May 11, 2016

Mark Jordan, Board Chair
YouthBuild PCS
3047 15th Street NW
Washington, DC 20009

Dear Mr. Jordan:

The District of Columbia Public Charter School Board (DC 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:

o   School did not meet action plan targets in SY2015-16

Qualitative Site Review Report
A Qualitative Site Review team conducted on-site reviews of YouthBuild PCS between March 14 and March 25, 2016. 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 YouthBuild PCS.

Sincerely,

Naomi DeVeaux
Deputy Director

Enclosures
cc: Andrew Touchette

Qualitative Site Review Report

Date: May 11, 2016
Campus Name: YouthBuild Academy PCS
Ward: 1
Grade levels: Adult Education; ages 16-24
Total Enrollment: 116
Students with Disabilities enrollment: 12
English Language Learners enrollment: 22
Reason for visit: School did not meet action plan targets in SY2015-16
Two-week window: March 14 – March 25, 2016
Number of observations: 12

Summary
The YouthBuild Public Charter School (YouthBuild PCS) was designed to create a bridge between high school and college or career paths. The YouthBuild PCS mission states that YouthBuild PCS will transform the lives of out-of-school youth in the District of Columbia by offering a bilingual educational option that combines an academic program with vocational training, employability skill building and community service – a program designed to prepare young people for college or the workplace while they work to create housing for the city's low-income residents. The QSR team saw stronger evidence related to the vocational training aspects of the program than the academic components. There were no behavior problems during the observation at the construction site but behavior management was challenging for teachers in the school building.

The Qualitative Site Review (QSR) team used the Charlotte Danielson Framework for Teaching (Appendix I) to score observations in two domains: Classroom Environment and Instruction. The QSR team rated 63% of observations as proficient or distinguished in the Classroom Environment domain. Creating an Environment of Respect and Rapport was the highest rated component with 75% of the observations rated as distinguished or proficient. During some classroom observations and at the construction site observation in particular, teachers and students showed mutual respect toward each other and connected with each other as individuals. In a few observations students showed disrespect toward teachers and other students. In most instances teachers attempted to respond to this behavior, but with unsuccessful results. In one observation a teacher and students ignored two students who argued in the classroom and proceeded to take it out in the halls.

The QSR team rated 52% of observations as proficient or distinguished in the Instruction domain. The component of Communicating with Students received the highest ratings, with 58% of the observations rated as distinguished or proficient. Teachers in these observations stated objectives clearly, engaged students in meaningful learning tasks, and connected the content to student knowledge and experience. Teachers at the construction site often invited students to explain their choices in how to build something and discussed the pros and cons of approaching projects in different ways. Students were integral in making decisions about how to complete the work.

In many observations, however, instruction was characterized by lower levels of engagement, with many students off task and using social media on the computers or their phones instead of working on the material. Teachers rotated to work with different groups of students and individual students. However, many students had trouble continuing to work if the teacher was not working directly with them. Some teachers used low-level questioning methods with inadequate wait time. This resulted in the teacher often answering the question he or she posed to the students.

<u>Specialized Instruction for Students with Disabilities</u>

Prior to the two-week window, YouthBuild PCS provided answers to specific questions posed by DC 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. The school described using various types of resources to support the learning of students with disabilities: visual aids (charts/graphs), calculators, adaptive on-line curriculum, and one-to-one blended learning. The reviewer observed both push-in and pull-out supports where the teacher made use of small white-boards and page-protected worksheets for the student and teacher to scaffold assignments. The observer did not see the use of any charts, adaptive on-line curriculum, or blended learning.

The school also described differentiating instruction through the use of subject content provided in posters, direct instruction, and the use of technology through blended learning. While the reviewer saw direct instruction, there was no evidence of using posters or blended learning for this purpose. Due to the one-to-one nature of the specialized instruction, feedback to students was timely and frequent enough to assess the ability of the student. The use of online tools such as Aleck.com. Mobymax.com. and Newzela.com, which were described by the school as strategies for gauging the specific understanding of students with disabilities, were not utilized during the Special Education (SPED) observations but were observed during other classroom observations.

<u>Instruction for English Language Learners</u>

YouthBuild PCS indicated in the English Language Learner (ELL) questionnaire that it offers an English as a Second Language (ESL) course daily. The school selected textbooks and other resources to meet the students' needs in their native language, namely Spanish, and their target language, English. General educators and ESL instructors administered both informal and formal assessments. These assessments included the Test of Adult Basic Education (TABE) and the General Educational Development (GED) Ready assessments, teacher-created weekly assessments, and exit tickets to gauge student learning. ESL classes are differentiated through small group rotations that focus on short reading passages, grammar, and guided reading, as well as differentiated assessments. These rotations give the instructor time to work in small groups and for one-on-one instruction.

During the two-week window, the QSR team observed ESL instruction that involved effective supports like native language clarification and ample modeling and gesturing. The ELL instructor was intentional with language, speaking at a pace appropriate to students' proficiency levels, enunciating certain sounds within words and breaking down the phonetics of key vocabulary. However, the ELL instructor made a few grammatical errors. There were informal assessments evident throughout the lesson that touched upon each of the four language domains – reading, writing, speaking, and listening. The reviewer did not observe strong monitoring of individual student understanding. Much of the whole group discussion was focused on arriving at the correct answer rather than elaboration or exploration into why some students' responses were incorrect. The pacing was occasionally rushed, with insufficient wait time for students to respond to questions posed. The classroom environment was one of warmth and respect, with students easily engaging with the teacher and other students.

This table summarizes YouthBuild PCS'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
Mission: YouthBuild PCS will transform the lives of out-of-school youth in the District of Columbia by offering a bilingual educational option that combines an academic program with vocational training, employability skill building and community service – a program designed to prepare young people for college or the workplace while they work to create housing for the city's low-income residents.	The QSR team saw evidence that YouthBuild PCS is providing students with vocational training and skill building, per its mission, but there is mixed evidence that the school is meeting its mission related to preparing students for college. Teachers at the construction site kept students engaged with hands on learning, continual questioning, and opportunities to discuss and make decisions about the best way to approach various tasks. Students worked individually and together on rebuilding the interior of a house. Among other tasks, students hammered beams, installed drywall, and wired electrical outlets. Teachers and students engaged in conversations about the remodeling project and seemed to have very good relationships. The QSR team observed varied levels of instruction in the classroom. Students in a vocational education classroom discussed soft skills, interviews, and professionalism. Some teachers walked students through math problems with prompting or assisted them with worksheets and reading packets. Behavior issues led to lost instructional time in multiple observations. Some students were off task and did not do any academic work during observations.
Goals:	

Mission and Goals	Evidence
85% of the students that enter the school with less than an eighth grade reading level and complete the school year will progress at least two grade levels in reading.	During language arts instruction, teachers helped students with vocabulary including pronunciation and definitions. Teachers also asked students to explain the difference between facts and opinions in the contexts of the readings. In one observation a teacher expressed excitement when speaking to a student about his improving reading level, "See look at the levels. You're very close to this grade level. You're moving up in your grade levels!"
90% of students who complete the school year will progress at least one grade level in mathematics.	Teachers worked through math problems with students in small group and one-on-one settings. In one observation a few students worked independently on tablets using ALEKS algebra software. Students worked on different levels of mathematics, from fractions to solving algebraic equations.
65% of ELL students will progress at least 20% in English proficiency.	Teachers differentiated ESL classes through small group instruction. Students worked in guided reading groups and took assessments based on their current language levels. Please see the ELL instruction section in in the summary for more information related to this goal.
12% of the students who enter the school year with a reading level between 4 and 7.9 as measured by the TABE and complete the school year will pass the official GED exam. 65% of the students who enter the school year with at least an eighth grade reading level as measured by the TABE and	The QSR team observed students working on tablets and computers to practice material related to the Test for Adult Basic Education (TABE) and the General Education Development (GED) exams. In a special education observation, a teacher discussed reading levels with a student and explained where the student needed to be to do well on the TABE.

Mission and Goals	Evidence
complete the school year will pass the official GED exam.	
95% of students who complete the school year will earn at least one of the following certifications: NCCER; RBI; MOS; or HVAC.23	The QSR team saw evidence that students are learning construction skills related to the National Center for Construction Education and Research (NCCER) certification. Students worked with teachers at the construction site to complete projects such as electrical wiring, installing drywall, and redoing other interior parts of a house. The QSR team did not observe any activities specifically related to other certifications.
Students will learn to interact respectfully with peers and authority figures and develop conflict management skills.	Many students interacted well with each other, teachers, and administrators at the school. However, in multiple observations students used profanity during instruction, answered their cell phones in class even after a teacher asked them not to, talked back to teachers, left the classroom without any communication with the teacher, and spoke in disrespectful tones with teachers and other students.
Governance:	A DC PCSB staff member observed the YouthBuild PCS Board of Trustees meeting on April 21, 2016. A quorum was present. Board members presented updates on information about the school including: GED test performance, attendance, student employment, PMF goals, teacher recruitment, financial status, and board governance.

THE CLASSROOM ENVIRONMENT[1]

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 63% of the observations as "distinguished" or "proficient" for the Classroom Environment domain.

The Classroom Environment	Evidence Observed	School Wide Rating	
Creating an Environment of Respect and Rapport	The QSR team scored 75% of the observations as distinguished or proficient. In these observations students and teachers exhibited mutual respect for each other. In one observation a student got up to get a marker for his dry erase board. He saw that another student needed one and got up again to get marker for him. In another observation a student that was not feeling well said that he needed to take a break. When he began to get up, the teacher said, "Okay, you can have five minutes if you feel that will help."	Distinguished	8%
		Proficient	67%
	The QSR team scored 25% of the observations as basic. In these observations some students acted inappropriately by arguing with each other, using profanity, and being disrespectful. Teachers attempted to address the issues but were not able to refocus the students or curb the behavior.	Basic	25%
	The QSR team rated none of the observations as unsatisfactory in this component.	Unsatisfactory	0%
Establishing a Culture for Learning	The QSR team scored 58% of the observations as proficient and none as distinguished. In some observations the teacher explained what the students would be learning and discussed the importance of the topic, "Today we are covering	Distinguished	0%

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[1] Review team members may observe teachers more than once.

The Classroom Environment	Evidence Observed	School Wide Rating	
	employability, which is probably the most important unit we will cover."	Proficient	58%
	The QSR team scored 25% of the observations as basic. In some observations teachers placed more importance on finishing tasks than the quality of the work. In one observation a teacher attempted to support the student with a math worksheet, but the student required multiple prompts to complete the task. After numerous attempts the teacher asked the student to do fewer problems than originally assigned, "Just do two problems and that's it. Try to make it simpler. You don't need to write so much down."	Basic	25%
	The QSR team rated 17% of the observations as unsatisfactory in this component. In these observations teachers did not attempt to convey the importance of the work and did not try to get students on task. Students got up and walked out of the other classrooms without communicating with the teacher. The same students stayed out in the hallway having social conversations while instruction was occurring in the classroom. These conversations were audible to everyone in the classroom and were filled with profanity. In other observations students used class time to socialize, use social media, or take phone calls instead of completing academic work.	Unsatisfactory	17%
Managing Classroom Procedures	The QSR team scored 67% of the observations as proficient and none as distinguished. In these observations distribution of materials was efficient and students followed classroom routines. In one observation a student walked in	Distinguished	0%

The Classroom Environment	Evidence Observed	School Wide Rating	
	late, quickly obtained his dry erase board and tablet, and sat down without disturbing the other students who were working. The teacher quietly asked him if he needed some scratch paper in addition to his other materials.	Proficient	67%
	The QSR team scored 33% of the observations as basic. In a few observations the transitions from one topic to the next were not clear. The teacher lost instructional time while trying the clear up the confusion. Students continued to ask clarifying questions after the explanation. In one observation students did not have the materials to start their work. A teacher asked, "Did anyone bring their notebooks and pen today to school?" After repeating the question two more times, no one answered and students had not begun to do their work.	Basic	33%
	The QSR team rated none of the observations as unsatisfactory in this component.	Unsatisfactory	0%
Managing Student Behavior	The QSR team scored 50% of the observations as proficient and none as distinguished. In these observations teachers had established standards of conduct and student behavior was generally appropriate. Teachers acknowledged good behavior and their response to misbehavior was effective. In one observation a student put his head down on the table at the beginning of class. The teacher said, "I need you to get up and do your work." The student complied and began his work.	Distinguished	0%
		Proficient	50%

The Classroom Environment	Evidence Observed	School Wide Rating	
	The QSR team rated 42% of the observations as basic in this component. Teachers were unable to maintain order in some instances. In a few observations teachers attempted to correct misbehavior but were unsuccessful. Some students used profanity while talking to teachers and other students. In one observation a student did not want to work with a teacher and said, "I don't need anyone to come here and teach me how to do math." The teacher replied, "Let's focus on your work." The student stated, "I don't want help."	Basic	42%
	The QSR team rated less than 10% of the observations as unsatisfactory in this component.	Unsatisfactory	8%

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 52% of the observations as "distinguished" or "proficient" for the Instruction domain.

Instruction	Evidence Observed	School Wide Rating	
Communicating with Students	The QSR team scored 58% of the observations as proficient and none as distinguished. Teachers stated the objectives of the lessons and introduced material by going over the instructions for worksheets or small group work. In one observation a teacher worked one-on-one on a reading assignment and then asked the student to write some sentences with details from the story.	Distinguished	0%
		Proficient	58%
	The QSR team scored 42% of the observations as basic. In a few observations teachers needed to clarify the directions multiple times. During a pull-out session, a teacher helped a student through each step of double digit subtraction. The teacher attempted to have the student work independently and recite steps with uneven results. When the student gave a wrong answer, the teacher corrected the student and continued to talk in a procedural manner while the student remained silent.	Basic	42%
	The QSR team rated none of the observations as unsatisfactory in this component.	Unsatisfactory	0%
Using Questioning/Prompts and Discussion Techniques	The QSR team scored 50% of the observations as proficient and none as distinguished. In some observations teachers walked students through problems without giving the answers and prompted the student to describe the steps. In another observation a teacher helped a student who was having difficulty reading multi-syllabic	Distinguished	0%

Instruction	Evidence Observed	School Wide Rating	
	words by asking the student to think about context clues and pictures in the story. At the construction site, teachers invited students to discuss the best way to approach and complete projects. Each teacher explained a different way to finish a project, when the students asked how they should do it, the teacher said, "That's for you to decide. Tell us how you would do it."	Proficient	50%
	The QSR team scored 25% of the observations as basic. Teachers asked questions that only required a single correct response. In a few observations teachers posed questions and tried to facilitate discussions, but only a few students participated.	Basic	25%
	The QSR team rated 25% of the observations as unsatisfactory in this component. These observations were characterized by poor levels of classroom discussions. Teachers did not challenge students through questioning or facilitate discussions among students. In most observations students who were working were involved in independent work. In one observation a teacher did ask questions but also answered all of the questions without including the students in the exchange.	Unsatisfactory	25%
Engaging Students in Learning	The QSR team scored 50% of the observations as proficient and none as distinguished. In these observations most students were engaged in the lesson or independent work on tablets. In one observation students worked well in pairs on fractions practice. In another observation students worked on tablets while a teacher assisted another student with sounding out difficult words.	Distinguished	8%
		Proficient	42%

Instruction	Evidence Observed	School Wide Rating	
	The QSR team scored 33% of the observations as basic. During one observation the teacher made multiple attempts to motivate a student and explained the impact of the student's hard work, but the student was largely passive throughout the observation and minimally engaged in completing the assignment.	Basic	33%
	The QSR team rated 17% of the observations as unsatisfactory in this component. In some observations students were off task, on social media, and talking with each other. Students continued this behavior even after being prompted several times by the teacher to get on task. In a few instances teachers made no attempt to correct the behavior and allowed students to stay off task. One disgruntled student stated, "I don't feel motivated. Nobody's teaching."	Unsatisfactory	17%
Using Assessment in Instruction	The QSR team scored 50% of the observations as proficient and none as distinguished. In half of the observations, teachers assessed students' work and understanding of the material and gave specific feedback. Teachers checked in with individual students to see the progress on the tablets and worksheets. One teacher said, "I want to know your scores when you finish."	Distinguished	0%
	In another observation a teacher provided direct feedback and asked questions to guide student thinking. The teacher had the student state his/her address. After the student gave the information, the teacher said, "See that's a detail that's important when you tell someone where you live. If you don't include SE, which is a detail of your address, they won't know where to go."	Proficient	50%

Instruction	Evidence Observed	School Wide Rating	
	The QSR team scored 42% of the observations as basic. In these observations teachers circulated to see how students were accessing the material but offered general feedback instead of specific feedback for individual students. In one observation the teacher's attempt to adjust the lesson in response to student assessment was minimal and little scaffolding was offered when students did not produce the correct answer. In the same observation a teacher accepted certain answers but then later rejected them because the answers were incorrect. The teacher's explanation was only, "it doesn't work." The teacher did not go on to explain why or model how to get the correct answer.	Basic	42%
	The QSR team rated less than 10% of the observations as unsatisfactory in this component.	Unsatisfactory	8%

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.

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 situation 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 may 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

Instruction	Unsatisfactory	Basic	Proficient	Distinguished
				reflection and closure.
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.