



# **The New York City Department of Education**



# **Quality Review Report**

**The Green School: An Academy for Environmental  
Careers**

**High School 454  
223 Graham Avenue  
Brooklyn  
NY 11206**

**Principal: Karali Pitzele**

**Dates of review: May 23 – 25, 2007**

**Reviewer: John Hudson**

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## Part 1: The school context

### Information about the school

The Green School opened in September 2006 and currently includes 106 grade 9 students. Hispanic students account for nearly two thirds of the enrollment while just over one third are Black. The proportion of English language learners is 9% and 7% are special education students. English is the predominant language spoken in the school. The proportion of students with Title 1 eligibility is 79%, which is higher than similar and City school averages. Attendance, at 84%, is lower than typically found in similar and City schools.

Empowerment Schools have more flexibility to make key decisions and control the resources for their school community. Empowerment Schools are free to develop or purchase professional development services, choose which schools to affiliate with, and benefit from reduced reporting and paperwork requirements.

## Part 2: Overview

### What the school does well

- The principal is respected by staff, students and parents who recognize that her vision is becoming a reality.
- Collaborative teams use data well to track the progress of: individual students, classrooms, ethnic groups, English language learners, special education students and students below grade level.
- Teams set longer-term goals for the achievement of individual students, and groups of students, with appropriate plans and timescales to realize them.
- Teachers and advisors use one-to-one meetings with students to keep them on track towards their annual goals, taking particular care with the substantial proportion of its students who are below grade level.
- The school has developed a curriculum with high expectations for student achievement coupled with an effective assessment system for tracking progress towards longer term goals.
- The principal manages the budget well to provide appropriately sized classes, effective use of staff and other necessary resources to support and challenge students.
- The school is characterized by a climate of mutual respect where students trust staff and feel well cared for.
- Students benefit from frequent environmental study opportunities with the school's primary partner.
- The school uses available data to continuously realign goals and plans

### What the school needs to improve

- Develop information management systems so that data is readily available to all who need access to it.
- Use detailed and frequently measured data to set regular interim goals so that student performance can be tracked towards longer-term goals and plans fine tuned to enable students to meet their goals.
- Share among all teachers the good planning and differentiated instructional skills used by some.
- Continue to engage with parents to ensure students attend punctually and regularly, learn effectively and take advantage of the many opportunities available to them.
- Continue to build and align capacity to ensure the school achieves its vision of excellence.

## Part 3: Main findings

### Overall Evaluation

#### **This is a proficient school.**

The principal and her staff have developed a comprehensive data system which includes students' middle school State test outcomes together with current assessment data. The school has created a thorough mechanism for assessing student achievement by rubric in both subject content skills and knowledge and habits of work, including attendance, punctuality and behavior. These assessments are augmented by regular Regents style tests to prepare students for their forthcoming examinations. Very good collaborative planning and tracking of student personal and academic achievement and progress are features of the school. The principal has a clear understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses.

The high school is located in a large building, which includes a middle school. Two more schools will join the building in September 2007.

### How well the school meets New York City's evaluation criteria

**Quality Statement 1 – Gather Data: School leaders and faculty consistently gather data and use it to understand what each student knows and is able to do and to monitor student progress over time.**

#### **This area of the school's work is proficient.**

The principal and her staff make considerable use of a broad range of past and current performance data to gain a deep understanding of student progress and achievement. These include State tests in middle school as well as their own assessments. The school uses rubrics to assess student achievement and progress in the skills, knowledge and understanding of the separate subject areas. They also collect data about students' habits of work, which include attendance and punctuality, self-discipline, engagement with classroom activities and timely completion of assignments.

Collaborative teams and individual teachers use these data well to track the progress of students, classrooms, ethnic groups, English language learners and special education students. The school takes very great care to track the progress of approximately 50% of students who are below grade level in English language arts and mathematics, and those near the borderline of grade level. The staff works co-operatively and well to compare progress between individual students, classrooms, subject areas, ethnic groups and other groups of interest.

The school plans to maintain this good data gathering and tracking practice within and across grade levels when a second cohort is enrolled in September. To accommodate this transition the school is investigating how to develop its data management system to capture data from all the various sources currently in use.

**Quality Statement 2 – Plan and Set Goals: School leaders and faculty consistently use available data to understand each student’s next learning step. Through collaborative planning and student and parent engagement, they set high goals for improving teaching practice and accelerating each student’s learning.**

**This area of the school’s work is proficient.**

The whole staff work collaboratively to set challenging but achievable, objectively measurable goals for longer term improvement. These goals focus on its twin track approach to student achievement and progress in distinct subject areas and in habits of work. Clear plans, kept under continuous review, ensure staff and students are working purposefully towards these goals. The school is beginning to set intermediate goals and plans which link in with its regular assessment cycle throughout the academic year.

A good system of regular, supported self-evaluation activities encourages students to focus their attention on reaching their annual goals. Goals for individuals, groups of students including classrooms, the grade 9 cohort currently in the school and academic subjects are set to match overall school goals. Teachers and advisors use one-to-one meetings with students to establish clear plans to keep them on track to achieve annual goals. The school takes particular care with the substantial proportion of its students who are below grade level.

The school is developing its capacity to include a minority of its parents and caregivers who are not yet fully engaged with the school. Parents who are involved in their children’s education strongly support the school’s environmental sustainability mission and high academic and behavioral expectations. Parents appreciate very regular reports of student achievement and progress, currently available in English and Spanish. The school plans to further develop its website to enable parents to access school information about their children, including punctuality and attendance data, assessment outcomes and homework assignments.

Informal conversations between teachers and frequent staff collaborative meetings continuously discuss how student achievement can be raised. These discussions are based on up-to-date data on student achievement and progress. Students and, where possible, parents are included in these conversations whose purpose is to keep the school under continual review and drive up standards of personal and academic achievement.

**Quality Statement 3 – Align Instruction: The school aligns its instructional activity and resources, and student engagement around its focused plans for accelerating learning for each student.**

**This area of the school’s work is proficient.**

All members of the administration and teaching team have been intimately involved in the selection of a curriculum which implements the mandated curriculum and through which student progress and achievement can be frequently assessed. The school has high expectations for student achievement and has created an effective assessment system for tracking their progress towards longer term goals.

All teachers strive to improve their planning and instructional practices. They seek to plan interesting activities in class to engage students and improve their achievement. Practice is variable, however, and while many lessons achieve these aims, some do not. The school as a whole is focusing its attention on how to share the good instructional practice

of some teachers so that all students benefit from well planned, differentiated activities, based on the learning needs of individual students. The school is working to improve student engagement and reduce instances of poor behavior of a minority of students, mainly in less-well managed classes.

The principal has made very good use of the budget available to her. Very good staffing decisions enable classes to be suitably sized and students benefit from a broad based curriculum in the school's opening year. Scheduling decisions ensure student performance continues to rise. Budget plans for next academic year are under discussion with the aim of broadening the curriculum further and extending the school day.

Students report that they feel respected by their teachers and other staff who respond to their academic and personal needs. A climate of care permeates the school. Students are confident there are many members of staff they could confide in, should the need arise. Patterns of attendance are inconsistent. Student attendance and engagement are high priorities and although many students arrive at school on time and attend very regularly, other students have been absent through illness while a few attend less frequently.

**Quality Statement 4 - Build and Align Capacity: The development of instructional leadership, staff, and capacity are aligned around the school's collaboratively established goals for accelerating the learning of each student.**

**This area of the school's work is proficient.**

The principal selects staff on the basis of their high expectations for student achievement and teachers benefit from a wide range of professional development. The school is focusing activities to develop strengths in those key areas it identifies from its analysis of performance data. These areas include: analyzing data to diagnose learning needs, aligning lesson plans and differentiating instruction based on the learning needs of students. Professional learning activities include: classroom visitations, self-evaluation, peer-evaluations and collaboration in teams. In these ways the school expects to provide professional development according to the individual needs of teachers and other members of staff.

The principal makes classroom observations and gives feedback afterwards. She plans for the frequency of observations to increase and be shared when the new assistant principal is in place. The frequency of teacher observation of their peer's classroom instruction has reduced since the opening months of the new school. The school has a very well established process for planning, evaluating outcomes and revising plans in weekly collaborative planning meetings. All members of the school are well-informed of goals and plans and practiced in self-evaluation and peer-evaluation to drive improvement.

The principal is respected by staff, students and parents for her vision for the school. They recognize that this vision is becoming a reality. Through staff development and new appointments, the principal is increasing her capacity to achieve growth, change and improvement. The school, located above a middle school, runs smoothly and procedures are followed. Students benefit considerably from the environmental science opportunities afforded by the school's lead partner, Brooklyn Center for the Urban Environment.

**Quality Statement 5 - Monitor and Revise: The school has built-in structures for evaluating each student's progress throughout the year, recognizing weaknesses in its improvement plans and teaching practices, and flexibly adapting plans and practices to meet its goals for accelerated learning.**

**This area of the school's work is proficient.**

The school makes good use of frequent assessment events to track student progress and review the effectiveness of plans, procedures and interventions. Collaborative teams regularly compare student progress within and across classrooms. The quality and suitability of available data provides opportunity for goals and plans to be realigned as necessary so that instruction remains highly responsive to student learning needs. The inclusion of interim goals will enable the principal and her staff to evaluate the effectiveness of plans more rigorously.

The school leadership team, principal and her staff are completing their review of the school's first year of operation and are revising and improving goals, plans, processes and use of resources. These changes will be included in its revised application submission to the Department of Education, which replaces the comprehensive education plan. In its first year of operation, school practices and use of resources have remained in alignment with the learning needs of students and the school's goals and plans to improve student outcomes.

## Part 4: School Quality Criteria Summary

<b>SCHOOL NAME: The Green School (HS 454)</b>	∅	✓	+
<b>Quality Score</b>		X	

<b>Quality Statement 1 – Gather Data: School leaders and faculty consistently gather data and use it to understand what each student knows and is able to do and to monitor student progress over time.</b>	∅	✓	+
1.1 The school uses available data and generates its own data to provide an objective, constantly updated understanding of the performance and progress of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>each student, classroom, grade level,</li> </ul>		X	
1.2 The school uses available data and generates its own data to provide an objective, constantly updated understanding of the performance and progress of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>ethnic groups, English language learners, special education students*</li> </ul>		X	
1.3 The school uses available data and generates its own data to provide an objective, constantly updated understanding of the performance and progress of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>all other categories of interest to the school*</li> </ul>		X	
1.4 Performance and progress are measured based on comparisons with similar schools, with the school's own past performance, and among students, classrooms, grade levels, academic subject areas, ethnic groups, and other groupings of interest within the school.		X	
<b>Overall score for Quality Statement 1</b>		X	

\* These criteria are partially aspirational as of now because schools do not have routine access to all of this data. The NYC DOE plans to provide schools with enhanced access to the necessary data in 2007.

<b>Quality Statement 2 – Plan and Set Goals: School leaders and faculty consistently use available data to understand each student's next learning step. Through collaborative planning and student and parent engagement, they set high goals for improving teaching practice and accelerating each student's learning.</b>	∅	✓	+
2.1 Using data, school leaders and faculty engage in a collaborative process to set demanding, objectively measurable goals for immediate and long-range improvement, and to develop plans and timeframes for reaching those goals.		X	
2.2 Goals and plans focus on the school as a whole and on each student, classroom, grade level, academic subject, and group of students whose performance or progress has been identified by the school as a particular focus area.			X
2.3 Particular attention is given to improving the performance and progress of students in greatest need of improvement.			X
2.4 High expectations are conveyed to students and parents/caregivers. Students and their parents/caregivers are regularly invited to provide information about each student's performance and how to improve. This information is central to setting challenging goals and developing, evaluating, and revising plans.		X	
2.5 Goals and plans for improving student performance and progress drive the activity of all members of the school community: leaders, staff, students, parents, and other partners.		X	
<b>Overall score for Quality Statement 2</b>		X	

<b>Quality Statement 3 – Align Instruction: The school aligns its instructional activity, resources, and student engagement around its focused plans for accelerating learning for each student.</b>	∅	✓	+
3.1 The school selects the curriculum based on how well it aligns with or implements the mandated curriculum and on the curriculum's capacity to generate meaningful interim data about progress towards goals and to support the school's high expectations and improvement plans.			X
3.2 Teachers are accountable for improving instruction and student outcomes. They plan and differentiate their instruction based on the needs revealed by student data and by the focused plan the school has developed to improve each student's and group of students' outcomes.		X	
3.3 Budgeting decisions are driven by the needs revealed by student data and by the focused plan the school has developed to improve each student's and group of students' outcomes.			X
3.4 Staffing decisions are driven by the needs revealed by student data and by the focused plan the school has developed to improve each student's and group of students' outcomes.			X
3.5 Scheduling decisions about the use of teacher and student time are guided by the needs that emerge from examining student data and by the focused plan the school develops to improve student outcomes.			X
3.6 Instructional programs actively engage students.		X	
3.7 Staff know and respect students and respond to their academic needs, as well as their personal needs that affect academic performance. Each student knows and trusts an adult on the staff who is concerned about him or her.			X
3.8 Student attendance and engagement are high priorities. High rates and patterns of absences trigger immediate intervention.		X	
<b>Overall score for Quality Statement 3</b>		X	
<b>Quality Statement 4 – Build and Align Capacity: The development of instructional leadership, staff, and capacity are aligned around the school's collaboratively established goals for accelerating the learning of each student.</b>	∅	✓	+
4.1 Leaders, faculty, and staff are selected based on their high expectations for student performance and progress and based on their commitment and capacity to use data, compare outcomes within and across classrooms and schools and develop and revise plans and methods to improve performance and progress.		X	
4.2 Professional development decisions are driven by the needs revealed by student data and by the focused plan the school has developed to improve each student's and group of students' outcomes. Professional development is designed to help leaders, faculty, and staff use data, self- and peer-assessments, and collaboration with peers to achieve goals for improved school and student outcomes. Professional development and self- and peer-evaluation are aligned and overlap.		X	
4.3 The principal frequently observes classroom teaching and has a considered strategy for improving the quality of each teacher's instruction. Teachers frequently observe and support each other's classroom instruction with the goal of improving student outcomes.		X	
4.4 Planning, evaluation of results, and revision of plans takes place in teams. Leaders and faculty inform each other of their goals and results, candidly evaluate themselves and each other, and use what is learned to drive improvement.		X	
4.5 The principal is respected and has capacity to effect change.		X	
4.6 The school runs smoothly. Procedures are clear, communicated to all, and are generally followed.		X	
4.7 The school aligns youth development and support services around stated academic goals. Partnerships with outside bodies are routinely used to achieve academic goals.			X
<b>Overall score for Quality Statement 4</b>		X	
<b>Quality Statement 5 – Monitor and Revise: The school has built-in structures for evaluating each student's progress throughout the year, recognizing weaknesses in its improvement plans and teaching practices, and flexibly adapting plans and practices to meet its goals for accelerating learning.</b>	∅	✓	+
5.1 All school plans and other interventions include frequent interim goals and diagnostic assessments of progress designed to reveal in objectively measurable ways whether the plan is being effectively implemented and reaching stated goals.		X	
5.2 Comparisons of student progress within and across classrooms and schools are used in making interim diagnostic assessments and measuring the progress of plans and interventions.			X
5.3 Information generated by periodic assessments and diagnostic measures of progress and comparisons is used to revise plans immediately in order to reach stated goals. Interim and final goals are modified when data objectively demonstrate that revision is required.		X	
5.4 Each plan's interim and final outcomes drive successive phases of goal setting and improvement planning, and each successive phase is characterized by agile and flexible realignment of practices and resources to improve student academic outcomes.			X
<b>Overall score for Quality Statement 5</b>		X	