



November 20, 2013

Terry Golden, Board Chair  
KIPP DC PCS- Promise Academy  
4801 Benning Road, SE  
Washington, DC 20019

Dear Mr. Golden:

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 designated as Focus/Priority by Office of the State Superintendent of Education

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

A QSR team conducted on-site review visits of KIPP DC – Promise Academy Public Charter School (“KIPP DC – Promise PCS”) between October 7 and October 18, 2013. 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.

School leadership also asked PCSB to attend the school on September 17th, 2013 in order to observe how the school’s Focus intervention strategies are being implemented in classrooms. In addition to conducting classroom observations, PCSB sat in on feedback sessions between school leadership and teachers,

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 KIPP DC – Promise PCS. Thank you for your continued cooperation as PCSB makes every effort to ensure that KIPP DC Public Charter School (“KIPP DC PCS”) is in compliance with its charter.

Sincerely,

Naomi DeVeaux  
Deputy Director

Enclosures  
cc: School Leader

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

KIPP DC Public Charter School– Promise Academy (“KIPP DC PCS—Promise”) is part of the 12-campus KIPP DC network of schools. It serves over 400 students in grades one through four and is located in Ward Seven. DC Public Charter School Board (“PCSB”) conducted a Qualitative Site Review (“QSR”) in October 2013 because the KIPP DC – Promise Academy PCS was designated “Focus” under the Office of the State Superintendent of Education’s (“OSSE”) accountability system as designed in its 2012 Elementary and Secondary Education Act (“ESEA”) waiver.

PCSB conducted observations over a two-week window, from October 7<sup>th</sup> through October 18<sup>th</sup>, 2013. A team of two PCSB staff members and one consultant conducted observations of 16 classrooms, including classrooms where more than one teacher was present. Observers saw instruction in both the morning and in the afternoon. In addition to this two-week observation window, the school scheduled PCSB to observe feedback sessions between school leadership and teachers, and to conduct classroom observations on September 17<sup>th</sup>, 2013. The purpose of this scheduled day was to observe how the school is implementing its Focus intervention strategies. Additionally, PCSB attended a parent “Chat and Chew” event in order to gain additional information on how the school supports parents in helping students to be successful at school.

PCSB also attended a board meeting on September 18<sup>th</sup>, 2013. A quorum was present. The session began with a motion to vote in a new board member, and the Board approved the motion. Additional topics discussed included the new facility for Hamilton High School, with the organizational priority to grow by five campuses, about 5,000 students. LEA staff members then discussed the LEA financial position, and the dashboard used by KIPP DC PCS to monitor financial performance. Another staff member reviewed the school academic performance growth of each KIPP DC PCS campus, saying that there appeared to be a drop in test scores in the third grade, though the academic team expects this to smooth out at a later time. LEA staff made reference to being selective in waitlist acceptance around students with IEPs.

According to the charter application, the mission of KIPP DC PCS is to nurture and guide students’ creativity, knowledge and sense of self as the school prepares them with the academic, intellectual, and character skills that are necessary for success in excellent middle schools, high schools, colleges, and in the competitive world beyond. During both the two-week observation window and the scheduled day, PCSB observed various ways in which KIPP DC – Promise PCS was fulfilling its mission. Teachers prepared students with the academic and intellectual skills necessary for success beyond the school by providing targeted, differentiated support during the literacy blocks, frequently with multiple teachers working with small groups of students on different reading or literacy activities. Teachers throughout the school constantly praised students for hard work and encouraged continual improvement as students attempted to tackle challenging learning tasks. Teachers also prepared students with character skills necessary for success by setting firm classroom expectations for respectful behavior and by consistently following through on those expectations with behavior systems. Teachers dealt with the rare instances of misbehavior fairly, thereby contributing to a stable, orderly, and academically focused learning environment. Observers noted the presence of consistently high expectations for all students with regard to both their academic progress and their social progress. Throughout classrooms, teachers reinforced expectations for students to begin sentences correctly, to review the steps of their math problems to ensure correct answers, and to be persistent as they encountered academically

challenging work. During classroom activities such as dancing to transition, teachers encouraged students to ensure they were being safe so that no one would be hurt. Teachers consistently conveyed their expectations that students would respect each other by listening attentively and by not talking over each other. Teachers focused on the college-going, future-oriented culture in every classroom, as classrooms used their teachers' college alma maters to build a classroom identity.

Within the Classroom Environment elements of the Framework for Teaching, observers rated 75% of classrooms as proficient or exemplary. Teachers and students demonstrated mutual respect. Teachers were universally warm and caring towards students, and emphasized the importance of kindness within their classrooms. Teachers consistently empowered students to complete work by saying things like, "I know you can do this!" Managing student behavior and classroom procedures was seamless in most classrooms, with very little instructional time lost. Students generally complied with teacher expectations and in the rare situations when students did not, teachers addressed the behavior consistently and fairly.

Within the Instructional Delivery elements of the Framework for Teaching, observers rated 69% of classrooms as proficient or exemplary. Teachers frequently invited student participation in explanations of content and clearly stated the instructional purpose of lessons. Teachers generally asked a mix of lower and higher order questioning to establish baseline understanding of the subject matter before extending the discussion. In a small number of classrooms, instruction was dominated by teacher-talk. Most learning tasks had multiple correct answers or approaches, with some student choice in how learning tasks were performed.

During both the scheduled day and the two week observation window, PCSB observed strong implementation of KIPP DC PCS – Promise Academy's intervention strategies to improve the academic performance of its Focus subgroup, economically disadvantaged students, who comprise the majority of the school's population. The school's improvement strategies include: differentiation of instruction based on student data in English language arts and math, frequent checks for understanding, more parent-school connections, and high quality and differentiated professional development for teachers. Multiple teachers were present in classrooms during literacy instruction and the classes were generally organized into small groups that included Guided Reading, targeted vocabulary work, and independent reading. PCSB observed small group instruction in math classes, too, including teachers in math classes circulating throughout the classroom, supporting students with independent work, asking students to explain their thinking on math problems, and clarifying teaching points for individual students. PCSB also had the opportunity to attend a parent Chat and Chew event that was focused on giving parents the tools necessary to support their students' success. Parents had the opportunity to learn about the importance of school attendance, regular home routines, and proper sleep and nutrition. The social worker from the school who led the session also gave parents contact information for city services that could help in areas such as family counseling and medical services. With regard to improving student outcomes through professional development, PCSB observed two feedback sessions between school leadership and teachers. During the sessions, the principal and the instructional coach talked through lesson plans with teachers individually and guided them towards revisions to improve student learning. During the two-week window, PCSB also observed a teacher peer-observing a master teacher's instruction.

## CHARTER MISSION, GOALS, AND ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENT EXPECTATIONS

This table summarizes KIPP DC 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.

Goal	Observer’s Evidence
<p>Mission: The mission of KIPP DC – Promise Academy PCS is to nurture and guide our students’ creativity, knowledge and sense of self as we prepare them with the academic, intellectual and character skills that are necessary for success in excellent middle schools, high schools, colleges, and in the competitive world beyond.</p>	<p>During both the scheduled day and the unscheduled observation window, PCSB observed various ways in which the school is fulfilling its mission of preparing students with the academic, intellectual, and character skills necessary for success beyond KIPP DC – Promise PCS.</p> <p><i>Academic and Intellectual Skills</i></p> <p>As discussed in further detail throughout this report, classrooms generally included more than one teacher during literacy blocks, often with one teacher working with a small group and another teacher circulating around students independently reading to ask comprehension questions. Teachers praised students for attempting learning tasks, encouraged continual improvement (such as through the writing process, described further below), and gave students concrete strategies (such as tackling tricky words, described in further detail throughout this report). Open-ended activities that differentiated through the learning product encouraged creativity. In one classroom, students had to make up their own “silly” sentences with words in one word family, like “the cake was floating on a green plate on the lake.” In another classroom, students were learning about architecture and the learning task was for students to draw their own floor plans. In a writing class, students peer-edited each others’ stories about a scary moment.</p> <p><i>Character Skills</i></p> <p>As described in further detail throughout this report, teachers praised students for being kind to each other, set classroom expectations around respectful behavior, hard work, and being productive, and addressed the rare instances of student misbehavior. For example, in one classroom where a few different students were misbehaving, the teacher emphasized the expected character skills by explaining to them, “We are a caring family and a learning team,” and then thanked particular students for meeting classroom expectations.</p>
<p>1. Students will demonstrate academic proficiency at a performance level that makes students competitive for outstanding public or private secondary schools of their choice.</p>	<p>Observers noted various examples of high expectations for students and high academic rigor throughout classrooms. Teachers named classrooms after their colleges and class mascots mirrored those of the teachers’ colleges, fostering a college-going culture. Observers saw various quotes on boards throughout classrooms emphasizing the importance of hard work. Teachers consistently</p>

Goal	Observer's Evidence
	encouraged students to complete their work. In many classrooms, after they had taught the mini lesson to the entire class, teachers circulated throughout the class. When students had trouble with the learning task, teachers provided appropriate amounts of scaffolding to ensure that students had access to the content.
2. Students promoted from KIPP DC elementary schools are prepared to succeed in KIPP DC middle and high schools, as well as other competitive high schools of their choice.	PCSB observed various strategies used by teachers to promote student success beyond the school. As detailed in Goal #1, classrooms were characterized by high expectations and high academic rigor. Teachers emphasized literacy skills such as citing textual evidence, paraphrasing long chunks of text as a way to deepen understanding, and finding the main idea in a story. Teachers used various strategies to assess learning, such as exit tickets and one-on-one conferencing. In math classrooms, teachers focused on developing students' numeracy skills through the use of manipulatives and by modeling learning tasks. Students generally had ample opportunity for independent practice, with the teachers constantly circulating throughout classes in order to assess learning and to provide additional support where needed.
3. Students will have high attendance rates.	While the QSR team did not review attendance data, observers noted that most classrooms were full, with few if any open seats.
4. Students will benefit from enrichment activities.	The school schedule confirmed that the school offers the following classes: Art, Spanish, African Culture, Orchestra, Physical Education, and Tinkering. While the QSR team did not observe specials classes, one observer saw students in Orchestra class practicing violin.
5. Principals will create an educational program and foster a school environment that facilitates student academic and social improvement.	<p>PCSB also observed various examples of how the school promotes academic improvement. Some teachers praised students for attempting problems in math classes. During the scheduled day, a teacher promoted academic improvement by facilitating a peer-editing process of the student writing. Throughout the class, she walked around to see that students were productively engaged and following the steps to provide helpful edits to each other. As discussed in Goal #2, teachers focused on discrete skills in both literacy and in math to prepare students for academic success. Observers also saw an Honor Roll bulletin board displayed in the halls.</p> <p>PCSB observed various ways that the school promoted an environment that facilitates student social improvement. PCSB observed teachers displaying classroom expectations, including one set that read, "Be respectful. Be productive. Believe in yourself." Teachers frequently praised students for positive behavior. PCSB heard a teacher praise a student who was "caught being kind" to another student and another teacher redirect a student by saying, "That was unsafe. You owe [the other student] an apology." One observer noted and the schedule confirmed the teaching a "KIPP" class. According to the KIPP DC PCS --Promise Academy</p>

Goal	Observer's Evidence
	handout, the principal or vice principals teach these classes to students monthly. KIPP Class units focus on school values. The PCSB observer noted that the KIPP class on the day of the observation was focused on the concept of respect.
6. The Principals will ensure fiscal and physical sustainability of the school.	The QSR team neither looked for nor observed any evidence related to this goal.
7. The Board will provide sufficient and effective support to school leaders.	During the Board Meeting held on September 18 <sup>th</sup> , 2013, LEA staff presented information on various topics impacting the school. The LEA staff discussed the additional facility for Hamilton High School, and the LEA's organizational priority of having seats for 5,000 students. LEA staff also discussed the organization's financial position and the school's academic performance, highlighting the drop in test scores in third grade and the expectation that this drop will level out.
8. The school will maintain a daily attendance rate of 93% or higher	While the QSR team did not review attendance data, observers noted that most classrooms were full, with few if any open seats.
9. The school leader will create a culture among staff that facilitates professional growth.	PCSB observed school leadership working with individual teachers and creating a culture among staff that would facilitate professional growth. As described in greater detail in Support and Intervention Plan Strategy #3, Addendum 1 of this report, PCSB observed feedback sessions between the principal and a literacy teacher, and between the literacy coach and another teacher. During both feedback sessions, school leadership led teachers through a series of question in order to improve their lesson plans and to improve their delivery. During the scheduled day, the principal discussed how once per month, grade level teams have a three hour planning block on Fridays in order to facilitate the improvement of lesson planning through team collaboration. During the two-week observation window, one observer noticed that another teacher came into the room where she was observing; this teacher observed and took notes. After the class, the school principal explained to PCSB that this teacher was conducting a peer observation to learn some best practices.
10. The school will cultivate an environment in which parents will support and participate in their child's education.	During the "Chat and Chew" parent event that PCSB attended, the school provided various resources and strategies to help parents participate in their child's education. About ten parents attended the session, led by the school social worker. The presentation was called "Supporting Student Success: Connecting the pieces." Topics covered included the importance of: attendance at school for students, routines at home that will lead to school success, involvement in student's academic life, and self-care, and where parents can get support. The social worker provided a number of resources and handouts that parents could use to connect themselves to other services city-wide, such as mental health services and family counseling.

Goal	Observer's Evidence
<p>11. The school will provide a safe environment in which to learn.</p>	<p>During both the scheduled day and the unscheduled day, PCSB observed that KIPP DC PCS – Promise Academy was a stable learning environment. As described in further detail throughout this report, teachers promoted safe and respectful classroom environments by setting classroom expectations, by praising students for creating a safe environment, and by addressing situations when students did not meet expectations. Observers noticed the use of the “Buddy Classroom.” Students who are not successful in one classroom may go for a “time out” in their “Buddy Classroom,” which is likely close to the student’s assigned class. One observer noticed how a teacher in the Buddy Classroom asked the student to write down what his issue was; he did so, and the teacher asked him to come up with a possible solution. After he successfully did so, the teacher praised him, and encouraged him to make better choices, thus promoting a safe environment.</p>

## SCHOOL INTERVENTION AND SUPPORT STRATEGIES

This table summarizes KIPP DC -- Promise PCS’s intervention and support strategies as detailed in its web-based Intervention and Support Plan, and the evidence that the PCSB staff member observed of the school implementing the strategies during the Fall 2013 QSR visit 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/Priority intervention strategies. As such, 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 standard language of ‘While this strategy may be in place, PCSB neither looked for nor observed any evidence related to this strategy.’ Different language will be used to indicate poor implementation of a given strategy.

Please note that much of the evidence for the implementation of intervention and support strategies was observed through classroom observation, and was aligned to the *Framework for Teaching*. As such, PCSB noted the specific classroom observation elements that speak to these strategies, where appropriate, in order to avoid repetition.

Strategy Described in Intervention Plan	School’s Description of Strategy on the Ground	Evidence
<p>1. Use formative assessment design and data analysis to improve and differentiate instruction, STEP Assessment (literacy), and NWEA Assessment (literacy and math).</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Differentiated, targeted instruction, for whole groups and small groups, based on students assessment data.</li> <li>- Small group instruction based on bi-weekly Friday Skill Assessments that assess standards</li> <li>- Incorporation of “Checks for Understanding” across subject areas to ensure that students have a solid understanding of the aim before beginning independent practice</li> <li>-Immediate feedback provided to students on small group work.</li> <li>-Teachers referencing student goals, specific skills that they have mastered or that they need additional help with.</li> </ul>	<p>During the scheduled observation day, PCSB observed a wide range of strategies that provided evidence as to the use of frequent formative assessments to check for student understanding, to improve and differentiate instruction, and to provide immediate feedback to students. In one classroom observed, after the teacher had discussed how to tackle “tricky words”, and given students a few strategies, she gave each student a small piece of paper that had a space for the “tricky” word, and a list of the strategies (with picture supports as a reminder of what the strategy is). Students independently read and had to record their tricky words from their on-level books, as well as the strategy they used. She and another teacher were going around to each of the students to check on their progress. In a math class, the teacher played a Jeopardy-type of game with students where they chose a particular problem out of a category (such as addition, subtraction, vocabulary, or word problem); the teacher put the problem on the board, and asked students to use their individual white boards to record their answers. While she was doing this, another teacher was walking around and checking on student answers, and helping students who had the incorrect answers, thereby giving students immediate feedback on their answers. In a fourth grade writing class, the teacher asked students to peer-edit, giving students the opportunity to assess each other against established criteria. As they did so, she walked around and checked in with individual groups of students, asking them about their writing and checking in to make sure that they were following the established steps, and providing immediate feedback to them on their writing. In another literacy</p>



Strategy Described in Intervention Plan	School's Description of Strategy on the Ground	Evidence
		<p>class, the teacher frequently checked for student understanding as she continued reading a book that she had started yesterday; she modeled how to make predictions about the text, and then asked students to do the same, ensuring that student predictions were based on both the pictures they saw, and what they already knew about the story.</p> <p>PCSB also saw frequent examples of small group, differentiated instruction. During second grade, guided reading, small groups rotated to the teacher while the rest of the class continued with their independent reading. Student work during this time was differentiated, with each group of students having a different set of vocabulary words to work on with the teacher. While students independently read, and the teacher worked with a small group, another teacher was on the carpet with a small group of students, asking them comprehension questions about their independent reading. In a few different classrooms where PCSB did not see small group instruction during the observation, two teachers were walking around the classroom to check on individual students or small groups of students. PCSB observed teachers working with students in one class to match the words that they had just cut out to the appropriate pictures.</p> <p>During the scheduled observation day, PCSB observed teachers referencing both skills that the students have mastered, as well as skills on which the students need to continue to work. During a math lesson in which the class was individually working out two digit addition and subtraction numbers, the teacher would ask a student to come up to the front of the class to show or demonstrate how the student got to the correct answer, saying "Friends who did not get the correct answer need to watch as STUDENT counts down." In at least two classrooms observed, and discussed in further detail above, teachers emphasized the skill of tackling tricky words, giving students various strategies to use, such as chunking, or stretching out the word.</p> <p>During the scheduled observation day, PCSB also had the opportunity to witness how teachers consider differentiation while they are planning. PCSB observed a debrief between the principal and the fourth grade writing teacher. They were working together on developing a unit plan for descriptive words, and this was the second time they had met to discuss. Using the context of individual student needs, where some students may be more advanced than others in their literacy skills, the teacher and the principal discussed how they could phrase a learning task so that all students would be engaged in productive, on-level work. PCSB also observed a debrief between the literacy coach and a teacher. The pair were discussing how to execute productive small group lessons in the classroom. The coach had asked the teacher to try a couple of strategies to ensure that students lost little time in transitioning to</p>

Strategy Described in Intervention Plan	School's Description of Strategy on the Ground	Evidence
		<p>independent reading and to consultation, and the teacher and the coach were discussing how these strategies worked.</p> <p>For information regarding the use of assessment during the two-week observation window, please see the Instructional Delivery Domain of this report, particularly the element of Using Assessment in Instruction.</p>
<p>2. Parent-Student Connections</p>	<p>- Data Night: During the 2012-2013 school year, parents had the chance to attend a Data Night to learn more about how they can help prepare students for their in-class assignments. Parents were able to get detailed information about where students are and how they can work with them at home. There will be another Data Night this year at Promise.</p> <p>- Parent-Teacher conferences: Teachers go over Skill Assessments with parents in more detail during Parent Conferences. They review STEP, NWEA, and Benchmark data with parents to help with support students at home.</p>	<p>While the parent engagement strategies of data nights and parent-teacher conferences may be in place, PCSB neither looked for nor observed any evidence related to this strategy.</p> <p>PCSB attended a “Chat and Chew” event for parents around supporting student success. More information about this event can be read in Goal #10 in the Charter Mission and Goals section of this report.</p>
<p>3. Provide High Quality differentiated, professional development.</p> <p>Each member of the leadership team meets with each teacher every other week to provide planning support and regular feedback. Teachers receive support based on the developmental goals established.</p> <p>The school has developed a Long Term PD plan to address student need, and as a result of teacher</p>	<p>- Teachers visiting each other's' rooms to share best practices with one another.</p> <p>-Leadership team meeting with teachers regularly to provide support and feedback.</p> <p>-High quality instruction as a result of strong planning and professional development.</p>	<p>During the two-week observation window, PCSB noticed a teacher observing and taking notes during another class. The principal later shared with the observer that the visiting teacher was observing in order to gain some additional teaching strategies from a highly skilled colleague.</p> <p>During the scheduled day, PCSB had the opportunity to observe differentiated professional development during two feedback sessions between school leadership and teachers. As discussed above, in intervention strategy one, the principal met with the fourth grade literacy teacher to discuss revisions to her writing lesson. The principal started the session by going through all of the strengths of the teacher's plans. The principal then focused the debrief on how the teacher could clarify the lesson by limiting the number of skills that she is trying to cover. The principal asked the teacher a series of questions to guide her as to the revisions to make on the writing plans, such as “What else will students need to accomplish in order for them to be able to write the paragraph?”</p> <p>During the other debrief observed on the scheduled day, and discussed above in intervention strategy one, the literacy coach and teacher discussed how the literacy</p>

Strategy Described in Intervention Plan	School's Description of Strategy on the Ground	Evidence
<p>input.</p> <p>The school also provides STEP PD, whereby the STEP trainer provides feedback during guided reading and small group instruction as well as during the literacy lessons for the whole group.</p> <p>During Literacy PD, teachers have the opportunity to attend sessions led by Elementary school instructional coaches on a variety of topics, such as word study and guided reading. Coaches plan differentiated sessions in order to support Capital Teaching Residents along with more experienced teachers.</p> <p>Department meetings provide for an additional opportunity for PD, as the school has shifted the focus to development rather than logistics. The focus of department meetings is on long term goals, and ensuring that the school's focus is on student achievement and teacher development.</p>		<p>block in the teacher's class was going. The literacy coach had given the teacher a couple of strategies to try, and had re-visited the classroom to see how the strategies were going. The pair discussed together how the strategies may be tightened up in the classroom to ensure students are maximizing learning time, and spending less time on transitions.</p> <p>While the department meetings, literacy professional development (beyond the individual feedback sessions), and STEP professional development may be in place, PCSB neither looked for nor observed any evidence related to this strategy.</p> <p>For information about the high quality instruction, as a result of the school's professional development program, please see the Instructional Delivery section of this report.</p>

Strategy Described in Intervention Plan	School's Description of Strategy on the Ground	Evidence
<p>4. Building number sense, fact fluency, strengthening students' geometry and measurement skills so they are able to think rationally and critically about solving problems.</p>	<p>- Math class: Teachers are working to pull small groups of students to provide more individualized instruction.</p> <p>-Assessment of students in real time in order to get immediate data on students and provide an opportunity for students to ask questions or ask for additional support.</p>	<p>During the scheduled day, PCSB had the opportunity to observe various ways that teachers built number sense and fact fluency. In one math class, students were playing a game that required them to answer different types of math problems. The students picked a category of problems (addition, subtraction, vocabulary) and the teacher showed students a problem on the board, and the students had to answer the problem on their own individual white boards. Students then held up their answers. Both the main teacher and another adult in the room were walking around to check on progress of every student, and asked students to write out their work. The teacher then asked one student who had the correct answer to explain his idea to the rest of the class. This happens continually throughout the duration of the class, with the teachers constantly holding up new problems, circulating to ensure students are working through the problems correctly, and then students explaining answers to the rest of the class. PCSB also observed small groups during the two-week observation window. In one math class, after the teacher taught a mini lesson on place value, she immediately pulled a small group of four students to teach an additional lesson on place value. In another math class, after the mini lesson, the teacher walked around to check on individual student progress and scaffolded where necessary.</p> <p>For more information on real-time assessment, please see the Using Assessment in Instruction element of the Instructional Delivery domain of this report.</p>
<p>5. Other promising strategies that address the areas of deficiency that placed the school in Focus status and are sufficient to achieve change and demonstrate progress.</p>	<p>- Teachers are modeling their thinking during the mini-lesson, when they are introducing material or skills to the students.</p> <p>- Throughout guided practice and independent practice, students explain their thinking to one another and to their teacher. In math in particular, students are explaining their thinking using their words so they are able to demonstrate proficiency on the DC CAS.</p> <p>-Teachers' frequent use of the phrase, "Does this make sense?"</p>	<p>During both the scheduled day and the two-week observation window, PCSB observed various ways that teachers modeled their thinking, requested that students explain their thought process, and checked for understanding. In one classroom observed during the scheduled day, the teacher reviewed with students what they had done during the read-aloud the previous day during the literacy block; she discussed how the class made predictions about the text. She then held up the book she would be reading, <i>Harry the Dirty Dog</i>, and then modeled how she would be making predictions about the text for her partner, saying, "I can tell by the picture that he used to be white but he is getting very dirty... so far, my prediction based on the title and the pictures are correct." During the two-week observation window, teachers modeled during carpet time what students would be doing back at their tables.</p> <p>Teachers consistently requested that students share their thought processes during both the observation window and the scheduled day. Throughout the observation window, teachers encouraged students in many classrooms to talk to each other to explain their thinking during independent practice. In a math class observed during the scheduled day, where students were to answer questions posed by the teacher on individual white boards, the teacher asked students to explain their thinking as a way</p>

Strategy Described in Intervention Plan	School's Description of Strategy on the Ground	Evidence
		<p>of modeling for other students. In a literacy class observed during the scheduled day, one teacher worked with students at a table on spelling words, another teacher was circulating around the students independently reading and writing on sticky notes to ask them questions about their reading. In a science class observed on the scheduled day, the teacher began the lesson by reviewing the discussion they began yesterday on living things and non-living things. The teacher asked the students questions to get them to recap what they had learned yesterday. She then asked students a series of questions about individual plant parts to check understanding of the material covered yesterday. Within the observation window, teachers consistently asked students to recap what they had learned in previous classes, asking them to draw conclusions about the prior classes' material, and to justify their answers.</p>
6. Extended learning time	<p>-Two teachers in each room during Guided Reading &amp; Guided Math. In Guided Reading students are grouped homogenously so that teachers are able to meet them where they are.</p>	<p>During both the scheduled day and the two-week observation window, PCSB observed multiple adults in rooms during Guided Reading and Guided Math. As described in Intervention Strategy #1, of this section, during Guided Reading, multiple teachers were in classrooms working with students on differentiated activities. Teachers worked with students on Guided Reading, targeted vocabulary work, and independent reading; during independent reading, observers saw teachers checking on student use of "sticky" notes to annotate their reading, ask questions about the text, or try out a decoding strategy. While PCSB did not observe many small groups during math class, PCSB did observe multiple teachers in the room to support students by checking in on individual progress during independent work. Where necessary, teachers provided feedback to students to help them work through a particular strategy or problem.</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, 75% 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>	<p>In 75% of classrooms, teachers and students demonstrated mutual respect. Teachers used respectful language to correct students, as in one classroom where students were not in the correct spot and the teacher encouraged the class to “politely help them get to where they need to be.” In another classroom, the teacher told students, “I love that you are trying to help your friends out! But let’s try to use a quiet voice.” Teachers demonstrated genuine warmth towards students, as shown through a gentle hand on the shoulder or getting at eye level as they provided individual feedback to students. Teachers used words such as “big guy” and “sweetie” to refer to students. In classrooms throughout the school, teachers nurtured a positive environment through embracing the college name and mascot of their classrooms. In one classroom the teacher used his college chant to get the students’ attention, saying, “Go U!” and student immediately replied “AU!”</p>	<p>Limited</p>	<p>6 %</p>
	<p>In 25% of classrooms, teachers scored satisfactory or below in creating an environment of respect and rapport. In some classrooms, a small number of students demonstrated disrespect for teachers. In one classroom, students displayed anger and aggression toward their classmates, despite the teacher’s efforts to de-escalate behavior. In another classroom, a student refused to comply with directions, and knocked materials off of the desk while the teacher attempted to get the student back on track. However, overall, instances of disrespect were rare.</p>	<p>Satisfactory</p>	<p>19 %</p>
		<p>Proficient</p>	<p>69 %</p>
		<p>Exemplary</p>	<p>6 %</p>

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

Class Environment	Evidence Observed	School Wide Rating	
<b>Establishing a Culture for Learning</b>	<p>In three-fourths of the observations, teachers conveyed to students the importance of hard work and that with hard work students could be successful. Observers heard teachers say to students phrases such as, “I think you can do it!” and “I know you can read this!” Teachers consistently recognized the efforts of students, saying, “I love how STUDENT was persistent and worked through this problem with me!” and “I like how STUDENT is fixing it... way to catch your work!” Displays throughout rooms, such as a “No Excuses” Chart further encouraged a culture of hard work.</p> <p>In 25% of classrooms, teachers scored satisfactory or below in establishing a culture for learning. In a few classrooms, students complied with teachers’ expectations for learning, but indicated low commitment to work. Observers noted disruptive, off-task behavior in some classrooms. In one classroom, despite the teacher’s repeated attempts to bring students back on track, they continued to talk very loudly without completing the learning task at hand. Observers also noted that high expectations for learning were initiated more by teachers than by students.</p>	Limited	6 %
		Satisfactory	19 %
		Proficient	69 %
		Exemplary	6 %
<b>Managing Classroom Procedures</b>	<p>In most classrooms, teachers lost very little instructional time due to the effective management of classroom procedures. Teachers used countdowns to prepare students to transition. In most classrooms, transitions from the carpet to tables were seamless, with teachers using chants, call-and-response, and hand motions to move students quickly to the next activity. Teachers consistently praised students for on-task behavior, saying “STUDENT’s eyes came to me right away!” and “Table 1, incredible job!” Teachers posted guidelines around the rooms for various activities, such as those for partner reading.</p> <p>In 26% of classrooms, transitions functioned unevenly. One classroom seemed chaotic as students transitioned from the carpet to individual groups, despite the teacher’s attempts to focus students on the next learning task. In another classroom, behavior challenges delayed the start of the next instructional activity.</p>	Limited	13 %
		Satisfactory	13 %
		Proficient	56 %
		Exemplary	19 %

Class Environment	Evidence Observed	School Wide Rating	
<b>Managing Student Behavior</b>	<p>Student behavior was generally appropriate throughout classrooms, and teachers consistently monitored student behavior against established standards of conduct. Teachers praised students in different ways for staying on task. In one classroom, the teacher passed students “the carpet cat” when they demonstrated readiness. In another classroom, the teacher gave students stickers for good behavior. Teachers responded effectively to misbehavior, chanting to get students to refocus. Chants such as, “Macaroni cheese, everybody freeze,” and “One, two, three... eyes on me!” were generally effective in getting students back on track.</p>	<p>Limited</p>	<p>13 %</p>
		<p>Satisfactory</p>	<p>13 %</p>
	<p>In 26% of classrooms, teachers attempted to maintain order but with uneven success. In some classrooms, students continued to participate in off-task behavior, despite repeated reminders from the teacher.</p>	<p>Proficient</p>	<p>69 %</p>
		<p>Exemplary</p>	<p>6 %</p>



## 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, 69% 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>In 75% of the observations, teachers clearly communicated the instructional purpose to students, and explanations of content were well-scaffolded, clear, and accurate. In one classroom, the teacher activated students’ prior knowledge as they began a new unit on place value, asking students, “Do you remember working with place value in first grade? This is how we’re going to do it today...” Teachers invited student participation in the explanations of content, as they asked students to explain aspects of yesterday’s lessons to the class before moving on to the next part of the unit. Teachers clearly stated expectations for learning by telling students explicitly what their answers should include. Teachers connected learning to student interest, as in one classroom where the teacher asked a student to design the interior of their home. Teachers generally modeled for students how to complete learning tasks, specifically modeling how a student should be thinking about a learning task. In one class for example, the teacher asked students to examine the text features saying, “When I preview the text, which is something that all good readers do, I read the heading and I think about what I might be reading about.”</p>	<p>Limited</p>	<p>13 %</p>
		<p>Satisfactory</p>	<p>13 %</p>
		<p>Proficient</p>	<p>56 %</p>
	<p>In a small number of classrooms, students seemed confused about how to complete a learning task. In a couple of classrooms, though the teacher explained how to do the learning task, students seemed unsure of what to do and continued to have trouble completing the activity.</p>	<p>Exemplary</p>	<p>19 %</p>
<b>Using Questioning and Discussion Techniques</b>	<p>In approximately 70% of the classrooms, teachers posed questions to students designed to promote thinking and understanding, and facilitated a genuine discussion among them. Teachers pushed students to think critically with questions such as “Was there more than one problem in our</p>	<p>Limited</p>	<p>13 %</p>

Instructional Delivery	Evidence Observed	School Wide Rating	
	<p>story? What might the consequences be of the solution?” and consistently asked students to justify their responses to questions. Teachers effectively used wait time by preparing students, saying, “I’m going to give you fifteen seconds to think of an example.” Teachers also made an effort to call on students who were not raising their hands. Students throughout classrooms had opportunities to discuss with their classmates through “pair-share” as one of many strategies teachers used to ensure that students were heard.</p> <p>A small number of observations included mostly teacher-talk, with limited opportunities for students to engage in a discussion with the teacher or each other. In a couple of classrooms, for example, the teachers attempted to engage all students in the learning task by walking around and asking them about their work, but many students were off task as the teachers were unable to circulate quickly enough to check on everyone.</p>	Satisfactory	19 %
		Proficient	69 %
		Exemplary	0
<b>Engaging Students in Learning</b>	<p>In most observations, students demonstrated active intellectual engagement in the content, with the teacher scaffolding to support their engagement. Most learning tasks had multiple correct responses or approaches. In a couple of classrooms for example, the teacher had modeled how to find the main idea in a small chunk of text, and asked students to fill out a chart doing the same with individual texts. The teachers in these classrooms walked around to ensure students understood how to complete the task, and scaffolded where appropriate. Teachers throughout the school used a mix of whole group and small group instruction, and independent practice to ensure students could access content through a few different strategies. In a math class for example, the teacher brought a small group of students together after the whole-group mini lesson to do a separate lesson on place value; students watched closely as the teacher wrote on a clip board to model the learning task.</p> <p>In a small number of classrooms, learning tasks and activities allowed some students to be passive learners. In these classrooms, instruction was mainly teacher-led, with few opportunities for students to be involved.</p>	Limited	13 %
		Satisfactory	6 %
		Proficient	63 %
		Exemplary	19 %

Instructional Delivery	Evidence Observed	School Wide Rating	
Using Assessment in Instruction	<p>In slightly more than half of the classrooms observed, teachers regularly assessed student progress. Teachers assessed learning on a whole class basis in a number of different classrooms by asking students to give a “thumbs up” when they had an answer. To assess students individually, observers saw the use of exit tickets to close out lessons. After teachers gave students independent practice, they frequently circulated around the room.</p> <p>In a small number of classrooms, assessment was limited. In a few classrooms, the teachers attempted to check in with all students on a learning task and were not able to get to each of the students; students seemed generally confused about how to complete the learning tasks.</p>	Limited	19 %
		Satisfactory	25 %
		Proficient	44 %
		Exemplary	13 %

**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>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
<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.