

# QUALITATIVE SITE REVIEW REPORT

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

KIPP DC – LEAP Academy PCS (KIPP DC – LEAP PCS) serves approximately 300 students in grades pre-kindergarten-3 (PK3) through kindergarten in the multi-campus Benning Road facility in Ward 7. This campus opened in 2007. 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.

The QSR team conducted observations over the course of a two-week window, from December 1 through December 12, 2014. A team of three PCSB staff members (including PCSB’s Special Education Specialist) conducted observations of 11 classrooms. A member of the PCSB staff 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 95% of the observations as distinguished or proficient in the Classroom Environment domain. All four components scored over 90% proficient or distinguished, with two having 100% of the observations earning the top categories. Teachers had consistent routines and practices in place to ensure smooth transitions for students so minimal instructional time was lost. Student behavior was closely monitored and teachers had effective strategies in place to help students succeed in managing their own behavior.

The QSR team scored 84% of the observations as distinguished or proficient in the Instruction domain, with every classroom was proficient in Engaging Students in Learning. Across the school, students were actively engaged in learning. Teachers provided activities that had multiple correct answers (such as identifying words that started with the letter F) and by a mix of different groupings (whole group, small group and independent work).

As stated in the special education questionnaires submitted by the school, 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 to instruct and serve all students. Students with disabilities had access to related services such as speech, occupational therapy, etc., which were also observed. 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’s goals and academic achievement expectations as detailed in its charter and subsequent Accountability Plans, and the evidence that the Qualitative Site Review (QSR) team observed of the school meeting those goals during the Qualitative Site Visit.

Mission and Goals	Evidence
<p>Mission:</p> <p>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.</p>	<p>The evidence gathered during this qualitative site review shows that KIPP DC – LEAP Academy PCS (KIPP DC – LEAP PCS) is working to meet the KIPP DC mission.</p> <p><b><i>Create and sustain the highest quality school system</i></b></p> <p>KIPP DC – LEAP PCS is part of the Benning campus of schools. This school serves PK3 – K grades. Students will transition to KIPP DC – Promise PCS, which serves grades 1 through 4 then to KIPP DC – Key PCS, which serves grades 5 through 8, all in the same building.</p> <p><b><i>Develop knowledge, skills, and character</i></b></p> <p>The teachers at KIPP DC – LEAP PCS focused on providing rigorous content, creating positive interactions, and instilling a love of learning in students. Overall the course work challenged all students in both literacy and math. Students also received choice time, art classes, and center activities as noted in the daily schedule. Teachers worked with students on social and emotional skills which focused on managing their own behavior, interacting with other students, and handling difficult situations. Teachers consistently talked with students quietly about how they worked with other students to make sure they interacted in a positive way.</p> <p><b><i>Students become thoughtful, influential, and successful in the competitive world</i></b></p> <p>In most classrooms teachers encouraged students to explain their thinking and support their answers when responding to a teacher’s</p>

Mission and Goals	Evidence
	<p>questions. During read alouds teachers often asked students to identify the characters' feelings or the setting of the story and explain how they came up with that answer using clues from the book.</p>
Goals	
<p>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>The QSR team observed an evident love of learning among the students at the school. Students were highly engaged in ready activities to help them learn letter sounds, letter identification and word sounds. PK3 classrooms practiced letter sounds and identification while PK 4 and kindergarten classrooms focused on word sounds and chunking words together. During math instruction teachers incorporated vocabulary terms to introduce the students to comparing and contrasting objects in addition to using greater than and less than with numbers</p>
<p>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.</p>	<p>Students at KIPP DC – LEAP PCS are being prepared to be learners at KIPP DC – Promise PCS, their elementary school. Students were encouraged to “Grow their brains” and teachers instilled a love of learning in both the general education and resource classrooms. In every classroom the words “ALL of us WILL learn” were posted. The QSR team observed that students were excited to read on their own and interact with others during choice time and center activities.</p>
<p>Students will have high attendance rates (the school will maintain daily attendance of 93% or greater).</p>	<p>While the QSR team neither looked for nor observed any evidence related to attendance rate, most classrooms had very few empty seats.</p>
<p>Students will benefit from enrichment activities.</p>	<p>Students at the school participated in art class every other week for the entire week. The art teacher focused on a unit of on using the</p>

Mission and Goals	Evidence
	printing press during the observation window. In one class the PK4 students learned about different forms of printing presses and then were able to interact and explore with these presses at various centers. Students had access to paints, stencils, scissors, and stamps to create art projects.
Principals will create an educational program and foster a school environment that facilitates student academic and social improvement.	The QSR team did not specifically look for evidence to support this goal, but it was evident to observers that grade level teachers had time to plan together based on the similar lessons and instructional strategies used across classrooms. The kindergarten teachers were reading books on the gingerbread man and asking similar questions about the character and were also using the same chants to practice word sounds and chunking words together. Teachers used similar transition strategies and commands to manage student behavior. When students changed between classrooms (i.e., to art class) the students were aware of the expectations.
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.

<b>Mission and Goals</b>	<b>Evidence</b>
<p>The school will create an environment in which parents will support and participate in their child’s education.</p>	<p>The QSR team observed parents walking students into the school building and into class. In one class a student came in late with her father. The parent walked in and helped his daughter hang up her coat and backpack before he left. The school also has activities planned for parents. The bulletin board in the entry of the school announced that Saturday school would be at the ice rink where all PK4 and kindergarten students, along with one adult per child, would have free admission.</p> <p>Additionally posted outside of the grade level hallways were the objectives for the week and handouts for parents to help their children work on the objectives at home.</p>
<p>The school will create a safe environment in which to learn.</p>	<p>The school has created a safe environment for students to learn. A security guard greeted each visitor into the school and checked identification as individuals checked in. Teachers taught safe and orderly conduct to be demonstrated at all times – in the hallways and in the classrooms. Teachers often reminded students to transition in a safe manner. The school is also a peanut- free building to protect any students with peanut allergies.</p>
<p>Governance:</p>	<p>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.</p>

## THE CLASSROOM ENVIRONMENT<sup>1</sup>

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 95% of the observations as “distinguished” or “proficient” for the Classroom Environment domain.

The Classroom Environment	Evidence Observed	School Wide Rating	
<b>Creating an Environment of Respect and Rapport</b>	The QSR team scored 91% of the observations as proficient or distinguished in Creating an Environment of Respect and Rapport. In these observations talk between students and between teachers and students were friendly, warm, and respectful. Teachers called students by name or “friend” and offered words of encouragement to the students, such as, “Good job.”	Distinguished	9%
		Proficient	82%
	The QSR team rated less than 10% of the observations as basic and none as unsatisfactory.	Basic	9%
		Unsatisfactory	0%
<b>Establishing a Culture for Learning</b>	The QSR team scored 91% of the observations as proficient, and none as distinguished, in Establishing a Culture for Learning. Across the school teachers communicated a passion for the content they were teaching, conveyed a high expectations of learning for all students, and created cognitively busy classrooms to challenge learning. Multiple teachers used the phrase, “Grow your brains” to communicate the importance of learning.	Distinguished	0%
		Proficient	91%
	The QSR team rated less than 10% of the observations as basic and none as unsatisfactory.	Basic	9%
		Unsatisfactory	0%

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

The Classroom Environment	Evidence Observed	School Wide Rating	
<b>Managing Classroom Procedures</b>	<p>The QSR team scored 100% of the observations as proficient in Managing Classroom Procedures. Routines for transitions were in place and efficient, with little instructional time lost. Teachers used chimes, countdowns, and songs to indicate transitions to the students. The co-teaching team in each classroom also had a process in place for setting up the materials. One teacher would lead the group of students while the other instructional staff would prepare the materials in the room.</p>	Distinguished	0%
		Proficient	100%
	<p>The QSR team rated none of the observations as basic or unsatisfactory.</p>	Basic	0%
		Unsatisfactory	0%
<b>Managing Student Behavior</b>	<p>The QSR team scored 100% of the observations as proficient or distinguished in Managing Student Behavior. Standards of conduct were established in every classroom and teachers' responses to misbehavior were consistent. In many classrooms the behavior of the students was entirely appropriate. Supports were in place for all students to manage their behavior. For students with special needs, their dedicated teacher often sat on the floor with the student on their lap or right beside them.</p>	Distinguished	27%
		Proficient	73%
	<p>The QSR team rated none of the observations as basic or unsatisfactory.</p>	Basic	0%
		Unsatisfactory	0%

**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 84% of the observations as “distinguished” or “proficient” for the Instruction domain.

Instruction	Evidence Observed	School Wide Rating	
<p><b>Communicating with Students</b></p>	<p>The QSR team scored 82% of the observations as proficient or distinguished in Communicating with Students. Observers noted teachers clearly communicating the instructional purpose of lessons, helping students with areas of misunderstanding, linking learning to previous activities, and modeling tasks to the small group or entire class. In the art class the teacher let the pre-kindergarten class know that they were going to continue discussing printing presses, which the students had worked on for the past few days.</p>	Distinguished	9%
		Proficient	73%
	<p>In a few observations the teacher did not clearly state the purpose of the lesson and the students were confused on how to complete the task. In one observation the teacher had to keep clarifying the task for students during independent work.</p>	Basic	18%
		Unsatisfactory	0%
<p><b>Using Questioning/Prompts and Discussion Techniques</b></p>	<p>The QSR team scored 73% of the observations as proficient and none as distinguished in Using Questioning/Prompts and Discussion Techniques. Across all grades, teachers asked open-ended questions to allow students to explain their thinking and engage with the materials. During read alouds teachers asked students to explain how characters</p>	Distinguished	0%



Instruction	Evidence Observed	School Wide Rating	
	<p>were feeling and predict what was going to happen next by using examples from the text and explaining their thinking. In one math observation, the teacher had challenging follow up questions about colors and numbers. The students had to identify piles that were equal to, bigger than, or less than the comparison block tower.</p>	Proficient	73%
	<p>In a few observations teachers did not consistently ask questions or asked questions only requiring a yes or no answer. In one observation the teacher did not engage with students during centers. Even though she kept referring to the task as centers, it appeared to be free choice time as students played at different stations. There was no learning activity attached to the play at this time.</p>	Basic	27%
		Unsatisfactory	0%
<b>Engaging Students in Learning</b>	<p>The QSR team scored 100% of the observations as proficient in Engaging Students in Learning. Students were intellectually engaged in the learning and had choice in how they completed learning tasks. Students worked at stations to complete activities to teach letter sounds, letter identification, and writing skills. Teachers also included games to challenge students in learning. In one PK3 observation the teacher wrote different letters on the board and had students call out the correct letter and name a word that started with that letter. The students were eager to participate.</p>	Distinguished	0%
		Proficient	100%
	<p>The QSR team rated none of the observations as basic or unsatisfactory.</p>	Basic	0%
		Unsatisfactory	0%

Instruction	Evidence Observed	School Wide Rating	
Using Assessment in Instruction	The QSR team scored 82% of the observations as proficient in Using Assessment in Instruction. During small group and independent work, one teacher usually circulated the room to give specific feedback to students. When a teacher led a small group, the teacher asked specific questions to gauge the level of understanding of each student. In some observations it was evident the teacher was tracking student understanding on a clipboard.	Distinguished	0%
		Proficient	82%
	The QSR team scored a few observations as basic in this component. In these classrooms the teacher who monitored small group and independent work provided little academic feedback or guidance, instead focusing on student behavior.	Basic	18%
		Unsatisfactory	0%

**APPENDIX I: THE CLASSROOM ENVIRONMENT OBSERVATION RUBRIC**

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

**APPENDIX II: INSTRUCTION OBSERVATION RUBRIC**

<b>Instruction</b>	<b>Unsatisfactory</b>	<b>Basic</b>	<b>Proficient</b>	<b>Distinguished</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.

Instruction	Unsatisfactory	Basic	Proficient	Distinguished
<p><b>Using Assessment in Instruction</b></p>	<p>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.</p>	<p>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.</p>	<p>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.</p>	<p>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.</p>