

**BALTIMORE CITY**  
**PUBLIC SCHOOLS**

**Office of Achievement and Accountability**  
**Division of School Evaluation and Accountability**

**School Effectiveness Review**  
**2013-2014**

**Thomas Jefferson Elementary/Middle School**

**November 19-20, 2013**



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## Part I: Introduction and School Background

### ***Introduction to School Effectiveness Review***

The goal of the School Effectiveness Review (SER) is to provide an objective and research-based analysis of the work schools are doing to impact student achievement. Based on research and school-level best practices, four domains were identified for review: highly effective instruction, talented people, vision and engagement, and strategic leadership. In addition, a rubric was created to determine the extent to which each domain and accompanying key actions are being implemented. Each of these domains closely aligns with domains held by City Schools for great school leaders and great teachers and is observable in a set of key actions. Together, these domains, key actions, and supporting indicators form the City Schools' School Effectiveness Standards.

An SER team, comprised of representatives from City Schools who have extensive knowledge about schools and instruction, gathered information from teachers, students, parents, and leadership during a two-day site visit. During the visit, the SER team observed classrooms, reviewed selected school documents, and conducted focus groups and interviews with school leadership, teachers, students, and parents. The SER team analyzed evidence collected over the course of the SER to determine the extent to which key actions have been adopted and implemented at the school. This report summarizes the ratings in the four domains and key actions, provides evidence to support the ratings, and – based on a rubric – allocates a performance level for each key action. More information about the SER process is detailed in the School Effectiveness Review protocol, available upon request from City Schools.

### ***School Background***

Thomas Jefferson Elementary/Middle School serves approximately 504 students in pre-Kindergarten through eighth grades. The school is located on Dryden Drive in the Hunting Ridge neighborhood of Baltimore, Maryland. The principal, Ms. Angela Henry has been at the school for four years. The following tables provide information about the school's student demographics and student achievement data.

**Student Demographics**

	Year		
	2012-2013	2011-2012	2010-2011
<b>Student Race/Ethnicity (%)</b>			
African American	98	97	97
American Indian	--	--	--
Asian American	--	--	--
Hispanic	< 1	--	--
White	2	--	--
<b>Students Receiving Specialized Services</b>			
Special Education	11	10	10
FARM	82	76	76
English Language Learners (ELL)	--	--	--

**Student Achievement Data – Maryland School Assessment (MSA) Performance**

	Year		
	2012-2013	2011-2012	2010-2011
<b>MSA Reading (% Proficient/Advanced)</b>	76	71	77
<b>MSA Mathematics (% Proficient/Advanced)</b>	64	60	70

Source: City Schools' School Profile

## Part II: Summary of Performance Levels

Based on trends found in the collected evidence, the SER team assigns a performance level to each key action.

Domains and Key Actions	Performance Levels			
	Level 4: Highly Effective	Level 3: Effective	Level 2: Developing	Level 1: Not Effective
<b>Domain 1: Highly Effective Instruction</b>				
1.1 Teachers plan highly effective instruction.				<b>Effective</b>
1.2 Teachers deliver highly effective instruction.			<b>Developing</b>	
1.3 Teachers use multiple data sources to adjust practice.				<b>Effective</b>
1.4 School leadership supports highly effective instruction.				<b>Highly Effective</b>
1.5 Teachers establish a classroom environment in which teaching and learning can occur.				<b>Highly Effective</b>
<b>Domain 2: Talented People</b>				
2.1 The school implements systems to select, develop, and retain effective teachers and staff whose skills and beliefs represent the diverse needs of all students.				<b>Highly Effective</b>
2.2 The school has created and implemented systems to evaluate teachers and staff against individual and school-wide goals, provide interventions to those who are not meeting expectations, and remove those who do not make reasonable improvement.				<b>Effective</b>
<b>Domain 3: Vision and Engagement</b>				
3.1 The school provides a safe and supportive learning environment for students, families, teachers, and staff.				<b>Highly Effective</b>
3.2 The school cultivates and sustains open communication and decision-making opportunities with families about school events, policies, and the academic and social development of their children.				<b>Highly Effective</b>
3.3 The culture of the school reflects and embraces student, staff, and community diversity.				<b>Highly Effective</b>
<b>Domain 4: Strategic Leadership</b>				
4.1 The school establishes growth goals that guide strategic planning, teaching, and adjusting of practice to meet student needs.				<b>Highly Effective</b>
4.2 The school allocates and deploys the resources of time, staff talent, and funding to address the priorities of growth goals for student achievement.				<b>Highly Effective</b>
4.3 The school provides regular opportunities for teachers and staff to engage in job-embedded, collaborative planning and adjustment of practice.				<b>Highly Effective</b>

## Part III: Findings on Domains of Effective Schools

Domains and Key Actions	Performance Levels			
	Level 4: Highly Effective	Level 3: Effective	Level 2: Developing	Level 1: Not Effective

### Domain 1: Highly Effective Instruction

<b>Key action 1.1: Teachers plan highly effective instruction.</b>	<b>Effective</b>
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- Teachers develop and implement standards-based daily lessons, however not all units and long-term plans use appropriate curriculum planning documents. School leadership reported that teachers used the Baltimore City Schools (City Schools) curriculum, the International Baccalaureate Framework (IBF), and the Rubicon Atlas (a global thematic framework) to plan lessons for all grade levels. Teachers reported that they use the Common Core State Standards (CCSS) and the City School’s curriculum to develop daily and unit lesson plans for all grade levels. Additionally, school leadership and teachers reported, that 30-day plans are submitted for review to school leadership. In the IBF curriculum, the 30-day plans are used as long-term plans. A review of the 30 Day Plans confirmed the use of the district’s curriculum, the IBF, and the Rubicon Atlas in the middle school. A review of a teacher’s daily lesson plan confirmed the use of the CCSS. For example, one middle school Humanities lesson plan incorporated the following standard, CC SS.ELA-Literacy.L.6.4b: use common, grade appropriate Greek or Latin affixes and roots as clues to the meaning of the word (e.g., audience, auditory, audible). Finally, a review of unit plans showed that the infusion of the IBF was not consistent in all plans.
  
- Teachers design daily lessons that meet all learners’ unique needs. School Leadership maintained that teachers consistently provide accommodations and modifications for students with Individualized Education Plans (IEP), 504 Plans, and Behavioral Intervention Plans (BIP). Further, they explained that teachers meet student needs through small group instruction and that the inclusion of small group instruction is an essential component of all lesson plans. School leadership reported and teachers confirmed that data is used to determine the groups and skills that should be reinforced. A review of daily lesson plans substantiated school leadership’s expectation for small group instruction. For example in a lower elementary literacy lesson plan, students were grouped according to skill level (below grade-level, on grade-level, and above grade-level) based on the data from a phonics assessment, along with intentional instructional activities for each group; specifically, students on grade-level were asked to complete a main idea worksheet and students who were above grade level were asked to complete a writing response.
  
- Teachers design daily lessons that provide opportunities for all students to engage with complex texts and/or rigorous tasks. School leadership and teachers stated that they follow the district’s curriculum which is aligned with the CCSS and affords students the opportunity to interact with complex texts and rigorous tasks. For example, the district provides texts that are complex for the assigned grade levels and that require student to engage in deep conversation about the text through using language frames, academic vocabulary, and accountable talk. School leadership and teachers added that essential questions guide units and daily lesson plans. A review of a lesson plan

on the use of the Modern Language Association (MLA) format showed how the essential question was used to guide instruction and engage students in the rigorous task of writing about monotheism and polytheism. Some of activities in the lesson include analyzing Greek and Latin Root words and analyzing exemplar essay in small groups to determine ensure understanding of MLA format.

<b>Key action 1.2: Teachers deliver highly effective instruction.</b>	<b>Developing</b>
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- Teachers use and communicate standards-based lesson objectives and align learning activities to the stated lesson objectives. In 93% of classes (n=14), teachers used and communicated standards-based lesson objectives. Moreover in 93% of classes, the learning activities aligned with the objectives. For example, in a middle school Language and Literature class; the objective, in the form of an essential question, asked students “Why do we use figurative language?” In that same class, students participated in an activity in which they read poetry to identify the different types of figurative language.
- Some teachers present content in various ways and emphasize key points to make content clear. In 100% of classes (n=14), content was grade appropriate, error-free, and communicated accurately. Additionally, teachers consistently modeled academic vocabulary and standard grammatical structures in 93% of classes. In an elementary lesson about the Revolutionary War, the teacher used terms such as “minute-men” and “casualties”. However, in slightly less than half of classes (43%), teachers presented content in two or more ways to make content clear. In most classes, the site visit team observed the teacher presenting content to all students, using one instructional method during the observation period.
- Some teachers use multiple strategies and tasks to engage all students in rigorous work. In 86% of classes (n=14), all tasks had a clear and intentional purpose. However, fewer classes (64%) included scaffolding and differentiating to provide access to grade-level material. For example, in a lower elementary classroom, the teacher did a “read-aloud” about the topic, asked students to “turn and talk” about aspects of the “read-aloud”, and asked students to complete a scavenger hunt. Likewise, in this same percentage of classes (64%), did students have opportunities and time to grapple with complex texts and/or rigorous tasks. In 36% of classrooms, there was no differentiation of the task assigned to students. Finally, in 64% of classrooms, students had adequate time and/or opportunities to engage with the given task.
- Some teachers use evidence-dependent questioning. In 93% of classes (n=14) teachers asked questions at key points throughout the lesson. For example, in a lower elementary classroom, the teacher asked students, “What sound does the capital letter make?” However, questions requiring students to justify, cite evidence, or explain their thought process were observed in only 50% of classes. For example, in an elementary class, teachers asked students, “What do you know about Paul Revere?” Although students recalled facts about the historical figure, they were not encouraged to explain their thinking or cite the source for their answer.

- Most teachers check for student understanding and provide specific academic feedback. In 79% (n=14) of classes, teachers were observed conducting one or more checks for understanding at key points throughout the lesson. In 79% of classes observed, checking for understanding occurred in the form of questioning at different points in the lesson. In a middle school humanities class, the teacher stopped at certain points during the lecture to ask students questions such as “Why do we need government?” When students were able to answer from their notes, she continued. When students were not able to answer correctly or with certainty, she reviewed the previous slide in her presentation. Additionally, in 71% of classes, teachers provided specific academic feedback to communicate current progress and next steps to move students forward. In a middle school literacy class, the teacher provided feedback to students as they identified figurative language and the teacher clarified definitions for students who were uncertain of the meanings of words. When a student could not complete his graphic organizer by referring to the text, the teacher urged him to review the key words from the Reading Preview Sheet and to think about how they related to Paul Revere.
- Most teachers facilitate student-to-student interaction and academic talk. In 79% of classes (n=14), teachers provided one or more opportunities for student-to student-interaction by providing time for students to engage in discussion with their peers. A reoccurring example of this structure was when teachers would ask students to turn and talk with their peers. Additionally, in 64% of classes, these student-to-student interactions were used to allow peers to deepen their understanding of concepts through discussion. In a middle school class, students explained to one another how certain social concepts were related. In 71% of classes, students used academic talk and generated questions related to the lesson content. For example, in a middle school humanities class, students used terminology such as “state of nature” and “natural rights”.

<b>Key action 1.3: Teachers use multiple data sources to adjust practice.</b>	<b>Effective</b>
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- Teachers set and track goals based on multiple measures of student progress. School leadership and teachers reported that they set and track literacy goals based upon data from the Reading Inventory and Scholastic Evaluation (RISE), Diagnostic Indicators of Basic Early Literacy Skills (DIBELS), Maryland School Assessment (MSA), Dolch Word List, and other teacher made assessments. Continuing, school leadership and teachers reported that math goals are set and tracked using: First in Math, mathematics MSA scores, and Pre and Post Unit Assessments. Additionally, they stated that each teacher tracks data through the use of classroom data charts. Classroom observations confirmed the use of data to set and track goals in that the teacher used performance data from “First in Math” intervention groups during their lessons to communicate strengths and areas of growth to each student. Further, the site visit team observed the use of data to set and track goals in the school’s data room. The data room tracked students’ reading levels (from A-Z) using DIBELS data. Additionally, teachers stated that they set class level goals. For example, the goal for kindergarten students is to know 100 sight words and to grow three reading levels by the end of the school year. Finally, a review of Collaborative Planning Team meeting agendas and notes confirmed that teachers have set goals for class levels. For example, one class goal was listed as a 10% increase in RISE assessment data.



- Teachers consistently analyze assessment results and make instructional modifications when needed. School leadership and teachers reported that student assessment data is reviewed bi-weekly in collaborative planning meetings. School leadership stated and a review of the Data Driven Instruction Bi-Weekly Data Review Form confirmed that there is a data analysis form that teachers use to disaggregate data as well as to identify students' strengths/weaknesses, assign small groups based upon student needs, and identify corrective instructional practices. Teachers further confirmed that they complete the bi-weekly assessment analysis forms after they review the data individually and prior to collaborative planning meetings. Moreover, school leadership stated that goals are based on the movement of students. The site visit team observed the data wheel and reading and math data charts in the school's data room. Finally, a review of lesson plans also confirmed the grouping of students based upon students' needs, as well as the strategies that would be used to address skill deficiencies.
- Teachers use data to appropriately recommend students to support services, interventions, and some opportunities for acceleration. The Student Support Team (SST) stated that teachers use academic performance data (grades), attendance data, and behavioral data (suspensions, detentions, time-outs, expulsions, physical restraints, and home teaching occurrences) from each marking period to recommend students to the SST as well as for the Individualized Education Plan (IEP) process. Teachers reported that students are recommended for interventions based on assessment data from classroom assessments, standardized assessments, classroom observations, progress reports, and the Brigance assessment for Child Study Team (CST) referrals. School leadership and teachers noted several interventions for struggling students; namely Experience Corps (a group of retired educators who provide small group instruction) to identified students, Reading A-Z, Razz Kids, and First in Math, which are computer software programs that are facilitated by after-school tutors. School leadership also reported the use of BookShare.org as a resource for students who need to practice reading. According to school leadership, students are allowed to determine if they would like to participate in the program. A review of the School Performance Plan confirmed the use of Reading A-Z, First in Math, Experience Corps, and an additional research-based workbook series to support school-wide goals. At the time of the site visit there were no school-wide opportunities for acceleration. School leadership and teachers reported that opportunities for acceleration are implemented mainly at the classroom level with teachers providing enrichment or having students go to higher grades for specific subject areas and are based upon some data from Amplify, the Maryland School Assessment, and teacher observations. School leadership reported that they are planning to allocate funds for an enrichment program through the College of William and Mary. School leadership also indicated that they have a small group of students who have qualified to test for entry into the Johns Hopkins Talent Development Program.

**Key action 1.4: School leadership supports highly effective instruction.**

**Highly Effective**

- School leadership holds and promotes a clear instructional vision of high student achievement. School leadership and teachers reported that the instructional vision is that students are fully engaged in the learning process by facilitating their own learning, participating in meaningful student-to-student interaction, and engaging in accountable talk with their peers. School leadership and teachers also reported that there is an expectation that 90% students will perform at a 90% proficiency rate. Classroom observations confirmed the use of process charts with language frames

to facilitate accountable talk. Further the vision of 90% of students achieving at 90% was evidenced in the display of posters around the school building.

- School leadership ensures that teachers engage in the planning of the curricula through the oversight of standards-based units, lessons and pacing. School leadership reported that they follow the district’s curricular timelines as determined through the scope and sequence. School leadership and teachers also reported that teachers are required to submit 30-day plans for school leadership to review. Further, school leadership and teachers added that daily lesson plans are required that although there is a school-wide lesson planning format; teachers have autonomy to use their own format as long as it is consistent by grade level. Additionally, school leadership and teachers stated that instructional pacing is discussed during weekly collaborative planning meetings, in which a member of school leadership participates. Finally, a review of collaborative planning meeting minutes confirmed that collaborative teams review student work and give grade level summaries during each meeting. These summaries are related to lesson planning and pacing.
- School leadership provides formative feedback and guidance to teachers about the quality of planning, teaching, and adjustment of practice. School leadership reported that feedback is provided on 30-day plans and daily lesson plans. School leadership reported that they informally observe instruction on a daily basis, and provide feedback to teachers through in-person conversations, post-it notes, and checklists/forms. Teachers also reported that they receive verbal feedback that is also followed up with emails from school leadership. Further, school leadership stated more detailed feedback is given to new and struggling teachers, indicating next steps, A review of informal feedback provided through emails and observation forms confirms that new teachers are consistently provided with documented feedback from informal observations and lesson plan are analyzed along with corrective actions if necessary.
- School leadership demonstrates an understanding of data analysis and ensures the use of a complete student learning data-cycle. School leadership and district network staff reported and a review of the School Performance Plan (SPP) confirmed that the school participates in the district’s Data Driven Instructional Team (DDIT) process. School leadership and teachers reported and a review of the school’s data binder confirmed that the school’s data analysis process was modified to occur bi-weekly so that teachers and school leadership have ample time to review data. Members of the school leadership team facilitate data meetings bi-weekly. Finally, school leadership reported and a review of the Data Driven Instruction Bi-Weekly Data Review was used to capture data, student grouping information, and next steps for re-teaching confirms that it is used in the process.

<b>Key action 1.5: Teachers establish a classroom environment in which teaching and learning can occur.</b>	<b>Highly Effective</b>
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- Teachers build a positive, learning-focused classroom culture. In 100% of classes observed (n=14), all student-to-student interactions were positive and respectful. In 93% of classes, all student initiated interactions with the teacher were positive and respectful and all students participated actively in class work and discussions. Additionally, in 86% of classes, all teacher initiated interactions with students were positive and respectful. Members of the site visit team observed students working

cooperatively in small groups, communicating with teachers using appropriate words and tone, and working with intention on the assigned task during the entire class period.

- Teachers reinforce positive behavior and redirect off-task or challenging behavior, when needed. In 93% of classes observed (n=14) teachers reinforced positive behavior. An example of this was observed when a teacher gave a student a warning and explained the consequence that would occur if the student did not put an object away. Additionally, in 93% of classes, teachers spent less than 10% of class time redirecting and disciplining students. Finally, in 86% of classes, less than 10% of students did not comply with the lesson's directions or work on the intended activities.
- Teachers implement routines to maximize instructional time. In 100% of observed classes (n=14) routines and procedures ran smoothly without excess prompting from the teacher. For example, in an elementary class, when prompted by the teacher, students moved to small groups with automaticity. Additionally, another elementary class incorporated chants and countdowns to indicate time for movement. Furthermore all classes observed (100%), were arranged a way that allowed for efficient student movement and access of materials. Finally, in 86% of classrooms, less than 10% of instructional time was spent on transitioning between activities and students were idle during less than 10% of instructional time.

## Domain 2: Talented People

**Key action 2.1: The school creates and implements systems to select, develop, and retain effective teachers and staff whose skills and beliefs represent the diverse needs of all students.**

**Highly Effective**

- School leadership has implemented an organizational and staffing structure that meets the diverse needs of all students. School leadership reported that an International Baccalaureate (IB) Coordinator for the primary and middle grades was added this year in an effort to create and maintain a strong IB Program. School leadership further reported that the Middle School administrator position was added to maintain a positive middle school culture. School leadership, teachers, and parents also noted the addition of a full time social worker and counselor to meet the social and emotional needs of students at the school. A review of the staff roster confirmed the existence of these positions.
- School leadership leverages a pipeline for staff recruitment and uses multiple measures and includes stakeholders in the assessment of candidates. School leadership recruits staff by using alternative education programs such as Teach for America (TFA) and the Baltimore City Teaching Residency (BCTR); district job fairs, recommendations from the district’s human capital office, and the International Baccalaureate Network. Teachers confirmed that they were referred to the school through TFA and the district’s human capital office. School leadership further reported that the staff recruitment process includes a candidate interview, portfolio review, a demonstration lesson, and recommendations. Finally, teachers reported that they are involved in the hiring process in that they have interviewed prospective candidates at the district job fair and observed demonstration lessons.
- School leadership includes staff members and other stakeholders in the selection, development, and retention of effective teachers and staff. Parents stated that school leadership shares staffing projections each year and asks for their input. Further, parents added that they are involved in the selection of teachers and staff by giving feedback as to the types of teachers they want to see on staff as it relates to gender and racial diversity. As previously mentioned, teachers reported that they attended the job fair with school leadership to interview candidates. School leadership has identified a site-based mentor for the support and development of new and non-tenured teachers. A review of the site-based mentor’s meeting notes confirms the existence of this structure for new teachers. School leadership maintains that teachers support one another in the school through collaboration and peer observations. Teachers corroborated this practice by stating that they are encouraged to work collaboratively prior to seeking assistance from school leadership. When asked about their favorite part of working at the school, teachers identified the supportive staff as a favorite aspect. A review of a completed peer observation checklist confirmed that teachers provide feedback to one another. For example, during a learning walk, a teacher provided the following feedback to another: “good essential questions...remove clutter from cubby area”.

- School leadership has created a mentoring program to support the development of all new teachers and staff and monitors the program’s effectiveness. School leadership reported that the previously mentioned, site-based mentor currently supports six new teachers through observation, collaborative planning, and providing feedback. A new teacher confirmed receiving support from the mentor and added that the support provided was very helpful. A review of emails, lesson plans, and observation checklists confirmed that the mentor sets and monitors goals with new teachers, observes and plans with new teachers, and provides feedback to teachers on planning and instructional delivery. School leadership reported that they monitor the effectiveness of the mentoring program by monitoring the progress of new teachers. Additionally, school leadership reported that they have seen growth in the new teachers. Further, district network staff reported that they participated in learning walks with the site-based mentor to monitor the implementation of the program.

<p><b>Key action 2.2: The school has created and implemented systems to evaluate teachers and staff against individual and school-wide goals, provide interventions to those who are not meeting expectations, and remove those who do not make reasonable improvement.</b></p>	<p><b>Effective</b></p>
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- School leadership makes full use of the evaluation system to develop faculty and staff capacity. School leadership stated that at the time of the site visit, there were three professional development sessions on the district’s Instructional Framework to ensure teacher understanding of the framework, as well as how it is used as part of the teacher evaluation process. School leadership and teachers reported that all initial planning conferences were held and that formal observations were being conducted during the time of the site visit. School leadership stated that they divide teacher observations in the Fall and exchange groups for Spring observations. Teachers added that school leadership would informally observed teachers in specific areas of the instructional framework prior to the observation, if requested. A review of the school’s observation schedule, Pre-Conference Form, and Observation Notes with coding confirmed the use and implementation of the formal observation process.
- School leadership provides timely support and interventions to struggling teachers and staff as indicated by data and/or informal or formal observations and holds them accountable for performance. School leadership supports struggling teachers by using Performance Improvement Plans (PIPs) to target instructional areas of improvement. Teachers on these plans are provided with support in the outlined areas by the site-based mentor. Additionally, school leadership noted that they intervene to support struggling teachers by connecting them with other teachers in the school, district staff such as, Academic Content Liaisons (ACL), the site-based mentor, and Alternative Certification Coaches (if applicable). A review of a PIP from October 15, 2013 outlined the following areas of growth for the teacher: design daily lessons to meet unique needs of learners, engage students in standards-based lesson objectives, use strategies to engage students in rigorous work, modify instruction in response to data. A review of informal observations notes and emails confirmed that the teacher’s progress in those areas is monitored and explicit feedback is provided by the mentor.

- School leadership engages faculty in a school-wide professional development plan based on identified needs and in alignment with the school's instructional vision. School leadership reported and teachers confirmed that teachers were given a survey at the beginning of the year to determine the strengths, areas of growth, and needs of the staff. Both stakeholder groups shared that teachers wanted more support with the Arts Integration Program; as a result teachers received professional development from Arts Everyday to assist in implementation. A review of the school's professional development calendar reflected teacher participation in the Arts Everyday professional development session in September 2013. It also noted the monthly infusion of the International Baccalaureate curriculum during professional development.

### Domain 3: Vision and Engagement

**Key action 3.1: The school provides a safe and supportive learning environment for students, families, teachers, and staff.**

**Highly Effective**

- The school community shares an understanding of, and commitment to, the school mission, vision, and values. All stakeholders (school leadership, teachers, staff, parents and students) could state the mission and vision of the school. The mission of the school as stated on posters throughout the school reads, “The mission of Thomas Jefferson, as an International Baccalaureate (IB) World School, is to develop locally and internationally minded students who are caring, open-minded, knowledgeable, reflective, principled, balanced communicators, thinkers, and inquirers.” School leadership stated that the school is designed to develop locally and internationally- minded students who are principled, caring, knowledgeable, and good communicators. Teachers confirmed this by stating that they teach students to be culturally aware and open-minded. Teachers also said that they promote certain attitudes such as respect, being principled, and caring for others. Additionally students reported that because they are an IB school, teachers teach them to be open-minded to other cultures and to have the IB attributes which are to be knowledgeable, caring, thinkers, and inquirers. Parents and district network staff noted the school’s commitment to making students internationally aware through school events such as the annual International Night.
- Students, staff, and families feel physically and emotionally safe at the school. School leadership, teachers, parents, and students reported feeling safe in the building. School leadership, teachers, and students stated that policies and procedures; and resources are in place to ensure the safety of the students and staff. One such procedure is that visitors must sign-in at the front desk in the main office, leave a driver’s license, and have a visitor’s pass to progress beyond a certain point in the building after 8:10 a.m. This was confirmed by a posted Dismissal Plan. A member of the site visit team was stopped in the hallway when her badge was not visible to a member of the school’s staff. Teachers reported and an email from the principal along with a posted dismissal plan confirmed that elementary students have color-coded cards on their backpacks to indicate their proper location and/or mode of after school transportation. The aforementioned stakeholders also mentioned that cameras are present in and around the school. According to teachers, students, and parents; the school is emotionally safe because members of the school community can freely express themselves. A parent noted the absence of bullying at the school as the reason why their student “found their voice”. Teachers reported that when they have issues or concerns, they can go to school leadership because they are approachable and open-minded. Finally, students and school leadership reported that they could talk to the school’s guidance counselor or have access to the social worker if they needed to speak with someone about a social or an emotional issue.
- School leadership establishes structures for the acknowledgement and celebration of student, faculty and staff success. Teachers and parents agreed that students are acknowledged for academic and non-academic achievement. Through the Positive Behavior Intervention and Supports (PBIS) system, students are given gold coins for exhibiting appropriate behavior. In one class, members of the site team witnessed a teacher rewarding gold coins to two students who were on-task. Students are also celebrated during the morning announcements for birthdays, academic achievement, attendance, and displaying the IB attributes. During the morning announcements, the site visit team heard students being recognized for showing the IB attribute of “being principled”. According to

teachers and students, the school also acknowledges a Student of the Month and the Class of the Month; however the criteria by which students and classes are selected is unclear. Teachers stated that staff is also celebrated. At the beginning of each staff meeting, school leadership purchases a dozen roses for teachers to give to their colleagues to recognize them for their accomplishments. Faculty meeting agendas confirm this as a reoccurring practice. The staff also receives special breakfasts and dinners. A flyer for American Education Week noted that teachers and staff would be honored with a special breakfast during the week. School leadership and the chair of the climate committee reported that staff would receive a special holiday gift. Finally, parents and staff also reported that the Parent Teacher Association (PTA) honors teachers with small gifts of appreciation during Teacher Appreciation Week and the holidays.

- The school develops systems that proactively attend to individual students’ social and emotional needs. School leadership reported and a review of the school’s staff roster confirmed that the school is staffed with a social worker, a school psychologist, and a guidance counselor to assist students in need of social/emotional support. Additionally, according to school leadership, the school has a pantry, which is sponsored by the Maryland Food Bank and Katherine’s Closet, a store stocked with students’ uniforms, coats, underclothes, and toiletries to support families who have socioeconomic needs. The site team witnessed the delivery and distribution of food on the second day of the visit. The School Support Team (SST) reported that they proactively intervene with students who may experience social and emotional difficulty. The team reported that students who are retained are automatically referred to SST prior to the end of the first quarter of the school year. Also, the SST reported that students who are projected to earn failing grades during the first quarter are also referred to the SST. Notes from SST meetings showed that at the time of the site visit, three meetings were held to date. When asked, members of the SST reported that they are in the process of notifying parents to schedule meetings for the remaining students.

**Key action 3.2: The school cultivates and sustains open communication and decision-making opportunities with families about school events, policies, and the academic and social development of their children.**

**Highly Effective**

- The school uses multiple strategies, languages and vehicles to communicate information about school progress, policies, events, and the academic and social development of students to families and the community. Parents, teachers, students, and school leadership reported that the school uses Parent Link (the district’s automated call system), flyers, newsletters, and the school’s website to communicate information about school progress, events and policies. A review of the Daily Blast, the school’s daily newsletter, confirmed that it is used to provide information to families about school-wide events and initiatives. Some of the events included: the canned food drive, the high school fair, and a Title I information meeting and an overview of the school’s arrival and dismissal policies. Students and teachers reported that they use conferences, phones calls, and emails to communicate academic progress to parents. A review of an email from school leadership, on September 22<sup>nd</sup>, 2013 to teachers confirmed that Back-to-School Night was used as an opportunity to communicate with parents about classroom overviews, components of the literacy block, and the infusion of rich and rigorous conversations and examples of how this practice would look in classes. Finally, school leadership and school staff stated that district interpreters and bilingual staff provide



translation services, when necessary, for students and families who speak languages other than English.

- The school establishes regular structures for two-way communication, which facilitate opportunities for families and the community to participate in, or provide feedback on school-wide decisions. School leadership reported that they solicit parent feedback through surveys. As previously mentioned, the Parent Teacher Association (PTA) and school leadership have a retreat during the summer to discuss plans for the upcoming school year. Parents also reported and a review of the schools' a parent survey confirmed that that they receive surveys from the school soliciting feedback about climate and school procedures. Parents also stated that the school hosts monthly "Community, Coffee, and Conversation" sessions for parents who wish to talk about school issues with members of the leadership team. Additionally, parents stated there are monthly Empowerment Sessions held for parents. The first Empowerment Session, in October, defined the Common Core State Standards and articulated its impact on students' education. Lastly, according to parents, Parent Teacher Association (PTA) meetings are held once per quarter, A PTA membership form confirmed the existence of the organization at the school. School leadership, teachers, parent, and students agreed that student leadership and involvement is an important part of the school's culture. To this end, students reported that school leadership also listens to ideas from the Student Government Association (SGA). A review of a flyer advertising the Induction of the 2013-14 SGA confirmed that the SGA exist at the school.
- The school addresses families and community partners' questions and concerns, and uses feedback to improve the school. School leadership and parents reported that traffic procedures for arrival and dismissal were recently changed in response to community concerns. The community and parents were concerned about student safety and the congestion of the street in front of the school during arrival and dismissal. As a result of these concerns, the school worked with the community to adjust the traffic pattern during those times. The site visit team noted the street sign making Dryden Drive a one-way street during certain times in the morning and afternoon to accommodate students. According to parents, school leadership also listened to their feedback to change the arrival entrance for middle school students. A posted entry/dismissal plan confirmed a policy for having elementary and middle school students enter and exit the building at designated entry points.

**Key action 3.3: The culture of the school reflects and embraces student, staff, and community diversity.**

**Highly Effective**

- School leadership, teachers, and staff build strong relationships with families and community stakeholders from diverse backgrounds. School leadership and teachers reported that it has resources in place to support families that are in need of food, clothing, and household items. As previously stated, the site visit team witnessed the school providing food to families. The school has organized several events for students' families. According to school leadership, parents, and teachers; Grandparents' Day on September 13, and Deeds for Dads on October 16<sup>th</sup> 2013, were successful events. A review of the attendance lists for Grandparent's Day confirmed a large attendance. Additionally, school leadership asserted that they have an array of community

partners. Some of these partnerships include: the Maryland Green School, Arts Everyday, Parks and People, the Maryland Food Bank, and Civility Music. Community partners affirmed that they provide professional development, mentoring, resources for beautification of the school, food, and school-based volunteerism. The professional development plan indicated that in November 2013; Arts Everyday provided staff development on Arts. Finally, while at the school, the site visit team witnessed Parks and People delivering and planting trees on the school's grounds. Also as previously mentioned, the Maryland Food Bank delivered food to the school during the site visit.

- The school's curricula, resources and programs consider cultural, linguistic and socioeconomic diversity. According to school leadership, the school offers programs that reflect cultural considerations. School leadership reported and flyer advertising the trip confirmed that members of the school community will visit a school in Puerto Rico in the Spring of 2014. As mentioned previously, parents and district staff reported that International Night is an annual event that showcases various cultures. International Night is held at the school. Teachers also reported that their curriculum, which is provided City Schools, is culturally diverse in that it includes texts from families from all over the world and easily aligns with the mission and vision of the school. School leadership also reported that as an International Baccalaureate (IB) school, all students are required to take a foreign language; therefore all students at Thomas Jefferson take Spanish. A promotional flyer noting class offerings, confirmed that Spanish is a course offered at the school for every student. The school also uses its resources to help those who are in need in and around the school community. In addition to the food bank, Katherine's Closet contains various household items (e.g. toiletries, cleaning supplies, and school uniforms) and is open daily. The site visit team observed the store and its hours of operation. Additionally, some parents donate uniforms that their students have outgrown to Katherine's Closet for families in need. Further, the district's network staff reported that the school gave food to government workers during a recent federal government shutdown.
- School staff is diverse in terms of gender, race/ethnicity, and teaching experience. According to school leadership and a review of school-provided teacher demographic data; 81% of teachers are women and 19% are men. Data also indicated that 73% of the staff is African American, 21% Caucasian, and 3% Hispanic. The range of teaching experience in the school is from first year to almost three decades.

#### Domain 4: Strategic Leadership

**Key action 4.1: The school establishes growth goals that guide strategic planning, teaching, and adjusting of practice to meet student needs.**

**Highly Effective**

- School leadership and teachers establish measurable goals for student learning and school improvement. The school's goals for Literacy, Mathematics, and Attendance goals were established by school leadership and documented in the School Performance Plan (SPP). The literacy goal is: students will increase proficient and advanced scores in reading comprehension by 10% on the Reading Inventory and Scholastic Evaluation (RISE), Amplify, and Stanford 10 assessments by June 2014. The math goal is for all students to utilize problem solving strategies to improve proficiency on district created post tests by 10% on tests administered at the end of a math unit and on quarterly assessments in middle grades. The final goal is for the school to reduce the rate of chronically absent students by 10%. Teachers confirmed the literacy and math goal as outlined in the SPP. School leadership added that they set a goal to meet the qualifications of a Blue Ribbon School. The site team observed the Blue Ribbon goal posted throughout the school.
- School leadership ensures the alignment of all school goals, action plans and key priorities. School leadership and teachers spoke to a school-wide emphasis on high yield strategies which is also mentioned in their School Performance Plan, as a way to help the school achieve its goals. Strategies given priority include homework and practice, summarizing and note-taking, and noting similarities and differences. Classroom observations supported the adoption of these strategies on a school-wide level through the use of Cornell notes and Venn Diagrams. Teachers added that they have seen growth in student achievement through the use of these strategies and noted that these strategies are now a district-wide focus.
- School leadership and staff participate in regular analyses of school-wide data and revisit and adjust action plans as needed. School leadership stated that the Instructional Leadership Team (ILT) meets every Thursday to discuss data related to school goals. Teachers added that the current Cycle of Professional Learning, class level data, and peer observation data is discussed during that time. Continuing, teachers reported that nonlinguistic representations have been added the school's action plan as a strategy to bolster student achievement; however it is unclear what data was used to add this focus area to the school's action plan. Both groups also stated that the ILT is working to modify the school's mathematics goal.

**Key action 4.2: The school allocates and deploys the resources of time, staff talent, and funding to address the priorities of growth goals for student achievement.**

**Highly Effective**

- Budget distributions and resource allocations support teaching and learning, including: sufficient staffing to support school-wide programming and initiatives; core and supplemental materials to support the curricula; technology and other equipment to support administration, teaching, and learning. School leadership, teachers, and students stated that they had sufficient instructional

materials. With regard to technology, school leadership indicated and classroom observations confirmed that the school has a laptop cart, a computer lab, computers in classrooms, SMART boards, net books for teachers, and Elmo Projectors. School leadership reported and teachers confirmed that teachers are encouraged to ask for what they need and school leadership always attempts to accommodate their requests. Finally, a review of receipts from School Activity Fund matched programs and events.

- School leadership leverages teacher and staff talent, expertise, and effectiveness by delegating essential responsibilities and decisions to appropriate individuals. School leadership asserted that they operate in line with the principle of distributive leadership. With that in mind, school leadership and teachers stated that every teacher serves on a school committee and that teachers are allowed to choose the committee on which they participate. Also according to school leadership, there are multiple leadership roles for teachers. Some of these roles include serving as mentors, coaches, and district literacy and mathematics representatives.
- The school collaborates with families and community partners to garner resources to meet the needs of students and the school. School leadership stated that Civility Music, one of their partners assists them with grant writing, professional development, acquiring resources from other community organizations, and mentoring. They also reported that Play Works assists the school in offering recess opportunities and leadership development for students. Teachers reported and students confirmed that Experience Corps provides tutoring for all students as well as attendance monitoring. Adding to this, Alpha Phi Alpha Fraternity and Rho Tau Lambda Fraternity serve as mentors for students. The School Performance Plan verifies the work and supports of the aforementioned organizations, in addition to documenting that the school receives financial resources from the Hunting Ridge Community and the Second Lutheran Church (resources from the church are allocated for the purchasing of school uniforms). School leadership and district network staff stated that the school has also acquired a grant to become a Maryland Green School, which allows them to be recipients of natural resources and beautification projects. One such project was through Parks and People to plants trees and flowers at the school.

<p><b>Key action 4.3: The school provides regular opportunities for teachers and staff to engage in job embedded, collaborative planning and adjustment of practice.</b></p>	<p><b>Highly Effective</b></p>
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- School leadership consistently provides and focuses common staff time on instructional practices and development in support of student achievement. School leadership stated and a review collaborative team meeting agendas confirmed that teacher planning time was increased to one hour this year, after noting that 45 minutes last year was not enough time for collaborative planning team meetings. School leadership reported and teachers upheld that teachers meet twice a week for collaborative team meetings and that school leadership is in attendance. A review of the collaborative planning meeting agendas confirmed the following topics of discussion: review of the school’s SMART goals, data focus forms, student sub-group performance, review of student work, grade level summaries, and teacher needs. Further, school leadership added, that teachers are able

to meet across grade levels and examine 30-day plans in order to identify important skills that need to be addressed.

- Teachers and staff participate in planning and implementation of school events and initiatives. School leadership and teachers stated that teachers are welcome to plan clubs and activities for students. Both groups reported and a review of a school flyer confirmed the existence of the following teacher- organized school-based clubs and activities: Mathematics Engineering Science Achievement club, the robotics club, the chess club, the National Academic League, cheerleading, ballet, basketball, and flag football. Additionally students reported that the Student Government Association was active at the school, which is another club organized by staff members. Finally, teachers reported that the climate committee often plans field trips for the school.

## Appendix A: School Report Comments

### Domain 1: Highly Effective Instruction

This is the first year of full scale implementation of the new Common Core curriculum. Strategies, techniques, effective/appropriate resources and tools are currently being identified. Teachers have also been receiving professional development and ongoing support to ensure that they are prepared for highly effective instruction during the 2014 -15 school year and beyond.

### Domain 2: Talented People

None

### Domain 3: Vision and Engagement

None

### Domain 4: Strategic Leadership

None

## Appendix B: SER Team Members

The SER visit to the Thomas Jefferson Elementary/Middle School was conducted on November 19-20, 2013 by a team of representatives from Baltimore City Public Schools.

**Paige Isaacson, Team Lead.** Paige is the Manager for the School Effectiveness Reviews in the Office of Achievement and Accountability (OAA) in Baltimore City Public Schools. Prior to joining OAA, Ms. Isaacson was a Team Lead in the Office of School Support Networks. Ms. Isaacson is also a former teacher in Baltimore City Schools in traditional, charter, and non-public schools. She has experience teaching kindergarten through sixth grades. Ms. Isaacson is a Teach for America alumna and holds a B.A. in Business Administration from the University of Kansas and an Ed.M. in Education with a focus on Administration and Supervision and Data-Based Decision Making from Johns Hopkins University.

**Katherine Harris** is a Program Evaluator II in the Office of Achievement and Accountability in Baltimore City Public Schools. Prior to joining OAA, Ms. Harris was a District Mentor in the Office of Teacher Support and Development. In Baltimore City Public Schools, Ms. Harris has served as teacher, Academic Coach, Dean of Instruction, and High School Administrator. Ms. Harris has also served as teacher in the Anne Arundel County Public School System, the Baltimore County Public School System and the Vance County Public School System in North Carolina. She holds a B.A. in English with a Concentration in Secondary Education from North Carolina Central University and a Masters of Education in School Improvement Leadership from Goucher College.

**Jalima Alicea** began working in City Schools at Gilmore Elementary School as a Special Education teacher in grades K-8. Upon completion of a Master's Program in Special Education, Ms. Alicea served the District of Columbia as a Special Education Coordinator. Returning to Baltimore City Schools in 2009, Ms. Alicea became an Educational Specialist in the Office of Special Education providing support and training to IEP Chairs and Special Education Teachers. Ms. Alicea is currently a Special Education Liaison with the School Support Networks, working with teachers, staff developers, administrators, and other school based staff to provide quality education and increase student achievement for students with special needs. Ms. Alicea currently holds a Master's degree Plus from Johns Hopkins University in Special Education and Certificate in School Leadership and Administration.

**Dr. Tasha Franklin Johnson** is an experienced educator currently serving as the Director of the Office of Federal Programs/Title I for the Baltimore City Public Schools. She is a former classroom teacher and school administrator with research interests in equitable education, culturally relevant practices, and teacher preparation in urban school systems. Dr. Johnson has extensive international and domestic teacher education experience preparing aspiring teachers and leaders to provide instructional services in urban schools. Dr. Johnson graduated from Southern Methodist University (SMU) with a BA in African American History and BBA in Organizational Behavior and Business Policy. She holds a masters degree in Education specializing in Administration, Planning and Social Policy from Harvard University and a doctorate in Early Childhood, Elementary Education from New York University.