



DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA
PUBLIC CHARTER SCHOOL BOARD

October 29, 2015

Chinesom Ejiasa, Board Chair
Washington Latin PCS- Middle School
5200 2nd St. NW
Washington, DC 20011

Dear Mr. Ejiasa:

The Public Charter School Board (PCSB) conducts Qualitative Site Reviews to gather and document evidence to support school oversight. According to the School Reform Act § 38-1802.11, PCSB shall monitor the progress of each school in meeting the goals and student academic achievement expectations specified in the school's charter. Your school was selected to undergo a Qualitative Site Review during the 2015-16 school year for the following reason:

- School eligible for 10-year Charter Review during 2015-16 school year

Qualitative Site Review Report

A Qualitative Site Review team conducted on-site reviews of Washington Latin PCS-Middle School between September 28, 2015 and October 9, 2015. Enclosed is the team's report. You will find that the Qualitative Site Review Report focuses primarily on the following areas: charter mission and goals, classroom environments, and instructional delivery.

We appreciate the assistance and hospitality that you and your staff gave the monitoring team in conducting the Qualitative Site Review at Washington Latin PCS- Middle School.

Sincerely,

A black rectangular redaction box covering the signature of Naomi DeVeaux.

Naomi DeVeaux
Deputy Director

Enclosures
cc: School Leader

Qualitative Site Review Report

Date: October 29, 2015

Campus Name: Washington Latin PCS- Middle School

Ward: 4

Grade levels: 5-8

Enrollment: 363

Reason for visit: 10-year review

Two-week window: September 28- October 9, 2015

Number of observations: 23

Summary

The mission of Washington Latin Public Charter School states that it provides a challenging, classical education that is accessible to students throughout the District of Columbia. The school's mission and vision was apparent to observers in both the physical environment and in the instructional program. Washington Latin PCS-Middle School provides a globally themed education to a diverse group of students.

The QSR team rated 87% of observations as proficient or distinguished in the Classroom Environment domain. Students and teachers had polite, respectful, and trusting relationships and demonstrated that there was value for the work being done at the school. The QSR team also rated 89% of observations as proficient or distinguished in the Instruction domain. Teachers challenged students to think and perform to the highest level and demonstrated a belief that all students can be successful. A mix of small group, whole-class and independent work experiences gave students and opportunity to fully engage in content. Lessons were aligned to daily goals and objectives posted on the board in many classrooms.

Prior to the two-week window, Washington Latin PCS – Middle School provided answers to specific questions posed by PCSB regarding the provision of instruction to students with disabilities. The reviewer who conducted special education-specific observations noted the following based on the answers provided by the school. In most observed classrooms teachers utilized SMART boards, computers, and multi-modality instruction, including verbal, visual, and kinesthetic components. The QSR team saw whole class instruction, small group/partner activities, and individual work, all of which were conducive to lesson differentiation. However, during class time, the majority of services delivered to students with disabilities were through one-on-one tutoring with little evidence of accommodations/modifications to the lesson. Additionally some teachers assessed student understanding based on only a few specific student responses, but these checks were not consistent and frequent enough to gauge the understanding of all students with disabilities within the classroom. The school reported that observers would see checks for understanding using Do Now's, pop quizzes, or quests. While the observer saw teachers debriefing of Do Now's in a few classrooms, the observer did see the use of quizzes or quests.

CHARTER MISSION, GOALS, AND ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENT EXPECTATIONS

This table summarizes Washington Latin PCS – Middle School’s goals and academic achievement expectations as detailed in its charter and subsequent Accountability Plans, and the evidence that the Qualitative Site Review (QSR) team observed of the school meeting those goals during the Qualitative Site Visit.

Mission and Goals	Evidence
<p>Mission: Washington Latin Public Charter School provides a challenging, classical education that is accessible to students throughout the District of Columbia.</p>	<p>The QSR team saw evidence that Washington Latin PCS- Middle School is meeting its mission.</p> <p><i>Challenging education</i> The QSR team observed teachers challenging students in most classrooms. As documented below, 89% of observations were scored at proficient or advanced in the Instruction Domain. Students in most observations engaged in content-related discussions and extended their own learning through questioning and making connections. Teachers used rich vocabulary and pushed all students to participate and think critically about the content. Priority was given to daily homework and students took ownership of their learning by copying down assignments at the end of class without teacher reminders. Teachers encouraged students to practice different approaches to solving problems often reminding students to “think back to a similar problem that you have already solved” or asking, “Is there any other way we can find the answer?” The school culture values independent reading as evidenced by students reading independently throughout the building during free time.</p> <p><i>Classical education</i> An emphasis on classical literature is evident in the hallways and libraries with large quotes by famous classical philosophers, artists and world leaders such</p>

Mission and Goals	Evidence
	<p>as Alexander the Great, Shakespeare, and Aristotle. Latin is taught as a foreign language to all students starting in 6th grade. In observations of Latin classes, students were observed learning about the Greek myths, discussing how classic tales are the foundation of many modern stories, and engaging in content review games. The topics included: history and culture, Roman Numerals, mythology, and Latin to English translation. There is a focus across all classrooms on the relationship between the ancient world and the 21st Century. In one observation students shared family traditions to connect to the Classical world and in another class students completed a warm-up assignment asking them to explain what Roman history teaches us about the modern world.</p> <p><i>Accessible to students throughout the District of Columbia</i></p> <p>According to school administrators and as seen by observers, Washington Latin PCS provides bus transportation for students to get to and from school from wards across the district.</p>
Goals:	
<p>PMF Goal #1: Student Progress – Academic Improvement over time <i>Effective instruction supporting student academic progress and achievement in reading and math.</i></p>	<p>The QSR team observed effective instruction in almost 90% of classrooms. Instruction was generally strong as evidenced by observations earning proficient and advanced scores in the Danielson Framework Instruction Domain. Students took tests and quizzes to demonstrate their understanding and projects had explicit scoring criteria. Observers saw that rigorous writers workshops offered students direct and immediate feedback. Across classrooms students discussed current articles and readings related to content specific goals and read independently without any</p>

Mission and Goals	Evidence
	<p>prompting from teachers. In math classes students worked collaboratively and independently to solve complex problems aligned to CCSS. Special education teachers pushed into classrooms to scaffold learning for students.</p>
<p>PMF Goal #2: Student Achievement – Meeting or exceeding academic standards</p> <p><i>Moving students to advanced levels of proficiency in reading and math</i></p>	<p>The QSR team observed differentiated instruction and student choice in most classrooms. Students in English classes read short stories, novels and actively discussed theme, character development, mood, tone with clear insight and understanding. All observers noticed students engaged in reading independent books that appeared to be at various levels of complexity. Teachers reviewed rubrics with students and provided clear expectations that all students should obtain full credit for work.</p> <p>The QSR team saw students respond to high-expectations and take ownership for improving their work. Observers saw students learn multiple methods for solving math problems along with opportunities for enrichment. In one 5th grade math class, students demonstrated fluency with multiplication that they built upon with classwork and assignments. Additionally elective classes challenge the problem-solving ability of students in a variety of areas such as “build your own video game.”</p>
<p>PMF Goal # 3: Gateway – Outcomes in key subjects that predict future educational success</p> <p><i>Promotion of reading proficiency by third grade and math proficiency by eighth grade</i></p>	<p>The QSR team observed a strong focus on academic growth and critical thinking skills. In math classes the QSR team observed students with strong foundational skills making it possible to jump into grade level content with little remediation. In one observation a student shared that she had set up a math problem differently from how</p>

Mission and Goals	Evidence
	<p>the teacher did and classmates were able to explain that it still worked because of the commutative property with little assistance from teacher. Students in civics and history classes underlined texts and discussed main ideas as a class. In an English course students worked on comparing and contrasting two grade appropriate novels that had been read as a class.</p>
<p>PMF Goal #4: Leading Indicators – Predictors of future student progress and achievement</p> <p><i>Culture of learning and support in the classrooms</i></p>	<p>The QSR team observed a culture built on mutual respect and belief in student potential with 87% of observations scoring proficient or advanced in the classroom environment domain of the Danielson Framework. Teachers encouraged students and students often supported each other. In addition to rigorous academic instruction students generally adhere to school policies and expectations around behavior. The QSR team observed students engaged in various grouping strategies for cooperative work. In the hallway a large quote reads, “if you treat an individual as if he were what he ought to be, he will become what he ought to be.” For additional examples of how the QSR team observed this goal, see The Classroom Environment domain in the table below.</p>
<p>Governance:</p>	<p>A PCSB staff member attended the Washington Latin PCS Board of Trustees meeting on August 26, 2015. A quorum was present. One member attended via video conference call. The board discussed developing an expansion plan, committee membership, discipline data, aligning board and staff goals, a financial update, and an academic update. The search committee gave an update regarding the search for a new head of school. Finally the board heard a presentation of the accreditation report.</p>

THE CLASSROOM ENVIRONMENT¹

This table summarizes the school’s performance on the Classroom Environments domain of the rubric during the unannounced visits. The label definitions for classroom observations of “distinguished,” “proficient,” “basic,” and “unsatisfactory” are those from the Danielson framework. The QSR team scored 87% of classrooms as “distinguished” or “proficient” for the Classroom Environment domain.

The Classroom Environment	Evidence Observed	School Wide Rating	
<p>Creating an Environment of Respect and Rapport</p>	<p>The QSR team scored 91% of the observations as distinguished or proficient. Teachers and students were friendly, positive and respectful in their interactions. In one observation students helped each other saying, “You get this one, and I’ll get another.”</p> <p>In another observation students cheered each other on when taking turns in a game. As students exited one classroom, the teacher encouraged them to “bring sunshine wherever you go today; it is a cloudy day.”</p>	Distinguished	13%
	<p>In a distinguished observation a student giggled and said, "I thought it was the Tiger river not Tiber!" The students and teacher laughed together and the teacher said, "Ok guys, it's not the Tiger river!"</p>	Proficient	78%
	<p>The QSR team rated less than 10% of the observations as basic in this component.</p>	Basic	9%
	<p>The QSR team rated none of the observations as unsatisfactory in this component.</p>	Unsatisfactory	0%

¹ Teachers may be observed more than once by different review team members.

The Classroom Environment	Evidence Observed	School Wide Rating	
Establishing a Culture for Learning	<p>The QSR team scored 91% of the observations as distinguished or proficient. Teachers passionately demonstrated a belief that the course content was important and had high expectations for all students. In these observations teachers called on a variety of students, even when students did not exhibit model behavior, and used wait time to encourage all students to try. In one classroom the teacher pushed student thinking saying, “That’s such a great example! I love it- now I want you to use that example to describe his emotion there.” In another observation, students shared ideas about a current events article beyond the scope of the teacher’s questions indicating interest in thorough understanding and enthusiasm for the content.</p>	Distinguished	26%
		Proficient	65%
	<p>The QSR team rated less than 10% of the observations as basic in this component.</p>	Basic	9%
	<p>The QSR team rated none of the observations as unsatisfactory in this component.</p>	Unsatisfactory	0%
Managing Classroom Procedures	<p>The QSR team scored 87% of the observations as distinguished or proficient. In these observations timers, attention getting signals, and tight routines maximized student instructional time. Students demonstrated knowledge of how to execute procedures by quickly moving from warm-up exercises to primary classroom activities, handing out materials such as white boards, books or paper, and reading independently during wait times as not to disturb other students. In one classroom more than 20 students had computers open and ready to learn before the tardy bell rang and within five minutes of the start of class students worked quietly and on-task with minimal teacher direction.</p>	Distinguished	0%
		Proficient	87%

The Classroom Environment	Evidence Observed	School Wide Rating	
	<p>The QSR team scored 13% of the observations as basic. In one observation instructional time was lost because students did not transition effectively to independent work. In these observations the observer did not see routines for passing out or collecting work and students handed in work at different times interrupting directions and direct instruction to do so. Students in one class exited noisily when the bell rang as the teacher was attempting to assign homework.</p>	Basic	13%
	<p>The QSR team rated none of the observations as unsatisfactory in this component.</p>	Unsatisfactory	0%
Managing Student Behavior	<p>The QSR team scored 79% of the observations as distinguished or proficient. Students adhered to high standards of conduct and behaved appropriately with minimal teacher redirection. In instances of misbehavior teachers responded quickly and effectively using countdowns, verbal redirects and proximity. In one observation a teacher nonverbally redirected a student by moving close and placing one hand on the student's shoulder. In another observation the teacher effectively intervened in a student-to-student interaction stating, "She made a mistake and we need to move on." The student immediately gave the worksheet back to the classmate and both immediately got on task.</p>	Distinguished	9%
		Proficient	70%

The Classroom Environment	Evidence Observed	School Wide Rating	
	<p>The QSR team scored 21% of the observations as basic. While inappropriate behaviors were addressed with reminders, students quickly reverted to undesirable behaviors and inconsistently maintained established standards. In one observation students insulted each other across the room with no acknowledgment from teacher. In another observation the teacher repeated, “A few of you have listened to the directions, but some of you have not. Please listen,” but the students continued talking with no consequence.</p>	Basic	21%
	<p>The QSR team rated none of the observations as unsatisfactory in this component.</p>	Unsatisfactory	0%

INSTRUCTION

This table summarizes the school’s performance on the Instruction domain of the rubric during the unannounced visits. The label definitions for classroom observations of “distinguished,” “proficient,” “basic,” and “unsatisfactory” are those from the Danielson framework. The QSR team scored 89% of classrooms as “distinguished” or “proficient” for the Instruction domain.

Instruction	Evidence Observed	School Wide Rating	
Communicating with Students	<p>The QSR team scored 96% of the observations as distinguished or proficient. In these observations teachers clearly articulated the learning objective often times referencing essential guiding questions. Teachers used strong academic vocabulary such as hieroglyphic, interval, thesis, and ironic in lesson delivery and added new vocabulary to word walls if students asked clarifying questions. Teachers modeled content with drawing and analogies deepening student understanding.</p> <p>In one distinguished observation the teacher began by reviewing how the lesson related to previous lessons, shared all resources students have to complete the new activity, and discussed why some resources are better than others.</p>	Distinguished	13%
		Proficient	83%
	<p>The QSR team rated less than 10% of the observations as basic in this component.</p>	Basic	4%
	<p>The QSR team rated none of the observations as unsatisfactory in this component.</p>	Unsatisfactory	0%

Instruction	Evidence Observed	School Wide Rating	
Using Questioning/Prompts and Discussion Techniques	<p>The QSR team scored 95% of the observations as distinguished or proficient. In these observations teachers asked open-ended questions and allowed for student discussion to occur naturally. In one observation the teacher asked students to share the most important moral dilemma the US Government has today leading to a respectful discussion involving the entire class. One teacher discussed different approaches to solving the same problem and students built on the discussion offering new ways and checking their work based on the discussion. Students played an active role in discussion in these observations.</p> <p>In one distinguished observation students extended a discussion of stereotypes and bias by bringing up relevant examples and making connections to previous readings.</p>	Distinguished	20%
		Proficient	75%
	<p>The QSR team rated less than 10% of the observations as basic in this component.</p>	Basic	5%
	<p>The QSR team rated none of the observations as unsatisfactory in this component.</p>	Unsatisfactory	0%
Engaging Students in Learning	<p>The QSR team scored 79% of the observations as distinguished or proficient. Lessons promoted student engagement through cooperative learning, hands-on activities, and problem solving opportunities related to their lives such as planning a school dance and pricing out new chairs for the classroom in algebra. Teachers provided</p>	Distinguished	9%

Instruction	Evidence Observed	School Wide Rating	
	<p>opportunity for student choice in how to complete learning tasks both in terms of grouping and offered multiple opportunities for students to demonstrate understanding. In these observations students actively worked with teachers facilitating and supporting students in reaching their learning targets.</p>	Proficient	70%
	<p>The QSR team scored 21% of the observations as basic. In these observations there was little or no student choice and the students played a passive role in the learning, with the teacher’s voice dominating the observation. During independent work students were not engaged which resulted in off-task conversations. In one classroom students watched a video with a worksheet without clear or any directions. During the movie many students had their heads down or talked without competing the classwork.</p>	Basic	21%
	<p>The QSR team rated none of the observations as unsatisfactory in this component.</p>	Unsatisfactory	0%
<p>Using Assessment in Instruction</p>	<p>The QSR team scored 87% of the observations as distinguished or proficient. In these observations teachers used a variety of methods to gauge student understanding. In many classrooms teachers rotated as students worked independently and in groups adjusting feedback on the spot. Teachers paused and gave global feedback when there were common mistakes and students responded by improving their work. In one observation the teacher said, “I can see lots of you are adding major details which is the goal. I am going to give you post-it notes to</p>	Distinguished	4%

Instruction	Evidence Observed	School Wide Rating	
	<p>write support to back up your claims.” In another observation the teacher said, “Now add three more facts to this section, and I will come back to check on you” to a student. In many observations teachers referenced rubrics and encouraged students to check their work against assigned criteria before answering independent questions. Teachers gave tests and quizzes to assess student understanding and in a few observations teachers reviewed graded tests and quizzes as they returned them to students.</p>	Proficient	83%
	<p>The QSR team scored 13% of the observations as basic. In a few observations students did not receive individual feedback on their work. In one observation the teacher continued teaching a lesson when it was clear that the majority of students did not grasp the content.</p>	Basic	13%
	<p>The QSR team rated none of the observations as unsatisfactory in this component.</p>	Unsatisfactory	0%

APPENDIX I: THE CLASSROOM ENVIRONMENT OBSERVATION RUBRIC

The Classroom Environment	Unsatisfactory	Basic	Proficient	Distinguished
Creating an Environment of Respect and Rapport	Classroom interactions, both between the teacher and students and among students, are negative or inappropriate and characterized by sarcasm, putdowns, or conflict.	Classroom interactions are generally appropriate and free from conflict but may be characterized by occasional displays of insensitivity.	Classroom interactions reflect general warmth and caring, and are respectful of the cultural and developmental differences among groups of students.	Classroom interactions are highly respectful, reflecting genuine warmth and caring toward individuals. Students themselves ensure maintenance of high levels of civility among member of the class.
Establishing a Culture for Learning	The classroom does not represent a culture for learning and is characterized by low teacher commitment to the subject, low expectations for student achievement, and little student pride in work.	The classroom environment reflects only a minimal culture for learning, with only modest or inconsistent expectations for student achievement, little teacher commitment to the subject, and little student pride in work. Both teacher and students are performing at the minimal level to “get by.”	The classroom environment represents a genuine culture for learning, with commitment to the subject on the part of both teacher and students, high expectations for student achievement, and student pride in work.	Students assumes much of the responsibility for establishing a culture for learning in the classroom by taking pride in their work, initiating improvements to their products, and holding the work to the highest standard. Teacher demonstrates as passionate commitment to the subject.
Managing Classroom Procedures	Classroom routines and procedures are either nonexistent or inefficient, resulting in the loss of much instruction time.	Classroom routines and procedures have been established but function unevenly or inconsistently, with some loss of instruction time.	Classroom routines and procedures have been established and function smoothly for the most part, with little loss of instruction time.	Classroom routines and procedures are seamless in their operation, and students assume considerable responsibility for their smooth functioning.

The Classroom Environment	Unsatisfactory	Basic	Proficient	Distinguished
Managing Student Behavior	Student behavior is poor, with no clear expectations, no monitoring of student behavior, and inappropriate response to student misbehavior.	Teacher makes an effort to establish standards of conduct for students, monitor student behavior, and respond to student misbehavior, but these efforts are not always successful.	Teacher is aware of student behavior, has established clear standards of conduct, and responds to student misbehavior in ways that are appropriate and respectful of the students.	Student behavior is entirely appropriate, with evidence of student participation in setting expectations and monitoring behavior. Teacher's monitoring of student behavior is subtle and preventive, and teachers' response to student misbehavior is sensitive to individual student needs.

APPENDIX II: INSTRUCTION OBSERVATION RUBRIC

Instruction	Unsatisfactory	Basic	Proficient	Distinguished
Communicating with Students	Teacher's oral and written communication contains errors or is unclear or inappropriate to students. Teacher's purpose in a lesson or unit is unclear to students. Teacher's explanation of the content is unclear or confusing or uses inappropriate language.	Teacher's oral and written communication contains no errors, but may not be completely appropriate or may require further explanations to avoid confusion. Teacher attempts to explain the instructional purpose, with limited success. Teacher's explanation of the content is uneven; some is done skillfully, but other portions are difficult to follow.	Teacher communicates clearly and accurately to students both orally and in writing. Teacher's purpose for the lesson or unit is clear, including where it is situated within broader learning. Teacher's explanation of content is appropriate and connects with students' knowledge and experience.	Teacher's oral and written communication is clear and expressive, anticipating possible student misconceptions. Makes the purpose of the lesson or unit clear, including where it is situated within broader learning, linking purpose to student interests. Explanation of content is imaginative, and connects with students' knowledge and experience. Students contribute to explaining concepts to their peers.
Using Questioning and Discussion Techniques	Teacher makes poor use of questioning and discussion techniques, with low-level questions, limited student participation, and little true discussion.	Teacher's use of questioning and discussion techniques is uneven with some high-level question; attempts at true discussion; moderate student participation.	Teacher's use of questioning and discussion techniques reflects high-level questions, true discussion, and full participation by all students.	Students formulate many of the high-level questions and assume responsibility for the participation of all students in the discussion.
Engaging Students in Learning	Students are not at all intellectually engaged in significant learning, as a result of inappropriate activities or materials, poor representations of content, or lack of lesson structure.	Students are intellectually engaged only partially, resulting from activities or materials or uneven quality, inconsistent representation of content or uneven structure of pacing.	Students are intellectually engaged throughout the lesson, with appropriate activities and materials, instructive representations of content, and suitable structure and pacing of the lesson.	Students are highly engaged throughout the lesson and make material contribution to the representation of content, the activities, and the materials. The structure and pacing of the lesson allow for student reflection and closure.

Instruction	Unsatisfactory	Basic	Proficient	Distinguished
Using Assessment in Instruction	Students are unaware of criteria and performance standards by which their work will be evaluated, and do not engage in self-assessment or monitoring. Teacher does not monitor student learning in the curriculum, and feedback to students is of poor quality and in an untimely manner.	Students know some of the criteria and performance standards by which their work will be evaluated, and occasionally assess the quality of their own work against the assessment criteria and performance standards. Teacher monitors the progress of the class as a whole but elicits no diagnostic information; feedback to students is uneven and inconsistent in its timeliness.	Students are fully aware of the criteria and performance standards by which their work will be evaluated, and frequently assess and monitor the quality of their own work against the assessment criteria and performance standards. Teacher monitors the progress of groups of students in the curriculum, making limited use of diagnostic prompts to elicit information; feedback is timely, consistent, and of high quality.	Students are fully aware of the criteria and standards by which their work will be evaluated, have contributed to the development of the criteria, frequently assess and monitor the quality of their own work against the assessment criteria and performance standards, and make active use of that information in their learning. Teacher actively and systematically elicits diagnostic information from individual students regarding understanding and monitors progress of individual students; feedback is timely, high quality, and students use feedback in their learning.