



March 5, 2014

Simmons Lettre, Board Chair  
Capital City PCS – High School  
100 Peabody Street, NW  
Washington, DC 20011

Dear Ms. Lettre:

The Public Charter School Board (“PCSB”) conducts Qualitative Site Reviews (“QSR”) to gather and document evidence to support school oversight. According to the School Reform Act § 38-1802.11, PCSB shall monitor the progress of each school in meeting the goals and student academic achievement expectations specified in the school’s charter. Your school was selected to undergo a QSR during the 2013-14 school year for the following reason(s):

- School is eligible to petition for 15-year Charter Renewal during the 2014-15 school year

#### **Qualitative Site Review Report**

A QSR team conducted on-site review visits of Capital City PCS – High School between January 13 and January 24, 2014. The purpose of the site review is for PCSB to gauge the extent to which the school’s goals and student academic achievement expectations were evident in the everyday operations of the public charter school. To ascertain this, PCSB staff and consultants evaluated your classroom teaching by using an abridged version of the Charlotte Danielson *Framework for Teaching* observation rubric. We also visited a board meeting in order to observe the school’s governance as it relates to fulfilling its mission, and charter goals.

Enclosed is the team’s report. You will find that the Qualitative Site Review Report is focused 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 Capital City PCS – High School. Thank you for your continued cooperation as PCSB makes every effort to ensure that Capital City PCS is in compliance with its charter.

Sincerely,

Naomi DeVeaux  
Deputy Director

Enclosures  
cc: School Leader

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Capital City PCS – High School serves 335 9<sup>th</sup> through 12<sup>th</sup> grade students as part of the three-campus Capital City PCS network, which serves approximately 1,000 pre-kindergarten-three through 12<sup>th</sup> grade students in a single facility in ward 4. In January 2014, PCSB conducted a Qualitative Site Review (“QSR”) of Capital City PCS – High School, in advance of Capital City PCS’s charter expiration in 2014-15 and subsequent charter renewal process. Capital City PCS is housed in a two-year-old building that is welcoming, warm, and sunny. In the 2012-13 school year, when the school moved to its new building, its student population grew drastically, from approximately 630 students to its current 1,000, and it switched from operating two campuses in two facilities to three campuses in one facility.

PCSB conducted observations over the course of a two-week window, from January 13 through January 24, 2014. A team of one PCSB staff member and three consultants (including a special education consultant) conducted observations of 23 classrooms, including classrooms where more than one teacher was present. The spirit of the QSR process is to identify the educational experience for all students, inclusive of students with disabilities, at a particular school. The results of this QSR are thus reflective of what the QSR team observed in all learning environments, including the six Special Education teachers observed in inclusion classrooms and a self-contained class. In some instances, the review team may have observed a teacher twice. Additionally, one team member was able to visit an unscheduled “Town Hall” meeting among Capital City PCS staff and 10<sup>th</sup> graders. PCSB also attended a Board of Trustees meeting to observe the school’s governance as it relates to fulfilling its mission and charter goals.

Based on evidence collected during the QSR visits, Capital City PCS – High School has been more successful in achieving the non-academic elements of its mission than its core academic aims. Its students appear to have embraced diversity and personal and civic responsibility, and seemed to participate in an inclusive, democratic community, as set out in the school’s mission. This was evident in students’ good behavior throughout the observations, class discussions that included conversations about students’ and others’ ethnicities and cultures, and a town hall event when 10<sup>th</sup> graders engaged in an authentic discussion with their teachers and the administration regarding classroom engagement. However, academic rigor was low in many of the observations; teachers missed opportunities to extend students’ knowledge and deepen their thinking. In many cases, when students gave low-level answers to questions that could have prompted more thorough, rigorous discussion and teacher probing through follow-up questioning. In general, student engagement was mixed; teachers did not seem to demand true intellectual engagement from students and in many cases students did not participate in lessons. The QSR team observed very little interdisciplinary learning and few authentic learning opportunities. With that said, it is important to note that the school’s learning expeditions may provide a level of rigor and authentic, interdisciplinary learning that the QSR team was unable to observe.

Approximately 80% of observations were rated proficient or exemplary in the Classroom Environments domain. There was not significant variation in the percentage of observations rated proficient across elements; each element had between approximately 75% and 85% rated proficient. Both elements, Creating an Environment of Respect and Rapport and Managing Student Behavior had more than 15% of teachers rated exemplary, the highest rating possible. Throughout the classrooms, teachers and students were respectful of and friendly towards one another; teachers held genuinely high expectations of student behavior; classroom procedures functioned effectively, resulting in little loss of instructional time; and teachers proactively managed student behavior. At most, a quarter of observations deviated from these standards, with a few instances of disrespectful behavior on the part of students; inconsistent expectations for student achievement; ineffective classroom procedures; and inappropriate student behavior.

However, just 65% of observations were rated proficient or exemplary in the Instructional Delivery domain. The ratings were higher in Communicating with Students and Using Assessment in Instruction elements of the domain, where approximately 80% of observations were rated proficient or above, than in the elements of Using Questioning and Discussion Techniques and Engaging Students in Learning. In both of the latter two elements, only half of observations were rated proficient or above. Teachers posed more low-level recall or single-answer questions in the lower-rated observations, rather than engaging students in in-depth discussions and higher-level questioning. Students in these classes had very few opportunities to learn from each other through questioning and discussion. In terms of student engagement, the QSR team noted a repeated lack of student motivation, enthusiasm, and interest in about half of the observations. There was little flexibility in content or process to engage students in their studies, and pacing was often rushed, allowing for little lesson closure or true intellectual engagement. While half of the observations were rated proficient or exemplary in each of these elements, PCSB expects more effective instructional delivery in schools that have been operating for 15 years, but understand from a discussion with its board of trustees on February 12, 2014 that the recent, rapid growth of the school required an influx of new teachers and a shift in focus from academics to culture to make sure that the school was set up for success.

To support students with disabilities the school has implemented a primarily inclusion-based model, with a self-contained classroom for extra support. In inclusion classrooms teachers followed a co-teaching model with both teachers participating in whole group instruction. Inclusion teachers circulated throughout the classrooms, offering assistance to all students who needed support, regardless of special education status. The QSR team's Special Education Consultant also had the opportunity to observe the self-contained classroom.

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

This table summarizes Capital City PCS’s goals and academic achievement expectations as detailed in its charter and subsequent Accountability Plans, and the evidence that the Qualitative Site Review (“QSR”) team observed of the school meeting those goals during the Qualitative Site Visit.

Mission and Goals	Evidence
<p>Mission: The mission of Capital City Public Charter School is to graduate a diverse group of young adults who are self-directed, intellectually engaged, and possess a strong sense of personal and civic responsibility. Our students will complete a rigorous academic program that emphasizes both independent and collaborative learning within an inclusive, democratic community.</p>	<p>Based on evidence collected during the Qualitative Site Review visits, Capital City PCS – High School has been more successful in achieving the non-academic elements of its mission than the core academic aims. Student intellectual engagement was mixed and academic rigor was lacking throughout the QSR team’s observations. Not all students were prepared to be self-directed learners and many teachers did not provide opportunities for both independent and collaborative learning. On the other hand, Capital City PCS – High School students have embraced diversity and personal and civic responsibility, and appear to participate in an inclusive, democratic community.</p> <p>The school is succeeding in creating a group of young adults who are diverse and who value diversity. In several observations classes studied socioeconomic, national, and ethnic diversity. Students in a history class were conducting in-depth research projects on Confucianism, Muslim women, and the Aztecs. In the school’s hallways the QSR team noted posters about students’ and staff members’ countries of origin, anti-racism efforts, and the Gender and Sexuality Alliance. One class held a discussion of economic diversity and wealth distribution that was almost entirely student-led, with very little teacher intervention.</p> <p>The school’s success in molding self-directed learners was less consistent. In several classes, students were self-directed, working on self-generated persuasive arguments, deciding how to spend their</p>

Mission and Goals	Evidence
	<p>independent work block to make progress on their symbolism projects, and doing computer research for their history projects. The student learning expeditions, while not observed, seem to offer students significant opportunities for self-directed work, especially for 12<sup>th</sup> graders. However, in several observations teachers seemed to have to push students to complete instructional activities. Students had little opportunity to choose how to complete tasks or to discover the correct procedures or answers for themselves.</p> <p>Similarly, student intellectual engagement was inconsistent. In almost half of the classrooms students were not fully engaged, in some cases because they were not required to be. For example, in a science class, students were not required to watch the teacher’s demonstration of the lab procedures, and only about half of the class watched. On the other hand, in about half of the observations, there were several positive examples of students working diligently, having on-task conversations among themselves, and being self-motivated to do their work. In a few observations students even continued content-based conversations after the class period ended.</p> <p>The students observed by the QSR team seemed to have adopted a strong sense of personal and civic responsibility, as outlined in the school’s mission. Students treated the school facilities, including computers, microscopes, and lab slides, with respect and care. A history class assignment focused on responsibility or duty, as did posters from an expedition about injustice and community responses. During one QSR team member’s visit, the school held an ad hoc meeting with the 10<sup>th</sup> grade to discuss classroom engagement; the students seemed receptive to the conversation and discussed their responsibility to improve.</p> <p>The QSR team found the academic program to be lacking the rigor promised in the school’s mission. Less than half of observations were</p>

Mission and Goals	Evidence
	<p>rated proficient or exemplary in “Questioning and Discussion Techniques;” in about half the classes, teachers’ questioning was primarily low-level and did not engage students in deeper analytical thought. About half of observations were proficient in “Engaging Students in Learning;” there was little lesson differentiation and students were inconsistently engaged in the lessons. In about a third of observations teachers were observed to miss clear opportunities to engage true rigor. For example, in an English class students wrote what they “noticed” and “wondered” about a text, but the teacher did not demand higher-level thinking; while some students made observations about the importance of the writer’s chosen vocabulary, others made superficial comments about the general topic of the text. In another class the teacher guided students through interpreting a graph, but did not go beyond identifying trends to analyzing underlying reasons for the changes in the trends. On the other hand, students in several classes appeared to be working through challenging academic texts. The QSR team did not review these materials or students’ work on these texts and cannot speak to the rigor of the related tasks.</p> <p>Teachers in many observations made opportunities for both independent and collaborative learning. Other classrooms relied on teacher-directed or whole-group instruction. In a few classes students were given the choice of working independently or in groups to complete research and literature-based assignments. Students in one class in particular helped each other when they were confused or frustrated, asking each other questions about where they were lost. In one class the teacher prompted students to evaluate the strength of each other’s hypotheses.</p> <p>According to the evidence collected during the QSR visits, the school has been successful in building an inclusive, democratic community. In classes all voices seemed welcome, though teachers did not</p>

Mission and Goals	Evidence
	<p>consistently require all students to participate. In an ad hoc 10<sup>th</sup> grade town hall about classroom engagement, students were invited to share their perspectives and it grew to be a true discussion between students and the faculty and administrative team.</p>
<p>1. Students will become competent, independent readers.</p>	<p>Capital City PCS – High School has implemented a strong reading program, as supported by evidence from this QSR and its strong performance on the DC CAS Reading assessment. The QSR team noted in particular the high-level academic articles that students read, even in courses other than English. Teachers supported students in reading these challenging materials by scaffolding content and helping students with difficult vocabulary. Students were required to comprehend grade-level text in order to participate in open discussions of class materials. Some students even carried around independent reading materials outside of class.</p> <p>There were a few exceptions to this trend. In one English class the teacher made several spelling and grammatical mistakes in the written materials, and in another class students were unable to explain the main idea of a challenging text and the teacher moved on without clarifying.</p>
<p>2. Students will become effective oral and written communicators.</p>	<p>Students were given many opportunities to improve their oral and written communication, including in classes other than English. In several classes, students were required to read the lesson material (sometimes aloud) and then participate in an open discussion of the material. Students wrote history essays, persuasive arguments, and symbolism essays. According to teachers’ comments and posters the school offers a Saturday Writing Academy and a writing lab to support students in improving their written communication. Students throughout the observations communicated effectively, using age-</p>

Mission and Goals	Evidence
	appropriate vocabulary and correct standard English.
3. Students will be able to reason mathematically and effectively present their thinking to others.	<p>In several observations students were routinely pushed to explain their mathematical reasoning to others. When students worked in small groups they had to present their answers to the larger group. In other classes students solved problems at the board and explained their method for solving the problem. One teacher prompted a student to more fully explain her mathematical reasoning by saying, “You know I like specifics;” the other students chuckled as if this was a common saying from the teacher. Another teacher said, “Okay, take that a step further, communicate the math you did and state an equation for that math,” and the student was able to comply immediately.</p>
4. To promote critical thinking, high-quality original work, and the acquisition of skills necessary for transition to college or career.	<p>With a few exceptions the QSR team’s observations were lacking in promoting critical thinking skills. Teachers’ questioning tended to be more focused on low-level questioning, rather than higher-order thinking skills; fewer than half of observations scored proficient on “Using Questioning and Discussion Techniques.”</p> <p>There was more evidence of high-quality original work, such as student research posters, assignments to create persuasive arguments, and use of advanced non-fiction texts. However, the QSR team also noted instances of fill-in-the-blank worksheets, rather than assignments focusing on producing original work to meet this goal.</p> <p>The QSR team noted several instances of teachers coaching students in the “soft skills” necessary for success in college and career. For example, several teachers talked about the importance of time management in college; one teacher led students through planning their study time for an upcoming AP exam, repeatedly stressing how they will need to be able to manage their study time in college.</p>

Mission and Goals	Evidence
	<p>Another teacher led students in using planners to track assignments. The school also uses the Habits of Mind and Habits of Study to instill college and career skills in students.</p>
<p>5. To establish a tone of unanxious expectation, decency, and trust among students, staff, and families.</p>	<p>In classroom observations, teachers modeled trust and unanxious expectations; teachers and students spoke frankly about their challenges, such as preparing for tests, time management, and planning. Students appeared to have strong relationships with their mentors built on frank feedback; in one conversation with a teacher about the “Habits of Mind” assessment, a student seemed appreciative and receptive to feedback.</p>
<p>6. To create meaningful student leadership opportunities and a student body authentically engaged in school governance</p>	<p>The QSR team did not observe any evidence that the school has created student leadership opportunities or a student governance structure. The team noted one bulletin board about a student leadership opportunity, but the board was empty.</p>
<p>7. To encourage responsibility, respect, compassion, service, and appreciation of diversity in all school community members</p>	<p>The QSR team attempted to see each of these values enacted in the school. For comments on the values of “responsibility” and “diversity,” please refer to the comments included above related to the school’s mission, which also includes these values.</p> <p>Regarding respect, almost 80% of the observations scored proficient or exemplary in the element of Creating an Environment of Respect and Rapport. Students were largely respectful of their teachers, each other, and the school facilities, including classroom supplies. There were only limited exceptions to this, such as students talking off-topic while teachers were talking, or students being rude to each other and calling each other names.</p>

Mission and Goals	Evidence
	<p>Regarding compassion, the QSR team was unable to collect significant evidence related to this value. One team member noted that some of the senior investigation topics could be tied back to compassion, such as one investigation about caring for the mentally ill.</p> <p>The QSR team did not observe any evidence regarding whether the school is encouraging service.</p>
<p>8. To implement learning expeditions -- in-depth investigations of a theme or topic that engage students through authentic research, projects, fieldwork and service, and that are interdisciplinary to the maximum extent possible.</p>	<p>The QSR team noted several mentions of “expeditions,” such as an 11<sup>th</sup> grade expedition related to “Food Justice for All.” In some cases, “expedition” seemed to refer more to a field trip than an in-depth, interdisciplinary theme, such as what teachers referred to as an upcoming “expedition” to Howard University. The team noted that each 9<sup>th</sup>, 10<sup>th</sup>, and 11<sup>th</sup> grade completes a common learning expedition, scaffolding to 12<sup>th</sup> grade when students complete self-directed learning expeditions with the support of three teacher coaches.</p> <p>The QSR team did not observe any evidence of interdisciplinary themes or planning. For example, 9<sup>th</sup> grade history students were working on a longer-term research project, but it was not aligned to the content discussed in other 9<sup>th</sup> grade classes.</p>
<p>9. To personalize teaching and learning through small class sizes, advisory, and flexibility in scheduling and course formats.</p>	<p>Class sizes varied widely, from 16 students with four adults to 20 students with one adult. The school schedule included a 30-minute advisory block after lunch each day.</p> <p>In terms of personalized teaching, the QSR team noted evidence of appropriate relationships between teachers and students. For instance, one teacher discussed a student’s “Habits of Mind” results with her</p>

Mission and Goals	Evidence
	<p>and they both expressed disappointment; the teacher indicated that the student had been in her advisory for several years in a row. However, these relationships did not seem to result in personalized teaching and learning; the QSR team noted little evidence of differentiation in lesson content or activities throughout the observations.</p>
<p>10. To utilize the CES philosophy of student-as-worker, teacher-as-coach as the core of instructional practice.</p>	<p>With a few exceptions, the QSR team found most instructional practice to be teacher-led. There were very few observed examples of rubrics or student assessment of their own work. In several cases teachers completed tasks that students were prepared to complete as “workers,” such as preparing their chemistry lab slides. Students had few opportunities to find their own paths through learning; more often than not the closest thing to “teacher-as-coach” was an “I do-we do-you do” framework for lesson activities.</p> <p>However, in a few observations the instructional practices did exemplify student-as-worker, teacher-as-coach. In a history class students were doing self-directed research with guidance from the teacher; the teacher acted as a supportive resource and helped them get started, but then students chose their resources, read scholarly articles on their own, and synthesized information. In an Advanced Placement class students were almost entirely self-directed in how they used an independent work block; some students worked together in groups, others worked independently, and others went to the computer lab. In 12<sup>th</sup> grade learning expeditions each student works with three teacher coaches throughout the year, though the QSR team was not able to observe any of these coaching meetings.</p>
<p>11. To assess learning through portfolios, exhibitions of work, and student performance of authentic tasks.</p>	<p>The QSR team did not observe any student portfolios, though students appeared to use binders to track their work and there were several in-depth posters of student work posted in hallways and in some</p>

Mission and Goals	Evidence
	<p>classrooms. These posters included student research on China and vocabulary posters with definitions, synonyms, and examples. A QSR team member also noted an English teacher mentioning the upcoming Celebration of Learning event, which may have been an opportunity for further exhibitions of student work. The QSR team noted a few examples of students performing authentic tasks. There seemed to be approximately equal weight accorded to authentic tasks, such as student research projects, as more stand-alone tasks, such as science labs completed with no discussion of “real-life” applicability.</p>
<p>12. Capital City will be a learning community for teachers as well as students. Teachers will receive the training and support they need to successfully implement the educational program and best support individual students.</p>	<p>The QSR team did not observe any professional development opportunities or professional learning communities, though the school’s schedule includes weekly professional development time on Wednesday afternoons. Assessments of teacher effectiveness can be found below in the Classroom Environments and Instructional Delivery rubrics.</p>
<p>Board Governance</p>	<p>On January 28, 2014, a PCSB staff member visited a Capital City PCS Board of Trustees meeting. Approximately eleven board members were present, plus at least one on a conference call line, constituting a quorum.</p> <p>The Executive Director and principals discussed the school’s data dashboard, which includes interim assessment data for reading, writing, and math; high school performance on the PSAT, SAT, and ACT; and in-seat attendance. They indicated that the overall lesson learned from the dashboard is that the school is better preparing students for literacy assessments than math assessments. In response to the board’s question about actionable findings, the school administrators indicated that they were conducting student-specific interventions, but the Board acknowledged that any improvements</p>

Mission and Goals	Evidence
	<p>would not happen overnight, despite the school’s urgency around effective teaching. They also discussed a recent collaboration between the school’s data team and FOCUS, which found that Capital City PCS’s math assessments were well-aligned to the DC CAS. Overall, the board indicated that the dashboards are easy to understand. However, the dashboard does not include math assessments for early childhood grades.</p> <p>The board also discussed the school’s strategic plan, which they plan to backwards-map from the five-year targets using the PMF. The board encouraged the administrators to let them know if they needed resource reallocation. Charter Board Partners assisted in creating a new template for the strategic plan. The board discussed each goal, including the capital campaign, the facilities plan, debt refinancing, and risk assessment. Regarding the governance goals, the board requested feedback on the Head of School evaluation and mentioned a future discussion around succession planning. Overall, the board indicated that their five-year goals are very ambitious and that they’re making progress on pieces of the goals.</p>

## CLASSROOM ENVIRONMENTS<sup>1</sup>

This rubric summarizes the school's performance on the Classroom Environments elements of the rubric during the unannounced visits. The label definitions for classroom observations of "limited," "satisfactory," "proficient," and "exemplary" are those from the Danielson framework. PCSB considers any rating below "proficient" to be under the standard of quality expected of DC charter schools. On average, 81% of classrooms received a rating of proficient or exemplary for the Classroom Environment domain.

Class Environment	Evidence Observed	School Wide Rating	
<b>Creating an Environment of Respect and Rapport</b>	Almost 80% of observations were rated proficient or exemplary in this element. Teachers were respectful of students, welcoming them warmly into the classroom, calling on them by name, and smiling warmly. One or two teachers exhibited care of students' lives outside of school; one teacher, for example, asked a student about her illness the previous day.	Limited	0%
		Satisfactory	22%
	Proficient	61%	
	About one-fifth of the observations were below proficient. In these classrooms, the QSR team noted that students regularly talked off-task while the teacher was talking.	Exemplary	17%
<b>Establishing a Culture for Learning</b>	About three-quarters of observations were rated proficient or exemplary in this element. Teachers regularly supported and encouraged students who took academic risks in class, and called on students regardless of whether they had volunteered to answer the question posed. These teachers talked about Saturday writing workshops and detention as opportunities for additional help, rather than punishment. Students in these classes appeared to take pride in explaining their thought processes and to aim to meet the teacher's high expectations.	Limited	0%
		Satisfactory	27%
	In the one-quarter of observations not rated proficient, high expectations did not	Proficient	64%

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

Class Environment	Evidence Observed	School Wide Rating	
	<p>appear to be set for all students. Not all students participated in the lesson; a few students had their heads on their desk or did not follow along with the lesson's activities. Teachers in these observations only called on students who volunteered to answer questions, and they did not convey confidence that students were up to the lesson's challenge. In one case, a student made a spelling mistake in an English class and the teacher said, "Well spelling isn't what we're working on right now."</p>	Exemplary	9%
<b>Managing Classroom Procedures</b>	<p>About 85% of observations were scored proficient in this element of the Classroom Environment rubric. In these classes, there was little to no loss of instructional time due to transitions or procedures. Students efficiently and quietly moved from class to class and between classroom activities. When they entered the class, students were expected to start working on a warm up or Do Now activity. Teachers prepared students for transitions with preset time limits and reminders.</p> <p>In the observations rated below proficient, students did not work for several minutes at a time. While working on a research project, many students were unable to successfully access the online resources for several minutes. In one science class, it took more than ten minutes to pass out the lab materials, despite there being a predetermined "passer" and passing time between classes to arrange materials.</p>	Limited	0%
		Satisfactory	14%
		Proficient	86%
		Exemplary	0%
<b>Managing Student Behavior</b>	<p>There were no cases of serious student misbehavior throughout the observations. Most teachers managed student behavior proactively by circulating throughout classrooms or naming students who needed to readjust their behavior before it became a problem. The QSR team noted a few instances of teachers giving students specific feedback, such as about off-task behavior, and students immediately correcting their behavior.</p>	Limited	0%
		Satisfactory	14%
		Proficient	73%

Class Environment	Evidence Observed	School Wide Rating	
	In the observations rated below proficient, teachers responded inconsistently or did not notice examples of student misbehavior, such as teasing or throwing paper at each other. These misbehaviors did not interrupt class activities or other students, but did distract the involved students for several seconds at a time.	Exemplary	14%

## INSTRUCTIONAL DELIVERY

This rubric summarizes the school’s performance on the Instructional Delivery elements of the rubric during the unannounced visits. The label definitions for classroom observations of "limited," "satisfactory," "proficient," and "exemplary" are those from the Danielson framework. PCSB considers any rating below "proficient" to be under the standard of quality expected of DC charter schools. On average, 65% of classrooms received a rating of proficient or exemplary for the Instructional Delivery domain.

Instructional Delivery	Evidence Observed	School Wide Rating	
<b>Communicating with Students</b>	<p>Eighty percent of observations were rated proficient or above in this element. Almost all classrooms had posted learning targets and instruction was aligned with these objectives. In several classes, teachers referred to previous lessons or prior knowledge to help clarify the lesson content. These teachers used expressive language and high-level content vocabulary, and occasionally students responded in kind with similarly appropriate academic vocabulary. Some teachers even narrated their expectations as students worked through independent activities.</p> <p>About one-fifth of observations were below proficient in this element of the rubric. Students seemed to be confused about lesson content or activity instructions in these classes, and teachers did not effectively clarify. In one class in particular, the QSR observer noted several spelling and grammatical errors by the teacher, including repeated and different misspellings of an author’s name, “except” rather than “excerpt,” and a significant failure to correct a student’s spelling.</p>	Limited	0%
		Satisfactory	22%
		Proficient	70%
		Exemplary	9%
<b>Using Questioning and Discussion Techniques</b>	<p>Fewer than half of observations were rated proficient or exemplary in Using Questioning and Discussion Techniques. In the proficient classes teachers posted thoughtful and rigorous questions of students. They allowed for appropriate wait time between asking the question and soliciting answers.</p>	Limited	29%
		Satisfactory	24%

Instructional Delivery	Evidence Observed	School Wide Rating	
	<p>Students in these classes were able to extend the discussion with thoughtful comments or further questioning.</p> <p>However, in more than half of observations questioning and discussion techniques were less effective. Teachers' questions tended to be only low-level or recall questions, with only one correct answer. Students were not given opportunities to discuss lesson content or procedures among themselves. Not all students participated in discussions or answered questions.</p>	Proficient	38%
		Exemplary	10%
<b>Engaging Students in Learning</b>	<p>About half of observations were rated proficient or exemplary in Engaging Students in Learning. Students in these classes were actively working and intellectually engaged. In a few classes students continued to discuss lesson content even after class had ended. In one class the co-teachers provided multiple learning modalities by one teacher writing important facts on the whiteboard while the other teacher orally taught the group lesson. Students had choices in how to complete assignments, such as being given the option to choose their own topic, their working group, the medium of their deliverable, or their research materials.</p> <p>In the observations that were rated below proficient, the QSR team noted that there was consistently little opportunity for lesson closure and reflection. Class endings tended to be rushed. There was no differentiation or lesson adjustment in these observations; all students were expected to learn at the same pace and through the same activities. As a result, students seemed to be inconsistently engaged; some students were working at some times, while at other times, students were off task.</p>	Limited	24%
		Satisfactory	24%
		Proficient	43%
		Exemplary	10%
<b>Using Assessment in Instruction</b>	Four-fifths of observations were rated proficient or exemplary in Using Assessment in Instruction. In these classrooms, student work was graded	Limited	0%

Instructional Delivery	Evidence Observed	School Wide Rating	
	<p>against a rubric, giving students clear standards for high-quality work. Teachers circulated throughout classrooms to monitor student work, and occasionally stopped to address student misunderstandings. Teachers seemed to be adopting more formative assessments, such as midterms and exit tickets; one teacher mentioned that he was re-teaching one element of the previous day's lesson due to the results from exit tickets.</p>	Satisfactory	19%
	<p>The 20% of observations that were not rated proficient did not seem to use formative assessments to gauge student learning. These teachers did not seem to regularly monitor student understanding or provide immediate feedback. These teachers tended to rely on choral responses to checks for understanding, rather than assessing individual students' grasps of the material.</p>	Proficient	76%
		Exemplary	5%

**APPENDIX I: CLASSROOM ENVIRONMENT OBSERVATION RUBRIC**

<b>Class Environment</b>	<b>Limited</b>	<b>Satisfactory</b>	<b>Proficient</b>	<b>Exemplary</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>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>Class Environment</b>	<b>Limited</b>	<b>Satisfactory</b>	<b>Proficient</b>	<b>Exemplary</b>
<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: INSTRUCTIONAL DELIVERY OBSERVATION RUBRIC**

<b>Instructional Delivery</b>	<b>Limited</b>	<b>Satisfactory</b>	<b>Proficient</b>	<b>Exemplary</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 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.

Instructional Delivery	Limited	Satisfactory	Proficient	Exemplary
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.