



**Department of
Education**

Joel I. Klein, Chancellor

**Quality Review Report
Office of Accountability
2008-2009**

Quality Review Report 2008-2009

The Judith K. Weiss – Woodlawn School

Elementary/Middle School 019

**4318 Katonah Avenue
Bronx
NY 10470**

Principal: Timothy Sullivan

**Dates of review: April 6-7, 2009
Lead Reviewer: Kim Outerbridge**

Part 1: The school context

Information about the school

The Judith K. Weiss School is an elementary-middle school with 511 students from kindergarten through grade 8. The school population comprises 8% Black, 21% Hispanic, 66% White, 4% Asian and 1% American Indian students. The student body includes 4% English language learners, and 17% special education students. Boys account for 53% and girls account for 47%. The average attendance rate for the 2007-2008 school year was 95.7%. The school is not in receipt of Title 1 funding.

There are two classes per grade. Although there is no official space for physical education, the cafeteria and outside schoolyard accommodate students for gym.

Overall Evaluation

This school is well developed.

The school has made good progress since the last review. The administrative team effectively implements the school's vision and mission while supporting a professional learning community where all staff members are held accountable. The administrative team, formed at the beginning of this school year, clearly focuses on student progress. The school implements Teacher's College Reading and Writing Projects daily in order to build strong writing skills across the core content areas. Teachers attend ongoing professional learning experiences and, in addition, on site staff developers provide a wide range of support for all of the staff. The entire building is print rich with student exemplars aligned to State standards. Student work displays are both inviting and informative. Staff, students, and parents express their ongoing satisfaction with the support and services received.

The Inquiry Team includes nine members of staff. Focus for this team is detailed and studied. There are two target populations. One target population is students with low levels in fluency, comprehension, decoding, and writing. English language learners and special education students participate in the program, 'Language!' as part of the school's inquiry study. Inquiry Team members monitor change strategy over time. In the 7th grade, the team targets a second population, based on lower levels of proficiency in State tests. Currently, 43 students participate in the Rally GOAL. program. Both groups of students receive ongoing support as part of the school wide focus. Members of the Inquiry Team provide direct instruction to the targeted students. In this way, the entire team practices and supports the cyclical model of inquiry. Furthermore, the work of the Inquiry Team allows staff to engage effectively in professional development, collaborative planning, and the process of action research where data informs curriculum, instruction and student learning goals.

Part 2: Overview

What the school does well

- The school uses a wide range of data, so leaders and faculty have an ongoing understanding of individual, group, and subject performance, informing instruction and organizational adjustments.
- Students with particular needs, including special education students, English language learners and challenging students benefit from targeted, caring support according to their needs, and so achieve success.
- Teachers and coaches use collaborative and data informed processes for planning and goal setting for grade levels and subjects and modify these as necessary, based on identified needs.
- Expectations for delivering the standards based curriculum are clear and supported well by pacing guides and instructional calendars that include checkpoints for monitoring progress.
- Teachers collaborate frequently to examine student work, plan together and visit each other's classrooms, sharing ideas and best practice in a continual desire to improve student outcomes.
- The school effectively includes parents as partners in supporting their children's achievement and personal growth.
- Leaders regularly use all manner of data to evaluate the effectiveness of organizational decisions, interventions, professional development supports and deployment of staff.

What the school needs to improve

- Ensure that student achievement is consistently encouraged and monitored through the extended use of goal setting in technology.
- Encourage the further development of students' academic and personal skills through the expansion of enrichment programs, as budget and space allows.
- Extend the work of the inquiry process by sharing the Inquiry Team findings and developing models of best practice.

Part 3: Main Findings

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

Quality Statement 1 – Gather Data: School leaders and faculty consistently gather, generate and analyze information on student learning outcomes and use it to understand what each student knows and can to do and to monitor the student's progress over time.

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

The school collects a wide range of data. This includes all standardized test data stored in the New York Start data system. The school usefully combines English language arts, math, science and social studies results into an agreed computerized template. This efficient system also captures baseline data, Fountas and Pinnel reading levels, science pre-and post assessments, attendance and gender studies. The uses a wide range fo assessments to gather achievement information, including Teacher's College AssessmentPro, Teacher's College Reading and Writing Project assessments and Everyday and Impact math assessments. Scale score analysis, with meticulous focus on middle school outcomes allows the school to identify trends and patterns as seen in the progress report measures. Teachers collect and store data using a data binder (TDA). All standardized and interim assessment results create a picture of the individual student strengths and areas of need.

At twenty percent of the student population, the proportion of English language learners and special education students is high. Because of this, the 'Language!' program assessment is administered for analysis and classification of individual student needs within the sub-groups. Charts and graphs show the data in meaningful displays. Gender studies provide no trends at this time, as comparisons do not show full information for pupils transferring from private schools and specifically there are gaps in analyses of math. The school provides additional support for the this specific subgroup, but it not always grounded in specific analysis of outcomes.

The school has a website and every teacher has his or her own page. Here, teachers and parents can access the current unit of study, class work, homework assignments, school wide data, grade and class information and use email. Subsequently, interim progress reports and report cards give parents, students, and staff multiple opportunities to discuss assessment results, learning needs and outcomes and attendance data. School wide data is shared at the initial parent association meeting. Planners, phone calls and ongoing letters solidify students and families' ability to assess and track each student's progress.

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.

The school creates annual school goals for the Comprehensive Educational Plan that align with the principal performance review. There are currently four school wide goals, agreed on by the school leadership team. This year, timeframes for achieving goals are established for grades kindergarten to 2, grades 3 to 5, and grades 6 to 8. Goals and timeframes are on display in the principal's office. They are aligned to the school year

calendar and include interim timeframes for monitoring student targets. Increased focus on student achievement with the establishment of specific goals, the implementation of action plans and the agreed timelines, creates a transparency amongst the entire school community. An outside electronic messenger informs parents of ongoing events and the overall instructional goals for the school. The parent association website also supports the school's goal setting process.

Teachers construct goals in collaboration with peers. The Incorporation of the Santa Cruz professional standards gives the school obvious criterion and quantifiable outcomes. This process begins each September and has evolved over time. Consequently, teachers create goals in collaboration with students during one on one conferencing. Teachers set measurable and rigorous learning targets for individual and groups of students in all core subjects. Goals are appropriate for each grade level. This process continues to evolve as the school sustains the practice of adjusting various timeframes so that learning goals are steadily obtained and student outcomes consistently increase. This includes the formulation of individual student technology goals.

Each parent receives a copy of the goals with explanations of how each student will attain each learning objective. Parents talk to their children with clear focus and direction. The school communicates benchmarks and next steps clearly to all stakeholders. School leaders and faculty meet with students regularly, and periodically with their families, to ensure that there is a clear understanding of the goals in all core subjects and timeframes set to increase student achievement. Parents and students express a clear understanding of how they can achieve these expectations because the school effectively communicates high expectations about attendance, behavior and academic performance.

Quality Statement 3 – Develop Coherent Instructional and Organizational Strategies: The school uses rigorous curricula, teaching and organizational decision making to engage students and faculty in meeting all students' learning goals.

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

Organizational decisions support teacher and student development over time. Classes are very structured and the execution of instruction is aligned with the reader's and writer's workshop. Students are carefully organized within classes based on June assessments. All special education classes effectively follow the collaborative team teaching model. Students are frequently engaged in partner work. Useful models and exemplars are available on charts in classrooms. There is flexibility in each course to challenge and meet the needs of individuals and groups of students. Because of this, the lowest, middle and highest achieving students make equally good progress. Using 'post-its', the teacher writes specific feedback for individual students. General education classes include a higher performing student group on each grade. Students in the 8th grade follow the workshop model with smooth transitions. The teacher repeatedly models using "think aloud" as a vehicle to engage students, and have meaningful interactions during the reading aloud.

All classrooms are equipped with smart boards. School leaders ensure that teachers have the resources that they need in order to deliver coherent and rigorous instruction, with flexibility to implement innovative approaches. Teachers use smart board technology while engaging students in rigorous experiences. In a 5th grade math classroom, students work in groups as the teacher alternates between assisting groups

and modeling using the smart board and document reader. Feedback is differentiated and the teacher has a formal system for tracking student outcomes. An example of this is seen in teacher conference notes where explicit teaching points are documented and assessments are recorded. Flexible groups are established. Math challenges, builders, and blasters form leveled groups to provide appropriate tasks for the students. Student work displays are consistent throughout the building. Student work that is standards based and aligned with the curriculum is presented on bulletin boards inside and outside of classrooms.

The school wide focus is writing across the core subject areas. This year, the school is working with Teacher's College. This partnership secures teacher resources, professional models, staff developers and ongoing feedback to support favorable student outcomes. Ongoing running record data, the analysis of student writing, the Language program assessment, gives the school evidence of accelerated growth. Teachers are purposeful in lessons observed, making strategic choices in how to introduce, deepen, and extend lessons so that every student is engaged and is able to demonstrate content understanding in all core subjects. Teachers participate in collaborative planning two periods per week. In this way, they are able to revisit the school wide goals and establish interim goals, making adjustments as necessary. Dedicated common planning sessions focus staff to look at student work, make judgments and modify implementation strategies. Organized learning walks provide the school community with instructional feedback and next steps as a collective.

Quality Statement 4 - Align Capacity Building to Goals: The school aligns its leadership development and structured professional collaboration around meeting the school's goals for accelerating student learning.

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

Informal and formal observations are completed and are current. The principal and cabinet use this form to record anecdotal evidence for observed practice. A separate log of assistance includes dates, subject/content area, including specified assistance given and follow-up. Teachers speak directly to feedback given to support their practice. As a result, the administrative team is able to track teacher development and improved student results. The administrative team is approachable and assists staff members with meeting expectations.

Professional development focuses strongly on increasing student achievement. An initial survey uncovers the differentiated needs for the teaching staff at the school. Collaborative planning, mentoring and new teacher supports, lab sites lead by Teacher's College, and modeled lessons lead by staff developers from Teacher's College and internal coaches are examples of supports available to staff. In addition, teacher progress reports, interclass visitations, Integrated Service Center professional development, in-house learning walks, and the Leadership Learning Support Organization professional development sessions provide teachers with multiple opportunities for learning. As part of the process to complete the school self-evaluation form, teachers receive a template and respond to specific prompts aligned to quality statements 1 through 5. This exercise gives the school additional data to support the year-long professional development plan.

The work of the Inquiry Team informs instructional decisions that are implemented school wide and is based on the examination of initial and ongoing assessment results and the examination of student work. The team evaluates the success of students using the cyclical approach of action research. Using the 'Language!' program and Rally

GOAL as change strategies, student outcomes are monitored using online tracking systems. An Inquiry Team bulletin board and quarterly newsletter inform the staff of progress and success. Examples of this are the approaches used to model for and explicitly teach to students. Staff participate in the Inquiry Team meetings as open invitations are publicly displayed weekly. The school acknowledges the usefulness of the inquiry process and seeks to extend this work to influence school wide developments.

School leadership and staff work in partnership with families to provide consistent academic and personal support. The guidance counselor and SAPIS worker meet with students for peer mediation, high school articulation and host a gardening club. Chess classes and a wrestling team sponsored by the Right Moves and Project Arts further enhance student personal and academic growth. The student council empowers scholars to facilitate fundraiser and or social awareness events. The Kennedy Center, Woodlawn Boys and Girls club, Irish Aisling Center, Precious Moments - the Bereavement Program at Calvary Hospital all serve as organizations providing resources to students and families. Additional enrichment programs and links with Community Based Organizations are high on the school's 'wish list'. Unfortunately, budget and physical space largely influence these decisions, but the school has School leaders examine the effect of support services on student personal and academic growth.

Quality Statement 5 - Monitor and Revise: The school has structures for monitoring and 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.

Teachers across core subjects demonstrate how they consistently assess and monitor the progress of all students, and set and revise measurable goals to accelerate student learning. Strategies for implementation include collaboration, pre and post assessments, and running records. Interim goals with calendars and benchmarks are evident across the school and in teachers' data binders. All data serves as a tool for monitoring student achievement of interim goals. Teachers monitor progress at agreed intervals and reassign student groupings in direct response to analysis of interim outcomes. They organize the teaching of skill sets based on new data. Conferencing binders further support this work. Students articulate the purpose of teacher and student conferences. With assistance from teachers, students suitably revise goals in all of the core subject areas.

School leaders use the progress report, quality review, learning environment survey, findings from the inquiry team, other professional collaborations, student work, interim and other assessments, and attendance data to evaluate the effectiveness of organizational and instructional decisions. Also under regular review are teacher professional development plans. Outside of the collaborative team teaching model, teachers are assigned in pairs. This buddy system allows the staff to pool resources effectively, share understandings, monitor, and evaluate student progress throughout the year.

Drilling down from school wide to individual student goals verifies an alignment and reinforces the school's vision and mission. Parents, students, teachers, and the administrative team demonstrate a collegial spirit in a school where children receive a fair and equitable education.

School Quality Criteria 2008-2009

School name: Judith K. Weiss School X019	△	➤	✓	+
Overall QR Score				X
Quality Statement 1 – Gather Data: School leaders and faculty consistently gather, generate and analyze information on student learning outcomes and use it to understand what each student knows and can do, and to monitor the student’s progress over time.				
<i>To what extent do school leaders and faculty regularly...</i>	△	➤	✓	+
1.1 collect and analyze actionable information, including assessment results and attendance data, to provide a complete view of the learning outcomes and needs of individual students and groupings of students?				X
1.2 focus analysis on the learning outcomes and needs of all sub-groups of students?				X
1.3 engage in an open exchange of information with students and families about students’ learning needs and outcomes, including assessment results and attendance data?				X
1.4 design or adapt tools to enable school leaders and teachers to organize and analyze student performance, identify trends and inform instructional and organizational decisions, and to enable students and their families to assess and track each student’s progress?				X
Overall score for Quality Statement 1				X
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.				
<i>To what extent do school leaders and faculty...</i>	△	➤	✓	+
2.1 use collaborative and data-informed processes to set measurable, actionable and differentiated learning goals in core subjects for individual students and groupings of students and develop differentiated plans and timeframes for reaching these goals?				X
2.2 use collaborative and data-informed processes to develop the school’s Comprehensive Educational Plan (CEP)?				X
2.3 ensure that the achievement of learning goals, and the implementation of plans and timeframes for reaching these goals, is the central focus of school leaders, faculty, students and families?			X	
2.4 communicate high expectations to all students and families, and involve students in developing their learning goals and plans and in taking their next learning steps?				X
Overall score for Quality Statement 2				X

DEFINITIONS

“**Analyze**” or “**analysis**” includes, but is not limited to, comparisons of:

- the current and past outcomes of . . . individual students, administrative groupings and sub-groups of students and the school itself in core subjects;
- the outcomes of different classrooms and sub-groups in the same grades and core subjects; and
- the school’s Progress Report and other outcomes to those of peer/other schools

“**Assessment results**” include student outcomes on summative assessments (e.g., state ELA, math, science and social studies tests, NYSESLAT, Regents Exams, and Performance Based Assessment Tasks) and formative assessments aligned to the school’s curriculum (including Periodic, DYO, and teacher-developed Classroom Assessments).

“**Core subjects**” are ELA, math, science, social studies/history, the arts, foreign language, and physical education/health.

“**Data-informed processes**” include analysis of Progress Report, Quality Review, Learning Environment Survey, Inquiry Team findings, assessment results and attendance data

“**Groupings of students**” include classrooms, grade levels and high school cohorts.

“**Organizational decisions or strategies**” refer to a school’s use of budget and resources, staffing, planning, scheduling, grade structure, departments and teacher teams and other aspects of the school’s structure and organization that can affect student outcomes.

“**Sub-groups of students**” include special education students, English Language Learners, the other NCLB sub-groups, boys, girls, and other groups significant to the school.

Quality Statement 3 – Develop Coherent Instructional and Organizational Strategies: The school uses rigorous curricula, teaching and organizational decision making to engage students and faculty in meeting all students’ learning goals.							
<i>To what extent do ...</i>	Δ	➤	✓	+			
3.1 school leaders and faculty deliver challenging and engaging curricula in core subjects, including the arts, that are aligned to state standards?				X			
3.2 teachers plan and teach lessons that are differentiated to meet the needs of individual students and student groupings and are designed to enable all students to reach their learning goals?				X			
3.3 school leaders make strategic organizational decisions to support a coherent and rigorous instructional approach that enables students to reach their learning goals?				X			
3.4 school leaders maintain a culture of mutual trust and respect and positive attitudes toward learning that support the academic and personal growth of students and adults?				X			
Overall score for Quality Statement 3				X			
Quality Statement 4 – Align Capacity Building to Goals: The school aligns its leadership development and structured professional collaboration around meeting the school’s goals for accelerating student learning.							
<i>To what extent do school leaders...</i>	Δ	➤	✓	+			
4.1 use their own observation of classroom teaching and the analysis of student outcomes to implement an explicit, differentiated strategy to improve each teacher’s instruction, with a special focus on new teachers?				X			
4.2 encourage teachers to take part in Inquiry Teams and other structured professional collaborations (informed by the examination of student work, assessment outcomes and their own peer observations) and share in the instructional leadership of the school with the goal of improved student learning?				X			
4.3 provide professional development that encourages teachers to continuously evaluate and revise their classroom practices to improve student outcomes?				X			
4.4 utilize youth development, support services and partnerships with families and outside organizations to accelerate the academic and personal growth of students?			X				
Overall score for Quality Statement 4				X			
Quality Statement 5 – Monitor and Revise: The school has structures for monitoring and evaluating each student’s progress throughout the year and for flexibly adapting plans and practices to meet its goals for accelerating learning.							
<i>To what extent do...</i>	Δ	➤	✓	+			
5.1 the school’s plans for improving student outcomes and its strategies for improving each teacher’s instructional practices include measurable interim goals and suitable time frames for evaluating success and making adjustments during the year?				X			
5.2 school leaders and faculty use interim checkpoints and data to inform lessons, improve curriculum, differentiate instruction and revise student learning plans throughout the year?				X			
5.3 school leaders use data to regularly evaluate the effectiveness of and modify organizational decisions, structured professional collaborations and teacher improvement strategies?			X				
5.4 school leaders and the school community have a clear vision for the future development of the school and implement procedures and systems to support academic, personal and professional growth?				X			
Overall score for Quality Statement 5				X			
Quality Review Scoring Key							
Δ	Underdeveloped	➤	Underdeveloped with Proficient Features	✓	Proficient	+	Well Developed