



July 9, 2014

Ralph F. Boyd, Jr., Board Chair
Center City PCS - Petworth
510 Webster St, NW
Washington, DC 20011

Dear Mr. Boyd:

The Public Charter School Board (PCSB) conducts Qualitative Site Reviews (QSR) to gather and document evidence to support school oversight. According to the 2014 Memorandum of Understanding that PCSB has with the Office of the State Superintendent of Education (OSSE) around implementation of the 2012 Waiver to the Elementary and Secondary Education Act, PCSB must “Ensure that public charter schools identified as Focus or Priority are providing interventions and supports to students and their teachers consistent with that school’s Intervention and Support Plan” (p.5). Your school was selected to undergo a QSR during the 2013-14 school year for the following reason:

- School is designated as Focus by Office of the State Superintendent of Education because of the underperformance of its Focus subgroup: English Language Learners.

Please see the following link for information about the requirements for exiting Focus status:

http://osse.dc.gov/sites/default/files/dc/sites/osse/release_content/attachments/OSSE_Revisions%20-%20Executive%20Summary%20-%20All%20Principles%20-%202017%2012%20FINAL.pdf

Qualitative Site Review Report

A QSR team conducted on-site review visits of Center City PCS - Petworth between April 22 and April 25, 2014. School leadership also asked the QSR team lead to attend the school on April 24, 2014 in order to observe how the school’s Focus intervention strategies are being implemented in classrooms.

The QSR team’s report is attached. We appreciate the assistance and hospitality that you and your staff gave the monitoring team in conducting the Qualitative Site Review at Center City PCS – Petworth. Thank you for your continued cooperation as PCSB makes every effort to ensure that Center City PCS is in compliance with its charter.

Sincerely,

Naomi DeVeaux
Deputy Director

Enclosures
cc: School Leader

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Center City Public Charter School – Petworth (Center City PCS – Petworth) is one of six Center City PCS campuses. It serves approximately 235 prekindergarten-4 (PK4) to eighth grade students in the Petworth neighborhood of Northwest DC’s Ward 1. Center City PCS – Petworth earned a score of 70.2% and a Tier 1 designation on the Public Charter School Board’s (PCSB) 2013 Performance Management Framework (PMF). PCSB conducted a modified Qualitative Site Review (QSR) in April 2014 because the campus was designated “Focus” under the Office of the State Superintendent of Education’s (OSSE) accountability system as designed in its Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) waiver due to the academic performance of its English language learners (ELLs) As part of PCSB’s monitoring, the campus received a full QSR in fall 2013.

PCSB conducted QSRs for ESEA monitoring requirements during the following periods: fall 2012, spring 2013, fall 2013 and spring 2014. Center City PCS – Petworth received a modified QSR as opposed to a full QSR in spring 2014 as a result of earning more than 50 % of the possible points on the 2013 Performance Management Framework (PMF). A modified QSR contains one scheduled day, set by the school, and six unannounced classroom observations within a two-week window. Center City PCS- Petworth had ACCESS for ELLs testing during the originally scheduled May two-week window so the school and PCSB agreed upon an amended one-week window between April 22 and April 25, 2014. PCSB staff conducted a scheduled visit on April 24, 2014 to observe classes the school felt would demonstrate the intervention and support strategies the school has implemented to support the academic achievement of ELL students. PCSB collected evidence related to the school’s Focus strategies, including: 1) differentiated instruction for English language learners; and 2) the frequent use of assessments to determine student needs. Throughout the course of these visits, the QSR team visited approximately 15 classrooms, six that were assessed using the full *Framework for Teaching* rubric. Observations from the *Framework for Teaching* rubric are used to support the school’s implementation of the Focus strategies.

The majority of evidence collected during the scheduled day and the unscheduled observation window centered on the school’s effective implementation of strategies to differentiate instruction for ELLs. Throughout the English Language Arts (ELA) classes observed, teachers differentiated during small group instruction with multiple adults present during the literacy block. PCSB observed the ELL teachers working with students in several classrooms. In some classrooms, the ELL teachers worked with specific ELL students on their vocabulary, having students practice sight words and writing with a prompt. In many classrooms, specifically in the middle school classes, general education teachers reminded all students to use their ELA strategies when reading non-fiction text and working through word problems. PCSB concluded that there is ample evidence that the school is implementing strategies to improve the academic achievement of ELLs.

SCHOOL INTERVENTION AND SUPPORT STRATEGIES

The following table summarizes Center City PCS – Petworth’s intervention and support strategies as detailed in its web-based Intervention and Support Plan to improve the academic performance of its Focus subgroup, English Language Learners; and, the evidence that the QSR team member observed of the school implementing those strategies during both the scheduled day on April 24, 2014 and the observation window from April 22 through April 25, 2014 for the spring 2014 QSR for the purposes of the 2012 ESEA Flexibility Waiver.

PCSB leaves it to the discretion of school leadership to determine the best use of time during the scheduled day of observations for the purposes of Focus intervention strategies. Therefore it may not be possible to observe certain strategies chosen by the school. In cases where PCSB did not have the opportunity to observe the strategy, we will use the following statement: “While this strategy may be in place, PCSB neither looked for nor observed any evidence related to this strategy.” Different language is used to indicate poor implementation of a given strategy.

| Strategy Described In Intervention Plan | School’s Description of Strategy on the Ground | Evidence |
|---|--|--|
| <p>IIB04: Teachers individualize instruction based on pre-test results to provide support for some students and enhanced learning opportunities.</p> <p>Teachers create individualized plans to ensure every child has a plan of action based on post-test results.</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - For all ESL students, portfolios of ELL student work. - Teachers meeting with students to discuss progress on assessments and work. - Differentiated instruction for ELL students. | <p>PCSB did not review portfolios of ELL student work, as we do not conduct a document review as part of the QSR.</p> <p>During the scheduled day and during the unannounced observations, the QSR team observed teachers assessing students during small group work. In a few classrooms teachers assessed student learning either through questioning or by taking notes while the student read. A few teachers had an identified exit ticket for students to complete and submit before transitioning to the next class.</p> <p>The classroom teachers and ELL teachers provided differentiated instruction for ELL students. The QSR team observed small group instruction across subjects in most classrooms. During this time it appeared that students were grouped by ability and tasks were differentiated. The ELL teacher worked with a set of students as they transitioned from group to group.</p> |

| Strategy Described In Intervention Plan | School's Description of Strategy on the Ground | Evidence |
|---|--|--|
| | | <p>In the 1st grade classroom, the ELL teacher and classroom assistant worked with four students throughout the many tasks of the lesson from writing complete sentences to computer games, to working one-on-one with the teacher, who had a folder for each student with a unique set of vocabulary words. One side was labeled “Words I have learned” and the other side was “Words I am working on.” As the student practiced the words with the teacher, they moved words to the side needed.</p> <p>An assistant teacher worked one-on-one with an ELL student assessing the student on a Reading A-Z rubric in a 2nd grade classroom. In another small group of ELL students, the teacher asked specific questions to challenge students on the non-fiction text about pyramids.</p> <p>The 3rd grade ELL teacher worked with six students on a project about Spain. Each student had an assigned research topic and the teacher directed the students to specific websites to research on tablets. Students completed the task labeled “research project.” The teacher discussed plagiarism with the group and the students defined the word and discussed what it meant. The students began writing facts on notecards to share with the group at the end of the lesson.</p> <p>In the 5th grade ELA class, the teachers led differentiated reading centers. The ELL teacher worked with a specific group on a non-fiction text. The teacher assigned different roles, described on a poster on the wall, to individuals in the group: Story Analyzer, Reading Note taker, Question Analyzer, Question researcher, Question Answer, and Look Back Writer. When the groups switched halfway through the lesson, the ELL teacher worked with a second group on a different story. These students knew</p> |

| Strategy Described In Intervention Plan | School's Description of Strategy on the Ground | Evidence |
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| | | <p>their roles from the day before and continued where they had left off. The ELL teacher continued to ask specific questions to each group and asked students to refer back to the text for the answers.</p> <p>In middle school classrooms teachers supported ELL students with vocabulary assistance and small group instruction. Every middle school classroom worked in small groups to complete the assigned tasks. The social studies, ELA and math classes defined vocabulary on worksheets in groups.</p> |
| <p>IID06: Yearly learning goals are set for the school by the Leadership Team, utilizing student learning data.</p> <p>Staff ensure that students are assessed more than three times per year. Staff also ensure the smooth functioning of the school's operational systems in order to establish coherent streams of data.</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Well organized school - Differentiated instruction based on student data. | <p>The school appears to be well organized, with appropriate processes and procedures in place at each grade level. Pre-kindergarten (PK) and elementary age students transitioned within the classroom with little loss of instructional time; teachers used techniques such as timers and countdowns. Students generally moved as a whole class when leaving the classroom. In the middle school grades, teachers prompted students to change classrooms quietly.</p> <p>Students generally behaved in classes. Teachers awarded positive student behavior and gave demerits for unwanted behavior. Teachers prompted students to sit in a "Presidential Pose" and "Star Pose" showing students were ready to learn.</p> <p>As noted under the section on differentiated instruction, reviewers saw evidence of students working based on their ability. Additionally, one 5th grade classroom had Achievement Network (ANET) scores posted for the first and second testing cycles. Please see evidence above for additional information on differentiated instruction at the school.</p> |

| Strategy Described In Intervention Plan | School's Description of Strategy on the Ground | Evidence |
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| <p>III A40: All teachers assess student mastery in ways other than those provided by the computer program.</p> <p>Staff ensure that learning activities and assignments given to each student are targeted to that student's level of mastery, and are aligned to the objectives.</p> <p>School Leadership communicates expectations around teacher interaction with students (instructional and managerial).</p> <p>School leadership communicates expectations around assessment to teachers</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - High quality, highly differentiated instruction. - Teachers are seen interacting instructionally with students, individual and group. - Positive classroom environment. - Frequent assessment, informal and formal. - Teachers discussing assessment with students. | <p>For more information on differentiated instruction, please see the evidence in the first strategy above.</p> <p>As mentioned in the section on differentiated instruction, teachers worked with students both individually and in groups. Both ELL instructors and classrooms teachers worked with small groups to facilitate learning. The QSR team observed teachers engaging students, asking open-ended higher order thinking questions, and challenging students to do their best at all grade levels.</p> <p>Most teachers created and maintained positive classroom environments. However, observers also saw a few teachers struggle with creating a positive culture. In one classroom, for example, the teacher sighed and rolled her eyes when the student was misbehaving and isolated him from his peers for at least thirty minutes.</p> <p>The QSR team observed frequent informal assessments. During small group and whole class instruction teachers consistently assessed students as they read and worked on projects by asking specific questions to elicit student understanding. In one classroom working on homophones, the teacher utilized a think-pair-share for students to use words correctly in sentences. In another classroom the teacher ensured every student participated by picking popsicle sticks with student names on them to call on students.</p> <p>While the school may be formally assessing students, PCSB neither looked for nor observed teachers this during the scheduled day or the one-week classroom observation window.</p> |

| Strategy Described In Intervention Plan | School's Description of Strategy on the Ground | Evidence |
|---|---|--|
| <p>IVE06: The LEA/School has allocated funds to support extended learning time, including innovative partnerships.</p> <p>The school has developed a tutoring program for 2nd-8th grade students.</p> <p>School leadership will provide professional development for teachers in push in and small group instruction, individualizing and differentiation, and utilizing research-based strategies.</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - After school programming targeting ELL students; focus is on reading, math, writing, and study skills; incorporates technology and computer skills. <p><i>NB: After-school program will have ended by the time PCSB visits in Spring 2014. The school will have ACCESS blitz for ELLs after school on Tuesday, Wednesday, and Thursday of the week of April 22-25.</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - High quality differentiated instruction, small group instruction, push in services, particularly for ELL students. | <p>While the school may be providing afterschool programming, for ELLs, PCSB neither looked for nor observed after school activities.</p> <p>For evidence on high quality differentiated instruction, small group instruction, and push in services particularly for ELL students, please refer to the above three rows of this table.</p> |