



December 8, 2016

Le Roy (Terry) Eakin III, Board Chair  
DC Prep- Benning Elementary School  
100 41st Street, NE  
Washington, DC 20019

Dear Mr. Eakin:

The DC 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, DC 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 2016-17 school year for the following reason:

- School eligible to petition for 15-year Charter Renewal during 2017-18 school year

### **Qualitative Site Review Report**

A Qualitative Site Review team conducted on-site reviews of DC Prep PCS-Benning Elementary School between October 17, 2016 and October 28, 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 DC Prep PCS-Benning Elementary School.

Sincerely,

Naomi DeVeaux  
Deputy Director

Enclosures

cc: Maura Englender, Principal

## Qualitative Site Review Report

**Date:** December 8, 2016

### **Campus Information**

**Campus Name:** DC Prep PCS- Benning Elementary

**Ward:** 7

**Grade levels:** PK3- 3

### **Qualitative Site Review Information**

**Reason for visit:** School eligible to petition for 15-year Charter Renewal during 2017-18 school year

**Two-week window:** October 17, 2016 - October 28, 2016

**QSR team members:** 2 DC PCSB staff, 2 consultants, ELL specialist, SPED specialist

**Number of observations:** 34

**Total enrollment:** 449

**Students with Disabilities enrollment:** 33

**English Language Learners enrollment:** <10

**In-seat attendance on the days the QSR team conducted observations:**

**Visit 1:** October 19, 2016- 96.2%

**Visit 2:** October 20, 2016- 95.6%

**Visit 3:** October 24, 2016- 92.9%

**Visit 4:** October 25, 2016- 95.3%

### **Summary**

DC Prep Public Charter School's mission is

to bridge the educational divide in Washington, DC by increasing the number of students from underserved communities with the academic preparation and personal character to succeed in competitive high schools and colleges.

School leadership explained that the LEA aims to support teachers to develop the skills and cultivate the tools needed to create a rich learning environment where the heavy lift is on the students, where Prep Skills are embedded in instruction, and where strong teacher presence creates positive classroom momentum.

DC Prep provides a program of intensive academic support including individual academic intervention and small group instruction called Prep Sessions where students receive reading or math intervention tailored to their individual needs. The QSR team observed intervention sessions during the two-week window at DC Prep PCS - Benning Elementary and saw students engaged in re-teaching lessons. The intervention teachers explained to students they were working in small groups to improve their exit ticket scores from previous lessons.

During the QSR two-week window, the team used the Charlotte Danielson *Framework for Teaching* to examine classroom environments and instructional delivery (see Appendix I). The QSR team scored 82% of observations as distinguished or proficient in the Classroom

Environment domain. Students demonstrated an understanding of clear and consistent classroom procedures. Talk between students and teachers was respectful and warm in a majority of observations. The QSR team scored 76% of observations as distinguished or proficient in the Instruction domain. Teachers communicated lesson content and expectations for learning clearly and effectively. Students had opportunities to talk to one another about their learning and most activities successfully engaged students in the lesson.

A member of the DC PCSB staff attended the DC Prep Board Meeting on November 13, 2016. A quorum was present; board members reported both in person and on the phone. The board reported on academic highlights from all DC Prep Campuses. Additionally, they discussed DC Prep student demographics. Other topics covered by the meeting included: three- year strategic plan, governance matters, social and mental health support in schools, and participation rates of employees in DC Prep's 403(b) retirement plan.

### Specialized Instruction for Students with Disabilities

Prior to the two-week observation window, DC Prep PCS – Benning Elementary provided answers to specific questions posed by DC PCSB regarding the provision of instruction to students with disabilities in the Special Education Questionnaire.

- The school described the collaborative process between general educators and special educators. Special education teachers co-teach high-leverage blocks (ELA and Math grade-level focus lesson) with general educators, and they work with the teaching team to adapt instructional materials and implement supports for students with disabilities. The special education specialist saw at least two adults in all high-leveraged blocks use a variety of co-teaching models. In some classrooms the general and special educator each led small groups. Instruction appeared parallel in terms of content, however the special educator consistently provided self-management strategies including repetition, redirection and verbal reminders about classroom expectations that effectively kept students on task.
- The school explained that teachers analyze daily exit tickets, formative assessments, and anecdotal data, all of which is discussed at co-teaching meetings to determine the progress of students with disabilities. The special education specialist saw examples of ongoing assessment including formative assessments, teacher conferences, and end-of-class exit tickets. Questions on the exit tickets corresponded to the objective posted, and all students responded in most observations. In two out of six observations behavior challenges prevented the teachers from completing the exit ticket at the end of class.

### Instruction for English Language Learners

DC Prep PCS- Benning Elementary submitted responses to a questionnaire related to the school's provision of services for the school's English Language Learner (ELL) population, which is less than ten students at varying levels of English language proficiency.

- The school described content-based ELL instructional model, where students receive the bulk of their ELL services in an inclusion setting, and are immersed in the grade-level content throughout the school day. DC PCSB observed the ELL teacher in both push-in and pull-out settings. In both settings the ELL teacher provided manipulative supports, repetition, clues, and gestures to help students access the assignment. ELL students received differentiated assignments that taught at the appropriate level of English language and content for the age and experience of the students.

**CHARTER MISSION, GOALS, AND ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENT EXPECTATIONS**

This table summarizes qualitative evidence related to the goals and academic achievement expectations as detailed in the school’s charter and subsequent charter amendments. Some charter goals can only be measured quantitatively. The Qualitative Site Review (QSR) team recorded evidence of what the school is doing on the ground to meet these quantitative goals. During the 5-year charter review, 10-year charter review, or 15-year charter renewal process, DC PCSB staff will use quantitative data to assess whether the school met those goals.

<b>Mission and Goals</b>	<b>Evidence</b>
<p>Mission:</p> <p>The mission of DC Prep PCS is to bridge the educational divide in Washington, DC by increasing the number of students from underserved communities with the academic preparation and personal character to succeed in competitive high schools and colleges.</p>	<p>The QSR team observed strong evidence that DC Prep - Benning Elementary is meeting its mission.</p> <p>The instruction emphasizes academics, character, and leadership. Students actively participated in the functionality of their classrooms and were eager to help one another and their teachers.</p> <p>There were many instances of students taking academic risks and teachers celebrated students who demonstrated Prep Skills by giving out additions, which are points that students can receive for exhibiting positive behavior. Prep Skills include (1) speaking and listening to others, (2) persevering, (3) contributing to group activities, (4) advocating for oneself, and (5) using emotional management strategies.</p> <p>The QSR team also observed evidence that students are developing the skills, knowledge, and character necessary for further academic achievement, professional success and civic leadership. Students read historical articles and current events and teachers cultivated conversation about applying lessons learned to their own communities. In one observation students researched their own cultural heritages and wrote an essay about how they would use what they learned to contribute to the class community.</p>

Mission and Goals	Evidence
	The level of accountable talk in many classes demonstrated a commitment to preparing students for a world beyond the school. Students are equipped with language to respectfully disagree with one another.
<p>Goals:</p> <p>The school's leadership, faculty and staff are highly effective and work together in a constructive and sustainable fashion.</p>	<p>The QSR team scored most observations at DC Prep- Benning Elementary as distinguished or proficient in both the Classroom Environment and Instruction domains of the <i>Charlotte Danielson Framework for Teaching</i>. The QSR team observed multiple teachers in each classroom and the role of the second teacher varied from one class to the next. Some teachers co-taught in a whole group setting, some led small groups, and others focused on correcting student behavior. Overall the staff used effective instructional techniques to engage all students in challenging learning tasks.</p>
<p>Students abide by DC Prep's code of conduct, demonstrating good habits, character, and leadership.</p>	<p>Teachers consistently rewarded students with additions for displaying Prep Skills. The system of additions and deductions was consistent between classes and students tracked their points on papers they carried between classes. In some observations teachers recognized students as "star students" at the end of class. The school had an anti-bullying "Unity Day." On this day several academic lessons incorporated the themes of love and community.</p>
<p>Students graduate with an eighth grade level of academic competency or better.</p>	<p>Not observable</p>

<b>Mission and Goals</b>	<b>Evidence</b>
Students enroll in academically challenging college-preparatory high schools.	Not observable
The school assists in the launch and success of other charter schools, and in the improvement of non-charter public schools in the city.	Not observable
DC Prep alumni graduate from academically challenging high schools and attend college.	Not observable

**THE CLASSROOM ENVIRONMENT<sup>1</sup>**

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 82% of classrooms as “distinguished” or “proficient” for the Classroom Environment domain.

The Classroom Environment	Evidence Observed	School Wide Rating	
<p><b>Creating an Environment of Respect and Rapport</b></p>	<p>The QSR team scored 88% of the observations as distinguished or proficient in this component. In these observations talk between students and teachers was respectful and warm. Teachers greeted students by name and students were encouraged to “shine” each other by silently motioning spirit fingers in the direction of their peers. Several students were intrinsically motivated to help one another without receiving additions or praise. When one teacher walked into the classroom, a student got up to give the teacher a hug saying, “I missed you!”</p>	Distinguished	15%
		Proficient	73%
	<p>The QSR team rated 12% of the observations as basic in this component. In these observations students had negative reactions, such as rolling one’s eyes, when teachers gave directions. In some instances teachers attempted to respond to disrespectful behavior among students with uneven results.</p>	Basic	12%
	<p>The QSR team scored none of the observations as unsatisfactory in this component.</p>	Unsatisfactory	0%

<sup>1</sup> Teachers may be observed more than once by different review team members.

The Classroom Environment	Evidence Observed	School Wide Rating	
<b>Establishing a Culture for Learning</b>	<p>The QSR team scored 85% of the observations as distinguished or proficient in this component. In these observations students received additions for perseverance and grit. Teachers gave praise to students who were “prepped up” meaning they had all of their materials in place and were ready to learn. A few teachers said, “Now I’m ready to challenge you” and the students chanted, “Oh a challenge. I love it, I love it, I do!” In another observation a student self-corrected. She saw that she made a mistake and then said, “Oh I got it!” and the teacher gave her a high-five. In one observation a teacher said, “I want to see strong justifications. I’m looking at yours and it’s not as good as what I know you can do.”</p>	Distinguished	6%
		Proficient	79%
	<p>The QSR team rated 15% of the observations as basic in this component. In these observations teachers focused only on the students that were raising their hands, eager to participate. In one basic observation many students did not participate in centers; the students walked from center to center but did not stay in any center for long enough to complete the activity. In the library center some students threw books. In another observation the teacher told two students to sit quietly on the carpet without any work or direction.</p>	Basic	15%
	<p>The QSR team scored none of the observations as unsatisfactory in this component.</p>	Unsatisfactory	0%

The Classroom Environment	Evidence Observed	School Wide Rating	
<b>Managing Classroom Procedures</b>	<p>The QSR team scored 77% of the observations as distinguished or proficient in this component. In these observations students transitioned between activities with little loss of instructional time. Teachers used timers, chants, claps, and songs to move students between learning tasks. In all prekindergarten observations student names were labeled on the carpet and students knew how to go to their name with minimal teacher directions. In all grades students successfully and independently checked themselves into and out of centers. In a few observations students had classroom jobs and performed these jobs without being asked. In one classroom a student handed out white boards and markers to each student seated on the carpet. In another distinguished observation one student was the "noise monitor". This student raised his hand when the classroom got too noisy.</p>	Distinguished	15%
		Proficient	62%
	<p>The QSR team rated 23% of the observations as basic in this component. In these observations significant learning time was lost due to unclear classroom procedures. In some observations procedures had to be redone several times throughout the observation period. In a few observations there was not an established procedure for rotating between centers, and in one observation students threw classroom materials.</p>	Basic	23%
	<p>The QSR team scored none of the observations as unsatisfactory in this component.</p>	Unsatisfactory	0%

The Classroom Environment	Evidence Observed	School Wide Rating	
<b>Managing Student Behavior</b>	<p>The QSR team scored 80% of the observations as distinguished or proficient in this component. In these observations teachers redirected off-task behaviors successfully by physically meeting students on their level and whispering to redirect them. In each classroom there was a "fresh start" corner with a yoga book students could read to calm themselves down. Picture prompts and words were posted to remind students of expected behavior such as "Lips are zipped. Eyes are watching. Legs are crossed. Ears are listening." Teachers reminded students of each step when necessary. All teachers used a uniform system of assigning additions to acknowledge exemplary behavior and deductions as a consequence for not meeting behavioral expectations.</p>	Distinguished	12%
		Proficient	68%
	<p>The QSR team rated 20% of the observations as basic in this component. In these observations students required multiple redirections throughout the lesson. The teachers responded to misbehavior consistently, but multiple students continued to misbehave throughout the lesson. In one observation the students completed a Do-Now and transition to the carpet over the course of twenty minutes. Teacher had to remove several from the carpet for yelling which resulted in a significant loss of instructional time.</p>	Basic	20%
	<p>The QSR team scored 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 76% of classrooms as “distinguished” or “proficient” for the Instruction domain.

Instruction	Evidence Observed	School Wide Rating	
<p><b>Communicating with Students</b></p>	<p>The QSR team scored 91% of the observations as distinguished or proficient in this component. In these observations teachers clearly stated what students were learning. In one distinguished observation, the teacher built on prior knowledge saying, “We know what a character is.” The teacher asked students to define character and explain the difference between main and secondary characters.</p>	Distinguished	9%
	<p>In other observations the teachers modeled strategies. One teacher modeled annotation in a text. Students annotated a similar text with partners in order to solve evidence-based questions. In another observation a teacher referenced different strategies to solve a word problem. Some students drew a picture to represent the equation and some counted on their fingers.</p>	Proficient	82%
	<p>The QSR team rated less than 10% of the observations as basic in this component.</p>	Basic	9%
	<p>The QSR team scored none of the observations as unsatisfactory in this component.</p>	Unsatisfactory	0%

Instruction	Evidence Observed	School Wide Rating	
<b>Using Questioning/Prompts and Discussion Techniques</b>	<p>The QSR team scored 67% of the observations as distinguished or proficient in this component. In these observations teachers used effective questioning to deepen student understanding. Teachers encouraged students to build on one another's answers saying, "Who would like to build upon Student X's answer?"</p>	Distinguished	6%
	<p>Some observations used accountable talk with statements such as, "I respectfully disagree with you..." or "I agree with my peer because..." Teachers in multiple classrooms encouraged student participation by using "turn and talks" so every student had an opportunity to share their thoughts. Several teachers used open-ended questions and effectively built off students' answers to expand discussion.</p>	Proficient	61%
	<p>The QSR team scored 33% of the observations as basic in this component. In these observations teachers attempted to engage students in questioning but a majority of the time was spent addressing behavior issues. In other observations teachers prompted students to hold up agree or disagree symbols, but students did not have opportunities to share their reasoning.</p>	Basic	33%
	<p>The QSR team scored none of the observations as unsatisfactory in this component.</p>	Unsatisfactory	0%

Instruction	Evidence Observed	School Wide Rating	
<b>Engaging Students in Learning</b>	<p>The QSR team scored 80% of the observations as distinguished or proficient in this component. In several observations students were engaged in work at different centers. Overall learning tasks were aligned to the lesson objective and accessible to all students but were not easy. During one seven-minute silent work time, all students solved a math problem. Many struggled but they worked diligently and were awarded additions for perseverance. In one observation the students were excited to ball up their exit ticket and shoot it into the basket that corresponded with the answer they chose.</p>	Distinguished	15%
	<p>The QSR team scored 20% of the observations as basic in this component. In these observations there were few opportunities for students to participate as the teachers did all of the speaking. In some observations students were off-task during centers talking about irrelevant topics.</p>	Basic	20%
	<p>The QSR team scored none of the observations as unsatisfactory in this component.</p>	Unsatisfactory	0%
<b>Using Assessment in Instruction</b>	<p>The QSR team scored 67% of the observations as proficient in this component. In these observations there was a clear exit ticket and students demonstrated that they understood the criteria for success. In many observations the teachers circulated the classroom to gather evidence of student understanding and address misconceptions. Teachers asked, "How</p>	Distinguished	0%

Instruction	Evidence Observed	School Wide Rating	
	<p>do you know [this]?" and "Go back and check your work here."</p> <p>In one observation the teacher noticed that a student was struggling with the terms less and more. She asked questions to get the student to explain and then used a manipulative to address the confusion resulting in the student answering a problem correctly. In other observation, the teacher added comments in real-time to student essays using Google documents. Comments included, "Add research to support this claim" or "You need a topic sentence here."</p>	Proficient	67%
	<p>The QSR team scored 33% of the observations as basic in this component. In these observations teachers did not communicate to students how work would be evaluated. Several teachers annotated student actions broadly, saying phrases such as, "Student X is writing" and "Student X is working hard."</p>	Basic	33%
	<p>The QSR team scored none of the observations as unsatisfactory in this component.</p>	Unsatisfactory	0%

**APPENDIX I: THE CLASSROOM ENVIRONMENT OBSERVATION RUBRIC**

<b>The Classroom Environment</b>	<b>Unsatisfactory</b>	<b>Basic</b>	<b>Proficient</b>	<b>Distinguished</b>
<b>Creating an Environment of Respect and Rapport</b>	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.
<b>Establishing a Culture for Learning</b>	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.

<b>The Classroom Environment</b>	<b>Unsatisfactory</b>	<b>Basic</b>	<b>Proficient</b>	<b>Distinguished</b>
<b>Managing Classroom Procedures</b>	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.
<b>Managing Student Behavior</b>	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**

<b>Instruction</b>	<b>Unsatisfactory</b>	<b>Basic</b>	<b>Proficient</b>	<b>Distinguished</b>
<b>Communicating with Students</b>	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.
<b>Using Questioning and Discussion Techniques</b>	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.
<b>Engaging Students in Learning</b>	Students are not at all intellectually engaged in significant	Students are intellectually engaged only partially, resulting from activities or	Students are intellectually engaged throughout the lesson, with	Students are highly engaged throughout the lesson and make material contribution to the representation

Instruction	Unsatisfactory	Basic	Proficient	Distinguished
	learning, as a result of inappropriate activities or materials, poor representations of content, or lack of lesson structure.	materials or uneven quality, inconsistent representation of content or uneven structure of pacing.	appropriate activities and materials, instructive representations of content, and suitable structure and pacing of the lesson.	of content, the activities, and the materials. The structure and pacing of the lesson allow for student reflection and closure.
<b>Using Assessment in Instruction</b>	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.