



July 5, 2016

Donald Hense
Board Chair, Friendship Public Charter School
120 Q Street NE, Suite 200
Washington, DC 20002

Dear Mr. Hense,

The DC Public Charter School Board (DC PCSB) conducts Strategies Visits to gather and document evidence to support school oversight of schools that are identified as Focus or Priority by the Office of the State Superintendent of Education (OSSE). According to the 2014 Memorandum of Understanding that DC PCSB has with OSSE around implementation of the 2012 Waiver to the Elementary and Secondary Education Act, DC PCSB must "ensure that public charter schools identified as Focus or Priority are providing interventions and supports to students and their teachers consistent with that school's Intervention and Support Plan" (p.5). Your high school was designated as Focus by OSSE in school year 2014-15 based on state test results from school year 2012-13 for the performance of students with disabilities in reading.

DC PCSB conducted its fourth Strategies Visit in two years from May 16 to May 27, 2016, with two scheduled days on May 19 and May 20, 2016. The purpose of the visits is to observe how the school's Focus intervention strategies are being implemented. The visit also included an unscheduled visit.

The Strategies Visit report is attached. We appreciate the assistance and hospitality that the staff gave the monitoring team.

Sincerely,



Naomi DeVeaux
Deputy Director

Enclosures

cc:

Ms. Patricia Brantley, Chief Executive Officer
Ms. Kimberly Campbell, Chief of Staff
Mr. Dwan Jordon, Principal

Strategies Visit Report

Date: July 5, 2016

Campus Name: Friendship Public Charter School – Collegiate Academy (Friendship PCS – Collegiate)

Ward: 7

Grade levels: 9 -12

Enrollment: 810

Students with Disabilities enrollment: 164

English Language Learners enrollment: 2

Previous ESEA monitoring visits: January 2015 (full Qualitative Site Review with Strategies Visit), April 2015 (Strategies Visit), November 2015 (Strategies Visit)

Subgroup: Reading - students with disabilities

Two-week window: May 16 through May 27, 2016

Scheduled Days: May 19 and May 20, 2016

SCHOOL INTERVENTION AND SUPPORT STRATEGIES

The following table summarizes Friendship Public Charter School – Collegiate Academy’s (Friendship PCS – Collegiate) strategies and evidence collected by DC Public Charter School Board (DC PCSB) for the purposes of the 2012 ESEA Flexibility Waiver. DC PCSB observed the school implementing those strategies during both the scheduled days on May 19 and May 20, 2016 and the observation window from May 16 through May 27, 2016, in which one unscheduled visit took place.

Friendship PCS – Collegiate was first identified by the Office of the State Superintendent of Education (OSSE) as a Focus school in fall of 2014 based on the performance of their students with disabilities on the reading portion of the state assessment in school year 2012-13. Please note that OSSE was delayed one year in its identification of the school as a Focus school and DC PCSB began monitoring the school in school year 2014-15. Friendship PCS – Collegiate is considered to be in its second year of Focus Strategies monitoring despite having been identified based on data from three years ago.

The school will remain under Focus status until it meets the exit criteria established by OSSE or the ESEA Waiver expires. The state switched to a new assessment in school year 2014-15, causing its original exit criteria to no longer be applicable.¹

¹ In a letter to Focus and Priority charter schools dated April 1, 2016, OSSE detailed criteria it would use to grant flexibilities to those schools who would have exited Focus and Priority status if the opportunity had been provided based on past years of progress on the state assessment. For school year 2016-17, OSSE will identify Focus and Priority schools that meet certain performance thresholds on the state assessment (using 2016 PARCC results) that will make those schools eligible for certain flexibilities in monitoring. DC PCSB may then request modified (or no) monitoring of schools that meet those thresholds. However those schools will still be considered Focus and Priority schools, and are not eligible for exit.

DC PCSB monitored the school two times in school year 2014-15. To see the previous monitoring visits, go [here](#). The first visit in January 2015 was a full Qualitative Site Review (QSR) where the QSR team collected evidence related to the school's mission and goals, and conducted classroom observations and reported evidence aligned to the Charlotte Danielson *Framework for Teaching* in addition to collecting evidence of the school's implementation of its Focus strategies. DC PCSB conducts full QSRs with a Strategies Visit component related to a school's Focus identification in the first half of the first year of identification to gather baseline data related to the school's overall instructional program and the school's implementation of Focus strategies. Subsequent visits do not contain QSRs and are limited to just observing Focus strategies. The results of the Strategies Visits are used to collect interim evidence that the school is implementing the strategies identified in its Focus plan (see table below).

DC PCSB leaves it to the discretion of school leadership to determine the best use of time during the scheduled day of observations of Strategies Visits and gathers evidence from "snapshots" of a school day taken during the unscheduled visits. DC PCSB may not observe all Focus strategies. Cases where DC PCSB did not observe a strategy are indicated in the report. It is DC PCSB's current policy to not ask school leadership to identify individual students who have disabilities. During the scheduled day DC PCSB asked Friendship PCS – Collegiate to indicate which classrooms and/or events demonstrate the strongest evidence that the school is implementing its Focus strategies to support its students with disabilities in reading.

Overall DC PCSB saw strong implementation of strategies to support students with disabilities in reading. DC PCSB also saw strong implementation of the school's use of data to drive instruction for students in the Professional Learning Community where teachers analyzed student writing together. Teachers participated in an intervention meeting where they discussed challenges of students with disabilities in reading and how to address them. Teachers also used data in reading intervention classes to drive small group instruction. DC PCSB observed strong implementation of the reading intervention courses, noting that these were focused on areas of student need and that students were productively engaged throughout the classes.

Strategy Described in School Improvement Plan	School's Description of Strategy on the Ground	Evidence
Use formative assessment design and data analysis to improve and differentiate instruction	Teachers participate in ongoing 6-week data cycles that include analysis and re teaching of interim data.	DC PCSB saw strong implementation of the use of formative assessment design and data analysis to improve and differentiate instruction through the data cycle during the Fall 2016 monitoring visit. Evidence of this may be found here .

Strategy Described in School Improvement Plan	School's Description of Strategy on the Ground	Evidence
	<p>Teachers receive weekly observation and feedback sessions from the Instructional Leadership team.</p> <p>Monthly Professional Learning Community work related to strategies that will improve student achievement that take place in lateral teams.</p> <p>Using data analysis to form small groups for guided reading in reading intervention courses.</p> <p>Community Office Assessment and Evaluation staff rotate to campuses to provide ongoing support in the review of student work and data analysis. These consultations assist teachers with instructional planning to reteach standards not mastered.</p> <p>Monthly LEA-wide</p>	<p>DC PCSB saw school leadership observing teachers during the Fall 2016 monitoring visit, and observed strong implementation of a feedback session during the Spring 2016 monitoring visit. The session yielded practical strategies to improve student learning immediately. Teachers described their current essay-writing unit, sharing the difficulty of students applying their newly learned writing skills to subsequent assignments, challenging student interactions, and students' discomfort around their individual literacy data. The coach referred to the conversation he had with teachers the previous week, noting that he saw improved classroom environment as a result of the strategies teachers implemented. To address the teachers' concerns with student data, the coach suggested individual data trackers be made available to all students. He also discussed ways to mitigate specific negative student behaviors by keeping lectures short so students are more engaged in the work, and how to keep students invested even when they are faced with long stays at home (for home schooling or maternity leave).</p> <p>DC PCSB observed strong implementation of a lateral team working together to improve student achievement through a Professional Learning Community on the scheduled day. Participants included English teachers from across the school. In response to a school-wide need to improve student writing, school leadership organized an event during the scheduled day called Knights Right to Write in which all students read a text and answered a prompt through a five-paragraph essay. Teachers came together to norm the grading of these essays against the school-wide rubric at the end of the day. Observers saw both of these events. Teachers discussed overall strengths and weaknesses in student writing, identifying the specific writing skills students needed to improve to prepare for college.</p>

Strategy Described in School Improvement Plan	School's Description of Strategy on the Ground	Evidence
	<p>professional development is provided for all school based staff on developing assessments, improving instructional practice, meeting the needs of diverse learners, among other topics related to improving student achievement.</p> <p>The Friendship Informal Observation Tracker is a tool used to ensure observations and feedback are occurring weekly and to review the feedback to inform professional development and determine additional supports needed.</p>	<p>DC PCSB observed strong implementation of the use of data to drive small group instruction during an intervention meeting and during classroom instruction in Reading Lab. During the intervention meeting, instructional staff supporting reading for students with IEPs came together to discuss ways to improve reading support. They reviewed how they assess students during class, mentioning exit tickets and students' individual Scholastic Reading Inventory (SRI). They also discussed student skill gaps and how to support individual students to be successful. DC PCSB also reviewed notes from past intervention meetings showing evidence of a focus on data, as topics included student growth goals for April and May, participation and intervention software usage reports, grading reports, comprehension grouping reports and instructional feedback.</p> <p>DC PCSB observed the consistent use of small groups based on data analysis during reading intervention classes. In all of the Read 180 classes students started in different groups depending on what they needed to work on, like their intervention software or their SRI. The teacher had a data grading report for each week for each student that let her know the particular skills students had to work on in small groups, like vocabulary, fluency, and comprehension. A student ambassador explained to an observer how he knew what to work on, showing the class tracker of reading levels and describing the process for deciding which reading activity he needed. In multiple observations some students worked on reading intervention software and others read independently. The teacher pulled small groups together to work on a stretch text (a text slightly above the student's reading level). DC PCSB did not observe small groups beyond</p>

Strategy Described in School Improvement Plan	School's Description of Strategy on the Ground	Evidence
		<p>intervention classes, though this is consistent with the school's intervention plan.</p> <p>While DC PCSB did not observe Community Office staff reviewing student work, we observed Community Office staff and school staff looking at a special education student tracker to review areas to improve. The meeting focused on non-academic areas of concern including attendance and suspensions. The principal introduced the meeting as a weekly accountability discussion where special education coordinators report out to school leadership on the school's data to identify areas for improvement. School leadership tracked IEP timeliness, referrals, attendance, and suspensions to see school-wide trends, and highlighted what percentage of special education students were suspended to check disproportionality and if detected, to understand why. The principal ended this portion of the meeting by calling for more frequent data runs and for staff to be more diligent in ensuring students are receiving the necessary services.</p> <p>DC PCSB did not have the opportunity to observe the monthly LEA-wide professional development or the Friendship Informal Observation Tracker.</p>
<p>Extend learning time before, during and after school that is aligned to Common Core State Standard.</p>	<p>Students performing below grade level receive various interventions throughout the day through reading and/or math labs. The following interventions are</p>	<p>DC PCSB saw strong implementation of students receiving reading interventions throughout the day, mainly through the Read 180 classes but also through Wilson Reading. We attempted to observe an Achieve 3000 class but the teacher was absent. As discussed in the previous strategy, the Read 180 teacher consistently used data to create small groups. In addition to small groups working on computer software, independent</p>

Strategy Described in School Improvement Plan	School's Description of Strategy on the Ground	Evidence
	<p>provided: Achieve 3000 - Reading intervention for students scoring 3 grade levels below their current grade. Wilson Reading – Intervention for students who are at or below the 5th grade level. (New students have been added and students regrouped based on MAP performance and No Nonsense Reading Assessment). Read 180 (new) - Students who score 2 or more grade levels below for 9th and 10th graders.</p>	<p>reading assignments, and individual reading skills with the teacher, the class came together for a portion of the lessons to read a short text that was slightly above most of their reading levels. The teacher broke the text into chunks and asked students comprehension questions as they read along. She also asked specific questions about the words, helping them decode difficult vocabulary by breaking down the word parts and sound out the number of syllables in a word. Most students in all reading intervention classes were productively engaged and on-task. Classes had between ten and fifteen students each. In the rare instances when students got off task, redirection by the teacher refocused them with little time lost.</p> <p>DC PCSB observed a strong Wilson Reading Class. The focus of the class was on areas students needed to improve based on exit ticket data, and students were productively engaged throughout the entire class. The teacher began by sharing observations from students' most recent exit slips showing that students struggled with segmenting and welded sounds. The class then practiced these skills together. The teacher reviewed vowel sounds and digraphs, asking each student to come up to the board to choose the letters (from tiles) that make certain sounds as a way to assess each student's understanding. Students practiced spelling different words with welded sounds by "skywriting" them with their fingers as a class. For the last activity, students practiced individually making nonsense words and real words with tiles. The teacher ended the class with exit slips requiring students to spell a mix of nonsense and real words that she said out loud.</p> <p>DC PCSB did not observe students using Achieve 3000.</p>