



June 13, 2013

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

Dear Ms. Mayas,

The Public Charter School Board (PCSB) conducts Qualitative Site Reviews to gather and document evidence to support school oversight. According to the School Reform Act § 38-1802.11, 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 2012-13 school year for the following reason(s):

- School eligible for 5-year Charter Review during 2013-14 school year

Qualitative Site Review Report

A Qualitative Site Review team conducted on-site reviews of National Collegiate Preparatory Public Charter School between May 6th and May 15th. 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.

Enclosed is the team's report. You will find that the Qualitative Site Review Report is focused primarily on the following areas: charter mission and goals, classroom environments, 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 National Collegiate. Thank you for your continued cooperation as PCSB makes every effort to ensure that National Collegiate Preparatory Public Charter School 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 (“National Collegiate PCS”) is a high school in Ward 8 serving students in grades 9 – 12. The school opened in 2009 and is graduating its first senior class this year. It currently occupies space in the DCPS school building formerly known as PR Harris. The facility was clean and recently painted; corridors were well lit and wide enough to facilitate smooth transitions during the changing of classes. The school has just begun the implementation of its International Baccalaureate (“IB”) program for juniors. During the review visits, students and staff were friendly, respectful and focused on learning. During most of the classroom visits, the teachers maintained high expectations both academically and behaviorally for their students and the students were on-task.

The reviewers observed 15 classrooms in which teachers were focusing on the school’s core academic content. Students were focused and on-task in nearly all classroom observations. The students often worked together to complete learning activities, even if the activities were assigned as independent tasks. The classrooms were spacious and a majority of the displays were teacher-created skill or process charts. There were limited samples of student work seen school wide. Some of the work posted in the school did not have teacher comments and included errors. A few of the classrooms posted the standards for grading, but there were no rubrics or school wide grading systems observed by the team. Most of the classroom instruction observed was delivered using a lecture format with limited opportunities for student discussion. Many questions posed to students lacked rigor and did not promote higher-level thinking.

The mission of National Collegiate PCS is (1) to provide a rigorous 9th- 12th grade standards based college preparatory curriculum to maximize their students’ academic achievement, (2) to provide an interdisciplinary curriculum which integrates international studies themes across the academic curriculum leading to an IB diploma and (3) to prepare their students to be self-directed, life-long learners equipped to be engaged citizens of their school, community, country and world. With the exception of classroom lessons observed in Physics and Spanish classes most of the classrooms visited involved the completion of worksheets or copying notes and did not reflect the objectives of the school’s mission.

During the pre-visit meeting, the Principal indicated a few strategies that the school was using to support their teachers. She noted that the Director of Curriculum observes instruction and provides support for struggling teachers. The Director of Curriculum appeared in a majority of the classrooms being observed by PCSB to answer questions or provide feedback if needed. The Director also stepped into a classroom where student behavior was inappropriate to address students and quiet them down. There appeared to be an additional staff member strategically placed in the classroom of a struggling teacher identified by the Principal to assist with management issues. The students are dismissed early every Friday for staff professional development (PD). The Principal highlighted that the topic of PD every year is on differentiation. However, there was only one example of differentiation observed during the multi-day visit.

A PCSB consultant attended the National Collegiate board meeting on May 15th. The board had five voting members present to constitute a quorum. The board voted to elect a new member, Judge Robert Rigsby, to the board. The board also discussed facilities and finance issues and voted to approve the budget presented at the meeting. The budget that was voted on includes an increase in programmatic funds for the IB

program, a projection of higher legal fees to ensure compliance with Special Education law and interventions to support students struggling with literacy and numeracy. The board also discussed the challenge with their first class of seniors, dates related to graduation activities and the acceptance of all of their seniors into college.

CHARTER MISSION, GOALS, AND ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENT EXPECTATIONS

This table summarizes National Collegiate PCS’s goals and academic achievement expectations as detailed in its charter and subsequent Accountability Plans, and the evidence that the Qualitative Site Review (“QSR”) team observed of the school meeting those goals during the Qualitative Site Visit.

Mission and Goals	Evidence
<p>The mission of our public charter high school is (1) to provide a rigorous 9th- 12th grade standards based college preparatory curriculum to maximize our students’ academic achievement, (2) to provide an interdisciplinary curriculum which integrates international studies themes across the academic curriculum leading to an International Baccalaureate (IB) Diploma and (3) to prepare our students to be self-directed, life-long learners equipped to be engaged citizens of their school, community, country and world.</p>	<p>The school ensured that all of their 12th grade students were accepted to college, evidenced at the Board meeting, where members discussed how 100% of the senior class was accepted to college and several received scholarships. The review team observed a prominent display outside of the College Counselor’s office of the schools that students have been admitted to. Students were observed completing college questionnaires and discussing college visits they had taken during the school year. To prepare students for college curriculum, the team observed students writing a research paper in English class and completing science tasks in small groups in their physics class. None of the other classes observed included rigorous, college-preparatory curriculum. The team did not observe any interdisciplinary themes in the curriculum and only observed one IB class. The IB program is being implemented with the rising 12th grade class, so none of the graduates had an opportunity to earn an IB diploma.</p>
<p>1. Students will demonstrate proficiency and/or content mastery in English (i.e., reading and writing).</p>	<p>Each student is scheduled for at least four years of English with some being scheduled for the Banneker Reading Comprehension Program, which is for students identified as having basic reading skills. There were several writing activities observed that included free verse poems, completion of a research paper, and the completion of college questionnaires. Some work was posted in one of the English classes, but it contained errors that were not marked. 11th graders were offered an African-American Literature class. The observation team did not observe any American Literature or World Literature courses.</p>

<p>2. Students will demonstrate proficiency and/or content mastery in mathematics</p>	<p>Attainment of this goal was not observed by the reviewers. The lesson objectives for the math classes included the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Students will demonstrate knowledge of basic circle terminology by scoring > 80 on a quiz. (Students were asked to label and identify parts of the circle.) • Students will use properties of tangents to solve problems. (Activities aligned to this objective were not observed.) • Students will be able to review for finals by creating a Trig Book for Dummies. (The students were asked to copy formulas from their textbooks and notes to create a study guide for the final exam. The students were directed not to include examples or explanations, but to simply copy formulas down.) <p>One of the classes included content aligned to grade-level standards, but none of the classes observed provided students an opportunity to engage in higher-level math concepts.</p>
<p>3. Students will demonstrate proficiency and/or content mastery in history/social studies and of its application to current events.</p>	<p>The QSR team neither looked for nor observed any evidence related to this goal.</p>
<p>4. Students will demonstrate proficiency and/or content mastery in science.</p>	<p>One of the science courses observed was taught with a high level of expectations for student involvement and proficiency. During class, the students completed differentiated assignments while rotating through work stations. Students were able to make real-world connections with the content they learned in class. In another science course, three students answered a question incorrectly, and the teacher did not address their errors. The students struggled with an activity because of the lack of clarity the teacher gave when providing directions to the students.</p>

<p>5. Student satisfaction with the school's programs and ability to demonstrate an understanding of Honor, Scholarship and Leadership values.</p>	<p>A description of the honor, scholarship and leadership values were not observed or explicitly seen in any of the classroom observations. Some students showed leadership when they reminded each other to be respectful. A student was chastised by his peers after using profanity in one of the classes. Another student was overheard saying, "Don't say that; it's not appropriate for school." The Principal shared that community meetings and Advisory courses focus on explicit teaching of these values. The 12th graders are enrolled in a course called "Ropes" which focuses on cultural competence, financial literacy and other important life skills.</p>
<p>6. Teacher satisfaction with the school's operations and programs.</p>	<p>The QSR team neither looked for nor observed any evidence related to this goal.</p>
<p>7. Family/parents' support of the school and its mission.</p>	<p>At the Board meeting, the board of trustees shared that parents of seniors are actively involved in senior activities and supporting the school program. Students had recently taken a trip abroad and parents had been active in raising money for that trip. The parent who sits on the board was present at the board meeting.</p>
<p>8. Students demonstrate grade level proficiency or higher and progress one year or more every year in a selected world language.</p>	<p>The team observed a Spanish class, which is currently being taught by a long-term substitute while the teacher is on maternity leave. Students presented in Spanish and prepared home-cooked meals for the class that were from the country of their presentations. The students struggled with the pronunciation of nearly all of the Spanish words during their presentations. Although the teacher was fluent in Spanish, the observer did not hear the teacher addressing any of these errors.</p>

<p>9. National Collegiate Preparatory students will be exposed to rigorous academic coursework through the International Baccalaureate Diploma Program, which will further prepare them for success in post-secondary education</p>	<p>During the pre-visit meeting, the Principal shared that implementation of the IB program has just begun this year with the 11th graders. The team observed one class where there was an emphasis on IB. The students were engaged in selecting artifacts for their end of the year portfolios. Per the Principal, students are required to take six classes – IB English, Math Studies, Psychology, Biology and Theory of Knowledge. The school is currently doing Part A and will take IB diploma exams next year. Students are working on completing a community-service requirement and will eventually complete summer programming to prepare for an IB diploma. 11th grade students were able to visit another IB school this year.</p>
<p>10. Students will complete their high school education.</p>	<p>At the board meeting, it was shared that nearly all of the seniors are eligible for graduation. A few students were still working to complete assignments. The observation team observed several students working afterschool with teachers to complete their assignment. At the board meeting, it was shared that 100% of students have been accepted to college.</p>
<p>11. Students will acquire comprehensive college-preparatory knowledge and skills that will equip them for success in post-secondary education and beyond.</p>	<p>The observation team observed 11th grade students completing college questionnaires and conducting research on their colleges of choice during the Banneker Reading Comprehension Program period. Based on student participation in this activity, it seemed that every student is anticipating going to college. The college counselor's office door was decorated with names of colleges that students plan to attend. 12th grade students were observed working on research papers in their English classes.</p>

CLASSROOM ENVIRONMENTS¹

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

Class Environment	Evidence Observed	School Wide Rating	
Creating an Environment of Respect and Rapport	In nearly all of the classroom observations, students were respectful and courteous to their peers and the classroom teacher. Two students were heard correcting each other's language and encouraging each other to behave in a way that was appropriate for school. The teachers were polite to students and never raised their voices to address student behavior. The Spanish teacher often communicated her behavioral expectations to students in Spanish. One teacher was observed frequently using sarcastic comments towards her students. This was the only classroom observed where students were not respectful to the teacher or towards one another.	Limited	7%
		Satisfactory	20%
		Proficient	73%
		Exemplary	0%
Establishing a Culture for Learning	In about half of the classrooms observed, students were on-task and there was minimal prompting of the teacher to stay on task. One classroom had standards for grading posted in the classroom and the teacher insisted that all students participate and stay engaged throughout the lesson. The students were focused on the lesson in a majority of observations and eager to share their work with their classmates. There were some hall displays that spotlighted student work entitled "Student Exemplars" and "College Prep". While there was an expectation of effort seen throughout all of the observations, it was rare to hear positive reinforcement by the teachers or recognition of student effort.	Limited	0%
		Satisfactory	40%
		Proficient	53%
		Exemplary	7%
Managing Classroom Procedures	In less than half of the classrooms, instructional time was managed well. Timers were often used to manage transitions and independent work time. The observation team observed a school wide system of signing out to use the restroom, which was facilitated by students. The restroom procedure was the only student-facilitated classroom procedure observed. There were also two	Limited	0%
		Satisfactory	53%
		Proficient	40%

¹ Teachers may be observed more than once by different review team members.

Class Environment	Evidence Observed	School Wide Rating	
	classrooms observed where there was a loss of instructional time due to ineffective planning of student activities. In one classroom an activity ended early and students were idle for the last ten minutes of the class period. During another class, the teacher struggled with classroom management and did not clearly explain an instructional activity causing the students to be off task for a majority of the class period.	Exemplary	7%
Managing Student Behavior	There were clear, consistent standards of conduct seen in most classrooms and a general absence of misbehavior by the students. In most observations, students were on-task and most off-task behavior was quickly re-directed by the teacher. There was always an administrator present in the hallway during class time and hallway transitions. Several members of the administrative team stepped into a classroom to provide assistance to a struggling teacher during one of the observations. As mentioned above, the teachers were rarely heard reinforcing positive behaviors. There was also a teacher observed that did not apply fair consequences to students who entered the classroom late – one was sent out to get a pass, several were simply allowed to enter the room late without a problem.	Limited	0%
		Satisfactory	23%
		Proficient	69%
		Exemplary	8%
Organizing Physical Space	80% of the classroom environments observed were safe, inviting and spacious. There was adequate room for students to sit in small groups in most classrooms observed. The classrooms were freshly painted and there appeared to be enough resources and instructional materials for the number of students present in the classrooms.	Limited	0%
		Satisfactory	20%
		Proficient	80%
		Exemplary	0%

INSTRUCTIONAL DELIVERY

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

Instructional Delivery	Evidence Observed	School Wide Rating	
Communicating with Students	The lesson objective and daily agenda was posted in most of the classrooms observed. The majority of teachers delivered their lessons free of content errors. The teachers observed also communicated the lesson expectations to the students at the introduction of most lessons. Most of the academic vocabulary used was aligned to the students' ages and levels of development. One of the teachers did not provide clear directions to her students, causing confusion about the lesson activity. There were also two English teachers observed that had noticeable errors in their grammar usage.	Limited	0%
		Satisfactory	33%
		Proficient	60%
		Exemplary	7%
Using Questioning and Discussion Techniques	Two teachers designed questions in advance that required students to engage in critical thinking and to apply previously taught skills and concepts. Some of the teachers effectively used student responses and ideas to generate student discussions during the lesson. However, most classes did not provide opportunities for the students to be involved in discussions. There were limited examples of higher-level questioning observed. Most of the questions asked elicited one-word answers from students.	Limited	21%
		Satisfactory	36%
		Proficient	43%
		Exemplary	0%
Engaging Students in Learning	Most of the lesson activities were aligned with the goal of the lesson. However, most of the activities observed lacked variety and involved copying notes or completing worksheets. Most of the assignments were also whole group activities and did not pique student enthusiasm or interest with the content.	Limited	0%
		Satisfactory	60%
		Proficient	40%
		Exemplary	0%
Using Assessment in Instruction	There was limited evidence of teachers checking for understanding and assessing student learning. While many teachers circulated their classes during student work time and, at times used questioning to gauge student understanding of the lesson, these were the only examples of assessment observed during the three days of observations.	Limited	0%
		Satisfactory	77%
		Proficient	23%

Instructional Delivery	Evidence Observed	School Wide Rating	
		Exemplary	0%
Demonstrating Flexibility and Responsiveness	There was one example of lesson differentiation observed and few adjustments made in the case of students not understanding the content. There were limited examples observed of the teachers incorporating topics of student interest into their lessons.	Limited	20%
		Satisfactory	60%
		Proficient	10%
		Exemplary	10%

APPENDIX I: CLASSROOM ENVIRONMENT OBSERVATION RUBRIC

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.
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.

APPENDIX II: INSTRUCTIONAL DELIVERY OBSERVATION RUBRIC

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 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.

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.