



December 19, 2017

Ms. Clara Bostein, Board Chair
Two Rivers Public Charter School - Young
820 26th Street NE
Washington, DC 20002

Dear Ms. Bostein,

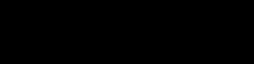
The DC Public Charter School Board (DC PCSB) conducts Qualitative Site Reviews to gather and document evidence to support school oversight. According to the School Reform Act § 38-1802.11, DC PCSB shall monitor the progress of each school in meeting the goals and student academic achievement expectations specified in the school's charter. Your school was selected to undergo a Qualitative Site Review during the 2017-18 school year for the following reason:

- School eligible to petition for 15-year Charter Renewal during 2018-19 school year

Qualitative Site Review Report

A Qualitative Site Review team conducted on-site reviews of Two Rivers Public Charter School – Young (Two Rivers PCS – Young) between October 23, 2017 and November 3, 2017. Enclosed is the team's report. You will find that the Qualitative Site Review Report focuses primarily on the following areas: classroom environment and instruction.

We appreciate the assistance and hospitality that you and your staff gave the monitoring team in conducting the Qualitative Site Review at Two Rivers PCS – Young.


Naomi DeVeaux
Deputy Director

Enclosures

cc: David Nitkin, Interim Executive Director

Qualitative Site Review Report

Date: December 19, 2017

Campus Information

Campus Name: Two Rivers Public Charter School – Young (Two Rivers PCS – Young)

Ward: 5

Grade levels: Prekindergarten (PK3)-3

Qualitative Site Review Information

Reason for visit: School eligible to petition for 15-year Charter Renewal in SY 2018–19

Two-week window: October 23 – November 3, 2017

QSR team members: Two DC PCSB staff members including one special education (SPED) specialist, and one consultant

Number of observations: 11

Total enrollment: 226

Students with Disabilities enrollment: 39

English Learner enrollment: n<10

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

Visit 1: October 24, 2017 – 94.7%

Visit 2: October 26, 2017 – 95.1%

Visit 3: October 31, 2017 – 97.5%

Summary

Two Rivers PCS' mission is:

To nurture a diverse group of students to become lifelong, active participants in their own education, develop a sense of self and community, and become responsible and compassionate members of society.

Two Rivers PCS – Young uses the Expeditionary Learning (EL) model that “emphasizes interactive, hands-on, project-based learning” focusing on “the whole child, recognizing the importance of character education and the social-emotional needs of children while helping them achieve academic excellence,” ([School Profile](#), school year 2016-17 Performance Management Framework Scorecard). During the two-week window, observers noted that instruction was engaging and rigorous, giving students opportunities to work collaboratively with teachers and peers. The QSR team saw a focus on character education and social-emotional needs as teachers facilitated conversations between students about how to kindly and respectfully resolve conflicts.

The QSR team used the Charlotte Danielson *Framework for Teaching* to examine classroom environments and instructional delivery (see Appendix I and II). The QSR team scored 80% 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 91% of observations proficient or distinguished. Interactions between teachers and students were highly respectful, with students following directions the first time asked and teachers showing warmth and care. The QSR team scored 82% of observations as distinguished or proficient in the Instruction domain, with all components earning 82% proficient or distinguished. Learning tasks were clear and aligned to lesson objectives. Teachers connected content to prior learning and student experiences. Teachers asked open-ended questions and pushed student thinking by frequently asking students to defend their reasoning. Student engagement across classrooms was high as teachers gave students more challenging work when needed or different strategies for solving problems when they struggled. Assessment was informal and frequent, aimed at improving the quality of future work.

Governance

A DC PCSB staff member attended the Two Rivers PCS board meeting on October 2, 2017. A quorum was present. Chairs from the Development, Academic, Finance, and Governance committees gave updates on their current work, including securing new grants to improve board governance and build a sensory special education room. The Interim Executive Director shared plans to engage parents and staff to gain input from the school community on the proposed middle school. The Chief Academic Officer (CAO) gave a presentation on the school's Performance Management Framework results and the Two Rivers model of deeper learning. The CAO announced plans to share the academic results in-depth with staff over coffee. Several board members asked probing, thoughtful questions throughout the meeting.

Specialized Instruction for Students with Disabilities

Prior to the two-week window, Two Rivers PCS – Young completed a questionnaire about how it serves its students with disabilities (SWD). Reviewers looked for evidence of the school's articulated program. Overall the school program implemented accommodations with fidelity, including alternative seating, guided worksheets and, individualized or small group instruction. The school evenly applied strategies for differentiation and checks for student understanding by allowing students choice in how they completed their work, and ensuring that students received timely feedback by providing at least two teachers in each inclusion classroom.

- To demonstrate that co-planning has occurred with special education teachers, the school explained that most classrooms have multiple teachers

who share in facilitating instruction. In each special education observation of inclusion classes, observers saw the general education teacher and special educators circulate the room to periodically check for understanding and address misconceptions. During whole-group instruction, all teachers actively participated in asking students questions to promote higher-order thinking, and in some instances teachers facilitated small groups to ensure students received additional support when necessary.

- To support the learning of SWD, the school reported that they offer resources such as smart boards, a math intervention computer program, and leveled text sets for reading practice. DC PCSB observed evidence of students using individual laptops for math practice during a one-on-one pullout session where the special education teacher monitored the student's progress and periodically asked questions to check for understanding of the content. In a separate individualized pull-out session for reading practice, DC PCSB observed the special education teacher assessing a student's progress as the student read several leveled texts aloud. Given each inclusion classroom had at least two teachers or a primary teacher and an assistant, observers saw evidence of students participating in flexible groupings where students were permitted to work together while the adult helped facilitate discussion and independent practice of the content.
- To provide accommodations according to the Individualized Education Programs (IEPs) of SWD, the school stated it uses graphic organizers, alternative seating (i.e., sitting in a chair instead of on the carpet), and guiding questions to support SWD. DC PCSB observed evidence of students having choice between sitting on the carpet or at their seat during whole-group instruction, and throughout various activities students were permitted to move about the room to different stations which helped keep them engaged. During whole-group discussion, teachers used guiding questions to promote student participation and often encouraged individual students to participate by sharing their ideas with the rest of the class. While observers did not observe students using scaffolded notes as described in the school's questionnaire, students were provided graphic organizers in the inclusion class to brainstorm their ideas before sharing aloud with the class.

THE CLASSROOM ENVIRONMENT¹

This table summarizes the school’s performance on the Classroom Environments domain of the rubric during the unannounced visits. The label definitions for classroom observations of “distinguished,” “proficient,” “basic,” and “unsatisfactory” are those from the Danielson framework. The QSR team scored 80% of classrooms as “distinguished” or “proficient” for the Classroom Environment domain. Please see Appendix III for a breakdown of each score.

The Classroom Environment	Evidence	School Wide Rating	
Creating an Environment of Respect and Rapport	The QSR team scored 91% of the observations as distinguished or proficient in this component. In distinguished observations classroom interactions among the teacher and students were highly respectful and warm. In one observation students were dancing in the classroom. The teacher noticed one student seemed sad and encouraged him to participate. In another observation a student noticed his classmate’s marker did not work and got him another one without any prompting from the teacher.	Distinguished	27%

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

The Classroom Environment	Evidence	School Wide Rating	
	<p>In proficient observations, teacher-student interactions were friendly and polite. In two observations teachers responded to disrespectful behavior among students by addressing the students as a pair and asking them to use kind words to explain their problem, make eye contact, and apologize if necessary. Students demonstrated respect for teachers by following directions the first time they were asked. Teachers used respectful language such as, "I like your thinking," and facilitated respect among students by saying, "Make sure you engage with your partner." In one observation the teacher indicated knowledge of individual students by referring to their ambitions as part of the vocabulary lesson.</p>	Proficient	64%
	<p>The QSR team rated none of the observations as basic in this component.</p>	Basic	0%
	<p>The QSR team rated less than 10% of the observations as unsatisfactory in this component.</p>	Unsatisfactory	9%
<p>Establishing a Culture for Learning</p>	<p>The QSR team scored 73% of the observations as distinguished or proficient in this component. In a distinguished observation teachers and students demonstrated genuine passion for the content and process, shouting excitedly when they got the correct answer. Students took initiative to improve the quality of their work by using another group's idea (previously</p>	Distinguished	9%

The Classroom Environment	Evidence	School Wide Rating	
	<p>recorded on a chart) as a possible solution without prompting from the teacher.</p> <p>In proficient observations teachers demonstrated high regard for students' abilities, offering praise and pushing students to expand their thinking. Teachers showed persistence in helping students understand content, looking at all students' work, asking guiding questions to help them arrive at the correct answers, and showing multiple approaches to the same problem.</p>	Proficient	64%
	<p>The QSR team scored 27% of the observations as basic in this component. Teachers and students focused on task completion rather than quality. Students answered questions with no reaction from the teacher about the quality of the responses and no probes for deeper thinking. In a couple of observations teachers appeared to not expect and students did not expend effort during partner work. Also teachers did not redirect off-task behavior.</p>	Basic	27%
	<p>The QSR team scored none of the observations as unsatisfactory in this component.</p>	Unsatisfactory	0%

The Classroom Environment	Evidence	School Wide Rating	
Managing Classroom Procedures	<p>The QSR team scored 64% of the observations as proficient or distinguished in this component. In the distinguished observation students performed assigned classroom jobs efficiently with minimal prompting from the teacher. Posters around the room displayed cues about performing specific tasks, allowing students to ensure smooth transitions for themselves.</p>	Distinguished	9%
	<p>In proficient observations transitions between activities were smooth. Students entered classrooms in the morning and quietly did an activity while they ate their breakfast, came in from recess and returned to the center they were at before, transitioned among activities, and retrieved materials without incident. Teachers used songs and cues to help transitions function smoothly.</p>	Proficient	55%
	<p>The QSR team scored 36% of the observations as basic in this component. Teachers lost instructional time as they waited for students to refocus, and lost time preparing materials for small group work. In one observation the teacher attempted to engage students in the distribution of materials but students did so inefficiently, requiring significant teacher attention.</p>	Basic	36%
	<p>The QSR team scored none of the observations as unsatisfactory in this component.</p>	Unsatisfactory	0%

The Classroom Environment	Evidence	School Wide Rating	
Managing Student Behavior	<p>The QSR team scored 91% of the observations as proficient or distinguished in this component. In the distinguished observation students worked together in centers and small groups. All the adults responded respectfully when any small redirection was needed.</p>	Distinguished	9%
	<p>In proficient observations teachers monitored student behavior using proximity to politely and respectfully redirect when necessary. Teachers paused, reminded students of expectations, clapped, or used countdowns to refocus students. They acknowledged good behavior by describing students as positive examples.</p>	Proficient	82%
	<p>The QSR team scored none of the observations as basic in this component.</p>	Basic	0%
	<p>The QSR team rated less than 10% of the observations as unsatisfactory in this component.</p>	Unsatisfactory	9%

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 82% of classrooms as “distinguished” or “proficient” for the Instruction domain. Please see Appendix III for a breakdown of each score.

Instruction	Evidence	School Wide Rating	
<p>Communicating with Students</p>	<p>The QSR team scored 82% of the observations as distinguished or proficient in this component. In a distinguished observation, the teacher scaffolded content, providing opportunities for students to contribute to explanations of content. Students worked in pairs to think through picture clues related to new vocabulary.</p>	Distinguished	9%
	<p>In proficient observations teachers clearly communicated the instructional purpose. They ensured students could engage with the learning task by explaining what students should do and by modeling before each transition, such as how to think through a math problem and how to greet each other during yoga practice. Teachers connected student learning to previous work and experiences by asking students think of their own examples of the beginning, middle, and end of stories.</p>	Proficient	73%

Instruction	Evidence	School Wide Rating	
	<p>The QSR team rated 18% of the observations as basic in this component. Teachers had to repeat directions several times as their initial explanations of learning tasks were unclear. Teachers offered strategies to help struggling students, but these were only partially successful as some students continued to struggle to complete the learning task.</p>	Basic	18%
	<p>The QSR team scored none of the observations as unsatisfactory in this component.</p>	Unsatisfactory	0%
<p>Using Questioning/Prompts and Discussion Techniques</p>	<p>The QSR team scored 82% of the observations as distinguished or proficient in this component. In a distinguished observation students initiated higher-order questions and prompted other students to participate.</p>	Distinguished	9%
	<p>In proficient observations teachers used various strategies to engage students in discussions, such as calling on students who did not volunteer, having students discuss vocabulary in pairs, using open ended questions, and providing examples to help students come up with their own responses. Teachers invited students to respond to each other's ideas, saying "I want you to listen to his/her answer." Several teachers pushed student thinking by asking "How do you know?"</p>	Proficient	73%

Instruction	Evidence	School Wide Rating	
	<p>The QSR team scored 18% of the observations as basic in this component. In one observation questions led students on a single path of inquiry requiring only recall. In another observation the teacher attempted to frame questions to promote student thinking but few students participated. Turn and talks in both observations required only recall without genuine discussion.</p>	Basic	18%
	<p>The QSR team rated none of the observations as unsatisfactory in this component.</p>	Unsatisfactory	0%
Engaging Students in Learning	<p>The QSR team scored 82% of observations as proficient in this component. Students had choice in how they completed learning tasks, working independently, with a peer, or with assistance from the teacher. Students stayed on task during independent practice and group work even when not working directly with the teacher. Effective pacing provided students time for intellectual engagement, with teachers giving frequent time updates and providing adequate wait time when students struggled. Teachers scaffolded and supported engagement by giving students who needed to be challenged more difficult math problems and by using counters and a scale to help small groups decide if an equation was true or false.</p>	Distinguished	0%
		Proficient	82%

Instruction	Evidence	School Wide Rating	
	<p>The QSR team scored 18% of the observations as basic in this component. In both basic observations student engagement was largely passive. Students spent the entire class time learning steps in a process with no opportunities to generate their own thoughts. Teachers attempted to use turn and talks but the level of inquiry was still recall. In one observation the lesson structure was unclear, with no explanations or modeling to guide students on how to complete the learning task.</p>	Basic	18%
	<p>The QSR team rated none of the observations as unsatisfactory in this component.</p>	Unsatisfactory	0%
<p>Using Assessment in Instruction</p>	<p>The QSR team scored 82% of the observations as proficient in this component. Teachers told students what high quality work looked like by providing examples of the types of ideas to include on worksheets, and examples of verbal responses. Teachers checked on individual student work, kneeling next to students to look over written work,</p>	Distinguished	0%

Instruction	Evidence	School Wide Rating	
	<p>listening to verbal responses, and providing individualized feedback aimed at improving the quality of future work. In a couple of observations teachers noticed that students were making similar mistakes and adjusted lessons accordingly, re-teaching concepts and modeling how to complete math problems. In one observation a student took initiative to have the teacher check his work as soon as he completed the assigned task to ensure s/he did it correctly.</p>	Proficient	82%
	<p>The QSR team scored 18% of the observations as basic in this component. Teachers attempted to facilitate peer assessment through turn-and-talks, but did not monitor what students said and gave no feedback as to whether their responses were correct. In both basic observations there was little evidence that students understood what high-quality work or responses looked like.</p>	Basic	18%
	<p>The QSR team rated none of the observations as unsatisfactory in this component.</p>	Unsatisfactory	0%

APPENDIX I: THE CLASSROOM ENVIRONMENT OBSERVATION RUBRIC

The Classroom Environment	Unsatisfactory	Basic	Proficient	Distinguished
Creating an Environment of Respect and Rapport	Classroom interactions, both between the teacher and students and among students, are negative or inappropriate and characterized by sarcasm, putdowns, or conflict.	Classroom interactions are generally appropriate and free from conflict but may be characterized by occasional displays of insensitivity.	Classroom interactions reflect general warmth and caring, and are respectful of the cultural and developmental differences among groups of students.	Classroom interactions are highly respectful, reflecting genuine warmth and caring toward individuals. Students themselves ensure maintenance of high levels of civility among member of the class.
Establishing a Culture for Learning	The classroom does not represent a culture for learning and is characterized by low teacher commitment to the subject, low expectations for student achievement, and little student pride in work.	The classroom environment reflects only a minimal culture for learning, with only modest or inconsistent expectations for student achievement, little teacher commitment to the subject, and little student pride in work. Both teacher and students are performing at the minimal level to "get by."	The classroom environment represents a genuine culture for learning, with commitment to the subject on the part of both teacher and students, high expectations for student achievement, and student pride in work.	Students assumes much of the responsibility for establishing a culture for learning in the classroom by taking pride in their work, initiating improvements to their products, and holding the work to the highest standard. Teacher demonstrates as passionate commitment to the subject.
Managing Classroom Procedures	Classroom routines and procedures are either nonexistent or inefficient, resulting in the loss of much instruction time.	Classroom routines and procedures have been established but function unevenly or inconsistently, with some loss of instruction time.	Classroom routines and procedures have been established and function smoothly for the most part, with little loss of instruction time.	Classroom routines and procedures are seamless in their operation, and students assume considerable responsibility for their smooth functioning.
Managing Student Behavior	Student behavior is poor, with no clear expectations, no monitoring of student behavior, and inappropriate response to student misbehavior.	Teacher makes an effort to establish standards of conduct for students, monitor student behavior, and respond to student misbehavior, but these efforts are not always successful.	Teacher is aware of student behavior, has established clear standards of conduct, and responds to student misbehavior in ways that are appropriate and respectful of the students.	Student behavior is entirely appropriate, with evidence of student participation in setting expectations and monitoring behavior. Teacher's monitoring of student behavior is subtle and preventive, and teachers' response to student misbehavior is sensitive to individual student needs.

APPENDIX II: INSTRUCTION OBSERVATION RUBRIC

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

Appendix III: SCORE BREAKDOWN BY COMPONENT

Percent of:	2a	2b	2c	2d	3a	3b	3c	3d
Unsatisfactory	9%	0%	0%	9%	0%	0%	0%	0%
Basic	0%	27%	36%	0%	18%	18%	18%	18%
Proficient	64%	64%	55%	82%	73%	73%	82%	82%
Distinguished	27%	9%	9%	9%	9%	9%	0%	0%
Subdomain Average	3.09	2.82	2.73	2.91	2.91	2.91	2.82	2.82

	Domain 2	Domain 3
% of Proficient or above	80%	82%
Domain Averages	2.89	2.86