



July 20, 2016

Jane Dimyan-Ehrenfeld, Board Chair
Maya Angelou Public Charter School – Young Adult Learning Center
5600 East Capitol Street, NE
Washington, DC 20019

Dear Ms. Dimyan-Ehrenfeld:

The DC Public Charter School Board (DC PCSB) conducts Qualitative Site Reviews to gather and document evidence to support school oversight. According to the School Reform Act § 38-1802.11, DC PCSB shall monitor the progress of each school in meeting the goals and student academic achievement expectations specified in the school's charter. Your school was selected to undergo a Qualitative Site Review during the 2015-16 school year for the following reason:

- DC PCSB rated the school as Tier 3 on the 2014-15 Performance Management Framework

Qualitative Site Review Report

A Qualitative Site Review team conducted on-site reviews of Maya Angelou PCS – Young Adult Learning Center between May 9 and May 20, 2016. Enclosed is the team's report. You will find that the Qualitative Site Review Report focuses primarily on the following areas: charter mission and goals, classroom environment, and instructional delivery.

We appreciate the assistance and hospitality that you and your staff gave the monitoring team in conducting the Qualitative Site Review at Maya Angelou PCS – Young Adult Learning Center.

Sincerely,


Naomi DeVeaux
Deputy Director

Enclosures
cc: Heather Wathington, School Leader

Qualitative Site Review Report

Date: July 20, 2016

Campus Name: Maya Angelou Public Charter School – Young Adult Learning Center

Ward: 7

Grade levels: Adult Education

Total Enrollment: 136

English Language Learners enrollment: 1

Students with Disabilities enrollment: 41

Reason for visit: DC PCSB rated the school as Tier 3 on the 2014-15 Performance Management Framework

Number of observations: 11

Summary

Maya Angelou Public Charter School – Young Adult Learning Center’s (Maya Angelou PCS – YALC’s) mission is “to create learning communities in lower income urban areas where all students, particularly those who have not succeeded in traditional school settings, can grow academically and socially.” Maya Angelou PCS – YALC offers a variety of classes including General Education Development (GED) courses, construction career training courses, and social-emotional courses. The Qualitative Site Review (QSR) team observed many of these course offerings during the two-week window.

During the two-week window, the QSR team used the Charlotte Danielson Framework for Teaching to examine classroom environments and instructional delivery (see Appendix I). The QSR team scored 95% of observations as distinguished or proficient in the Classroom Environment domain. The Creating an Environment of Respect and Rapport component was particularly strong with 100% of the observations receiving a distinguished or proficient rating. Teachers showed care for their students and asked about students’ lives outside of school.

The QSR team scored 70% of observations as proficient in the Instruction domain. In the components of Engaging Students in Learning and Using Assessment in Instruction, the QSR team scored 80% of the observations as proficient. Observers saw many teachers engage students in meaningful activities tied to the lesson objective and give students feedback. However, observers also saw teachers make content errors and students not grasping the materials, resulting in over a third of the observations scoring below proficient in the Communicating with Students component.

Summary of Instruction for Students with Disabilities

Prior to the two-week window, Maya Angelou PCS – YALC provided answers to specific questions posed by the DC Public Charter School Board (DC PCSB) regarding the provision of instruction to students with disabilities in the Special Education Questionnaire. Responses indicated that general education teachers work with the special education teachers or case managers to review accommodations for each student based on their individual education plan (IEP), discuss modifications, and agree on delivery of instruction. Also noted that the school differentiates instruction by modifying learning

content, processes, and products determining what students will learn and when and that general education teachers would have access to content specific workbooks, textbooks, and computers for online resources (e.g., Achieve 3000), which could be used to support them in accommodating students with diverse learning needs.

The QSR team member who conducted the special education-specific observations had an opportunity to visit one push-in, co-taught class as well as a one-on-one (student to teacher ratio) full pull-out session that focused on postsecondary transition. In the co-taught class, teachers provided services using a push-in model and the One Teacher/One Support model. During the co-teaching observation, the special educator provided direct whole-group instruction while the general educator observed the majority of the lesson. One special educator conducted the one-on-one full pull-out session with a case manager from DC's Rehabilitation Services Administration and an additional educator. The three adults in the classroom collaborated to address postsecondary transition skills such as transportation and employment. Although the special educator facilitated the lesson, the two additional adults provided additional resources and supports.

Overall, teachers did not consistently differentiate lessons. Some teachers repeated directions and information, checked for understanding, and used graphic organizers. The QSR team member did not see teachers use of textbooks, workbooks, or online resources during the observations which were mentioned in the answers to the questionnaire.

CHARTER MISSION, GOALS, AND ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENT EXPECTATIONS

This table summarizes the school’s goals and academic achievement expectations as detailed in its charter and subsequent Accountability Plans alongside 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>To create learning communities in lower income urban areas where all students, particularly those who have not succeeded in traditional school settings, can grow academically and socially. At Maya Angelou PCS our students develop the academic, social, and employment skills that they need to build rewarding lives and promote positive change in their communities.</p>	<p>The QSR team saw evidence of the school meeting its mission.</p> <p><i>Academic Skills</i> As further discussed in the Instruction domain, the QSR team observed students actively engaged in learning and teachers delivering lessons connected to the GED exam in the majority of observations, however, observers also saw some content errors or only asked students basic recall questions.</p> <p><i>Social Skills</i> The school offers enrichment sessions on Fridays where students engage with programs such as “So Fly”, a group where female students can discuss women’s issues relating to their lives. A QSR team member saw a skill of the week posted in the hallway; however, the team did not hear any reference made to the skill of the week during classroom observations. Another QSR team member observed teachers and students discussing how best to transition into postsecondary education.</p> <p><i>Employment Skills</i> The school has a partnership with DC’s Department of Public Works (DPW) where students have a paid internship with DPW and attend classes at Maya Angelou PCS – YALC. Several students participated in this program transition between their morning internship and afternoon classes at the school. Additionally, QSR team members</p>

Mission and Goals	Evidence
	observed students in construction training classes during which students built large wooden planters in a nearby community garden.
Goals:	
50% of pre- and post- testing students will make one or more EFL gain by the end of the program year. ¹	The QSR team observed sound instruction in the majority of observations. Teachers engaged students in learning using open-ended questions and technology including video clips. In a few observations teachers did not attempt to engage students who did not actively participate in the lesson or gave incorrect explanations of the content. A bulletin board in the hallway highlighted students who have moved up Lexile reading levels.
65% of students will pass the official GED exam.	
50% of students exiting a workforce program will attain the relevant credential.	The QSR team observed Home Builder’s Institute (HBI) construction classes. Students in these classes took charge of their learning and often completed tasks using construction tools independently needing little direction from the teacher. In one observation students worked in pairs measuring, cutting, and assembling large wood planks into planter boxes for a community garden. Students completed the tasks successfully with minimal intervention from the teacher.
70% of students successfully attaining a GED or workforce credential and exiting the program will enter the workforce or enter into post-secondary education.	See the evidence noted above.

¹ This chart contains qualitative evidence related to the school’s goals. DC PCSB will review quantitative data to determine if the school met the goals for future review or renewal reports.

Mission and Goals	Evidence
65% In-seat Attendance	The QSR team noted five to eight students per classroom. Two to three students entered late in a many observations. Teachers made references to students being absent the day before or when a topic was first covered in the class. The QSR team observed a bulletin board showing attendance goals by month and celebrating students with perfect attendance.
60% retention rate of students that pre- and post-test.	As further detailed in The Classroom Environment domain, the QSR team saw a positive school culture on the whole. Students interacted respectfully with their peers, and teachers encouraged students to try their best and work hard in almost all observations.
Governance:	On July 7, 2016, Maya Angelou PCS submitted a memo to DC PCSB saying that the board did not meet between April 2016 through July 2016. The school is trying to reschedule the June 24 meeting for some time in August. The board did meet on January 29, 2016. A quorum was present. The board discussed blended learning and the school's use of the Edgenuity program. The board heard a report from the CEO and discussed data and financial issues.

THE CLASSROOM ENVIRONMENT²

This table summarizes the school’s performance on The Classroom Environment 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	
Creating an Environment of Respect and Rapport	<p>The QSR team scored 100% of the observations as distinguished or proficient in this component. The interactions between teachers and students were positive in every observation. Both teachers and students spoke respectfully to each other saying “please” and “thank you” when appropriate. Teachers took an interest in students’ lives outside of school.</p>	Distinguished	27%
	<p>One teacher incorporated the lyrics from popular songs into the lesson. Another teacher related a chemical in a science lesson to students’ internship at the Department of Public Works. A student arrived late to class in one observation, and the teacher acknowledged that the student had to drop off a child at daycare.</p>	Proficient	73%
	<p>The QSR team scored none of the observations as basic in this component.</p>	Basic	0%
	<p>The QSR team scored none of the observations as unsatisfactory in this component.</p>	Unsatisfactory	0%
Establishing a Culture for Learning	<p>The QSR team scored 100% of the observations as distinguished or proficient in this component. During these observations teachers encouraged students and praised students for their hard work. In several observations teachers were excited about the material. One teacher said, “I wish I had more</p>	Distinguished	10%

² Review team members may observe teachers more than once.

The Classroom Environment	Evidence Observed	School Wide Rating	
	time to share with you more about this rich period in our history.” One teacher told students how bright they were and pushed all students to try out the most difficult problems.	Proficient	90%
	The QSR team scored none of the observations as basic in this component.	Basic	0%
	The QSR team scored none of the observations as unsatisfactory in this component.	Unsatisfactory	0%
Managing Classroom Procedures	The QSR team scored 91% of the observations as proficient and none as distinguished in this component. Teachers in these observations had established routines, and the class moved at an appropriate pace. Students signed in, picked up materials, and began work with little or no prompting from the teacher. In one observation the students transitioned efficiently between whole group instruction, individual work with construction tools, and cleaning up their stations without any loss of instructional time.	Distinguished	0%
		Proficient	91%
	The QSR team scored less than 10% of the observations as basic in this component.	Basic	9%
	The QSR team scored none of the observations as unsatisfactory in this component.	Unsatisfactory	0%
Managing Student Behavior	The QSR team scored 91% of the observations as distinguished or proficient in this component. Students in almost every observation behaved appropriately. In a few instances students called out or used a phone in	Distinguished	9%

The Classroom Environment	Evidence Observed	School Wide Rating	
	class. The students quickly changed their behavior when the teacher reminded them of the expectations. Teachers circulated the room to ensure that students were on task. One teacher tapped a student's desk lightly without interrupting the lesson when the student was falling asleep, and the student readjusted and got back into the lesson.	Proficient	82%
	The QSR team scored less than 10% of the observations as basic in this component.	Basic	9%
	The QSR team scored none of the observations as unsatisfactory in this component.	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 70% of the observations as “distinguished” or “proficient” for the Instruction domain.

Instruction	Evidence Observed	School Wide Rating	
Communicating with Students	<p>The QSR team scored 64% of the observations as proficient and none as distinguished in this component. In these observations teachers explained what students were learning and why it was helpful to them. One teacher drew a graphic organizer on the board and guided students through new material on balancing chemical equations. Another teacher walked students step-by-step through the goals and purpose of an upcoming career assessment. After a teacher modeled how to do a problem, most of the students were able to solve additional problems and model how to do it for their classmates.</p>	<p>Distinguished</p>	<p>0%</p>
		<p>Proficient</p>	<p>64%</p>
	<p>The QSR team scored 36% of observations as basic in this component. Teachers in these observations made content errors, or gave ineffective instructions, causing some students not to understand how to complete assignments. In one observation students read a poem and asked the teacher what the word “mourning” meant; the teacher responded that it was an alternate spelling of the word “morning.” Students in another observation repeatedly asked questions on how to solve a problem, and the teacher repeated the explanation in the same way each time. Most of the students in the class solved the problem incorrectly.</p>	<p>Basic</p>	<p>36%</p>

Instruction	Evidence Observed	School Wide Rating	
	The QSR team scored none of the observations as unsatisfactory in this component.	Unsatisfactory	0%
Using Questioning/Prompts and Discussion Techniques	The QSR team scored 64% of the observations as proficient and none as distinguished in this component. In these observations teachers asked open-ended questions, and students explained their thinking. In a few cases students responded to each other and engaged in discussions. During one observation the teacher said, "Tell me about segregation," and students responded with lengthy, thoughtful answers. Students in another observation discussed how they would go about balancing a chemical equation and in which order they would work with each element.	Distinguished	0%
		Proficient	64%
	The QSR team scored 36% of the observations as basic in this component. During these observations teachers asked and answered their own questions, and one or two students dominated the conversation without an invitation for other students to join. In one observation the teacher frequently asked open-ended questions but did not give sufficient wait time and ultimately answered the questions posed. Two students in another observation answered the vast majority of the questions asked, and the other students did not engage with the discussion.	Basic	36%
	The QSR team scored none of the observations as unsatisfactory in this component.	Unsatisfactory	0%

Instruction	Evidence Observed	School Wide Rating	
Engaging Students in Learning	<p>The QSR team scored 73% of the observations as proficient and none as distinguished in this component. Students in these observations were intellectually engaged with the content throughout the observation. Teachers used different materials such as graphic organizers and videos to support the learning. In one observation students read a poem. When the teacher asked students to analyze and respond to the poem, every student diligently began writing and referencing the poem. Students in another observation went up to the board and walked classmates through how they solved a problem; students asked each other questions, and each student took a turn presenting.</p>	Distinguished	0%
		Proficient	73%
	<p>The QSR team scored 27% of the observations as basic in this component. Teachers did not consistently intellectually engage significant portions of the class. A teacher in one observation moved too slowly through the lesson, and many students sat waiting for one or two peers to finish a problem. In another observation the primary activity was a discussion about the Great Depression. Only a few students participated and the others watched without any other activity.</p>	Basic	27%
	<p>The QSR team scored none of the observations as unsatisfactory in this component.</p>	Unsatisfactory	0%

Instruction	Evidence Observed	School Wide Rating	
Using Assessment in Instruction	<p>The QSR team scored 80% of the observations as proficient and none as distinguished in this component. In these observations teachers gave students feedback in real-time and guided students on how to correct their mistakes. One teacher circulated during the independent practice and gave students feedback individually on how well they were doing with the problems. After seeing a common mistake, a teacher called the group back together and guided students through additional examples. During another observation the teacher saw that several students were getting all of the problems correct and gave them some more challenging practice.</p>	Distinguished	0%
	<p>The QSR team scored 20% of observations as basic in this component. Teachers gave very little feedback to students or only general feedback to the whole class. In a couple of observations, teachers did not walk around or monitor how well each student in the class was grasping the material covered.</p>	Basic	20%
	<p>The QSR team scored none of the observations as unsatisfactory in this component.</p>	Unsatisfactory	0%

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.

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