QUALITATIVE SITE REVIEW REPORT

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

KIPP DC – Key Academy PCS (KIPP DC – Key PCS) serves 334 students in grades 5-8 in Ward 7. It is a part of the Benning facility, which also houses KIPP DC – LEAP Academy PCS and KIPP DC – Promise Academy PCS. The DC Public Charter School Board (PCSB) conducted a Qualitative Site Review (QSR) in December 2014 because KIPP DC is eligible to petition for 15-year Charter Renewal during 2015-16 school year. KIPP DC – Key PCS is its first campus to open in DC and has been a Tier 1 campus since the advent of the PMF in 2011.

The QSR team conducted observations over the course of a two-week window, from December 1 through December 12, 2014. A team of one PCSB staff member, PCSB's Special Education Specialist and one consultant conducted observations of 11 classrooms. A PSCB staff member also attended a Board of Trustees meeting.

The QSR team used Charlotte Danielson's *Framework for Teaching* Rubric throughout the observations and observed classrooms in mornings and afternoons. In some instances, a QSR team may have observed a teacher twice. The QSR team also collected evidence regarding the school's stated mission and goals.

The QSR team scored 72% of the observations as distinguished or proficient in the Classroom Environment domain. In these observations the QSR team saw teachers effectively transition students and employ classroom management techniques in order to maximize instructional time. Relationships between students and teachers were friendly and conveyed mutual respect in most observations. Most students showed a commitment to learning and teachers reminded students that hard work is important. However in a few observations teachers struggled to maintain a focused and orderly learning environment.

The QSR team scored 55% of the observations as distinguished or proficient in the Instruction domain. The highest rated component was Communicating with Students (64% distinguished or proficient). In these observations teachers clearly stated lesson objectives and used rigorous and grade appropriate vocabulary. Teachers asked open-ended questions and effectively facilitated discussions related to the learning tasks. The lowest component in this domain was Using Assessment in Instruction (45% distinguished or proficient). Teachers' use of assessment in instruction was inconsistent. Some teachers only used global checks for understanding and did not adjust instruction to address misconceptions.

As stated in the special education questionnaires submitted by the schools, KIPP DC believes in a holistic approach when providing case management and special education services for students with disabilities throughout the Benning facility. This was evident during the QSR observations. In many observations both a general education teacher and a special education teacher worked together in the classroom to instruct and serve all students. Additionally students with disabilities had access to related services such as speech, occupational therapy, etc., which were also observed. In all three schools at the Benning facility, the QSR team observed quality instruction and inclusion for students with disabilities. The teachers incorporated manipulatives, small group learning activities, and other supports to engage their students and to ensure

that students were learning. The QSR team also observed the genuine excitement and eagerness that many of the students with disabilities expressed, particularly in the resource room and one-on-one settings.

CHARTER MISSION, GOALS, AND ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENT EXPECTATIONS

This table summarizes KIPP DC—Key PCS 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
Mission: KIPP DC's mission is to create and sustain the highest quality school system for the most underserved communities in Washington, DC. KIPP DC students will develop the knowledge, skills, and character necessary to become thoughtful, influential, and successful citizens in the competitive world.	The evidence gathered during this qualitative site review shows that KIPP DC – Key PCS is meeting the KIPP DC mission. <i>Create and sustain the highest quality school system</i> KIPP DC – Key PCS currently serves 344 students in a state of the art building. The KIPP Benning facility houses three academies, which allow students and families the opportunity to send students to the same facility from the time children, are three years old through middle school. Students enrolled in KIPP schools are able to remain in the KIPP system for the duration of their K – 12 education creating consistency for the community. <i>Develop knowledge, skills, and character</i> In English classes teachers used strategies such as building background knowledge, previewing new vocabulary, and connecting content to students' lives to scaffold learning. In math classes students were presented with a number of different types of triangles and asked to determine the differences and categorize by similarities. The teacher then effectively used student observations to introduce a new unit.

Mission and Goals	Evidence
	In most classes teachers seized opportunities to build on students' skills and knowledge. Character education was integrated into the academic program in most of the observations. Students walked from class to class with "paychecks" on which teachers recorded praises and gave out points to students demonstrating KIPP values. Teachers modeled positive character traits in both their interactions with students and with other staff. Teachers challenged by student behavior maintained a calm and positive demeanor that modeled resilience. Bulletin boards highlighted individual students for demonstrating helpfulness, kindness and determination. Additionally signs in the classrooms reinforced positive student character with quotes such as: "try again, fail again, fail better" and "I believe in you, you can do it, this is important."
	Students become thoughtful, influential, and successful in the competitive world
	Teachers created opportunities for students to influence their classroom environment by actively participating in learning tasks and transitions. The QSR team saw teachers guide students to approach problems in different ways and, occasionally, explain to classmates what they did. Every classroom posted a class academic goal and referenced their expected high school graduation year. In the hallway there is evidence that students are encouraged to be thoughtful as seen on a "random act of kindness" board in hallway displaying shout outs to thoughtful students for actions such as including all students in a group. A "Chief Excitement Officer" board highlights student accomplishments. Introducing students to language of the real world, such as CEO, is essential to preparing students to be successful citizens.
Goals	

Mission and Goals	Evidence
Students will demonstrate academic proficiency at a performance level that makes students competitive for outstanding public or private secondary schools of their choice.	In most classrooms students were held accountable for completing their work and teachers appeared to believe in all of their students. Each classroom has academic goals for the class based on normed assessments. Rigor was uneven from classroom to classroom. Some teachers guided students through thoughtful and complex learning and some teachers spent most of the observation managing behavior. In one classroom students were asked to answer low-level recall questions about a movie with no discussion or background provided by the teacher. In the hallway the QSR team saw an "honors" and "high honors" bulletin board with student work and rubrics. Additionally a bulletin board clearly displayed current data highlighting students who met and improved their reading level.
Students promoted from KIPP DC elementary schools are prepared to succeed in KIPP DC middle and high schools, as well as other competitive schools of their choice.	Please see evidence given for goal 1.
Students will have high attendance rates (the school will maintain daily attendance of 93% or greater).	While the QSR team neither looked for nor observed any evidence related to attendance rate, most classrooms had very few empty seats.
Students will benefit from enrichment activities.	The QSR team saw evidence that students at KIPP DC – Key PCS have opportunities to participate in a variety of enrichment activities. Information in the hallway was present for basketball tournaments, running club (Fleet Feet), and after school tutoring.
Principals will create an educational program and foster a school environment that facilitates student academic and social improvement.	The QSR team did not look for or observe any explicit evidence related to this goal however the team saw effective push-in and pull-

Mission and Goals	Evidence
	out support being offered to students in all grade levels and content areas.
The Principal will ensure the fiscal and physical sustainability of the school.	The QSR team neither looked for nor observed any evidence related to this goal.
The Board will provide sufficient and effective support to school leaders.	The QSR team neither looked for nor observed any evidence related to this goal.
The school leader will create a culture among staff that facilitates professional growth.	The QSR team neither looked for nor observed any evidence related to this goal.
The school will create an environment in which parents will support and participate in their child's education.	The QSR team neither looked for nor observed any evidence related to this goal however one teacher texted a parent regarding a behavior management issue during class. The student was aware that her parent and the school were in contact with each other and redirected her behavior. There is a KIPP Parent Organization but the team did not see any evidence of the impact of the group.
The school will create a safe environment in which to learn.	Overall the school environment appeared to be extremely safe and conducive to learning. Security personnel sit at each entrance and require identification to enter the building. A staff member must accompany all visitors as they move through the building increasing the feeling of safety. In a few classrooms there were orange safety backpacks near the door. Students in the hall walked quietly and moved quickly from class to class. An adult accompanied the few students who were in the hallways during instructional. The hallways

Mission and Goals	Evidence
	are clean with colorful bulletin boards and inspiring quotes appropriate for the grade-level of the students.
Governance:	A PCSB staff member attended the KIPP DC Board of Trustees meeting on September 17, 2014. A quorum was present. The attendees included members of the KIPP DC Board of Trustees and a representative from Bain Consulting who would be working with the school on strategic planning. KIPP representatives gave presentations on various aspects of the school's performance. The presentations focused on a discipline report, a finance committee report, a management report, a school performance report, and a real estate update.

THE CLASSROOM ENVIRONMENT¹

This table summarizes the school's performance on the Classroom Environments domain of the rubric during the unannounced visits. The label definitions for classroom observations of "distinguished," "proficient," "basic," and "unsatisfactory" are those from the Danielson framework. The QSR team scored 72% of the observations as "distinguished" or "proficient" for the Classroom Environment domain.

The Classroom Environment	Evidence Observed	School Wide Ra	ating
Creating an Environment of Respect and Rapport	The QSR team scored 82% of observations as distinguished and proficient in Creating an Environment of Respect and Rapport. In these observations student-teacher interactions were uniformly warm and respectful. Teachers referred to students by name and students encouraged and helped each other. Observers noted teachers frequently giving praise and encouragement to	Distinguished	55%
	students. In one instance, a teacher spoke privately to a student who had his head down causing the student to chuckle and rejoin the class. In a few observations teachers used humor to redirect misbehavior. The humor would not have worked effectively if the students did not respect and have good rapport with the teacher.	Proficient	27%
	The QSR team scored 18% of the observations as basic and none as unsatisfactory in this component. Observers noted students ignoring teachers' efforts to focus them on academic content as they carried on their personal conversations. In one observation the reviewer witnessed multiple instances of	Basic	18%
	students acting disrespectfully to others that was not addressed by the teacher. For example, students in one observation laughed at another student who mispronounced a word they were reading and students in another observation laughed as a person from another ethnicity was seen in a video.	Unsatisfactory	0%

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

The Classroom Environment	Evidence Observed	School Wide R	ating
Establishing a Culture for Learning	Culture for The QSR team rated 82% of the observations as distinguished or proficient in Establishing a Culture for Learning. Teachers provided verbal praise when students showed effort and showed passion for their subject content. In these observations teachers motivate students to challenge themselves with	Distinguished	55%
comments such as "you can do this" or "I know this is hard but we can all do it." In one classroom the teacher told the students that all the problems of the day would be hard but that with commitment each student could complete the work. In another observation as a student struggled through a test, the teacher gave him the option to take breaks but reminded him that it was important that he try his best.	Proficient	27%	
	The QSR team scored 18% of the observations as basic in this component and none as unsatisfactory. Observers noted neutral energy for the content. In one	Basic	18%
	observation the teacher allowed some students to simply remain unengaged by resting their heads on the table, talking with friends, or sitting without working for the first nine minutes of a class period.	Unsatisfactory	0%
Managing Classroom Procedures The QSR team rated 60% of the observations as distinguished and 10% as proficient in Managing Classroom Procedures. In these observations teachers had established procedures that maximized instructional time. Students generally entered and exited classrooms quietly and quickly and in a few observations turned in homework in a basket before class began. In one classroom student assistants distributed and put-away laptops quickly and without interrupting the teacher or classmates. A class that was too loud, according to the teacher, was asked to return to their desks to try lining up again. This teacher held students responsible for following routines. Teachers used digital timers or bells and announced time warnings to better facilitate transitions.	Distinguished	60%	
	Proficient	10%	

The Classroom Environment	Evidence Observed	School Wide Ra	nting
	The QST team scored 30% of the observations as basic in this component and none as unsatisfactory. In one classroom there did not appear to be a routine for turning in or distributing work. When the teacher asked for work many students jumped out of their seats and ran to the front. Others just left papers	Basic	30%
on the desk, which in turn ended up on the ground after students left. In another observation, the teacher lost instructional time when over half of the students indicated they did not have the assignment from a previous day, and teachers spent time locating the correct assignment before beginning the lesson. In a few classrooms there appeared to be procedures but they were not enforced.	Unsatisfactory	0%	
Managing Student Behavior	The QSR team rated 55% of the observations as distinguished or proficient in the component of Managing Student Behavior. In the distinguished classrooms there was not any evidence of student misbehavior. Teachers effectively used subtle cues, such as proximity or simply stating a student's name to manage off-task behavior. The QSR team heard positive narration in	Distinguished	45%
most classrooms. The team saw school-wide systems in place to manage and track behavior as students move from teacher to teacher and heard consistency in its implementation from class to class.	Proficient	10%	
	The QSR team scored 45% of the observations as basic or unsatisfactory in this component. Students ignored teachers as they tried to redirect behavior. Teachers in these classrooms tried to employ countdown and attention-getting signals without success. In one classroom a student blatantly ignored the teacher multiple times and disrupted the entire class for over 20 minutes.	Basic	36%

The Classroom Environment	Evidence Observed	School Wide Rating	
	Eventually she was sent to the office but only after knocking over a desk, dancing and singing around the room, and shouting. One observer saw the same group of students in two classrooms, in one classroom there were no instances of misbehavior and in the other the students ignored the teacher for most of the observation. In one observation there was inconsistency in the options two teachers in one classroom gave to an off task student leading to confusion.	Unsatisfactory	9%

INSTRUCTION

This table summarizes the school's performance on the Instruction domain of the rubric during the unannounced visits. The label definitions for classroom observations of "distinguished," "proficient," "basic," and "unsatisfactory" are those from the Danielson framework. The QSR team scored 55% of the observations as "distinguished" or "proficient" for the Instruction domain.

Instruction	Evidence Observed	School Wide Ra	ating
Communicating with Students	The QSR team rated 64% of the observations as distinguished or proficient in Communicating with Students. In these observations teachers clearly stated lesson objectives and referred to them throughout the lesson. In one classroom the teacher told the students exactly what they would need to do for their exit ticket, which she called a "show off" before beginning whole group instruction and referenced the learning target through the lesson. In a few instances teachers introduced new content in a	Distinguished	36%
	meaningful way. One teacher broke down new vocabulary words in math to root words and prefixes. Teachers used rich vocabulary that was appropriate to the subject matter and in two observations teachers used analogies to explain complex content. A teacher said, "Imagine if you went to a brand new jobs and you didn't know what you were to be doing. That would be the same as if I said to you read this book without any knowledge of the history."	Proficient	28%
	The QSR team scored 36% of the observations as basic in this component. In these observations the teachers' attempts to explain the instructional purpose to students had limited success, or teachers did not explain the instructional purpose at all. In one instance, a teacher gave a monologue lasting six minutes and then stated, "I am getting ahead of myself" as	Basic	36%

Instruction	Evidence Observed	School Wide R	ating
	students demonstrated that they did not understand. She then continued to talk without addressing the students who appeared lost in the lesson. In another observation students watched a video with complex vocabulary that was not previewed by teacher leading to student confusion. One teacher had to restate directions three times because students were not clear about what to do.	Unsatisfactory	0%
Using Questioning/Prompts and Discussion Techniques		Distinguished	36%
		Proficient	18%
The QSR team scored 46% of the observations as basic or unsatisfactory. The QSR team did not see evidence of effective questioning/discussion techniques or observed a series of low-level recall questions posed in rapid succession by teacher in these observations. In one observation the teacher tried to pose open-ended questions but did not allow time for students to respond before moving on to the question. In most of these observations questioning was focused primarily on following procedures or managing behavior rather than on academic content.	Basic	36%	
	teacher tried to pose open-ended questions but did not allow time for students to respond before moving on to the question. In most of these observations questioning was focused primarily on following procedures	Unsatisfactory	10%

Instruction	Evidence Observed	School Wide R	ating
Engaging Students in Learning	The QSR team rated 55% of observations as distinguished or proficient in Engaging Students in Learning. In one observation the teacher engaged the students by offering choice in selecting an article to read about the Underground Railroad. The teacher briefly spoke about each article and shared the level of complexity but allowed students to pick the one they thought was best for them. Teachers paced the lessons well and engaged students in a variety of learning situations including whole group, small group, and individual work.	Distinguished	18%
	In nearly all of these classrooms teachers used turn and talk to engage students prior to whole class discussion. Students in one classroom were eager to categorize triangles and all that could be heard when students were talking amongst themselves was math related conversation. Teachers in these classrooms effectively paced lessons and adjusted timing based on student engagement.	Proficient	37%
	The QSR team scored 45% of the observations as basic in this component. The pacing in these lessons resulted in lost instructional time and off task behavior. In these observations the QSR team did not see evidence that students had any choice when it came to learning tasks. In one observation	Basic	45%
	most students had completed their work and did not have anything else to work on resulting in over 75% of the class being off task for over 15 minutes. In one observation a QSR team member heard students complaining that the work was "too easy."	Unsatisfactory	0%

Instruction	Evidence Observed	School Wide Ra	ating
Using Assessment in Instruction	t in Instruction The QSR team scored 45% of the observations as distinguished or proficient in Using Assessment in Instruction. In one classroom the teacher referenced the exit ticket from the day before and addresses misconceptions with the whole class. In all of these observations teachers were observed asking specific questions to students and probing to gauge understanding. Teachers provided specific feedback to individual students		18%
	as they rotated during independent work time. QSR team observed teachers modeling what high-quality work looks like and in a few classrooms saw evidence of rubrics being used to evaluate student work.	Proficient	27%
	The QSR team scored 55% of the observations as basic or unsatisfactory in this component. The QSR team did not see evidence of using assessment in instruction beyond global checks for understanding. Teachers gave feedback to individual students such "nice work" or "good	Basic	45%
	job" instead of specifically pointing out what was done well or what could be improved. In a few classrooms there was no evidence that students knew how their work would be evaluated. Each classroom has a poster stating an academic goal based on a normed assessment but QSR team did not see evidence that students were aware of their progress.	Unsatisfactory	10%

APPENDIX I: THE CLASSROOM ENVIRONMENT OBSERVATION RUBRIC

The Classroom Environment	Unsatisfactory	Basic	Proficient	Distinguished
Creating an Environment of Respect and Rapport	Classroom interactions, both between the teacher and students and among students, are negative or inappropriate and characterized by sarcasm, putdowns, or conflict.	Classroom interactions are generally appropriate and free from conflict but may be characterized by occasional displays of insensitivity.	Classroom interactions reflect general warmth and caring, and are respectful of the cultural and developmental differences among groups of students.	Classroom interactions are highly respectful, reflecting genuine warmth and caring toward individuals. Students themselves ensure maintenance of high levels of civility among member of the class.
Establishing a Culture for Learning	The classroom does not represent a culture for learning and is characterized by low teacher commitment to the subject, low expectations for student achievement, and little student pride in work.	The classroom environment reflects only a minimal culture for learning, with only modest or inconsistent expectations for student achievement, little teacher commitment to the subject, and little student pride in work. Both teacher and students are performing at the minimal level to "get by."	The classroom environment represents a genuine culture for learning, with commitment to the subject on the part of both teacher and students, high expectations for student achievement, and student pride in work.	Students assumes much of the responsibility for establishing a culture for learning in the classroom by taking pride in their work, initiating improvements to their products, and holding the work to the highest standard. Teacher demonstrates as passionate commitment to the subject.
Managing Classroom Procedures	Classroom routines and procedures are either nonexistent or inefficient, resulting in the loss of much instruction time.	Classroom routines and procedures have been established but function unevenly or inconsistently, with some loss of instruction time.	Classroom routines and procedures have been established and function smoothly for the most part, with little loss of instruction time.	Classroom routines and procedures are seamless in their operation, and students assume considerable responsibility for their smooth functioning.

The Classroom Environment	Unsatisfactory	Basic	Proficient	Distinguished
Managing Student Behavior	Student behavior is poor, with no clear expectations, no monitoring of student behavior, and inappropriate response to student misbehavior.	Teacher makes an effort to establish standards of conduct for students, monitor student behavior, and respond to student misbehavior, but these efforts are not always successful.	Teacher is aware of student behavior, has established clear standards of conduct, and responds to student misbehavior in ways that are appropriate and respectful of the students.	Student behavior is entirely appropriate, with evidence of student participation in setting expectations and monitoring behavior. Teacher's monitoring of student behavior is subtle and preventive, and teachers' response to student misbehavior is sensitive to individual student needs.

APPENDIX II: INSTRUCTION OBSERVATION RUBRIC

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

Instruction	Unsatisfactory	Basic	Proficient	Distinguished
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.