

January 24, 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 to gather and document authentic evidence to support the oversight of PCSB schools. According to the School Reform Act § 38-1802.11, PCSB shall monitor the progress of each school in meeting student academic achievement expectations specified in the charter granted to such school. Your school was selected to undergo a Qualitative Site Review during the 2012-13 school year for the following reason(s):

o School designated as Focus/Priority by Office of the State Superintendent

Qualitative Site Review Report

On November 28 and December 5, 2012, a Qualitative Site Review team conducted on-site reviews of KIPP DC PCS – Promise Academy. 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, a parent event, and conducted focus groups with a random selection of students, a group of teachers, and your administrators.

Enclosed is the team's report. You will find that the Qualitative Site Review Report is focused primarily on the following areas: mission/goals of the school's charter, classroom environments, instructional delivery, meeting the needs of all learners, professional development, and school climate.

We appreciate the assistance and hospitality that you and your staff gave the monitoring team in conducting the Qualitative Site Review at KIPP DC PCS – Promise Academy. Thank you for your continued cooperation as the PCSB makes every effort to ensure that KIPP DC PCS is in compliance with its charter.

Sincerely,

Scott Pearson
Executive Director

Enclosures

cc: School Leader

CHARTER GOALS

This table summarizes the goals that KIPP DC PCS contracted to in its charter and the evidence that the Qualitative Site Review ("QSR") team observed of the school meeting the goal during the Qualitative Site Visit. These goals are what the school indicated that it should be held accountable to.

Goal as Identified by the School	Evidence
Students will demonstrate academic proficiency at a performance level that makes students competitive for outstanding public or private secondary schools of their choice.	Classroom observations verified a consistent building-wide focus on academic achievement. During focus group discussions with the QSR team, teachers and administrators emphasized and provided specific examples of the use of data to inform instruction. In discussion with the QSR team during a focus group, teachers described procedures that they used to receive immediate feedback from students in order to modify instruction or to provide additional support as needed.
	The team saw teachers providing frequent feedback to students to support their academic progress. Students reported that they know how they are doing in school and what they are learning when they are able to understand and complete assignments independently. Students also indicated that they are aware of their progress through both report cards and progress reports.
Percentage of students who reach grade level proficiency according to independent	In multiple classrooms, observers saw small group work in literacy instruction and
reading inventories.	leveled readers in classroom libraries. Teacher and administrator focus groups
80% of our students will grow 3 or more levels on the STEP reading assessment.	revealed a consistent focus on data-driven instruction. Administrators also cited the instructional coach's work with teachers as a factor in the school's success in literacy instruction.
80% of our students will meet or exceed the grade level benchmark on the STEP reading assessment.	
The school will cultivate an environment in which parents will support and participate in their child's education.	The focus group participants described various ways in which parents are partners in students' education, including Parent-Teacher Conferences, Open Houses, and Backto-School nights. Students also mentioned that their parents receive frequent calls, both positive and negative, from teachers. A QSR team member attended the parent-teacher conference day, which had materials to help parents participate in their children's education, including information explaining how to read the child's report card. During the conference day, many parents greeted the principal, and the principal greeted the parents by name.

Goal as Identified by the School	Evidence
Instructional Culture Index from The New Teacher Project (TNTP)	The QSR team did not review actual data from the TNTP so were unable to speak to progress against this particular metric.
	Teachers and administrators described an extensive array of support systems that are in place to help them meet students' needs and their professional goals. They gave several examples of professional development opportunities, including external opportunities, such as the KIPP National Conference, and collaborative time with grade level teams and an administrator. Teachers expressed positive reactions to their participation in curriculum development, with many of them playing a significant role in writing and revising the curriculum. During the administrators' debriefing, a representative from the LEA reported that Principal Fullerton's Instructional Culture Index was one of the highest recorded scores among schools in DC that are using the index.
	Representatives from the LEA reported a 70% retention rate for teachers with many of those in the 30% being teachers who have moved into leadership positions and the Capital Teaching Fellows program, which intentionally places participants outside the school. Administrators also described a consistent focus on efforts to create a work life balance for teachers, including flexibility in scheduling when possible.
The school will maintain an average daily attendance rate of 93% or higher.	The QSR team found that most classrooms were full and contained few empty seats. According to classroom attendance charts and flags posted in hallways, student attendance levels are consistently high. During focus group discussions, teachers and administrators confirmed the QSR team's observations of the number of students.

SCHOOL MISSION

This rubric summarizes the school's performance on aligning its operations with the mission and goals of its charter.

School Mission	Limited	Satisfactory	Proficient	Exemplary
The school's mission and educational goals as	Limited observations of day to day observations as aligned with	Day to day operations and activities as aligned with mission and		Day to day operations and activities as aligned with the mission and
articulated in the charter	mission and educational goals by any school stakeholders.	_	educational goals are demonstrated by nearly all staff members.	_
The Board and school administrators govern and manage in a manner consistent with the school's design and mission.		demonstrate an adequate understanding of the school's design. There is evidence that	of the school's design. There is evidence that understanding of the design is used to effectively manage and govern the school.	All key administrators and Board members demonstrate an excellent understanding of the school's design. There is significant evidence that understanding of the design is used to effectively manage and govern the school.
and instruction are aligned with the school's mission	School curriculum and instruction are not aligned with the mission and educational goals and/or are utilized in limited/no classrooms.	School curriculum and instruction are aligned with the mission and educational goals and are utilized in some classrooms.	are aligned with the mission and educational goals and are utilized	School curriculum and instruction are aligned with the mission and educational goals and are utilized in all classrooms.
meeting the educational	The school demonstrates limited evidence of progress towards monitoring and making progress towards few of the goals of its charter.	The school demonstrates adequate evidence of progress towards monitoring and making progress towards some of the goals of its charter.	monitoring and making progress towards most of the goals of its	The school demonstrates exemplary evidence of progress towards monitoring and making progress towards all of the goals of its charter.

School Mission Summary

According to the charter application, the mission of KIPP DC PCS - Promise Academy 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. This is what PCSB staff and consultants looked for when visiting the classrooms, attending a parent meeting, and conducting the focus groups. Please note that PCSB staff was not able to attend a board meeting prior to the completion of this report.

Evidence collected during the scheduled and unscheduled visits to KIPP DC PCS - Promise Academy reflected alignment between the actual operation of the school and its stated mission and goals. The team observed a mission-specific focus on the preparation of students for present and future success in the school's curriculum and instructional programs. Observers noted that classrooms in general focused intensely on students' time on task, maximizing instructional time by having tight and well-established classroom routines. Observers noted that the principal has a comprehensive organizational and management structure; the principal delegates responsibility to other administrators to support the efficient operation of the school. During focus groups, administrators, teachers, and students were able to articulate specific ways in which the school implements and advances student achievement. During the student focus group, students described support from teachers in order to help them learn when they are "stuck." Students also described frequent feedback from their teachers during the student focus group. The teacher focus group described, and QSR team members observed, small group instruction that allowed for differentiation, to teach to students' academic needs and abilities. During the administrative focus group, school leaders described how staff members have individual conversations with students and families around students' academic progress and how to help them advance.

CLASSROOM ENVIRONMENTS

This rubric summarizes the school's performance on the Classroom Environments elements of the rubric during the scheduled and unscheduled visits.

Class Environment	Limited	Satisfactory	Proficient	Exemplary
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.
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.

Class Environment	Limited	Satisfactory	Proficient	Exemplary
Organizing Physical Space	Teacher makes poor use of the physical environment, resulting in unsafe or inaccessible conditions for some students or a serious mismatch between the furniture arrangement and the lesson activities.	Teacher's classroom is safe, and essential learning is accessible to all students, but the furniture arrangement only partially supports the learning activities.	Teacher's classroom is safe, and learning is accessible to all students; teacher uses physical resources well and ensures that the arrangement of furniture supports the learning activities.	Teacher's classroom is safe, and students contribute to ensuring that the physical environment supports the learning of all students.

Classroom Environments Summary

Approximately 80% of all classrooms observed scored proficient or exemplary on elements of the Classroom Environment Rubric, which includes five elements: Environment of Respect, Culture of Learning, Managing Classroom Procedures, Managing Student Behavior, and Organization of Physical Space.

The team observed a strong environment of respect among teachers and students. The team noted a few classrooms that were inconsistent with this generally strong trend: in one classroom, students required excessive reminders to remain on task, and in two classrooms, students exhibited disrespectful behavior.

The team noted that posted rules, values, charts, and student work, along with high expectations for student success, supported a genuine culture of learning across classrooms.

In most classrooms, there were established classroom procedures, in conjunction with verbal and nonverbal cues such as hand signals, clapping and chants.

The observers noted efficient management of student behavior through many examples of positive reinforcement, redirection of student behavior, and close monitoring of students, with a few exceptions in which observers noted constant "teacher talk" and multiple warnings without consequences.

In general, the team documented safe, well-equipped classrooms with abundant resources and libraries that were appropriate to student and instructional needs. The team observed that one small classroom appeared to limit teacher mobility in student monitoring. The room arrangement and large furniture were barriers to clear pathways in the classroom.

INSTRUCTIONAL DELIVERY

This rubric summarizes the school's performance on the Instructional Delivery elements of the rubric during the scheduled and unscheduled visits.

Instructional Delivery	Limited	Satisfactory	Proficient	Exemplary
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.

Instructional Delivery	Limited	Satisfactory	Proficient	Exemplary
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.
Demonstrating Flexibility and Responsiveness	Teacher adheres to the instruction plan in spite of evidence of poor student understanding or of students' lack of interest, and fails to respond to students' questions; teacher assumes no responsibility for students' failure.	Teacher demonstrates moderate flexibility and responsiveness to students' needs and interests, and seeks to ensure success of all students.	Teacher seeks ways to ensure successful learning for all students, making adjustments as needed to instruction plans and responding to student interest and questions.	Teacher is highly responsive to students' interests and questions, making major lesson adjustments if necessary, and persists in ensuring the success of all students.

Instructional Delivery Summary

Approximately 80% of classrooms were proficient or exemplary in areas of Instructional Delivery: Communicating with Students, Using Questioning and Discussion Techniques, Engaging Students in Learning, Using Assessment in Instruction, and Demonstrating Flexibility.

The team noted high expectations for learning, clear statements of purpose by the teachers, and step-by-step procedures as indicators of effective communication between students and teachers across multiple classrooms.

In many classrooms, the team reported the use of "why" questions, prompts for critical thinking and student discussions as examples of effective questioning and discussion. The team did note some areas of focus, including use of single path inquiry, single answer questions, and questions

that asked for recall rather than higher-order thinking.

Some classrooms used kinesthetic, visual and oral strategies, technology, including Promethean boards and computers, and differentiation to engage students. In some classrooms, the team observed slow pacing and lack of sufficient wait time.

The team cited immediate feedback, proximity, effective praise, self/peer assessment, and the use of exit tickets as examples of observed teacher application of assessment in ongoing instruction. In some cases, the team noted limited levels of self-regulation and frequent one-answer responses by students in unison.

There was flexibility in instructional delivery during observations, including one-to-one assistance, teacher persistence in helping students understand tasks, scaffolding, and re-teaching as needed. The team reported finding a few classrooms where instruction did not appear to be related to student interest and one teacher who was not responsive to the level of student engagement.

MEETING THE NEEDS OF ALL LEARNERS

This rubric summarizes the school's performance on the elements of the rubric related to meeting the needs of all learners.

All Learners' Needs	Limited	Satisfactory	Proficient	Exemplary
The school	The school has implemented a	The school has implemented	The school has implemented special	The school has implemented
has strategies	limited number of programs to help	programs and provided adequate	programs and provided significant	research- based and/or special
in place to	students who are struggling	resources to help students who are	resources to help students who are	programs and provided a full
meet the	academically to meet school goals.	struggling academically to meet	struggling academically to meet	complement of resources to help
needs of students at	Resources for such programs are marginal; or the programs	school goals. Based on individual needs, student participation is	school goals. Based on individual needs, student participation is	students who are struggling academically to meet school goals.
risk of	experience low participation given	moderate.	moderate to high.	Based on individual needs, student
academic	the students' needs.	moderate.	moderate to high.	participation is high.
failure.	in students noods.			parotiparon is ingin
The school	The school has a program in place	The school has a program in place to	The school has a successful program	The school has a successful
has strategies	to meet the needs of English	meet the needs of English Language	in place to meet the needs of English	program(s) in place to meet the
in place to	Language Learners who enroll at	Learners who enroll at the school.	Language Learners who enroll at the	needs of any English Language
meet the	the school. In order to comply with	The services are in keeping with	school. The services are in keeping	Learners who enroll at the school.
needs of	federal regulations, however, the	federal regulations, which include	with federal standards for sufficient	The services are in keeping with,
English	program could benefit from	sufficient staffing with requisite	staffing with requisite training,	and in some ways, exceed federal
Language Learners	increased staffing, improved staff qualifications and/or additional	training and resources.	qualifications and resources.	standards for staffing with requisite training, qualifications and
("ELLs").	resources.			resources.

Meeting the Needs of All Learners Summary

Through observations and discussions with teachers and administrators, the QSR team documented specific strategies to address the diverse needs of students. Teachers reported that data-driven decision-making and differentiation were the primary approaches to meeting students' varying abilities and learning styles. During the teacher focus group, one teacher reported the use of strategic placement of student desks during independent practice to facilitate monitoring and response to students in need of assistance. The team also noted, through classroom observations and focus group discussion, collaboration between special and general education teachers in classrooms to support students with special needs. Teachers also used a combination of "pull out" and "push in" models to address student need. During the teacher focus group, teachers emphasized a high level of planning focused on data-based adjustments across the grade level to modify or expand opportunities for student learning.

There are currently no English Language Learners ("ELL assessed.	s'') enrolled at the school, thus the school's per	formance on this criterion was not
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PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

This rubric summarizes the school's performance on the Professional Development elements of the rubric during the scheduled and unscheduled classroom observations and as discussed during the focus groups with administrators, faculty, and staff.

Professional Development	Limited	Satisfactory	Proficient	Exemplary
Time is made available throughout the year.	The school offers very few professional development days throughout the school year, and teachers indicate that they do not have enough time for ongoing professional development and planning.	The school offers several professional development activities throughout the school year, although teachers indicate they could use more time for planning.	The school day and the annual calendar reflect a strong focus on professional development and planning. Most teachers agree that they are given sufficient time for professional development and planning.	The school day and the annual calendar reflect a high priority given to professional development and planning. All teachers agree that they are given sufficient time for a variety of professional development opportunities and planning.
Extra support is in place for novice teachers.	The school offers limited formal or informal support and guidance for novice teachers. These teachers do not think that the support is adequate.	The school offers formal or informal support and guidance to novice teachers. These teachers think that the support is adequate.	The school has implemented a support system that is effective in meeting the needs of novice teachers.	The school has implemented a highly structured support system that is highly effective in meeting the needs of novice teachers.

Professional Development Summary

Teachers and administrators provided the QSR team with extensive evidence of alignment between the goals of the instructional program and the professional development of teachers. Focus groups also cited consistent professional development opportunities and high levels of teacher participation. The administrative team identified comprehensive and diverse professional development opportunities, including: Reading/Writing Workshops through Columbia University; KIPP's national training opportunities; training on the integration of Common Core State Standards; ongoing teacher development through the University of Chicago; teacher visits to Schools of Excellence; Data Days and presentations; and support provided by the instructional coaches. Teachers provided the team with descriptions of individual development plans and general opportunities for professional learning that focused on collaboration with grade-level team members as well as continuing development in content-specific pedagogy. One novice teacher noted that in addition to the ongoing professional development he receives, an administrator serves as a mentor to him. During the focus group discussions, students talked about the fun activities and new strategies for learning that their teachers share with them following their visits to Schools of Excellence.

SCHOOL CLIMATE

This rubric summarizes the school's performance on the School Climate elements of the rubric during the scheduled and unscheduled classroom observations and as discussed during the focus groups with students, faculty, and staff.

School Climate	Limited	Satisfactory	Proficient	Exemplary
The school is	The school's discipline policies and	The school's discipline policies and	The school's discipline policies and	The school's discipline policies and
a safe and	practices are not well-articulated or	practices are adequately articulated	practices are clearly articulated and	practices are clearly articulated and
orderly	understood by most of the staff,	and understood by the	understood by the administration,	understood by the administration,
learning	students and parents. Such policies	administration and by most of the	staff, students and parents. Such	staff, students and parents. Such
environment.	and practices are partially	staff, students and parents. Such	policies and practices are	policies and practices are fully
	implemented due to the lack of	policies and practices may not be	consistently implemented, providing	implemented by students and staff,
	clarity or understanding and, as a	fully implemented, due to a lack of	for a safe and orderly learning	providing for a consistently safe
	result, the learning environment	clarity or understanding. The	environment.	and orderly learning environment.
	provides limited safety and order.	learning environment, however, is		
		relatively safe and orderly.		

School Climate Summary

The QSR team consistently observed an orderly, safe, student-centered environment with high expectations for student achievement, collaborative relationships between teachers and administrators, respectful interactions between teachers and students, and implementation of policies and procedures to support purposeful teaching and learning. Discipline policies and behavioral expectations were visible and implemented with fidelity in most of the classrooms visited by the team. The bright and colorful walls and hallways of the state-of-the-art facility reflected ongoing instruction. Public displays included student work, college banners, and affirmations such as, "This work is important" and, "You can do it!" According to teachers and students, parents are highly satisfied with the school and participate regularly in academic and social activities in support of the school's mission. Focus groups reported specific examples of parent involvement such as parent participation in Back to School Nights, conferences, and the KIPP Parent Organization. The PCSB staff visit to a scheduled Parent Conference Day confirmed high parental attendance and participation. The school principal noted that the vast majority of parents participated in parent conference days, mostly on the day itself or on a different day scheduled by the teacher. The PCSB staff member noted that almost all time slots on sign-up sheets outside of rooms were filled with appointments for parents to meet with teachers during Parent Conference Day, and that classrooms were filled throughout the morning with parents meeting with teachers. The principal indicated that flexibility in scheduling and follow-up by teachers were factors in meeting the parent involvement goal. Seven of eight students interviewed by the team indicated that they had been enrolled at the school for three or more years.