waiting list process that explicitly preferences these at-risk subgroups.
- In 2013-14, TEP's literacy department focused on writing instruction, particularly argument writing. This process included bi-weekly meetings to analyze individual student writing, discussion of academic research-findings related to effective writing instruction, evaluation of writing curricula and instructional materials, the development of argument-writing units, and shared practices around the implementation of writing rubrics.
- The school has refined the construction and use of its Student Achievement Reports (SARs), subject-specific tools that identify the most important learning outcomes for the year as well as the assessments used to measure each outcome. To better align its ELA, Science, and Social Studies SARs to the Common Core Learning Standards (CCLS) and to one another, this year the school included on-demand assessments for all of these subjects. On-demand assessments are focused around one or two literary, informational, and poetry texts that are thematically tied to specific units of study.
- To better support its highest-need students, this year TEP expanded both its Special Education staff from four to six teachers as well as the reach of its after-school tutoring program, in which 80 students (more than 15% of the student body) work twice per week after school with volunteer and paid tutors.
- TEP expanded its extracurricular offerings to encompass seven selective sports teams that participate in city leagues and competitions (two basketball teams, a baseball team, a girls' volleyball team, and three competitive running teams) as well as five selective arts groups (TEP combos, TEP Band, two honors choruses, and Elite Artists group) that perform/exhibit in competitions and for the local community.
- The school implemented the use of CCLS-aligned lesson plans that utilize a common checklist/rubric across almost all subjects.

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<sup>6</sup> Self-reported information from school-submitted self-evaluation form on 2/14/14.

## **Essential Question 2: Is the school a fiscally sound, viable organization?**

### **Governance Structure & Organizational Design**

After reviewing information and documentation concerning Board turnover, Board minutes, reporting structure, organizational chart, annual accountability reporting documents, Board agendas, and school's website, the NYC DOE notes the following:

- The Board has six members, all voting, including the school's Principal. The school's Board Chair, David Coleman, has been with the school since 2008.
- As evidenced from a review of Board rosters, the Board did not experience turnover in 2013-2014.
- As recorded in the Board's minutes, there is a clear reporting structure with school leadership providing regular updates on academic, financial, and operational performance to the Board and its committees.
- Board minutes and documents to be discussed at each upcoming Board meeting are provided via the school's website for inspection by the public.

### **School Climate & Community Engagement**

After reviewing information and documentation concerning leadership turnover, staff turnover, attendance rate, student turnover, NYC School Survey results and response rates, and PTO meetings, the NYC DOE notes the following:

- The school did not experience leadership turnover in 2013-14.
- Instructional staff turnover was 34% with four out of 32 instructional staff choosing not to return for the 2013-14 school year from the prior year and seven out of 32 asked not to return. As of February 2014, the school had not experienced instructional staff turnover in 2013-2014.
- As of February 2014, average daily attendance for students during that school year was at 96.3%, which is higher than the school's charter goal of at least 95%.<sup>7</sup>
- Student turnover was 2.5% of students from the prior school year not returning at the start of the 2013-2014 school year. 1.6% of the students left the school between the start of the school year and February 2014.<sup>8</sup>
- The school reports having a Parent Association, as evidenced in its ACR self-evaluation and website.

### **2012-2013 NYC School Survey Results<sup>9</sup>**

<b>Categories</b>	<b>Result</b>	<b>Community</b>	<b>Response Rate</b>	<b>Citywide Rate</b>
<b>Academic Expectations</b>	Above Average	<b>Parents</b>	97%	54%
<b>Communication</b>	Above Average	<b>Teachers</b>	100%	83%
<b>Engagement</b>	Above Average	<b>Students</b>	96%	83%
<b>Safety &amp; Respect</b>	Above Average			

<sup>7</sup> Self-reported information from school-submitted data collection form on 2/14/14.

<sup>8</sup> Self-reported information from school-submitted data collection form on 2/14/14.

<sup>9</sup> Results are particular to the school type as identified in the 2013 School Survey.

## **Financial Health**

### Near-term financial obligations:

- Based on the FY13 financial audit, the school's current ratio indicated a strong ability to meet its current liabilities.
- Based on the FY13 financial audit, the school had sufficient unrestricted cash to cover its operating expenses for at least two months without an infusion of cash.
- A comparison of the enrollment projections for the 2013-2014 budget to the actual enrollment as of the end of the school year revealed that the school had met its enrollment target, supporting its projected revenue.
- As of the FY13 financial audit, the school had no debt obligations.

### Financial sustainability based on current practices:

- Based on the financial audits from FY11 to FY13, the school generated an aggregate surplus over the three audited fiscal years, and in FY13 the school operated at a surplus.
- Based on the FY13 financial audit, the school's debt-to-asset ratio indicated that the school had more total assets than it had total liabilities.
- Based on the financial audits from FY11 through FY13, the school generated overall positive cash flow from FY11 to FY13 and the school had positive cash flow in each measurable year.

### Annual Independent Financial Audit

- An independent audit performed showed no material findings.

### **Essential Question 3: Compliance with charter and all applicable laws and regulations?**

After a review of documentation submitted for the NYC DOE annual accountability reporting requirements for the 2013-2014 school year, the NYC DOE finds the following:

#### **Board Compliance**

The Board is in compliance with:

- The Board's membership size falls within the range outlined in the school's charter and in the Board's bylaws, five to 17 members.
- Currently, the officer positions outlined in the Board's bylaws are filled.

The Board is out of compliance with:

- The Board held 11 Board meetings with quorum in 2013 which is fewer than the 12 (monthly) meetings currently required by charter law.

#### **School Compliance**

The school is in compliance with (as reviewed May 2014):

- All staff members have appropriate fingerprint clearance.
- The school has submitted required documentation for teacher certification and is compliant with state requirements for teacher certification.
- The school has the required number of staff with AED/CPR certification.
- The school has submitted appropriate insurance documents to the NYC DOE.
- The school had an application deadline of April 8, 2014 and lottery date of April 8, 2014 adhering to charter law's requirement of accepting applications up to at least April 1.
- The school leader was trained in General Response Protocols/Fire Emergency Drill Conductor for NYC, as mandated by the NYC Fire Department.
- The school has posted its 2012-13 NYSED Annual Report and annual audit to its website, as specified in charter law.

The school is out of compliance with:

- The school has submitted its required immunization documentation but is not in compliance with Department of Health standards of 99% for immunization; the school had an immunization rate of 98.1% as of June 2014.

## **Essential Question 4: What are the school's plans for the next charter term?**

As reported by the school's leadership, the following is noted:

- TEP focused on ensuring its organizational sustainability via two main initiatives in 2013-2014:
  - TEP instituted a year-round calendar, including extended breaks and a shorter summer recess; in order to enable instructional and non-instructional staff to rest as well as to reflect during three planning institutes. The school states that internal survey data show this change had a positive impact on staff sustainability.
  - TEP continues work on its planned new school facility. The school's leadership is working with lead architects on the facility design, and its nonprofit development partner, the West Side Federation for Senior & Supportive Housing, is coordinating project funding. The school anticipates breaking ground on its new facility midway through 2015 and anticipates moving in midway through 2017.

### **Enrollment and Retention Targets**

As a reminder regarding accountability in the next charter term:

- Amendments to Article 56 of the New York State Consolidated Laws: Education, which relates to Charter Schools, call for charter schools, as a consideration of renewal, "to meet or exceed enrollment and retention targets" for students with disabilities, English language learners, and students who are eligible for the free and reduced price lunch program. The amendments further indicate "Repeated failure to comply with the requirement" as a cause for revocation or termination of the charter.
  - The law directs schools to demonstrate "that it has made extensive efforts to recruit and retain such students" in the event it has not yet met its targets.
  - The NYC DOE, as authorizer, will annually monitor the school's performance against these targets and the efforts it makes to meet this state requirement.
- In school year 2013-2014, TEP served a higher percentage of students qualifying for free or reduced price lunch and a higher percentage of students with disabilities compared to CSD 6 and citywide averages. The school served a lower percentage of English Language Learner students compared to CSD 6 but a higher percentage of English Language Learner students than the citywide average.

### **Special Populations**

	Free and Reduced Price Lunch					Students with Disabilities					English Language Learners				
	2009 -	2010 -	2011 -	2012 -	2013 -	2009 -	2010 -	2011 -	2012 -	2013 -	2009 -	2010 -	2011 -	2012 -	2013 -
	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014
<b>School</b>	83.5%	79.4%	84.9%	85.6%	89.1%	18.1%	18.2%	20.3%	20.9%	18.7%	21.3%	25.1%	25.0%	20.9%	20.5%
CSD 6	80.3%	81.8%	82.7%	82.5%	85.0%	14.9%	14.4%	14.3%	14.9%	15.8%	39.5%	38.7%	37.1%	34.8%	32.1%
NYC	62.1%	65.3%	68.1%	69.8%	73.5%	15.9%	15.9%	15.7%	16.1%	17.1%	16.1%	16.1%	15.5%	15.0%	14.7%

<b>Additional Enrollment Information</b>					
	2009-2010	2010-2011	2011-2012	2012-2013	2013-2014
Grades Served	5	5-6	5-7	5-8	5-8
CSD(s)	6	6	6	6	6

Comparisons to both the CSD(s) and City are made against students in grades K-8, 9-12 or K-12 depending on the grades the school served in each school year. Special population figures are as of October 31 for each given school year, with the exception of the 2012-2013 school year, which is as of October 26, 2012.