



July 18, 2017

Ms. Patrina Clark, Board Chair  
Academy of Hope Adult Public Charter School  
421 Alabama Ave, SE  
Washington, DC 20032

Dear Ms. Clark:

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 reasons:

- o Tier 3 on 2015-16 PMF

**Qualitative Site Review Report**

A Qualitative Site Review team conducted on-site reviews of Academy of Hope Adult Public Charter School between May 15, 2017 - May 26, 2017. 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 Academy of Hope Adult Public Charter School.

Sincerely,

Naomi DeVeaux  
Deputy Director

Enclosures  
cc: Leicester Johnson, Executive Director

## Qualitative Site Review Report

**Date:** July 18, 2017

**Campus Name:** Academy of Hope Adult Public Charter School

**Ward:** 5 and 8

**Grade levels:** Adult

**Reason for visit:** Tier 3 on 2015-16 PMF

**Two-week window:** May 15, 2017 – May 26, 2017

**QSR team members:** 2 DC PCSB staff, including a Special Education Specialist, and 2 Adult Education consultants

**Number of observations:** 20

**Total enrollment:** 402

**Students with Disabilities enrollment:** <10

**In-seat attendance<sup>1</sup> during the two-week window:**

**Visit 1:** May 15, 2017 – 67.4%

**Visit 2:** May 16, 2017 – 70.9%

**Visit 3:** May 17, 2017 – 59.4%

**Visit 4:** May 23, 2017 – 65.8%

### Summary

Academy of Hope Adult Public Charter School's (Academy of Hope Adult PCS) mission is to "provide high quality education and services that change lives and improve our communities". The QSR team observed evidence that the school is meeting this mission, observing high quality instruction for students with diverse needs at both facilities in Wards 5 and 8. In many classrooms students worked productively on individual work and collaborated with other students.

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 an impressive 98% of observations as distinguished or proficient in the Classroom Environment domain. In the component of *Creating an Environment of Respect and Rapport*, the QSR team scored 100% of the observations as distinguished or proficient, a remarkably high rate. In these observations teachers provided a warm, genuine learning environment. Multiple observers saw teachers and students show compassion and care for one another and none observed disrespectful student behavior. Overall impressions of the classroom environment illustrate a supportive and collaborative environment that promoted learning.

The QSR team scored a high 86% of observations as distinguished or proficient in the Instruction domain. In the component of *Communicating with Students*, observers rated 85% of interactions as distinguished or proficient. These observations were marked by high levels of student engagement. Observers noted that teachers challenged and routinely assessed students and used instructional strategies that supported student learning.

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<sup>1</sup> This data has not been validated by the school. DC PCSB pulled the data in June 2017.

### Governance

A DC PCSB staff member attended Academy of Hope PCS' Board of Directors meeting on March 18, 2017. A quorum was present. The Board approved the previous meeting's board minutes. The Executive Director discussed the fall test scores and interventions to generate improvements, as well as the PMF's new General Education Diploma (GED) participation measure. The Finance Committee delivered a financial report, noting positive school finances overall. The Board concluded with a discussion of the school's development projects.

### Specialized Instruction for Students with Disabilities

Prior to the two-week window, Academy of Hope Adult PCS responded to a DC PCSB questionnaire regarding the provision of instruction to students with disabilities. The DC PCSB special education specialist on the team noted the following evidence, which supports that the school is implementing the program stated in its questionnaire (as described below) with fidelity.

- To support the learning of students with disabilities in general education classrooms, the school stated that students have access to a variety of resources depending on the content and disability. General educators provide visual aids, such as posters, models, PowerPoints, and content-specific tools, such as calculators and reference materials. In each observation the classrooms were decorated in relevant anchor charts (e.g., capitalization rules; fractions, decimals, and percent). In one math observation a number line and ruler were taped to each desk, and students used the calculators on their phones.
- To provide additional support, the school staffs American Sign Language (ASL) interpreters and volunteer assistants. In one classroom there was a lead teacher, an assistant, and an ASL interpreter. Before the class began the lead teacher reviewed the lesson plan with the assistant. During the observation each teacher played an active role in delivering instruction and providing feedback. The ASL interpreter communicated the lead teacher's whole-class lesson on sentence structure to students who are deaf or hearing impaired. All students actively participated in the discussion and had opportunities to speak one-on-one with the teachers.
- To gauge student understanding specifically for students with disabilities, the school explained that teachers use informal checks for understanding throughout their lessons. Additionally teachers evaluate work samples, warm-ups, exit tickets, and project-based learning to determine student learning before summative assessments. In all observations teachers demonstrated proficiency at using assessment in instruction. A social studies teacher provided groups with specific feedback to improve the quality of their posters. In another classroom the teacher, assistant, and ASL interpreter all circulated to monitor student progress on a written assignment. While checking in with students, a math teacher noticed that many students were making the same mistake and stopped the class to reteach.

- The school wrote that it tiers classes to differentiate lessons. All students engage with the same subject content, but teachers adjust complexity and scaffolding based on student skill level. Teachers use a variety of resources and strategies to differentiate, including: leveled readings, graphic organizers, and mixed-ability collaborative learning tasks. In two ELA classrooms the teachers used different leveled non-fiction texts on the topic of ancient Greece. To write a paragraph describing ancient Greece, students had access to graphic organizers, a paragraph “must-haves” checklist, and a packet of transition words. Across all observations students had opportunities to collaborate with classmates. In another observation students worked in mixed-ability groups to create and present posters on different history topics. The QSR team found that the lead teachers as a group excelled at differentiating instruction and using assessment in instruction.

It should be noted that the school serves fewer than ten students with IEPs, and therefore implements its special education strategies throughout all classrooms, particularly “Essentials” classes which focus on beginning literacy and numeracy skills.

**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 charter review or 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: Our mission is to provide high quality education and services that change lives and improve our communities.</p>	<p>Teachers and students both demonstrated high levels of preparedness and engagement, and the environment was conducive to learning. Students demonstrated confidence in taking risks and collaborating with fellow students in the learning process. The QSR team saw a strong sense of community with supportive interactions, such as students praising each other’s work.</p> <p>Instruction focused on real-world problems and building foundations for learning in math, reading, and writing. Students learned components of quality writing such as using transitions. Overall the QSR team found that the high quality of instruction is effective in accomplishing the mission of changing student lives.</p> <p>Note that the QSR team did not observe services offered beyond instruction or the school’s impact beyond the school community.</p>
<p><b>Indicator 1: Student Progress</b></p> <p>Percentage of adult students who progress in ABE performance.</p>	<p>Students were highly engaged in most observations. All lessons were aligned to the Comprehensive Adult Student Assessment System (CASAS). Teachers reviewed the types of questions that students would encounter in this assessment of adult basic education. In the Math Essentials class, students solved word problems involving number operations, measurement, and basic algebra. The</p>

	<p>learning tasks engaged and challenged student thinking. Students demonstrated their work on the board and had to justify their answers to each other and comment on each other's work.</p>
<p><b>Indicator 2: Student Achievement</b></p> <p>Percentage of students that attempt and attain a passing score on the English/Spanish GED tests, or the learner obtains a diploma or state-recognized equivalent, documenting satisfactory completion of secondary studies (high school or adult high school diplomas) out of the total number of students who attempt the English/Spanish GED or diplomas or that are enrolled in the assessment phase of the NEDP.</p>	<p>The school demonstrated evidence of meeting this goal in academic classes. The structure of classes provided students opportunities to receive individual feedback on their progress towards meeting their GED, or NEDP goals. Teachers provided independent work time and individual feedback. Students had opportunities to engage in academic discussions with their peers, and teachers successfully differentiated and scaffolded GED content.</p>
<p><b>Indicator 3: Career/ College Readiness</b></p> <p>Entered Employment or Entered Postsecondary: Percentage of adult students who are in the labor force but enter the program without a job and either a) obtain a job after exiting the program or b) obtain a job while they are enrolled in the program and still hold a job during the first quarter of exit from the program or c) enroll in a postsecondary educational, occupational skills training program, or an apprentice training program.</p> <p>Retained Employment or Entered Postsecondary: Learners who either a) enter the program with a job, or b) obtain a job after exit, and remain employed in the 4th quarter after program exit c) enroll in a postsecondary educational, occupational, skills training program, or an apprenticeship training program.</p>	<p>The QSR team did not observe individual student interviews with the school's job developer, nor did the team observe the school's College Prep and Success class, as this class is only offered during the Fall and Winter Terms. However in many observations students worked on skills necessary for college in writing and computer skills classes. In these observations students worked at their own pace and teachers challenged students to improve their writing with transition words, topic sentences, supporting details, and conclusions.</p>

<p>Entered Postsecondary Education (prior program year): Percentage of students with a second secondary credential and who enroll in a postsecondary educational occupational skills training program, or an apprenticeship training program in the prior program year.</p>	
<p><b>Indicator 4: Leading Indicators</b></p> <p>Attendance: Percentage of students who attend classes regularly.</p> <p>Retention: Percentage of students with both a baseline assessment (pre-test) and a progress assessment (post- test) regardless of academic gain within the program year divided by the total number of students who were in the program, as defined by taking the pre-test.</p>	<p>DC PCSB measures attendance to evaluate the climate of a school. DC PCSB believes that if students are not in school, they lose opportunities for learning. On each day of observations, the school had attendance rates above 49.5%, which is the floor for the Adult Education Performance Management Framework.</p> <p><b>In-seat attendance during the two-week window:</b></p> <p><b>Visit 1:</b> May 15, 2017 – 67.4%</p> <p><b>Visit 2:</b> May 16, 2017 – 70.9%</p> <p><b>Visit 3:</b> May 17, 2017 – 59.4%</p> <p><b>Visit 4:</b> May 23, 2017 – 65.8%</p>

## THE CLASSROOM ENVIRONMENT<sup>2</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 98% of classrooms as “distinguished” or “proficient” for the Classroom Environment domain.

The Classroom Environment	Evidence	School Wide Rating	
<b>Creating an Environment of Respect and Rapport</b>	The QSR team scored an impressive 100% of the observations as distinguished or proficient in this component. The interactions between students and teachers were uniformly respectful and demonstrated genuine care. The teachers demonstrated curiosity about students’ backgrounds and asked questions about their families and work schedules. One teacher showed regard for student preferences by choosing books aligned to each student’s reading levels and interests. In a distinguished observation a teacher showed care for a student’s well-being and offered suggestions on how to take better personal care. In another distinguished observation a teacher inquired about the health of a student’s family.	Distinguished	10%
		Proficient	90%
	The QSR team scored none of the observations as basic in this component.	Basic	0%
	The QSR team scored none of the observations as unsatisfactory in this component.	Unsatisfactory	0%

<sup>2</sup> Teachers may be observed more than once by different review team members.

<b>Establishing a Culture for Learning</b>	The QSR team scored 95% of the observations as distinguished or proficient in this component. Students and teachers demonstrated commitment to establishing an environment that supports learning and encourages hard work. In these observations students were productive throughout the entire class with no off-task behavior. Students took academic risks by freely discussing methodology for solving math problems, information gleaned from maps, and shared responses to writing prompts. Teachers held students to high expectations by providing adequate time for all students to answer questions independently. Some teachers asked students to complete work on the board for others to see, and were understanding and compassionate in their corrections. Teachers regularly acknowledged student efforts. In one distinguished observation students showed support for each other by listening attentively and responding to one another in an academic discussion.	Distinguished	10%
		Proficient	85%
	The QSR team scored less than 10% of the observations as basic in this component.	Basic	5%
	The QSR team scored none of the observations as unsatisfactory in this component.	Unsatisfactory	0%
<b>Managing Classroom Procedures</b>	The QSR team scored 95% of the observations as proficient and none as distinguished in this component. Observers saw smooth functioning of classroom procedures and routines as teachers handed out and collected materials without incident. Students successfully made smooth transitions between activities and were self-driven, resulting in no loss of instructional time. Classroom organization helped students maintain a high level of productivity, as students knew where to go to get materials and how to transition through learning activities.	Distinguished	0%
		Proficient	95%

	The QSR team scored less than 10% of the observations as basic in this component.	Basic	5%
	The QSR team scored none of the observations as unsatisfactory in this component.	Unsatisfactory	0%
<b>Managing Student Behavior</b>	The QSR team scored an impressive 100% of the observations as distinguished or proficient in this component. In several distinguished observations there was no evidence of misbehavior in any classroom, as students were on task throughout the entire class no non-academic distractions (cell phone use) and no need for any disciplinary action or corrective behavior. In proficient observations teachers redirected minor off-task behavior by circulating throughout the room, looking at individual student work, and helping students refocus.	Distinguished	15%
		Proficient	85%
	The QSR team scored none of the observations as basic in this component.	Basic	0%
	The QSR team scored none of the observations as unsatisfactory in this component.	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 86% of classrooms as “distinguished” or “proficient” for the Instruction domain.

Instruction	Evidence	School Wide Rating	
<p><b>Communicating with Students</b></p>	<p>The QSR team scored 85% of the observations as distinguished or proficient in this component. In several distinguished observations teachers communicated the purpose and directions of the lesson thoroughly and clearly, at times inviting students to explain the content to the class. Teachers listened to student responses to ensure that the students understood the content. In one observation a teacher encouraged students to produce writing and not worry about spelling and grammar mistakes that can preoccupy the writing process.</p>	Distinguished	25%
	<p>In most observations teachers posted the agenda on the board and referred to it throughout the lesson. Teachers showed distinguished communication by clearly defining the lesson objectives and referring to them throughout the observations. Observers noted that teachers’ explanations of content were correct, clear and scaffolded to the student’s understanding. Students remained engaged with learning tasks and asked for help when needed.</p>	Proficient	60%
	<p>The QSR team scored 10% of observations as basic in this component. Content delivery in these observations consisted of a monologue with few opportunities for student participation.</p>	Basic	10%
	<p>The QSR team scored less than 10% of the observations as unsatisfactory in this component.</p>	Unsatisfactory	5%

<b>Using Questioning/ Prompts and Discussion Techniques</b>	<p>The QSR team scored 75% of the observations as distinguished or proficient in this component. Teachers appropriately challenged students by asking challenging questions, such as why the United States may have a higher incidence of incarceration than other countries.</p> <p>In most classes observers saw high levels of student participation in discussions. Teachers facilitated rich conversations among students, as in one observation where students worked in small groups to determine pricing of goods based on interest and tax. Students talked with each other freely to justify their proposed solutions. Teachers created opportunities for students to work and discuss directly with each other when working on assignments.</p>	Distinguished	5%
		Proficient	70%
	<p>The QSR team scored 25% of observations as basic in this component. In some observations teachers asked single-correct-response questions and some students did not respond. Students had few opportunities to discuss academic content with each other and teachers did not ask them to support their responses in discussion.</p>	Basic	25%
	<p>The QSR team scored none of the observations as unsatisfactory in this component.</p>	Unsatisfactory	0%
<b>Engaging Students in Learning</b>	<p>The QSR team scored a very high 95% of the observations as proficient and none as distinguished. Students showed enthusiasm about participating in the learning process by volunteering to answer questions or demonstrate concepts to their peers.</p> <p>Teachers moved around the room to check student progress. Materials and resources were intellectually engaging, such as maps showing different prices of fast food around the world, and books on topics students were interested in</p>	Distinguished	0%
		Proficient	95%

	(such as sports figures and current events). Students actively engaged in their work rather than watching the teacher work, and students showed a high level of motivation to complete learning tasks. All students worked toward mastery of material while working independently or in small groups.		
	The QSR team scored less than 10% of observations as basic in this component.	Basic	5%
	The QSR team scored none of the observations as unsatisfactory in this component.	Unsatisfactory	0%
<b>Using Assessment in Instruction</b>	The QSR team scored a high 90% of the observations as distinguished or proficient in this component. In these observations teachers paid close attention to evidence of student comprehension and asked appropriate questions to gauge understanding. In one observation a teacher moved around the room viewing student work on the computer screens. In a distinguished observation students provided each other with feedback without being prompted by the teacher, and the teacher continually provided feedback and clarity throughout the lesson. Teachers showed the ability to adjust their lessons as necessary, as in one class where the teacher brought students back together to review transition words before letting them continue an activity where they had to use them correctly in a paragraph.	Distinguished	5%
		Proficient	85%
	The QSR team scored 10% of observations as basic in this component. In one observation the teacher used global checks for understanding, such as "Does everyone understand?" In another observation the teacher worked quietly with one student who was challenged by a problem even though others in the class had the same challenge, missing an opportunity to	Basic	10%

	adjust instruction based on class needs.		
	The QSR team scored none of the observations as unsatisfactory in this component.	Unsatisfactory	0%

## APPENDIX I: THE CLASSROOM ENVIRONMENT OBSERVATION RUBRIC

The Classroom Environment	Unsatisfactory	Basic	Proficient	Distinguished
<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>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

Instruction	Unsatisfactory	Basic	Proficient	Distinguished
<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 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.
<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.