Department of Education
Carmen Fariña, Chancellor

Office of School Quality
Division of Teaching and Learning

Quality Review Report

2014-2015

Jacob H. Schiff

06M192

500 West 138th Street
New York
NY 10031

Principal: Susan Rivera

Date of review: November 20, 2014
Lead Reviewer: Manuel Ramirez

The School Context

Jacob H. Schiff is an elementary school with 314 students from grade Pre-K through grade 5. The school population comprises 6% Black, 92% Hispanic, 1% White, and 1% Asian students. The student body includes 32% English language learners and 17% special education students. Boys account for 51% of the students enrolled and girls account for 49%. The average attendance rate for the school year 2013-2014 was 92.0%.

School Quality Criteria

Instructional Core		
To what extent does the school…	**Area of:**	**Rating:**
1.1 Ensure engaging, rigorous, and coherent curricula in all subjects, accessible for a variety of learners and aligned to Common Core Learning Standards and/or content standards	**Celebration**	**Proficient**
1.2 Develop teacher pedagogy from a coherent set of beliefs about how students learn best that is informed by the instructional shifts and Danielson Framework for Teaching, aligned to the curricula, engaging, and meets the needs of all learners so that all students produce meaningful work products	**Focus**	**Developing**
2.2 Align assessments to curricula, use on-going assessment and grading practices, and analyze information on student learning outcomes to adjust instructional decisions at the team and classroom levels	**Additional Findings**	**Developing**
School Culture		
To what extent does the school…	**Area of:**	**Rating:**
3.4 Establish a culture for learning that communicates high expectations to staff, students, and families, and provide supports to achieve those expectations	**Additional Findings**	**Developing**
Systems for Improvement		
To what extent does the school…	**Area of:**	**Rating:**
4.2 Engage in structured professional collaborations on teams using an inquiry approach that promotes shared leadership and focuses on improved student learning	**Additional Findings**	**Developing**

Area of Celebration

Quality Indicator:	1.1 Curriculum	Rating:	Proficient

Findings:
School leaders and faculty have worked to ensure that curricula are aligned to Common Core Learning Standards (CCLS) and other content standards, emphasizing higher order thinking skills across grades and subjects.

Impact:
Common Core aligned curricula guide the design of learning experiences to ensure that all students have access to rigorous and challenging tasks.

Supporting Evidence

- Teachers work to adapt pre-existing Common Core aligned curricula to the learning needs of students. Sources that support this work include, *Go Math*, Core Knowledge, New York City Science and Social Studies Scope and Sequence and *Expeditionary Learning*.

- The curricula documents contain tasks aligned to CCLS and include modifications such as utilization of technology to provide multimedia experiences for all learners and visual displays that model reading strategies.

- Across grades and content areas, unit plans show challenging tasks that include scaffolds to solve mathematical equations and/or word problems and emphasis on the CCLS instructional shifts, with students being asked to interpret or make inferences from texts as well as develop questions and hypothesis.

Area of Focus

Quality Indicator:	1.2 Pedagogy	Rating:	Developing

Findings:
Instructional practices across classrooms did not consistently provide multiple entry points into the curricula. Evidence of higher order thinking and participation among students varied across the classes visited.

Impact:
Across classrooms, lessons did not consistently incorporate higher order thinking questions and tasks, resulting in uneven evidence of high quality work products and discussions.

Supporting Evidence

- Further, questioning strategies at times led to lessons that did not push student thinking. For example, during the lesson about forces and motion a 2nd grade teacher engaged in rapid fire low level questioning (What do we mean when we say push? What does pull mean? Is the object near or far? Do you get the answer from your head?) Students readily called out one word answers which required little or no thinking on their part.

- Strategies to support the multi-ability levels of students in the class were not evident across classrooms. For example in a 4th grade classroom where students worked in groups to find and use context clues to determine the meaning of unknown words on selected pages of a text, when one student asked,“ What do we do when we finish?” the teacher replied, “Later we will deal with that”. In a 3rd grade class where students were asked to state what they will be writing about, there was no direct modeling by the teacher so they spent over 10 minutes listing “topics I know about”.

- In a bridge class with 2nd and 3rd grade students with disabilities, the teacher handed out math manipulatives but did not provide scaffolds to help students complete the task so although there were three adults in the room, only a few students stayed on task. During the de-briefing about that lesson the principal noted that the lesson needed improved “planning, execution and use of resources”, was well as “scaffolds and visual representations” to support students.

- Lessons in a few classrooms facilitated discussion amongst students. For example, in a 5th grade class the teacher provided focus questions, with differentiated prompts for students to work in groups, discussing the quality of their written responses to questions about “Esperanza Rising”. This resulted in a lively discussion which was not the norm in some other classrooms where instruction involved only a few students in a teacher dominated question and answer session or facilitated brief turn and talks that did not allow students to explore topics deeply.

Additional Findings

Quality Indicator:	2.2 Assessment	Rating:	Developing

Findings:
Assessment practices do not result in regular sharing of meaningful feedback to students regarding their performance and progress. Ongoing checks for understanding and students' self-assessment were inconsistent across classrooms.

Impact:
All students do not consistently receive actionable feedback that informs them about their next steps and results in adjustments that target their individual learning needs across content areas.

Supporting Evidence

- The school's assessment program includes Fountas and Pinnell running records, end of unit performance tasks in literacy and math, teacher conferencing with students and Ed. Performance, an interactive online assessment system. Teachers also indicated that they use rubrics and checklists to evaluate the level of student mastery of learning goals.

- Most classrooms visited had teacher data binders showing student data and work samples from assessments of student performance; however, there was no evidence of classroom level modifications made as a result of data and work sample analysis by teachers.

- At the student interview session, some students articulated that even though work samples contained feedback, they were not clear on how to improve their work based on the feedback.

  During lessons viewed there was little evidence that teachers were utilizing data from any form of ongoing real time assessments to modify instructional strategies or lesson activities based on needs noted for individual or groups of students.

Quality Indicator:	3.4 High Expectations	Rating:	Developing

Findings:
The school is expanding systems to communicate high expectations about student learning and provide feedback to families regarding student's progress in meeting the expectations. Strategies for ensuring accurate and detailed feedback about learning and guidance to students are not yet fully evident across the school.

Impact:
The school's focus on creating a culture of high expectations has not yielded deep student and parent awareness of college and career readiness skills and regular engagement of all students in discussions of their next steps for progress in meeting expectations for learning.

Supporting Evidence

- Using Positive Behavior Intervention System, expectations on student behavior and positive student choices are communicated and celebrated schoolwide. In addition, participation in the National Honor Society and assembly programs are used to promote and recognize students for academic achievements.

- To provide parents with daily access to feedback about the academic and social-emotional progress their children are making, the school plans to implement an online system, Datacation, which will be used to keep families informed about their children's progress towards expectations for their current and future grade. Teachers indicated that the newly implemented Tuesday conference time for families is beginning to support the communication of information to a few families who take advantage of it.

- Although some parents at the parent meeting indicated that the school sends home progress reports, several other parents stated that the school is not providing regular feedback regarding their child's progress. One noted that most parent support is "mostly for early grades".

- During interviews of some students, students who had taken New York State assessments stated that they were not aware of their performance level rating on any of the assessments done. Some students also indicated that teachers did not work with them to set goals for them to work towards.

Quality Indicator:	4.2 Teacher teams and leadership development	Rating:	Developing

Findings:
Although teacher teams meet to analyze student work, teacher team practices and distributive leadership structures are still in an emergent phase across the school.

Impact:
Teacher team structures do not yet support regular engagement of all teachers in teamwork that informs school wide or grade level decision-making and promotes improved teacher practice and student outcomes.

Supporting Evidence

- Through programmed common meeting times in their schedules, the K-2 teacher team meets weekly to analyze student's work and share instructional practices. However, teachers in grades 3-5 reported that their opportunities to engage in structured team meetings are limited as they are not programmed for common planning.

- Teachers at one team meeting used a protocol to guide conversations as they examined student work and data to identify areas of mastery and learning needs in math. They indicated that the meetings are improving their work in the planning and implementation of instructional practices. During the principal interview, the principal also noted that she is beginning to see improvement in the quality of discussions at team meetings, which she re-structured to introduce roles and protocols.

- Teachers reported that a coach, who serves as a link between the administration and faculty, usually leads teacher team meetings and communicates their ideas for professional development topics or other requests to the principal during a monthly meeting. The principal noted that teacher leadership is supported via teacher membership on a Staff Development Committee and the United Federation of Teachers' Consultation Committee.