



July 9, 2014

Alison Mayas, Board Chair  
National Collegiate Preparatory PCS  
4600 Livingston Road, SE  
Washington, DC 20032

Dear Ms. Mayas:

The Public Charter School Board (PCSB) conducts Qualitative Site Reviews (QSR) to gather and document evidence to support school oversight. According to the 2014 Memorandum of Understanding that PCSB has with the Office of the State Superintendent of Education (OSSE) around implementation of the 2012 Waiver to the Elementary and Secondary Education Act, PCSB must “Ensure that public charter schools identified as Focus or Priority are providing interventions and supports to students and their teachers consistent with that school’s Intervention and Support Plan” (p.5). Your school was selected to undergo a QSR during the 2013-14 school year for the following reason:

- School is designated as Focus by Office of the State Superintendent of Education due to the academic performance of its economically disadvantaged and African American students.

Please see the following link for information about the requirements for exiting Focus status:  
[http://osse.dc.gov/sites/default/files/dc/sites/osse/release\\_content/attachments/OSSE\\_Revisions%20-%20Executive%20Summary%20-%20All%20Principles%20-%205%2017%2012%20FINAL.pdf](http://osse.dc.gov/sites/default/files/dc/sites/osse/release_content/attachments/OSSE_Revisions%20-%20Executive%20Summary%20-%20All%20Principles%20-%205%2017%2012%20FINAL.pdf)

### **Qualitative Site Review Report**

A QSR team conducted on-site review visits of National Collegiate Preparatory PCS between May 12 and May 23, 2014. School leadership also asked the QSR team lead to attend the school on April 30, 2014 in order to observe how the school’s Focus intervention strategies are being implemented in classrooms.

The QSR team’s report is attached. We appreciate the assistance and hospitality that you and your staff gave the monitoring team in conducting the Qualitative Site Review at National Collegiate Preparatory PCS. Thank you for your continued cooperation as PCSB makes every effort to ensure that National Collegiate Preparatory PCS is in compliance with its charter.

Sincerely,

A black rectangular box redacting the signature of Naomi DeVeaux.

Naomi DeVeaux  
Deputy Director

Enclosures  
cc: School Leader

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

National Collegiate Preparatory Public Charter School (NCP PCS) is a college preparatory high school. It serves approximately 296 students in 9<sup>th</sup> through 12<sup>th</sup> grades in Ward 8. NCP PCS is an authorized International Baccalaureate (IB) World School offering an IB diploma program to its juniors and seniors. NCP PCS earned a score of 51.4% and a Tier 2 designation on the DC Public Charter School Board's (PCSB's) 2013 Performance Management Framework (PMF). The DC Public Charter School Board (PCSB) conducted a modified Qualitative Site Review (QSR) in May 2014 because the campus was designated "Focus" under the Office of the State Superintendent of Education's (OSSE) accountability system as designed in its Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) waiver due to the academic performance of its economically disadvantaged and African American students. The campus received a full QSR in December 2013.

PCSB conducted QSRs for ESEA monitoring requirements during the following periods: fall 2013 and spring 2014. NCP PCS received a modified QSR as opposed to a full QSR in spring 2014 as a result of earning more than 50% of the possible points on the 2013 PMF. A modified QSR contains one scheduled day, set by the school, and six unannounced classroom observations within a two-week window. The QSR team conducted classroom observations between May 12 and May 23, 2104. PCSB staff observed the scheduled day on April 30, 2014 to observe classes and a data meeting the school felt would demonstrate the intervention and support strategies they have implemented to support the academic achievement of economically disadvantaged and African American students.

The majority of evidence collected during the scheduled day and the unscheduled observation window centered on the school's implementation of strategies to differentiate instruction for economically disadvantaged and African American students. On the scheduled day the QSR team observed the College Prep class, an Advanced Placement (AP) course, and two IB courses. All of those courses included rigorous content and high expectations for students. Teachers asked open-ended discussion questions and students comfortably responded to the questions with their ideas. The non-college preparatory classes observed during the unannounced two-week window and on the scheduled day were notably more teacher-focused. Students did not confidently answer questions and teachers tended to ask more recall questions. A QSR team member observed a data meeting during the scheduled day. Teachers led by the director of curriculum and instruction analyzed data from the quarterly ANet assessments using ANet's website and tools. The group then discussed strategies to improve student performance and used the data to determine the highest leverage sub-skills to focus on for the remainder of the school year.

**SCHOOL INTERVENTION AND SUPPORT STRATEGIES**

The following table summarizes

- 1) National Collegiate Preparatory PCHS’s intervention and support strategies as detailed in its web-based Intervention and Support Plan to improve the academic performance of its Focus subgroups, economically disadvantaged and African American students; and,
- 2) The evidence that the QSR team member observed of the school implementing those strategies during both the scheduled day on April 30, 2014 and the observation window from May 12 through May 23, 2014.

PCSB leaves it to the discretion of school leadership to determine the best use of time during the scheduled day of observations for the purposes of Focus intervention strategies. Therefore it may not be possible to observe certain strategies chosen by the school. In cases where PCSB did not have the opportunity to observe the strategy, we will use the following statement: “While this strategy may be in place, PCSB neither looked for nor observed any evidence related to this strategy.”

Strategy Described in Intervention Plan	School’s Description of Strategy on the Ground	Evidence
Learning Communities	<p>Teachers target specific learning goals in a given class and provide greater opportunities to accelerate learning or support students in areas of need.</p> <p>NCP will measure the success of grouping students into learning communities through classroom observations that evidence improved instructional practice centered on differentiating instructions to meet each student’s present levels of performance.</p>	<p>While this strategy may be in place, PCSB neither looked for nor observed any evidence related to learning goals being targeted across classrooms to particular students.</p> <p>On the scheduled day and during the unannounced observations, the QSR team observed students working in groups or pairs in almost all classrooms. The classroom seating arrangements facilitated partner and group work. Some observations included classes with both a general education and a special education teacher. Teachers encouraged students to work together and to ask each other for help on assignments in a couple of observations. In these classrooms the QSR team observed differentiated instruction where the special education teacher repeated the material in a different way from the general education teacher for individuals or small groups of students.</p>

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Explicit Model Lesson Plans	<p>At National Prep, teachers plan and design lessons using the explicit model lesson plan template. This template scaffolds instruction from teacher led with an Introduction portion for new material, to Guided Practice with teacher support, and leading to Independent Practice by students. This model of planning guides instruction from teacher centered to student centered.</p> <p>NCP will measure the success of using this model of lesson planning through classroom observations to observe improved delivery of instruction as evidenced by lessons that scaffold instruction and lessons that transition in delivery from teacher centered to student centered.</p>	<p>Every classroom visited had a lesson plans available using the Explicit Model Lesson Plan Template. The lesson plan structure clearly moves from a teacher-led introduction of new material to independent practice. However, in a few of the observations, the lesson plans were not completely filled out so they did not present a clear transition from teacher-centered to student-centered activities.</p>
Sophomore Seminar (DC CAS)	<p>This school year National Prep hired a highly qualified English teacher to teach Sophomore Seminar classes. Sophomore Seminar classes are designed to support the instruction of literacy skills for 10<sup>th</sup> grade students. The class focuses on skills such as reading and analyzing informational and literary texts, synthesizing information from multiple sources in order to successfully respond to clarifying questions, and teaching reading and comprehension strategies for successfully interacting with texts with higher lexile demands. By having one teacher, the curriculum is implemented with fidelity and instruction is directed by one teacher whose sole responsibility is to teach seminar classes.</p>	<p>While this strategy may be in place, PCSB neither looked for nor observed any evidence related to this strategy.</p>
5 <sup>th</sup> Block (DC CAS and SAT)	<p>Measure of success for the addition of 5<sup>th</sup> Block will be evaluated by students' performance on the DC CAS, PSAT, and SAT for SY 2013-14 as compared to performance on the DC CAS, PSAT, and SAT for SY</p>	<p>While this strategy may be in place, PCSB neither looked for nor observed any evidence related to the DC CAS component of this strategy.</p>

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	<p>2012-13.</p> <p>NCP will use students' performance data on 4 interim assessments and DC CAS test data to measure the success of the 5<sup>th</sup> block at the 10<sup>th</sup> grade level.</p> <p>NCP will use student performance data from PSAT and SAT for SY 2013-14 to evaluate the success of the 5<sup>th</sup> block period at the 11<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> grade levels.</p>	<p>The QSR did observe the SAT preparation course during the 5<sup>th</sup> Block. For evidence on how students were prepared to score competitively for college on the SAT, please see the In-House SAT and ACT Preparation Program strategy.</p>
ANet Partnership (DC CAS)	<p>This school year NCP partnered with the Achievement Network to provide interim assessments in English and mathematics to students in grades 9 and 10. Through this partnership, NCP is provided a data coach to support with analyzing test data in order to develop action plans for supporting students with attaining proficiency in Common Core State Standards in math and English for grades 9 and 10.</p> <p>NCP will use students' performance data on 4 interim assessments in the academic year and DC CAS test data for school year 2013-14 to measure the success of its partnership with the Achievement Network.</p>	<p>As evidence of the school's partnership with the Achievement Network (ANet), a QSR team member observed a data meeting led by the director of curriculum and instruction. Ninth and tenth grade math and English teachers worked in content area groups to identify the highest and lowest performing standards according to the ANet data on their students. Teachers used the supporting documents and resources from the ANet website in order to better analyze the test data. After determining on which standards students performed highest and lowest, teachers discussed types of strategies and the director of curriculum and instruction led the group in developing action plans. Teachers discussed which sub-skills are the primary challenges for students and what strategies they could use to teach those sub-skills. The group was so engrossed in planning strategies that the opted to skip lunch in order to finish the work rather than go lunch at the designated time.</p>
DC Cooperative Partnership (DC CAS)	<p>This school year NCP partnered with the DC Cooperative to support with professional development and training for all instructional staff to support the learning of best practices for reaching diverse learners. Through this partnership, instructional staff receives in-house</p>	<p>While this strategy may be in place, PCSB neither looked for nor observed any evidence related to this strategy.</p>

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	<p>professional development in teaching diverse learners and opportunities to attend outside training sessions around reaching and teaching special education students.</p> <p>The success of this partnership will be measured through classroom observations with the purpose of observing for instructional delivery that includes varying classroom activities and instruction that includes appealing to varying learning styles and student ability.</p>	
<p>Study Island (DC CAS, SAT, ACT, AP)</p>	<p>National Prep purchased Study Island a web based Common Core Standards program designed to support DC CAS preparation in Mathematics, English, and Biology. The Program also provides support for college readiness through SAT, ACT, and AP test prep.</p> <p>NCP will use student performance data on the DC CAS, PSAT, SAT, ACT, and AP exams for school year 2013-14 to measure the success of Study Island within its academic program.</p>	<p>The QSR team did not observe students using the Study Island program, however, a team member observed a teacher assigning AP Biology students to work on the program.</p>
<p>Achieve 3000 (DC CAS)</p>	<p>National Prep uses Achieve 3000 a web based reading support program that is designed to help students improve their reading fluency and comprehension skills. The program is adaptive and provides reading passages on students' current reading level.</p> <p>NCP will use student performance data on the DC CAS, PSAT, SAT, ACT, and AP exams for school year 2013-14 to measure the success of Achieve 3000 within its academic program.</p>	<p>While this strategy may be in place, PCSB neither looked for nor observed any evidence related to this strategy.</p>

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College Prep Course	<p>College preparation course was redesigned as a full year course offered to seniors and facilitated by instructor with knowledge of college recruitment or college admissions processes. The purpose of this course is to assist students with navigating and completing the required steps to gain admission to college and preparing students academically to meet the rigor of college courses.</p> <p>The measure of success for the College Prep course will be 12<sup>th</sup> grade students' preparedness for matriculation to college as evidenced by successful completion of the course, application and acceptances to college, financial literacy certification, improved SAT scores over the course of the school year, and garnering of scholarships to colleges and universities.</p>	<p>A QSR team member observed the College Prep Course. The instruction was centered on acquiring college-level skills. Several times the teacher mentioned that the work students were doing would prepare them for college, and the teacher referenced college in her examples as she went over rules for writing a critical essay. The class worked on critical thinking skills as they discussed what makes a good argument. While the rigor of the activities was at an appropriate level for college preparation, many students were not engaged in the class. An example of this occurred when the teacher gave students two minutes to write a thesis statement for their essay and only one student got to work.</p> <p>There was no discussion of applying to college or financial literacy during the observation.</p>
Financial Literacy	<p>Financial literacy was added to the College Prep Course curriculum. This component of the curriculum is offered to seniors as they prepare to matriculate from high school and enter the world independent of parents. The financial literacy portion the College Prep course offers an opportunity for students to be versed in making wise and responsible fiscal decisions as they prepare to navigate the world independently.</p> <p>The success of the acquisition and implementation of this curriculum will be measured by the number of students who participate and successfully complete the program and gain financial literacy certification at the completion of the program.</p>	<p>While this strategy may be in place, PCSB neither looked for nor observed any evidence related to this strategy.</p>
In-House SAT and ACT Preparation Program	<p>In-House Standardized SAT Prep Program is an addition to NCP's educational program that allows NCP students</p>	<p>On the scheduled day a QSR team member observed the SAT Prep Program during the 5<sup>th</sup> Block. The content of the</p>

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	<p>to prepare to complete SAT and ACT assessments by attending review classes facilitated by members of NCP's instructional staff. Students in grades 11 through 12 will attend SAT prep classes and will receive instruction in strategies for successful completion of SAT assessments and will review for these assessments by completing practice activities. Identified teachers will attend SAT Prep Workshops for Teachers and will use in-house software to support preparation efforts.</p> <p>NCP will measure the success of this program by comparison of student performance on the SAT and PSAT for school year 2013-14 as compared to student performance on the SAT and PSAT for school year 2012-13.</p>	<p>class focused on preparing students to earn competitive SAT math scores. Teachers went over test taking strategies, such as looking at the problem number to gauge how difficult a problem might be since the SAT questions get harder as you go in each section. Teachers presented three techniques to approach SAT math questions and students spent the majority of the observation working on practice SAT problems.</p> <p>While this strategy may be in place, PCSB neither looked for nor observed any evidence related to teacher workshops or training component of this strategy.</p>
Advanced Placement	<p>This school year National Prep began offering AP classes in the upper grades. Honor students who do not enter the IB program after grade 10 will enroll in AP classes.</p> <p>NCP will measure the success of the Advanced Placement program by the percentage or number of students who meet success on the Advanced Placement Exam during the 4<sup>th</sup> quarter of the school year.</p>	<p>The AP Biology course observed on the scheduled day demonstrated a strong classroom environment and notable instructional delivery. The teacher held students to high academic standards and the students rose to the occasion. Both the teacher and students used high-level biology vocabulary confidently. The teacher asked open-ended questions and all students engaged in discussion about food webs and chains. Students also posed questions that extended the conversation.</p>
Discovery Education 11 <sup>th</sup> Grade College Readiness Assessments/ACT Preparation	<p>This school year NCP began administering College Readiness Assessments in the 11<sup>th</sup> grade. CRA assessments are provided by Discovery Education. These interim assessments assess students' readiness for college. Each assessment has four sections: English, Math, Reading, and Science Reasoning. The benchmarks report a scale score of 1 to 36. These scale scores have been</p>	<p>While this strategy may be in place, PCSB neither looked for nor observed any evidence related to this strategy.</p>



Strategy Described in Intervention Plan	School's Description of Strategy on the Ground	Evidence
	<p>shown to predict performance on the ACT College Admissions.</p> <p>By offering College Readiness Assessments in the junior year, students build and review skills that are assessed on the ACT and learn where they are weakest and strongest. These assessments support preparation and instructional efforts for maximum success on the ACT exams that students will complete in the Fall of senior year.</p> <p>NCP will measure the success of this program by analyzing student performance on the ACT for this current school year compared to students' performance on the ACT for school year 2012-13.</p>	
PSAT	<p>NCP revised the standardized assessment schedule to include 10<sup>th</sup> grade students. Students in the 10<sup>th</sup> grade completed PSATs in the Fall with 11<sup>th</sup> grade students. The benefits of students completing the PSAT in their sophomore year are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Experience/Encounter with Test</li> <li>• Risk free exposure to test questions, format, content</li> <li>• Practice for the SAT</li> <li>• Opportunity to identify students' areas of strength and weakness and design appropriate preparatory strategies</li> <li>• Students can take the PSAT only once in a school year, but can take the test multiple times.</li> <li>• Students who take the PSAT in their sophomore year must take the test again in their junior year to enter national Merit Scholarship Corporation programs.</li> </ul>	<p>While the school may be implementing this strategy, the QSR team neither looked for nor observed student PSAT completion or performance.</p>

Strategy Described in Intervention Plan	School's Description of Strategy on the Ground	Evidence
	<p>NCP will measure the success of the 10<sup>th</sup> grade PSAT administration by analyzing the performance of this year's 10th grade students on the PSAT as 11<sup>th</sup> grade students (SY2014-15) in order to compare results to the previous years' 11<sup>th</sup> grade students to determine if early exposure to the PSAT positively affects performance on the PSATs in the 11<sup>th</sup> grade.</p>	