



DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA
PUBLIC CHARTER SCHOOL BOARD

April 1, 2013

Ms. Jeneen Ramos, Board Chair
Washington Math Science Technology PCS
1920 Bladensburg Rd NE
Washington, DC 20002

Dear Ms. Ramos:

The Public Charter School Board (PCSB) conducts Qualitative Site Reviews to gather and document authentic evidence to support the oversight of all 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):

- School eligible to petition for 15-year Charter Renewal

Qualitative Site Review Report

On January 10th and January 24th, 2013 a Qualitative Site Review team conducted on-site reviews of Washington Math Science Technology (WMST) Public Charter School. 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 and 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. Thank you for your continued cooperation as the PCSB makes every effort to ensure that Washington Math Science Technology Public Charter School is in compliance with its charter.

Sincerely,



Naomi DeVeaux
Deputy Director

Enclosures
cc: School Leader

CHARTER GOALS

This table summarizes the goals that Washington Math Science Technology Public Charter School (“WMST 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.

Goal	Evidence
Demand for a seat at the WMST PCS.	The QSR team neither observed nor looked for any evidence related to this goal.
Student academic performance measured against DCPS performance.	In the focus group, students stated they are encouraged and are offered incentives to do well on assessments. They specifically mentioned that the girl and boy who earn the highest score on DC-CAS will receive a G-Shock watch and that all 10 th graders go to Dave and Busters after the DC-CAS.
Student academic performance measured against US performance.	<p>In the focus group, students revealed that they wanted to do well on the IB exams. WMST PCS uses the Naviance program that coordinates individual learning plans for students, serves as a database for standardized student assessments, and tracks college enrollment and graduation rates.</p> <p>The QSR team observed several honors, Advanced Placement (“AP”), and International Baccalaureate (“IB”) classes.</p>
Student preparedness for work and life.	According to the administrator focus group, WMST PCS students have participated in programs sponsored by the National Cancer Institute of NIH; the Dr. Oz Health Initiative which prompted a visit by Dr. Oz to the school; various robotics competitions; IT Job Shadow days sponsored by the federal government; and science fairs. Students have also participated in violence prevention, and financial literacy seminars, ROTC competitions, and a meeting of elected women leaders from around the world.
The school as a center for civic and community life.	At the board meeting, the QSR members observed Board members talking about the work they have been doing to build connections with potential community and organization partners.
WMST PCS as a change agent for public education in the District of Columbia.	The QSR team neither observed nor looked for any evidence related to this goal.

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 articulated in the charter application and subsequent amendments are implemented in the day to day operations of the school.	Limited observations of day to day observations as aligned with mission and educational goals by any school stakeholders.	Day to day operations and activities as aligned with mission and educational goals are demonstrated by some staff members.	Day to day operations and activities as aligned with mission and educational goals are demonstrated by nearly all staff members.	Day to day operations and activities as aligned with the mission and educational goals are demonstrated by students throughout the school building.
The Board and school administrators govern and manage in a manner consistent with the school’s design and mission.	Administrators and Board members demonstrate a limited understanding of the school’s design. Evidence of its use in the management and governance of the school is substantially lacking.	Administrators and Board members demonstrate an adequate understanding of the school’s design. There is evidence that understanding of the design is sometimes used to effectively manage and govern the school.	Administrators and Board members demonstrate a good understanding 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.
The school’s curriculum and instruction are aligned with the school’s mission and educational goals.	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.	School curriculum and instruction are aligned with the mission and educational goals and are utilized in most classrooms.	School curriculum and instruction are aligned with the mission and educational goals and are utilized in all classrooms.
The school has met or is making progress toward meeting the educational goals of its charter.	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.	The school demonstrates proficient evidence of progress towards monitoring and making progress towards most of the goals of its charter.	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 Washington Math Science Technology PCS is to “provide a rigorous education integrating mathematics and science instruction with technology that will enhance analytical reasoning development and will enhance highly motivated, successful students prepared for further study in math, science, technology, and related careers”. This is what PCSB staff and consultants looked for when visiting the classrooms, attending a parent meeting and board meeting, and conducting the focus groups.

WMST PCS has added engineering to its focus to its Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math (STEM) program. Technology is integrated throughout the schools as evidenced by the presence and use of computers, Smart boards, and projectors by teachers and students. There are three computer labs, a new math lab (for intensive math remediation or enrichment), new Mac computers in the media centers, and three teachers on staff who teach technology-related courses. The school is in the process of securing partners for STEM-related activities. They currently work with NASA, Project Lead the Way, and the American Association for the Advancement of Science (“AAAS”). The AAAS partnership is a bridge program where they are assisting in the development of a chemistry unit. WMST PCS is one of only four schools in the nation to implement the AAAS program. Students attend an introduction to engineering program in the summer and receive three freshman credits from John Hopkins University. The school is currently screening students to participate in a STEM program at the University of the District of Columbia. During Science Week, scientists interact with students in the classroom. The school requires seniors to participate in a science fair competition as an exit requirement and is actively seeking to secure internships for seniors with STEM partners.

A QSR team member also visited a board meeting on January 23, 2013. Seven members were in attendance and one member was on the phone, constituting a quorum. The agenda topics included the President’s report, the Head of School’s report, and reports from various standing committees. The majority of the meeting was focused on planning and making decisions for a spring fundraiser. Board members have been working to build connections with potential community and organization partners.

Curriculum and instruction are aligned with the school’s mission. WMST PCS offers Honors, AP, and IB classes in core subject areas. The QSR team observed teachers and students regularly using technology, which was incorporated into almost all classes. Students have access to three computer labs, a math lab, and Mac and PC computers. The school has established partnerships with STEM organizations that provide additional learning experiences for students. Although administrators and teachers referred to differentiated instruction, the QSR team saw little evidence of differentiated learning opportunities during classroom instruction.

WMST PCS is making progress towards its educational goals as evidenced by the advanced course offerings and student participation in the AP, IB, and Honors programs; a tracking system for alumni post-secondary attendance and graduation; teacher training and professional development opportunities; and field-based experiences that expand student horizons. The school recognizes student achievement and provides incentives and rewards for student success.

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 four-fifths of all classroom observations 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.

Almost 90% were rated proficient or exemplary on Environment of Respect. In most classes, teacher-student rapport was caring and respectful. Students received lots encouragement from teachers and several teachers used humor when interacting with students. It was not uncommon for teachers to call out specific students by name with “good job”, “I’m so proud of you”, “I knew you could do it”, etc. The QSR team also observed respect and positive rappings among students. Student interactions with each other supported the instructional tasks. For example, a student asked how to spell a word and several students offered assistance. In another class a student clarified the teacher’s direction, while in another a student asked if he could help a classmate with his work. Students offered assistance to classmates, and individual and whole class accomplishments were recognized by handclaps and chants.

Almost 90% were rated proficient or exemplary on Culture of Learning. Most teachers incorporated essential elements of an effective lesson (e.g. objective, warm-up, guided practice), and made references to real life experiences to help students make connections with objectives of lessons. Teachers also referenced prior learning during discussions. Lesson objectives were written on board, and in a few classrooms, expectations for successful completion of the objective were either written or stated during class. Posters on classroom walls and bulletin boards were reflective of subjects taught, and expectations for attending college were evident in all classrooms (college banners, guidelines for preparation for the SAT). During lessons, teachers reminded students that the skills they were learning would be needed in college. Most classes also had recent student work on display.

Three-quarters of teachers were rated proficient or exemplary on Managing Classroom Procedures. In most classes, rules were posted and students followed rituals and routines with little direction. Teachers used chants, countdowns, and hand signals to get students' attention. Reviewers observed students consistently on task whether working in large groups, small groups, pairs, or independently, and there was little to no loss of instructional time as students moved from one activity to another. Several times during student presentations, observers did note a slow response from teachers when students were being inattentive. Although there was no misbehavior, teachers did not refocus students' attention in a timely manner.

Almost 90% were rated proficient or exemplary on Managing Student Behavior. In all classes, student behavior was appropriate with no or few disruptions of instructional activities. Classroom rules and tiered consequences were posted in almost all classes observed, and during group work or independent activity teachers circulated among the students and touched them on the shoulder to ensure they remained focused. Except for an occasional "are you with me?" there were no behavior issues that required the teacher's attention in the majority of the classrooms observed.

Almost 90% of classrooms observed were rated proficient or exemplary on Organization of Physical Space. Classrooms were spacious and were able to support various learning activities (e.g. independent work and large, small, and whole group instruction) and provided teachers easy access to move among individual students and groups. Most furniture arrangements supported the classes' instructional foci and allowed teachers to maintain eye contact and proximity with each student. There were sufficient supplies and materials to complete assignments and instructional activities. The QSR team observed teacher and student use of Smart boards, computers, and other technologies in most classrooms. Arrangement of student desks, lab tables, computers, and other classroom equipment supported access to safe exits if needed.

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 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.

Instructional Delivery Summary

Approximately 70% of classrooms were proficient or exemplary in areas of Instructional Delivery, including: Communicating with Students, Using Questioning and Discussion Techniques, Engaging Students in Learning, Using Assessment in Instruction, and Demonstrating Flexibility.

Approximately 95% were rated proficient/exemplary on Communicating with Students. In the classes observed, lesson objectives were posted and contained the objective for instructional activities. AP classrooms also had AP requirements for each objective posted. Directions for instructional activities were clearly stated. Most teachers used strategies to encourage students to connect the material to their own experiences and in several classrooms, teachers integrated material from other disciplines. Although teachers generally did not make grammatical errors in oral presentations, they sometimes used colloquialisms such as “y’all” when talking to students.

Almost three-quarters of teachers observed were rated proficient or exemplary on Using Questioning and Discussion Techniques. In several classes, observers noted teachers using a variety of questioning strategies at different levels to activate student thinking. They used prompts and cues to encourage students to expand their thinking about a topic. Students not only responded to teachers' questions but initiated their own questions for clarification or as follow-up questions on related topics. Students were given equitable and multiple opportunities to respond to questions and teachers often gave positive feedback and encouragement. Although higher level questioning techniques were observed, in most classes questions teachers asked were low to mid-level.

Almost three-quarters of teachers observed were rated proficient or exemplary on Engaging Students in Learning. In the majority of classrooms, most students were focused and engaged throughout the lesson. Observers noted that, in general, most teachers attempted to be inclusive and to involve all students in the lesson. They used verbal cues and prompts to keep students on track. However, in a few classes, student disengagement that did not result in misbehavior was not redirected in a timely manner. In engaging their students, teachers also used whole and small group instruction, as well as independent work by partner teams and individual students. Teachers and students used technology appropriate for the activity. However, students who appeared to have different ability levels were all working on the same assignment, requiring teachers to sometimes provide extensive support to some students while others were ready to move on.

Only half of the teachers observed were rated proficient or exemplary on Using Assessment in Instruction. In some classrooms, observations revealed that teachers used varied assessments that included exit tickets, circulating among the students to ensure they were on task and following directions, and providing specific feedback to individual students or groups of students. Some teachers used group hand signals (i.e. thumbs up) to check for understanding and students made presentations that were designed to showcase their mastery of skills and concepts on specific topics. Teachers also used questioning techniques that provide immediate feedback for students. These strategies were not implemented uniformly or effectively in the other half of the classrooms observed.

Only half of the teachers observed were rated proficient or exemplary on Demonstrating Flexibility. There were a few instances in which it was obvious teachers deviated from the planned lesson to address student concerns and interests. For example, in response to a student's query, one teacher generated a discussion that allowed students to make connections between the 1800s and 2013. In another class a robust discussion developed about superstitions, and in yet another, the teacher adjusted the lesson to include a discussion of the importance of the inauguration of the President of the United States. According to a lesson plan that was reviewed after the classroom observation, "modifications and adjustments are designed to meet the needs of special education students." The review team did not observe any differentiation or modifications in instruction for special education students. However, in the majority of observations the QSR team did not review teachers' lesson plans in advance.

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

Meeting the Needs of All Learners Summary

In the teacher focus group, the special education coordinator indicated that the special education program is an inclusion program and has a pull-out component for students who are not reading at grade level and need more intensive instruction. Special education teachers work closely with staff and consult with general education teachers to modify lesson plans to address the academic and socio-emotional needs of special education students. After school tutorials include technology and online programs and are offered for both the advanced and struggling students. In the Professional Learning Communities there is a common planning time for teachers to discuss student issues and to use data to track student progress or identified needs. The review team did not observe any differentiation of instruction in classrooms that would address the needs of advanced as well as special education students.

There are currently no English Language Learners (“ELLs”) enrolled at the school, thus the school’s performance on this criterion was not assessed.

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

According to the administration, every Wednesday afternoon teachers meet by department in Professional Learning Communities to share teaching strategies that have proven successful for them. Each week “peer consultants” train teachers on a skill such as classroom management or differentiated instruction. Administrators monitor PLC sessions and participants are required to submit evaluation forms and minutes. Administrators report that non-instructional staff also participate in Wednesday afternoon meetings. Teachers also meet in pairs and discuss what skill they want their peers to look for. Peers then observe and give feedback. Peer coaching is considered an informational process and no report is given to administrators.

A professional development day is scheduled each semester and teachers also attend subject-related conferences throughout the year. Math teachers are taking classes at American University on the Common Core State Standards for math, seven teachers have received certification through the International Baccalaureate (IB) program, and some teachers are being trained in the AVID (Advancement via Individual Determination) program that provides academic support to prepare students to take honors and AP classes in high school and to be successful in a four year university.

The mentoring program assigns a coach to new and struggling teachers that models lessons, assists in developing lesson plans, and provides informal observations and feedback. The school also has a literacy and a numeracy coach that provide classroom support to all teachers.

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

School Climate Summary

The walls in the narrow hallways are decorated with student artwork, motivational quotations, posters, and college banners. Teachers and students said they feel safe at school and security personnel are visible throughout the building. Classrooms are large and allow teachers and students ample space to move about for activities. Bulletin boards, walls and tables are decorated with subject-related posters and artifacts, student work, and college information. Adults and students speak and act respectfully to each other, and non-instructional staff is visibly involved with students and teachers.

The school has a disciplinary matrix that is included in the school handbook. Different levels of infraction are delineated and suspension is the last recourse. Administrators report that there have been no behaviors over the past three years that warranted expulsion. In the teacher focus group, teachers said that the school “feels like family” and that there is enormous support among fellow staff members and from the administration. The school recognizes teachers by allowing them to showcase their skills during Professional Learning Communities, by giving gestures of appreciation in staff meetings, and through monthly recognition of outstanding activities. Students are recognized for several types of accomplishments – perfect attendance, honor roll, proficient or advanced score on the DC-CAS, and the G-Shock watch for the highest scoring male and female on the DC-CAS.

Although students indicated that they like the different programs the school offers (IB, AVID, AP) they indicated that they would like a larger school so they could have a real high school experience, such as more extra-curricular activities, reinstatement of the basketball program, and a

gym.