



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



# **Quality Review Report**

**Judith K. Weiss**

**Elementary-Middle School 019**

**4318 Katonah Avenue  
Bronx  
NY 10470**

**Principal: Mr. Michael Schurek**

**Dates of review: October 16 - 18, 2007**

**Lead Reviewer: Peter Birks**

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## Part 1: The school context

### Information about the school

Judith K Weiss School, PS 019, is an elementary-middle school with 470 students from kindergarten through grade 8. The school population comprises 13% Black, 21% Hispanic, 62% White and 4% Asian students. The student body includes 4% English language learners and 15% special education students. Boys account for 54% and girls account for 46%. The average attendance rate for the school year 2006-2007 was 93.1%. The school does not receive Title 1 funding.

Judith K. Weiss is a compact school that is very popular with parents. The student population is increasing but the school is not able to expand its accommodation. As a consequence, the library is now used as a classroom. There is no gym or dedicated facilities for music and the arts. Based upon its original accommodation plan the school now is at 177% utilisation and is in need of further accommodation for its students.

## Part 2: Overview

### What the school does well

- The school reviews and updates its knowledge of student performance on a regular basis, particularly special education students.
- There are meticulous systems for tracking overall student progress over time.
- Students in greatest need of improvement are identified and supported in excellent fashion.
- The school consistently conveys high expectations to students, parents and caregivers.
- There is a very clear and effective focus on English language arts and math to provide good data on student achievement and progress.
- There is a strong climate of mutual trust and respect between all staff and students.
- Very good student attendance and punctuality are promoted effectively.
- The school operates smoothly and efficiently to promote high levels of student learning and discipline.
- School leaders use data well to set the next stage of improvement planning.
- The principal inspires and promotes a clear and exciting vision for the future development of the school.

### What the school needs to improve

- Rationalize and further develop school systems to enable teachers to retrieve performance data more easily.
- Continue to expand a broad and engaging curriculum to meet the range of educational demands of all students.
- Ensure that teachers provide more differentiated instruction to meet the individual learning needs of all students in their class.
- Formally compare and contrast the performance and progress of students according to ethnic groups, gender groups and other categories of interest.
- Measure school performance and compare student progress more formally alongside that of similar schools.

## Part 3: Main findings

### Progress made since the last review

The school has made good progress in addressing the issues identified in the previous Quality Review report

### Overall Evaluation

#### **This school is well developed.**

Judith K. Weiss School is a high performing school with ambitious expectations of all working and studying in the school. There is a strong sense of purpose, particularly focused on achievement in English language arts (ELA) and math, and this drives a commitment to high student performance. Student test results have improved impressively in recent years, in both ELA and math. The school is investing systematically in new information and communication technologies, for example, interactive whiteboards, and their use is having a positive and motivating effect upon student learning.

There are excellent systems for tracking student progress over time. The school reviews and updates its knowledge of the performance and progress of students on a frequent basis. This process identifies clearly the students in greatest need of improvement and supports them in excellent fashion. The compact nature of the school and the respect that exists between all staff and students contribute to an environment of strong mutual support. High expectations are prevalent and the school conveys them effectively to students, parents and caregivers. The school operates in a smooth and efficient fashion to support high standards of student learning and student discipline is excellent. Punctuality is good. Student attendance rates are higher than those found in similar schools citywide.

The school has made good progress since the last Quality Review report particularly in the transfer of data between grades. It has developed the school curriculum and recognizes the need to continue this development. The school inquiry team has yet to meet and looks forward to an early introduction to the new citywide data management system, ARIS. The team hopes that this new program will help to rationalize the management of data in the school. Teachers do not find it easy to retrieve data they need from the school's existing systems.

### 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 the student's progress over time.**

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

The school leaders have a very good understanding of the performance and progress of all its students, and review this on a regular basis. This is particularly so for special education students. These students are included in general education classes and form cooperative learning groups with other students. Their performance and progress is monitored very carefully within this setting and additional targeted support provided. The impressive improvement in their test results indicates the positive impact of this strategy.

The school meticulously measures student performance and progression over time in the core subjects. It monitors rigorously its own past performance, that of classes, grades and subject areas, as well as the patterns of student progression. The school constantly looks for value added features when tracking the pace of student progress. The principal attends grade meetings to help analyze these issues at grade level where intervention plans can be agreed and implemented. Combined grade meetings consider and debate the data in order to promote continuity and progression for students as they move through the grades. This helps to maintain high standards across all testing grades.

The school has inaugurated an electronic program to store records of the performance of its students. The school's own database enables leaders and faculty to analyze and collate information and to compare this information with the standardized test results. Through development of the inquiry team, the school plans to rationalize and develop further systems to manage information added to the database, probably with the help of ARIS. The school's current data management systems do not enable staff to easily retrieve and control this data.

The school does not formally compare and contrast the performance of students according to ethnic groups or gender, nor does it consider it necessary or practicable to measure its performance formally alongside similar schools.

**Quality Statement 2 – Plan and Set Goals: School leaders and faculty consistently use data to understand each student's next learning steps and to set suitably high goals for accelerating each student's learning.**

**This area of the school's work is well developed.**

Teachers work and collaborate very well to identify student goals and to monitor the progress of their students towards meeting those goals. Apart from regular grade meetings, the compact nature of the school enables many informal and useful contacts between teachers and this promotes a unity of purpose. Teachers establish goals for student improvements within timeframes, many of them reflecting school priorities and the pattern of curriculum progress for math and English language arts.

The school highlights overtly the students in greatest need of support and plans highly effective intervention strategies. Developments in the collation and analysis of student data enable the school intervention teams and individual teachers to identify such students accurately, and to develop well-targeted support. There is a healthy combination of professional interventions including from school coaches, intervention teachers, special education teachers, assistant principals and the principal.

The principal takes a strong and effective lead in promoting the school's high levels of expectation. He attends monthly meetings of the school Parent Teacher association and shares information openly with parents and caregivers on the achievements and progress of students as a whole. Parents appreciate this openness and the clarity with which the principal shares information with them. There is generally good communication between home and school, including frequent progress reports on the individual student's performance and progress. Teachers know their students well and talk regularly with their parents and caregivers when necessary and when they are available.

**Quality Statement 3 – Align Instructional Strategy to Goals: The school aligns its academic work, strategic decisions and resources, and effectively engages students around its plans and goals for accelerating student learning.**

**This area of the school's work is well developed.**

The core subjects of reading, math and writing are the areas of the curriculum most in focus in the school. Detailed data is gathered on student performance and progress, and programs for these areas are well organized. Following the previous Quality Review report, the school has extended the curriculum on offer to students. The school recognizes that a broad and engaging curriculum is not yet fully in place for all students nor is it completely linked to its developing data management programs.

Teachers collate data from their own continuous assessment in core areas of the curriculum, alongside data retrieved from the school's electronic recording and monitoring system. They make effective use of this information to adjust student groups in the classroom. The result is a clear focus on the standards of achievement of individual students. Teachers are becoming more secure with these monitoring and grouping strategies for students, and this is having a positive influence on broadening the style of instruction in the classrooms.

Teachers demonstrate an appreciation of the detail and accuracy of the data that they receive. They recognize and value the effect on student progress of the creative use of such information. They use their positive, collaborative relationships to share their understanding of student grouping strategies and to plan more patterns of differentiated instruction. As one teacher said, "It changes the way we organize ourselves." Although this has led to a clear focus on differentiated instruction, there is still variation and inconsistency in the way this is implemented in some classrooms. The school has identified this as an area for further improvement. As teachers develop their skills in using the school's monitoring data to influence their student grouping strategies and their style of instruction, they are becoming more aware also of their personal responsibilities. This accountability is clear throughout the school but particularly in the upper grades.

There is a strong climate of mutual trust between all staff, students, parents and caregivers. Student punctuality is carefully monitored and the principal and other staff members approach parents informally to manage any irregular patterns. This works well. Attendance rates are very good and students are rewarded for regular patterns of good attendance.

**Quality Statement 4 - Align Capacity Building to Goals: The development of leadership, teachers and other staff capacity is aligned to the school's collaboratively established goals for accelerating the learning of each student.**

**This area of the school's work is well developed.**

The principal conducts formal observations of classroom teaching during the year, particularly of non-tenured teachers. A pre-observation meeting usually precedes these formal observations to prepare for the observation visit. In addition, regular, random classroom visits take place and a short, written commentary is often left for the teacher, reflecting on aspects of the observation. Periodically, the principal provides a useful report at a school staff meeting to summarize the information gleaned from his classroom visits.

The school's compact nature facilitates informal processes for classroom visits and grows mutual support between teachers. They have opportunities both to visit their colleague's classroom and to observe demonstration lessons. The current emphasis is less on collaborative teacher intervisitations for informal observations and more on finding

opportunities to model or observe good practice, often with the valuable support of the school coaches. The school arranges for teachers to visit other schools also, in order to observe examples of good practice. Through these procedures, the teachers, including one teacher new to the profession, feel well informed and supported.

The school links formal opportunities for professional development well to its emphasis on informal contacts, teacher collaboration and the modeling of good practice. It combines, with increasing benefit, the practical insights gained from demonstration lessons and visits to other schools, with support for the use of data to improve its own differentiated teaching approaches in the classroom. The school has engaged a trainer from the Teachers College to work with teachers to develop this approach further. The impact on the performance of students on improved test results is witness to the value of previous professional development strategies. The school is now addressing with vigor, its need to develop greater consistency in the understanding and application of differentiated instruction in its classrooms.

The school operates smoothly and efficiently, with clear procedures, to promote high levels of student learning and excellent discipline.

**Quality Statement 5 - Monitor and Revise: The school has structures for evaluating each student's progress throughout the year and for flexibly adapting plans and practices to meet its goals for accelerating learning.**

**This area of the school's work is well developed.**

The school's robust plans to improve student outcomes include a clear commitment to the enhanced performance of students in their formal tests and a further increase in the pace of their progress. Reliable ongoing assessment strategies are linked closely to the electronic record system that measures the interim progress of students. Staff share a commitment to the use of analytic data as a measure of the effectiveness of their plans, and to help adapt planned programs, instructional strategies and the grouping of students.

School leaders examine the data carefully to establish the next stage of improvement planning. They review the data regularly to chart progress and to identify where it would be advantageous to make changes to school planning. Information emerging from staff planning activities, for example monthly grade meetings, teachers' collaborative planning meetings and school cabinet meetings, contributes to the regular review of goal setting and improvement planning by the school leaders. There is a spirit of open collaboration and communication that drives and reinforces the school's consistent focus on raising the level of student performance.

The principal provides a clear and exciting vision for the future development of the school and inspires members of the wider school community to support him. Alongside the drive for higher achievement and greater progress of students lies an increasing awareness of the importance of information communication technologies. The school is linking the desire to promote differentiated instruction and cooperative learning with creative investment in laptop computers with wireless capability and in interactive whiteboards in the classroom.

## Part 4: School Quality Criteria Summary

<b>SCHOOL NAME: Judith K. Weiss School (ES 019)</b>	Δ	▷	✓	+	◇
<b>Quality Score</b>				X	

<b>Quality Statement 1 – Gather Data: School leaders and faculty consistently gather and generate data and use it to understand what each student knows and is able to do and to monitor the students progress over time.</b>					
<b>To what extent do school leaders and faculty provide . . .</b>	Δ	▷	✓	+	◇
1.1 an objective, constantly updated understanding of the performance and progress of each student, classroom, grade level?				X	
1.2 an objective, constantly updated understanding of the performance and progress of special education students?					X
1.3 an objective, constantly updated understanding of the performance and progress of English language learners?				X	
1.4 an objective, constantly updated understanding of the performance and progress of ethnic groups, gender groups and all other categories of interest to the school?		X			
1.5 a measurement of performance and progress based on the school's own past performance, and among students, classrooms, grades and subject areas?					X
1.6 a measurement of performance and progress based on comparisons with similar schools?		X			
1.7 training, management systems and structures that support teachers in the use of school data to inform planning and instruction and to track the progress of students?			X		
<b>Overall score for Quality Statement 1</b>			X		

<b>Quality Statement 2 – Plan and Set Goals: School leaders and faculty consistently use data to understand each student's next learning steps and to set suitably high goals for accelerating each students learning.</b>					
<b>To what extent do school leaders and faculty . . .</b>	Δ	▷	✓	+	◇
2.1 engage in collaborative processes to set demanding, objectively measurable goals for improvement, and to develop plans and timeframes for reaching those goals?				X	
2.2 focus 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 identify and improve the performance and progress of those students in greatest need of improvement?					X
2.4 share whole school goals with all members of the school community to rigorously improve the performance and progress of students?					X
2.5 convey consistently high expectations to students and their parents/caregivers?					X
2.6 regularly provide students and their parents/caregivers with information about the goals set for each student, and about each student's progress and performance, and how they can improve?				X	
2.7 invite and enable parents/caregivers to provide useful information to teachers and the school about the learning needs and capacities of their children?				X	
<b>Overall score for Quality Statement 2</b>				X	

<b>Quality Statement 3 – Align Instructional Strategy to Goals: The school aligns its academic work, strategic decisions and resources, and effectively engages students around its plans and goals for accelerating student learning.</b>					
<b>To what extent does the school . . .</b>	<b>Δ</b>	<b>➤</b>	<b>✓</b>	<b>+</b>	<b>◇</b>
3.1 select core curricular approaches that facilitate and provide meaningful interim data about progress towards goals and focus on raising the achievement of students?					X
3.2 provide a broad and engaging curriculum, including the arts, to enhance learning both within and outside the school day?			X		
3.3 hold teachers accountable for the progress and learning of the students in their charge, for making instruction interesting and compelling, and for creating a positive safe and inclusive learning environment?				X	
3.4 ensure that teachers use school, class and student data to plan for and provide differentiated instruction that meets the specific needs of all the students in their charge?			X		
3.5 make budgeting, staffing and scheduling decisions strategically, based on data, to meet the school's academic goals for all students?				X	
3.6 ensure that there is an environment of mutual trust and respect between all staff and students to support personal and academic development?					X
3.7 ensure that there are effective and consistently applied procedures to encourage and monitor student attendance?					X
<b>Overall score for Quality Statement 3</b>				<b>X</b>	

<b>Quality Statement 4 – Align Capacity Building to Goals: The development of leadership, teachers and other staff capacity is aligned to the school's collaboratively established goals for accelerating the learning of each student.</b>					
<b>To what extent does the school . . .</b>	<b>Δ</b>	<b>➤</b>	<b>✓</b>	<b>+</b>	<b>◇</b>
4.1 use frequent observations of classroom teaching by the principal and other available information to develop a differentiated strategy for improving the quality of each teacher's instruction?				X	
4.2 make professional development decisions strategically, based on data, to help meet the improvement goals of students and teachers?				X	
4.3 provide frequent opportunities for teachers to observe each other's classroom instruction and to meet together in teams to plan, share effective practices, and evaluate one another's instruction in an open and reflective professional environment?				X	
4.4 develop effective procedures for the induction and support of teachers who are new to the profession or the school?				X	
4.5 align youth development, guidance/advising and other student support services around stated academic and personal development goals?				X	
4.6 consistently implement clear procedures that enable the school to run smoothly and encourage effective student learning?					X
4.7 create effective partnerships with outside entities that support the academic and personal growth of the students?				X	
<b>Overall score for Quality Statement 4</b>				<b>X</b>	

<b>Quality Statement 5 – Monitor and Revise: The school has structures for evaluating each student's progress throughout the year and for flexibly adapting plans and practices to meet its goals for accelerating learning.</b>					
<b>To what extent do . . .</b>	<b>Δ</b>	<b>➤</b>	<b>✓</b>	<b>+</b>	<b>◇</b>
5.1 the school's plans for improving student outcomes include interim goals that are objectively measurable and have suitable time frames for measuring success and making adjustments?				X	
5.2 the school's plans for improving teacher outcomes include interim goals that are objectively measurable and have suitable time frames for measuring success and making adjustments?				X	
5.3 teachers and faculty use periodic assessments and other diagnostic tools to measure the effectiveness of plans and interventions for individual and groups of students in key areas?				X	
5.4 teachers and faculty use the information generated by periodic assessments and other progress measures and comparisons to revise plans immediately in order to reach stated goals?				X	
5.5 school leaders track the outcomes of periodic assessments and other diagnostic measures and use the results to make strategic decisions to modify practices to improve student outcomes?				X	
5.6 school leaders and staff use each plan's interim and final outcomes to drive the next stage of goal setting and improvement planning?					X
5.7 the principal and school community have a clear vision for the future development of the school and implement procedures and systems to effect change?					X
<b>Overall score for Quality Statement 5</b>				<b>X</b>	