



NYCDOE

Quality Review: Final Report

The New York City Department of Education



Quality Review Report

Judith K. Weiss School

Public/Middle School 19

4318 Katonah Avenue

Bronx

NY 10470

Principal: Mr. Michael Schurek

Dates of review: October 26 - 27, 2006

Reviewer: Richard Woolf

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Part 1: The school context

Information about the school

Judith K. Weiss School, PS 19, is located in the Woodlawn section of the Bronx. It is a kindergarten through grade 8 school. The majority of students live within the Woodlawn area, but a number attend from other areas of the Bronx.

The school population is approximately 447: 61% white, 19.1% black, 16.7% Hispanic and 3.2% Asian and others. There is an average of two classes per grade grouped heterogeneously with an average class size of 24 in kindergarten through grade 5 and 35 in grades 6 through 8. The attendance rate is around 94%, which is above that of similar and other City schools.

Part 2: Overview

What the school does well

- The school's leadership is effective and insightful.
- There is a traditional approach which delivers significant outcomes, and students achieve very well.
- The staff is strong, hardworking and dedicated and their work is totally focused on their students.
- An excellent working relationship exists with parents.
- The school does innovative work with outside agencies, such as New York Leadership Center.
- Students are polite and courteous from kindergarten through grade 8.
- Students' attendance is good, well above similar and City-wide schools.
- This is an excellent school fully deserving of its success.

What the school needs to improve

- Ensure transfer of data is made easier between grades, to prevent any slowing down of progress when students change classes.
- Look further at ways of extending the curriculum offer for all grades, to further enhance student engagement and their personal development.

Part 3: Main findings

Overall Evaluation

This is a well developed school.

This is a very good and continuously improving school. The principal is a constant reminder of what hard work, a passion for education and dedication can achieve. Over the past five years there has been significant progress on all measurable outcomes in every grade from kindergarten through 8. The principal is uncompromising in his quest for excellence and has the full support of his staff in aiming high to raise achievement. The support of the assistant principals is much valued and appreciated by the principal in continuously moving the school forward.

Data is used very well to inform decision making at all levels, be they for individual improvement or whole school developments. The school is very data-driven and there are examples of effective data use as a tool to aid the staff in their primary focus of educating the whole child. There is strong evidence to demonstrate the collaborative nature of teamwork and teaching is strong across all grades.

While the parent body is critical of the lack of a wider curriculum offering, they appreciate the overall success of the school or the dedication and hard work of its staff.

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 well developed.

The school has a vast array of data on individual students as well for the whole establishment. Great importance is placed upon the compulsory elements of the system as laid down by the City and State tests. The administration and individual teachers monitor carefully improvements in the outcomes. The use of data over the last five years has had a significant impact upon progress. Teacher assessments are used extensively to monitor specific skills as well as observations and conferencing activities. The staff have very detailed data on their students which allow for an immediate response to any highlighted or perceived concerns.

The principal has a very clear overview of the progress being made for individual students and grades and as a result has clearly demonstrated that even students who are deemed in need of special education make more progress in general education than raw scores would suggest. This approach has clearly aided the overall progress of these students and improved school results.

Results compared to similar schools have shown a marked increase over time and the numbers gaining levels 3 and 4 have increased each year over the last five years. The principal acknowledges the improvement but is not complacent and works with his staff to continuously improve the outcomes by the better use of data to inform instructional practice.

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 well developed.

The principal places a great deal of professional trust in his staff to deliver high quality education for all students. He clearly articulates the goals for the whole school and individual grades but does not stipulate percentage increases, year on year. His approach has had the effect of teachers working collaboratively to ensure that progress is significant but realistic, and data has informed much of their work. There is strong evidence to suggest that because of this collaborative work, students’ groupings are altered rapidly to meet individual needs.

The work of the literacy coach and mathematics staff developer in supporting both staff and students is greatly appreciated at a professional and personal level and the impact of this has been to further open academic debate and enhance educational opportunity. One effect of this has been the creation of an innovative system for meeting the needs of special education students. Self-contained special education classes have been eliminated and replaced with a model that provides almost all special education services to students within the general education classroom. The success of this approach has had a ripple effect in other areas of the school and helped to improve the overall achievement. Students are aware of their individual progress and the impact it has in ensuring the continued success of the establishment and are able to articulate at length what is expected of them.

Attendance at parents meetings is comparatively high and the principal takes time to explain the impact data has on raising standards within the school. Parents are fully supportive of this approach and are kept informed on many levels as to the progress of the school, especially relative to individual expectations of their children which are clearly laid out by staff at the beginning of each year.

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 well developed.

The school has a well developed curriculum in English language art and mathematics that has had a significant impact upon an overall increase in test outcomes. However, other areas of the curriculum could be improved to further enhance student opportunities. This is tied in with a budgetary issue as the school receives no Title 1 funding. The excellent teaching is very successful in engaging and motivating the students to develop positive attitudes to their learning. Results of this high level of engagement are clearly demonstrated in outstanding levels of achievement in comparison with both similar and City-wide schools.

The principal adapts curriculum programs to best suit the needs of his staff and students to ensure further and continued success. The staff have a large part to play in curriculum design and are appreciative of having their thoughts and ideas listened to by the administration. They take responsibility for their students’ progress. The data compiled

from various testing mechanisms inform much of their work especially at the kindergarten through 5 grades. Where specific issues arise, good use of professional development is made whether sourced internally or externally and staff are required to share new-found knowledge with their colleagues. There is good use of information technology in a dedicated lab and each classroom, kindergarten to 8, has a number of computers for student use. This increases student engagement as well as developing their skills.

Compared to similar schools the attendance rates are well above average and are attributed to a number of factors that include good teaching, parental support and students themselves feeling valued by the entire school community.

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 well developed.

The leadership and management of the school are very good. The principal sets high standards for himself and is very successful in communicating these to others. He is well respected by the staff, students, parents and wider community. The staff is very stable and highly professional. This is clearly demonstrated throughout all aspects of school life. The rate of staff absence is very low when compared to similar schools and this acts as another indicator of staff professionalism.

The principal has a detailed knowledge of what is happening in classrooms through the numerous informal observation visits undertaken, over and above the required formal observations. There is a great deal of discussion and feedback as a result of both types of observation. Staff members are very appreciative of the principal's support and understanding of curriculum issues.

Professional development is seen as a key motivator in the school's drive to improve standards. Opportunities are provided for collaborative work at all grade levels, despite a loss of time due to contractual issues, and this supports staff in developing their practice. Professional development is targeted to both whole school and individual goals and priorities.

Through the professionalism of the entire school community, progress over the last five years has been significant. Complacency appears not to be in the school's vocabulary, as it is constantly challenging itself to meet new goals and further enhance the life opportunities of its students.

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 well developed.

PS 19 is a successful school when judged against all performance indicators and criteria. Monitoring plays a key role in determining in the planning process.

The Comprehensive Education Plan is formulated as a result of extensive consultation and establishes the school's priorities based upon all available data at the time of completion. Interim assessments in all curriculum areas are regularly undertaken as a means of showing progress to date and plans and targets are revised accordingly. Within this planning process, grade level and individual student targets are set and measured toward achieving overall success. The ability of the staff to adapt their instruction as a result of careful monitoring of the data is a strength. A further indication of this will be the use of the intern from the Leadership Center, who will be writing an electronic data collection program for the use of the entire staff to respond more quickly and more positively to changing data as the school receives it.

This is a highly successful school which uses data effectively to respond to the individual needs of its staff and students.

Part 4: School Quality Criteria Summary

SCHOOL NAME: Judith K Weiss School (PS/MS 19)	∅	✓	+
Quality Score			X

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.	∅	✓	+
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"> • each student, classroom, grade level, 			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"> • ethnic groups, English Language Learners, special education students* 			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"> • all other categories of interest to the school* 			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
Overall score for Quality Statement 1			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.

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.	∅	✓	+
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
Overall score for Quality Statement 2			X

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.	Ø	✓	+
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
Overall score for Quality Statement 3			X
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.	Ø	✓	+
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
Overall score for Quality Statement 4			X
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.	Ø	✓	+
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
Overall score for Quality Statement 5			X