



**Department of  
Education**

*Joel I. Klein, Chancellor*

**Quality Review Report  
Division of Performance and Accountability  
2010-2011**

# **Quality Review Report 2010-2011**

**The GLOBE School for Environmental Research**

**Middle School 272  
3710 Barnes Avenue  
Bronx  
NY 10467**

**Principal: Matthew Angell**

**Dates of review: January 25 – 26, 2011**

**Lead Reviewer: Linda Trifon**

## Part 1: The school context

### **Information about the school**

The GLOBE School for Environmental Research is a middle school with 485 students from 6 through grade 8. The school population comprises 63% Black, 30% Hispanic, 1% White, and 2% Asian students. The student body includes 12% English language learners and 9% special education students. Boys account for 55% of the students enrolled and girls account for 44%. The average attendance rate for the school year 2009 - 2010 was 89%.

### **Overall Evaluation**

**This school is developing.**

## Part 2: Overview

### What the school does well

- The principal makes informed and effective organizational decisions to support improvements in teaching and learning.
  - The GLOBE School for Environmental Research is a caring and safe community focused on accelerating student learning and creating a positive and nurturing learning environment. To that end, the principal redesigned the organizational structure to enable teams of teachers to work together and function as partial collaborative teams. As a result, struggling students learn side by side with higher performing students, accelerating their progress.
  - Teacher assignments and student programs align to the school's efforts to improve student-learning outcomes. The school assembled five teams of teachers to focus on a manageable cohort of students. These teams meet regularly to discuss their cohort of students, sharing responsibility for each student resulting in a decrease in school suspensions and improved demeanor.
- A positive school tone, augmented by excellent external and internal programs supports the academic, social and personal growth of students.
  - A culture of mutual trust and positive attitudes toward teaching and learning is emerging. This is a safe and nurturing environment where teachers and students feel supported and treat each other respectfully. In order to support the social and personal growth of students, the school provided teachers with professional development around diffusing teacher/student situations. As a result, teachers are equipped with strategies to engage students in brainstorming solutions enabling them to focus on academics. The principal shared that the lack of campus identity may contribute to students' unwillingness and desire to be part of the school. To that end, a school basketball team was created. Students sign contracts promising to adhere to the school's academic and behavioral expectations. This has elevated the school's culture of respect as students rally around The GLOBE School. One student shared, "It's one big family here."
  - The school's partnership with Queens College enables students to collect data about the environment and input that information into a computer to be shared globally by scientists. This program piqued the interest of students which led to the creation of an annual school science fair. The school is now planning to embed the program into the instructional core.
- The school has an instructional focus that is reinforced by the use of classroom observations focused on best practices to improve instruction.
  - To increase the level of student writing is a school-wide instructional focus. Writing rubrics are used throughout the grades resulting in a more coherent instructional program. The rubrics are aligned with the common core writing standards and student writing samples are graded accordingly, providing them with next learning steps.
  - School leaders make proactive performance evaluation and tenure decisions. Classroom observations aligned to the analysis of student data informs the

school's professional development opportunities that support effective instructional practices. The principal shared, "I think of my pre-and-post observations as one-to-one professional development for every teacher." As a result of this focused feedback, teachers are beginning to implement effective strategies that meet student needs.

- Teachers participate in professional collaborations where they analyze student learning outcomes and share effective instructional strategies and techniques that result in adjustments to classroom decisions.
  - Teacher teams regularly meet to discuss and analyze student work. Agendas are used to keep teachers on task and provide a history of the team's discussions and instructional decision-making. Probing and guided questions around student learning outcomes lead to newly identified student supports in order to meet the needs of students and targeted learning experiences.
  - School leaders embrace distributed leadership. The administrators selected teachers to be grade leaders and together with the principal, comprise the school's core team. The principal meets weekly to discuss the implementation of the instructional framework and to address questions and concerns of teacher team members, thus keeping abreast of teacher issues and student concerns to determine steps for improvements.
- Teams of teachers use Periodic Assessments to identify student needs and establish differentiated learning goals to accelerate progress.
  - Teachers use Acuity results to identify student needs. Based upon these results, learning goals are established with the student. In sample goal sheets, one student wrote that his goal was "To improve in evaluating the validity and accuracy of information." Another goal is, "To improve in recognizing how the author uses language to create images and feelings." Students know their goals, reflect on their progress and work toward achieving them.
  - During teacher team meetings, teachers analyze data to identify individual students who need additional support. For example, an analysis of data confirmed that students struggle with identifying words in context. Students were grouped and instruction planned according to their learning needs, resulting in greater success.

## **What the school needs to improve**

- Continue to strengthen pedagogy to ensure that instruction is differentiated, based on student learning outcomes, and that tasks are consistently rigorous, engaging and challenging for all students, including student subgroups to increase performance.
  - Across the school, teachers do not consistently differentiate mini-lessons to support students at their entry levels. For example, in a special education classroom, whole group lessons were not differentiated and tasks were worksheets resulting in low levels of student engagement. In most general education classrooms, strategies and routines were typically question and answer sessions. Consequently, a lack of rigorous student engagement and higher order thinking hinders students' opportunities to increase their academic

performance. The lack of technology-based instruction hinders students' ability to perfect computer literacy skills necessary for success in the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

- Enrich the curriculum in all classrooms, to ensure that the delivery of instruction leads to heightened levels of student engagement and questioning extends student thinking to maximize learning.
  - Although the school has aligned its curriculum to State standards, rigorous and challenging academic tasks are not embedded across grades and content areas. For example, tasks are mostly short answer activities and do not take into account the diversity of learners, resulting in uneven levels of engagement. Teacher questioning does not lead to high levels of critical thinking, preventing students from performing at higher levels. Lessons designed by teachers do not consistently provide entry points suitable for all learners.
- Identify all student subgroups and analyze their learning outcomes to identify areas of need, in order to plan differentiated instructional strategies to accelerate progress.
  - Teams of teachers and individual teachers gather summative and Periodic Assessment data on student learning outcomes. However, teams of teachers do not identify the strengths and needs of identified student subgroups. This hinders their ability to create a complete picture of individual student's learning needs to consistently provide effective, targeted instruction.
- Develop a school-wide system to monitor measure and evaluate progress toward interim student learning goals so that timely adjustments can be made to support increased student performance.
  - The lack of established interim benchmarks across all grades and subject areas inhibits school leaders' evaluation of student progress against those benchmarks. This impedes the school's ability to identify areas needing improvement.
  - Teachers send home interim progress reports to parents and families. The reports lack specificity about how students can achieve their learning goals and how families can support them at home. The absence of precise strategies significantly hampers students' ability to succeed. As of yet, teams of teachers have not developed a system for measuring progress toward student interim goals established for individual students and groups of students.
- Extend and expand communication and collaboration with teachers and parents to increase their capacity to engage in meaningful discourse and plan next steps.
  - Academic expectations for students are not at a challenging level to enable all students to meet and/or surpass the standards and grade-wide expectations. Parents expressed their desire for additional after-school and/or Saturday academic programs to support and enhance the regular instructional program. As of yet, the school has not created such programs. While faculty provide multiple opportunities for parents and families to be active participants in their child's education, teachers and parents stated their desire to engage in on-going communication with the principal. The lack of accessibility hinders the school's ability to engage all constituents in meaningful decision-making.

## Part 3: School Quality Criteria 2010-2011

<b>School name: The GLOBE School for Environmental Research</b>	<b>UD</b>	<b>D</b>	<b>P</b>	<b>WD</b>
<b>Overall QR Score</b>		<b>X</b>		
<b>Quality Statement 1 – Instructional and Organizational Coherence: The school has a coherent strategy to support student learning that aligns curriculum, instruction and organizational decisions.</b>				
<i>To what extent does the school regularly...</i>	<b>UD</b>	<b>D</b>	<b>P</b>	<b>WD</b>
1.1 Design engaging, rigorous and coherent curricula, including the Arts, for a variety of learners and aligned to key State standards?		<b>X</b>		
1.2 Develop teacher pedagogy from a coherent set of beliefs about how students learn best, and ensure that it is: aligned to the curriculum, engaging, and differentiated to enable all students to produce meaningful work products?		<b>X</b>		
1.3 Make strategic organizational decisions to support the school's instructional goals and meet student learning needs?			<b>X</b>	
1.4 Maintain a culture of mutual trust and positive attitudes toward learning that support the academic and personal growth of students and adults?			<b>X</b>	
<b>Quality Statement 2 – Gather and Analyze Data: School leaders and faculty consistently gather, analyze and share information on student learning outcomes to understand school and student progress over time.</b>				
<i>To what extent does the school ...</i>	<b>UD</b>	<b>D</b>	<b>P</b>	<b>WD</b>
2.1 Gather and analyze information on student learning outcomes to identify trends, strengths, and areas of need at the school level?			<b>X</b>	
2.2 Align assessments to curriculum and analyze information on student learning outcomes to adjust instructional decisions at the team and classroom level?		<b>X</b>		
2.3 Use or develop tools to enable school leaders and teachers to organize, aggregate, and analyze student performance trends?		<b>X</b>		
2.4 Engage in an open exchange of information with students and families regarding students' learning needs and outcomes?		<b>X</b>		

<b>Quality Statement 3 – Plan and Set Goals: School leaders and faculty consistently engage the school community and use data to set and track suitably high goals for accelerating student learning.</b>							
<i>To what extent does the school ...</i>	<b>UD</b>	<b>D</b>	<b>P</b>	<b>WD</b>			
3.1 Establish a coherent vision of future development that is reflected in a short list of focused, data-based goals that are understood and supported by the entire school community?			X				
3.2 Use collaborative and data informed processes to set measurable and differentiated learning goals for student subgroups, and students in need of additional support?			X				
3.3 Ensure the achievement of learning goals by tracking progress at the school, teacher team and classroom level?		X					
3.4 Communicate high expectations to students and families, engage them in decision-making, and promote active involvement in the school community?		X					
<b>Quality Statement 4 – Align Capacity Building: The school aligns its leadership development and structured professional collaboration around meeting the school’s goals and student learning and emotional needs.</b>							
<i>To what extent does the school ...</i>	<b>UD</b>	<b>D</b>	<b>P</b>	<b>WD</b>			
4.1 Use the observation of classroom teaching and the analysis of learning outcomes to elevate school-wide instructional practices and implement strategies that promote professional growth and reflection, with a special focus on new teachers?			X				
4.2 Engage in structured professional collaborations on teams using an inquiry approach that promotes shared leadership and focuses on improved student learning?			X				
4.3 Provide professional development that promotes independent and shared reflection, opportunities for leadership growth, and enables teachers to continuously evaluate and revise their classroom practices to improve learning outcomes?			X				
4.4 Integrate child/youth development, support services and partnerships with families and outside organizations with the school-wide goals to accelerate the academic and personal growth of students?			X				
<b>Quality Statement 5 – Monitor and Revise: The school has structures for monitoring and evaluating progress throughout the year and for flexibly adapting plans and practices to meet its goals for accelerating learning.</b>							
<i>To what extent does the school ...</i>	<b>UD</b>	<b>D</b>	<b>P</b>	<b>WD</b>			
5.1 Evaluate the quality of curricular, instructional and organizational decisions, making adjustments as needed to increase the coherence of policies and practices across the school?			X				
5.2 Evaluate systems for assessing students, organizing data, and sharing information with student and families, making adjustments as needed to increase the coherence of policies and practices across the school?		X					
5.3 Establish and sustain a transparent, collaborative system for measuring progress towards interim and long term goals and making adjustments during the year and over time?		X					
5.4 Use data to regularly evaluate the effectiveness of structured professional collaboration, capacity building and leadership development strategies?			X				
<b>Quality Review Scoring Key</b>							
<b>UD</b>	<b>Underdeveloped</b>	<b>D</b>	<b>Developing</b>	<b>P</b>	<b>Proficient</b>	<b>WD</b>	<b>Well Developed</b>