

# QUALITATIVE SITE REVIEW REPORT

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

KIPP DC – Spring Academy PCS (KIPP DC – Spring PCS) is part of the KIPP DC PCS network. This campus opened in SY2013-14 at the Webb facility. The campus currently serves 104 students in first grade in Ward 5. The DC Public Charter School Board (PCSB) conducted a Qualitative Site Review (QSR) in November 2014 because KIPP DC is eligible to petition for 15-year Charter Renewal during the 2015-16 school year.

The QSR team conducted observations over the course of a two-week window, from November 10 through November 21, 2014. A team of one PCSB staff member and two consultants (including one special education consultant) conducted eight observations. A PCSB 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 member 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 most of the observations teachers and students had mutually respectful interactions. Students were focused on their learning and teachers maintained high expectations for behavior and work completion. There were very few instances of student misbehavior and nearly all were dealt with fairly and maintained the students' dignity. In the majority of the observations, teachers had well-established routines and guided students through transitions with little loss of instructional time.

The QSR team scored 53% of the observations as distinguished or proficient in the Instruction domain. Within the components of Communicating with Students and Using Assessment in Instruction three-fourths of the observations scored proficient or distinguished. Teachers shared learning objectives and used a variety of assessment strategies in the majority of the classrooms. In these observations students followed clearly stated directions and teachers gave student specific feedback and modeled high-quality work. However fewer than half of the observations were rated as proficient in the Using Questioning and Discussion Techniques (38%) and Engaging Students in Learning (37%) components. The rigor of the learning tasks in many classrooms was low and students did not appear engaged. In many observations, whole group instruction consisted of recall level questions posed to the whole class with little opportunity for students to participate in discussions.

The learning culture in each classroom demonstrated high expectations for all learners. Students worked together in groupings of mixed configurations: small groups with teachers, pairs for shared reading, and independently in centers. Two or more teachers assigned to each classroom helped to ensure that all students received close monitoring and individualized support as needed. Students with special needs were integrated with other students and supported in completing learning tasks assigned. A special education resource teacher assisted one student with special needs using the push-in, full inclusion model. Students used manipulatives and a variety of hands-on, developmentally appropriate

materials to build conceptual knowledge and develop skills. Close supervision and support from teachers facilitated successful outcomes for all students.

CHARTER MISSION, GOALS, AND ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENT EXPECTATIONS

This table summarizes KIPP DC – Spring Academy’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 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 – Spring PCS is working to meet the KIPP DC mission.</p> <p><b><i>Create and sustain the highest quality school system</i></b>                      KIPP DC – Spring PCS serves 104 students in grade one and has a strategic plan to expand through grade four. The physical building has ample room for the growth plan of the school.</p> <p><b><i>Develop knowledge, skills, and character</i></b>                      At KIPP DC – Spring PCS each classroom follows the same daily agenda including extended blocks dedicated to literacy and math. Teachers expected students to fully participate in all learning tasks. The QSR team observed similar lessons being taught across the four classrooms although some teachers struggled to make the content accessible to challenging students. In these instances students were observed off task and goofing off with peers.</p> <p>Teachers at KIPP DC – Spring PCS modeled positive character traits and treated students respectfully in all circumstances. Classroom rules reinforced positive behavior and good character. Students were reminded to “be kind and helpful to friends” and many teachers narrated students who demonstrated this character trait. Students were observed giving “shine”, a silent hand motion, to fellow students who needed encouragement and to those who demonstrated the KIPP values of love, team, grow and joy. Teachers often took teachable moments to reinforce these character values.</p>

Mission and Goals	Evidence
	<p><b><i>Students become thoughtful, influential, and successful citizens in the competitive world</i></b></p> <p>Teachers helped students understand that hard work and using their brains is important to future success. Each classroom had a college theme and teachers reminded students that they grow their brains to be successful in the next stages of their lives. Students were asked to answer questions in complete sentences and applauded for explaining information thoroughly. Teachers allowed students opportunities to influence their classroom environment by actively participating in learning tasks and transitions. In a few observations the team saw teachers guide students to approach problems in different ways and in some instances explain to classmates what they did.</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 small group instruction in most classrooms including guided reading in literacy and small group work in math. Each classroom has a data board with updated student data to show which students were making progress toward grade-level proficiency. In most observations, students were held accountable for completing their work and most teachers appeared to believe that all students can be successful. Each classroom had a leveled reading library and in two classrooms students demonstrated that they were aware of their reading levels. A variety of techniques were given to students to help them be successful learners such as: sounding out words by themselves or using chunk words. The master schedule dedicates extended blocks for both math and literacy instruction and includes a daily writing workshop.</p> <p>Leadership at the school shared that students complete exit tickets daily to track progress but the team did not observe this in any classroom.</p>

Mission and Goals	Evidence
<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 are encouraged to do their best. Signs reading, “This is important, You can do it, We believe in you!” hung in most classrooms and teachers reminded students that hard work can help you succeed. Teachers were also observed leading discussions on focus and commitment and positively narrated students demonstrating these traits. Students are reminded to work together to solve problems, clean up, and “get things done.” Each classroom had a sign with students’ high-school graduation year and a college theme was observed throughout the school.</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>While the QSR team neither looked for nor observed any evidence related to enrichment activities offered outside of the school day nor schedules that would have shown whether or not targeted students were offered academic enrichment.</p>
<p>Principals will create an educational program and foster a school environment that facilitates student academic and social improvement.</p>	<p>The QSR team did not look for or observe any evidence related to this goal.</p>
<p>The Principal will ensure the fiscal and physical sustainability of the school.</p>	<p>While the QSR team neither looked for nor observed any explicit evidence related to this goal. Observers noticed that there are expansion areas available for anticipated grade-level additions.</p>

Mission and Goals	Evidence
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, observers noted that there was a KIPP Parent Organization bulletin board in the main hallway of the school highlighting upcoming events and the school calendar. A few classrooms had parent boards and newsletters posted in the hallway. The QSR team only observed parents during morning drop-off and did not see any parent volunteers in classrooms.
The school will create a safe environment in which to learn.	Security guards greeted each visitor at the main door, maintained a visitor log, and monitored hallways. The school was welcoming and orderly with students and staff maintaining quiet and safe hallways. Expectations for student behavior were posted in the classrooms. Staff members reminded students what it looks like to have a “safe body” and adults accompanied students in the hallways.
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

Mission and Goals	Evidence
	focused on a discipline report, a finance committee report, a management report, a school performance report, and a real estate update.

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 72% of the observations as “distinguished” or “proficient” for the Classroom Environment domain.

The Classroom Environment	Evidence Observed	School Wide Rating	
Creating an Environment of Respect and Rapport	The QSR team rated 75% of the observations as proficient and none as distinguished in the component of Creating an Environment of Respect and Rapport. Teachers and students interacted with mutual respect and demonstrated caring in all interactions. Teachers greeted students by name and referred to students as “friends.” Students gave each other “shine” as a silent symbol of support and encouragement. In one observation a student moved over so another student could join the class on the carpet without being asked. In another observation the teacher called on students to recognize the “friends who are with the team” and to state what the student was doing correctly. KIPP values charts (love, team, grow, joy) are posted in the classrooms.	Distinguished	0%
		Proficient	75%
	The QSR team scored 25% of the observations as basic and none as unsatisfactory. Students responded disrespectfully to each other at times: laughing at a student who made a mistake, laughing at a student who fell out of a chair, and writing on each others dry erase boards during instruction. In one observation, the students were continuously talking while the teacher gave directions. It should be noted that in these observations the observers noted that teachers maintained respectful interactions with students and reminded students to respect each other, despite having limited success.	Basic	25%
		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	
Establishing a Culture for Learning	The QSR team rated 88% of the observations as distinguished or proficient in the component of Establishing a Culture for Learning. Teachers in these classrooms demonstrated high regard for student ability. More than once teachers gave high-fives to students who persisted in solving problems. Teachers encouraged students to work hard with comments such as, “we only grow our brains if we work hard”, “remember this is important,” and “I see so many friends working hard and getting ready for second grade.” In one observation, the teacher showed that she had confidence in every student’s ability to learn and was not satisfied until every student understood the subject using different strategies to challenge each student. Each classroom had a sign that read, “this is important, you can do it, we believe in you.”	Distinguished	25%
		Proficient	63%
	Only 12% of the observations were rated as basic in this component and none as unsatisfactory. In one observation, the teacher had low energy for the work as she prompted students to complete tasks and in another observation students had their heads down and were not encouraged to participate.	Basic	12%
		Unsatisfactory	0%
Managing Classroom Procedures	The QSR team rated 63% of the observations as proficient and none as distinguished in the component of Managing Classroom Procedures. In these classrooms there were clear procedures and routines in place that students were comfortable following. Teachers used signals such as echo clapping or 3-2-1 to begin and end transitions. In one classroom all 25 students moved from the carpet to small groups safely in 12 seconds. Structures were in place to put away materials before moving to new groups. There was little to no loss of instructional time in these classrooms.	Distinguished	0%
		Proficient	63%

The Classroom Environment	Evidence Observed	School Wide Rating	
	<p>The QSR team rated 37% of the observations basic and none unsatisfactory. They noted that transition procedures were in place but routines functioned with little success. For instance only one student correctly retrieved math books for his table while the rest of the class goofed off. In one classroom, it took the class seven minutes to move from the carpet to small groups and once in groups students were only partially engaged.</p>	Basic	37%
		Unsatisfactory	0%
Managing Student Behavior	<p>The QSR team rated 63% of the observations as distinguished or proficient in Managing Student Behavior. In these observations, behavior was almost always appropriate. Teachers used attention getting techniques and positive narration to manage classrooms. Using proximity and quick glances most teachers were able to quickly redirect or prevent any off task behavior. Students were aware of behavior expectations and responded positively. In one instance, a teacher asked a student if he was “working hard” and after responding “no” the student immediately corrected his off task behavior. In another classroom, the teacher held the hand of a student who struggled to pay attention in a supportive and non-embarrassing way and encouraged him by saying “I love your low-voice but make sure your body is on the carpet.”</p>	Distinguished	13%
		Proficient	50%
	<p>The QSR team rated 37% of the observations as basic and none as unsatisfactory. In one classroom, students were repeatedly given cues to lower voices but the class did not respond and there was no follow through from teacher. Students were seen rolling around on the floor with chairs to be funny and students not involved in a group rolled a ball back and forth with no teacher intervention or redirection.</p>	Basic	37%
		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 just over half, 53%, of observations as “distinguished” or “proficient” for the Instruction domain.

Instruction	Evidence Observed	School Wide Rating	
Communicating with Students	The QSR team rated 75% of the observations as proficient and none as distinguished in the component of Communicating with Students. Teachers in these observations had error-free presentation of content, directions and procedures. In several observations teachers stated the purpose for the lesson and student engagement indicated they knew exactly what to do. In many observations, teachers modeled the process to be followed in completing a learning task, as in a math classroom where the teacher had students watch as she completed problems using manipulates before practicing in pairs and then on their own.	Distinguished	0%
		Proficient	75%
	In a quarter of the observations rated basic, teachers attempted to explain the instructional purpose with limited success or did not clearly state the purpose of the lesson. In a few instances, students were confused after directions were given and in one group lesson no additional help was given and students remained off-task.	Basic	25%
		Unsatisfactory	0%
Using Questioning/Prompts and Discussion Techniques	The QSR team rated just 38% of the observations as proficient and none as distinguished in in the component of Using Questioning/Prompts and Discussion Techniques. In these observations teachers were patient with students as they formulated thoughts giving wait time as needed. Teachers challenged students with open-ended questions and every student had the opportunity to participate. Additionally the teachers built on student responses to ask follow-up questions.	Distinguished	0%
		Proficient	38%

Instruction	Evidence Observed	School Wide Rating	
	<p>The QSR team scored 37% of the observations as basic and 25% as unsatisfactory. In these observations there was no discussion among students and the majority of interactions were questions posed by teachers with single correct answers and no explanation of students' reasoning. When the team observed the discussion in these observations, it was focused heavily on following procedures. In one math lesson the teacher asked open-ended questions but when students failed to get the first-step the teacher completed the problem herself.</p>	Basic	37%
		Unsatisfactory	25%
Engaging Students in Learning	<p>The QSR team rated just 37% of the observations as proficient and none as distinguished in the component of Engaging Students in Learning. In these observations the students needed very few reminders to stay focused on their learning and had the materials and resources they needed to complete the learning tasks. Students demonstrated engagement through productive work on learning tasks, or by asking academically focused questions. In one observation students worked in teacher-assigned centers with some students grouped with the teacher, some on computers, and the rest in various small groups. Following a mini lesson on non-fiction books in a reading class, students quickly moved to their seats to read a leveled non-fiction reader independently before sharing facts. In both instances students demonstrated engagement through lively conversations about the content.</p>	Distinguished	0%
		Proficient	37%
		Basic	63%

Instruction	Evidence Observed	School Wide Rating	
	<p>Over half of the observations were basic (63%) and none were unsatisfactory in Engaging Students in Learning. In many of the observations, all of the students worked on the same task with little evidence of differentiated learning or student choice. Some students did not appear to be challenged by the work. In one observation students practiced adding and subtracting using tens sticks in a whole group setting but did not have access to these materials when they went back to their seats for small groups. In this observation only two out of five groups remained focused.</p>	Unsatisfactory	0%
Using Assessment in Instruction	<p>The QSR team rated 76% of the observations as proficient or distinguished in the component of Using Assessment in Instruction. Teachers in these classrooms continually elicited feedback to gauge student understanding and made frequent adjustments to lessons as needed. In a few observations teachers gave students opportunities to assess their own learning. In one observation students sat in a semi-circle and were asked to “draw how you know the answer” to a word problem. As students struggled the teacher adjusted her conversation with each student and provided opportunities for students to make improvements to their work. In another observation students completed math problems on white boards and held up answer for teacher. The teacher then used their answers to create small groups and rotated to address misconceptions. Data walls with reading levels were posted in most classrooms.</p>	Distinguished	13%
		Proficient	63%
	<p>In this component the QSR team rated 25% of the observations as basic and 13% as unsatisfactory. Some teachers used global checks for understanding but did not follow-up with students who did not understand.</p>	Basic	25%

Instruction	Evidence Observed	School Wide Rating	
	<p>In some observations teachers did not make any effort to determine what students understood. In these observations the teachers did not give any indication of what high-quality work looked like. In one instance the teacher told the class she had worksheets for them once they finished their work but she never checked to ensure that work was correct or done before handing out more work sheets and walking away.</p>	Unsatisfactory	13%

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 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.
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 many 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.
Using Assessment in Instruction	Students are unaware of criteria and performance standards by which their work will be evaluated, and do not	Students know some of the criteria and performance standards by which their work will be evaluated,	Students are fully aware of the criteria and performance standards by which their work will be	Students are fully aware of the criteria and standards by which their work will be evaluated, have

Instruction	Unsatisfactory	Basic	Proficient	Distinguished
	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.	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.	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.	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.