



March 23, 2018

Patrina Clark, Board Chair  
Academy of Hope Public Charter School  
2315 18th Place NE  
Washington, DC 20018

Dear Ms. Clark,

The DC Public Charter School Board (DC PCSB) conducts Qualitative Site Reviews to gather and document evidence to support school oversight. According to the School Reform Act § 38-1802.11, DC PCSB shall monitor the progress of each school in meeting the goals and student academic achievement expectations specified in the school's charter. Your school was selected to undergo a Qualitative Site Review during the 2017-18 school year for the following reason:

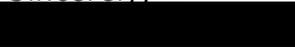
- School eligible for 5-year Charter Review during 2018-19 school year

### **Qualitative Site Review Report**

A Qualitative Site Review team conducted on-site reviews of Academy of Hope Public Charter School (Academy of Hope PCS) between January 29, 2018 – February 9, 2018. Enclosed is the team's report. You will find that the Qualitative Site Review Report focuses primarily on the following areas: classroom environment and instruction.

We appreciate the assistance and hospitality that you and your staff gave the monitoring team in conducting the Qualitative Site Review at Academy of Hope PCS.

Sincerely,

  
Naomi DeVeaux  
Deputy Director

Enclosures

Cc: Ms. Leicester Johnson, CEO

# Qualitative Site Review Report

**Date:** March 23, 2018

## **Campus Information**

**Campus Name:** Academy of Hope Public Charter School (Academy of Hope PCS)

**Wards:** 5 and 8

**Grade levels:** Adult

## **Qualitative Site Review Information**

**Reason for visit:** School eligible for 5-year charter review during 2018-19 school year

**Two-week window:** January 29, 2018 – February 9, 2018

**QSR team members:** One DC PCSB staff member and three Adult Education consultants

**Number of observations:** 22

**Total enrollment:** 306

**Students with Disabilities enrollment:** N/A – Academy of Hope PCS opted out of Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) funding for school year 2017-18

**English Language Learners enrollment:** 0

### **In-seat attendance on observation days:**

**Visit 1:** January 29, 2018 – 72.8%

**Visit 2:** January 31, 2018 – 69.8%

**Visit 3:** February 6, 2017 – 70.3%

**Visit 4:** February 7, 2018 – 61.2%

## **Summary**

Academy of Hope PCS' mission is

To provide high quality education and services that change lives and improve our communities.

Academy of Hope PCS is a welcoming and respectful Adult Education school that serves students eighteen and older. The school's programmatic focus is to help their students improve academic skills, earn a General Education Diploma (GED), and become more active participants in their communities. The school employs several strategies to support their mission: using assessment-aligned instructional materials, offering courses during the day and evening, and infusing instruction with motivational messages for student improvement. In one observation students learned about Fran Lebowitz, a famous author who earned her GED. The teacher remarked, "It doesn't matter where we begin. It matters where we are going and where we finish. We can do anything when we put our minds to it."

The QSR team conducted observations at both campuses during the day and in the evening. Overall the team noted that teachers and students were engaged and motivated to work. There was a high level of respect and professionalism among students and between students and teachers. The QSR team noted minimal student tardiness that resulted in some loss of instructional time. Attendance ranged between 60-70%, and observers noted between 1-16 students in each observation. Some team members noted instances when students were on their phones for non-academic reasons or left the classrooms seemingly without permission, but these occurrences were relatively infrequent.

During the QSR two-week window, the team used the Charlotte Danielson *Framework for Teaching* to examine classroom environment and instruction (see Appendix I and II). The QSR team scored 95% of observations as distinguished or proficient in the Classroom Environment domain. This was slightly lower than the score of 98% proficient or distinguished in this domain when the school received their last QSR in 2017 and average for adult education schools, where students self-select to attend school and absenteeism and withdrawals are more common symptoms than off-task behavior of students in class. Half of all observations scored distinguished in *Managing Student Behavior* as student behavior was entirely appropriate. The lowest scoring component was *Managing Classroom Procedures*. Most classrooms had effective procedures, but in some of these observations, there was some loss of instructional time due to ineffective routines. Some classrooms did not have centrally located materials, and as a result, students had to interrupt the teacher's instructions.

The QSR team scored 83% of observations as distinguished or proficient in the Instruction domain. This overall score is also slightly lower than the 86% rated as distinguished or proficient in 2017 and average for adult education schools. There were significantly fewer observations scored as distinguished in all components in this domain than in the Classroom Environment domain. There were also a few unsatisfactory scores in two components: *Communicating with Students* and *Using Discussion Techniques*. The QSR team observed some instances when the teacher had significant content errors or did not provide opportunity for students to discuss content. The highest scoring component in this domain was *Communicating with Students*. In the majority of classrooms teachers invited student participation and thinking on clearly explained learning tasks.

### Governance

A member of the QSR team reviewed approved minutes from Academy of Hope PCS' November 18, 2017 board meeting. A quorum was present. The CEO, staff, and board members discussed fundraising, a focus on racial equity in hiring practices, and the upcoming January graduation for fifteen graduates. The school is working on creating a performance dashboard so staff and board members can stay

up-to-date on the school's progress. The board discussed their governance practices and upcoming board elections.

## THE CLASSROOM ENVIRONMENT<sup>1</sup>

This table summarizes the school’s performance on the Classroom Environment domain of the rubric during the unannounced visits. The label definitions for classroom observations of “distinguished,” “proficient,” “basic,” and “unsatisfactory” are those from the Danielson framework. The QSR team scored 95% of classrooms as “distinguished” or “proficient” for the Classroom Environment domain. Please see Appendix III for a breakdown of each subdomain score.

The Classroom Environment	Evidence	School Wide Rating	
<b>Creating an Environment of Respect and Rapport</b>	<p>The QSR team scored 100% of the observations as distinguished or proficient. Interactions between teachers and students were friendly, respectful, and appropriate at all times. Teachers either addressed students by their first names or by their honorifics. Students eagerly participated and willingly took intellectual risks.</p> <p>In distinguished observations interactions reflected genuine warmth, care for students as individuals, and sensitivity to each person. Teachers and students joked with each other, connected to each other on their out-of-school lives, and encouraged each other.</p>	Distinguished	36%
	<p>One student said to the teacher, “I was right, I told you, but you weren’t listening to me.” The teacher and student laughed and then the teacher responded, “I was listening but I wanted you to check!” They smiled at each other and the student gave a thumbs-up. In another observation the students encouraged each other and engaged in thoughtful interactions, saying, “Can you show me how to do that?” or “Can you say that again, please?”</p>	Proficient	64%
	<p>The QSR team scored none of the observations as basic or unsatisfactory in this component.</p>	Basic	0%
		Unsatisfactory	0%

<sup>1</sup> Teachers may be observed more than once by different review team members.

The Classroom Environment	Evidence	School Wide Rating	
<b>Establishing a Culture for Learning</b>	<p>The QSR team scored 91% of the observations as distinguished or proficient in this component. Overall students put forth tremendous effort and teachers held high expectations. In one observation students celebrated one another for correct answers. In another, the teacher said, "If you saw that (the language pattern), great, pat yourself on the back. If you didn't, don't get discouraged. We're going to keep going until everyone gets it!"</p> <p>In several distinguished observations teachers conveyed genuine passion for the content and the students' ability to be successful. One teacher noted, "This is our last class before we get back in the academic level class where you're getting ready to build skills and get ready for GED. Number sense is really about getting a sense of how numbers work. That might have felt a little weird at first but you picked it up fast!" Some teachers expertly supported individual students through scaffolding.</p>	Distinguished	23%
		Proficient	68%
	<p>The QSR team scored less than 10% of the observations as basic or unsatisfactory in this component.</p>	Basic	9%
		Unsatisfactory	0%
<b>Managing Classroom Procedures</b>	<p>The QSR team scored 91% of the observations as distinguished or proficient in this component. In most observations routines functioned smoothly and there was little loss of instructional time. Most of the time, students either had their materials or teachers had extras available. Students who arrived late to class began working quickly and quietly. In one observation a student got up and began handing out notebooks without teacher prompting. The students in these observations quickly transitioned efficiently between whole group and small group instruction.</p>	Distinguished	5%
		Proficient	86%
	<p>The QSR team scored less than 10% of the observations as basic or unsatisfactory in this component.</p>	Basic	9%
		Unsatisfactory	0%

The Classroom Environment	Evidence	School Wide Rating	
<b>Managing Student Behavior</b>	<p>The QSR team scored 100% of the observations as distinguished or proficient in this component. Half of the observations rated as distinguished, making this the highest scoring component in the review. In these observations student behavior was entirely appropriate or the teacher was preventative and swift in handling any minor misbehaviors. Students were active in correcting their own behavior and the behavior of their peers. During one observation a student was explaining a problem to another student while the teacher was talking. Another student motioned for the two of them to keep it down and they immediately began whispering even quieter while the class continued uninterrupted.</p>	Distinguished	50%
	<p>In all other observations teachers handled minor misbehaviors consistently, respectfully, and effectively. One teacher had to remind students to put away and silence cell phones after one student's phone continued to receive audible text messages. In another observation the students were playing a game and it got very loud as students began jumping and yelling. The teacher reminded the students to stay in their seats and to listen to the other teams' responses, resulting in a rule change to curb students' enthusiasm: "If you holler out the answer, you lose a point!"</p>	Proficient	50%
	<p>The QSR team scored none of the observations as basic or unsatisfactory in this component.</p>	Basic	0%
		Unsatisfactory	0%

## INSTRUCTION

This table summarizes the school's performance on the Instruction domain of the rubric during the unannounced visits. The label definitions for classroom observations of "distinguished," "proficient," "basic," and "unsatisfactory" are those from the Danielson framework. The QSR team scored 83% of classrooms as "distinguished" or "proficient" for the Instruction domain. Please see Appendix III for a breakdown of each subdomain score.

Instruction	Evidence	School Wide Rating	
<b>Communicating with Students</b>	<p>The QSR team scored 91% of the observations as distinguished or proficient in this component. Teachers clearly communicated the instructional purpose of the lessons and contextualized them within the larger scope. Several teachers reminded students about previous lessons or made connections to the GRE or other assessments.</p>	Distinguished	9%
	<p>In many observations teachers also provided clear directions and scaffolding when needed. Even though some lessons were focused on elementary level content, the teachers used age appropriate vocabulary and examples to teach students. Teachers also suggested specific strategies students could use. In one observation the teacher explained, "Now here you could use addition instead of multiplication but multiplication is faster. Let's see why multiplication would work better than addition in this case."</p>	Proficient	82%
	<p>The QSR team rated less than 10% of the observations as basic in this component.</p>	Basic	5%
	<p>The QSR team rated less than 10% of the observations as unsatisfactory in this component.</p>	Unsatisfactory	5%

Instruction	Evidence	School Wide Rating	
<b>Using Questioning/ Prompts and Discussion Techniques</b>	<p>The QSR team scored 72% of the observations as distinguished or proficient in this component. Several teachers in these observations asked students to justify their thinking, recall prior learning, and use context clues. Teachers asked questions such as, "Let me see your logic" and "How do you know? Tell me a bit more" or "You are right, but why?"</p>	Distinguished	5%
	<p>Students in the proficient observations engaged actively in the work and discussions, at times talking to each other about the content. Many students asked questions, seeking to understand at a deeper level.</p>	Proficient	67%
	<p>The QSR team scored 24% of the observations as basic in this component. The QSR team noted that in a few observations, discussion was not prevalent. Teachers asked questions but few discussion techniques were employed.</p> <p>In several observations teachers asked questions mostly along a single path of inquiry: "What are the steps we take to identify main idea and supporting details?" In another observation the teacher asked "why?" but there was only one acceptable answer. Even when multiple strategies could have been used, the teachers in the basic observations led students down a single path.</p>	Basic	24%
	<p>The QSR team scored less than 10% of the observations as unsatisfactory in this component.</p>	Unsatisfactory	5%
<b>Engaging Students in Learning</b>	<p>The QSR team scored 82% of the observations as proficient in this component and none as distinguished. In many observations teachers engaged all students using a variety of strategies. One teacher used individual white boards so all students could write their responses, show them, and then discuss the results.</p>	Distinguished	0%

Instruction	Evidence	School Wide Rating	
	Overall students were motivated to work on the course material and persist through challenges. In one class students continued working during the break and the teacher had to tell them to leave the room to rest their brains.	Proficient	82%
	The QSR team scored 18% of the observations as basic in this component. In these observations learning tasks required only recognition and recall. For example, students looked at simple sentences and were asked to identify the verb and subject in each sentence. Several teachers used multiple-choice worksheets and did not consistently ask students to explain their thinking. In one observation there were missed opportunities for student input.	Basic	18%
	The QSR team rated none of the observations as unsatisfactory in this component.	Unsatisfactory	0%
<b>Using Assessment in Instruction</b>	The QSR team scored 86% of the observations as proficient in this component and none as distinguished. In many observations teachers monitored student learning through questioning, collecting exit tickets or class work, and/or walking around the room to look at student work. In one observation students had to answer the problem correctly on their exit ticket to be dismissed from class. Students who were incorrect were pushed to go back and check their work and then eventually all were dismissed from class and all were correct.	Distinguished	0%
	In another observation the teacher employed a “thumbs up/thumbs down” strategy to assess comprehension, asking students to indicate whether or not they understood.	Proficient	86%

Instruction	Evidence	School Wide Rating	
	<p>The QSR team scored 14% of the observations as basic in this component. In these observations monitoring student learning was global and at times ineffective. One teacher posed questions and only one or two students had the opportunity to respond. There was no indication of individual student understanding. In another observation the teacher relied on written responses from some students on the board as assessment without eliciting evidence of understanding from all students. Additionally, this teacher corrected student work on the board without explaining why it was incorrect or what had to be done to correct it.</p>	Basic	14%
	<p>The QSR team rated none of the observations as unsatisfactory in this component.</p>	Unsatisfactory	0%

## APPENDIX I: THE CLASSROOM ENVIRONMENT OBSERVATION RUBRIC

The Classroom Environment	Unsatisfactory	Basic	Proficient	Distinguished
<b>Creating an Environment of Respect and Rapport</b>	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.
<b>Establishing a Culture for Learning</b>	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.
<b>Managing Classroom Procedures</b>	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.
<b>Managing Student Behavior</b>	Student behavior is poor, with no clear expectations, no monitoring of student behavior, and inappropriate response to student misbehavior.	Teacher makes an effort to establish standards of conduct for students, monitor student behavior, and respond to student misbehavior, but these efforts are not always successful.	Teacher is aware of student behavior, has established clear standards of conduct, and responds to student misbehavior in ways that are appropriate and respectful of the students.	Student behavior is entirely appropriate, with evidence of student participation in setting expectations and monitoring behavior. Teacher's monitoring of student behavior is subtle and preventive, and teachers' response to student misbehavior is sensitive to individual student needs.

## APPENDIX II: INSTRUCTION OBSERVATION RUBRIC

Instruction	Unsatisfactory	Basic	Proficient	Distinguished
<b>Communicating with Students</b>	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.
<b>Using Questioning and Discussion Techniques</b>	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.
<b>Engaging Students in Learning</b>	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.
<b>Using Assessment in Instruction</b>	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.

**APPENDIX III: SCORE BREAKDOWN BY COMPONENT**

Percent of:	2a	2b	2c	2d	3a	3b	3c	3d
Unsatisfactory	0%	0%	0%	0%	5%	5%	0%	0%
Basic	0%	9%	9%	0%	5%	24%	18%	14%
Proficient	64%	68%	86%	50%	82%	67%	82%	86%
Distinguished	36%	23%	5%	50%	9%	5%	0%	0%
<b>Subdomain Average</b>	<b>3.36</b>	<b>3.14</b>	<b>2.95</b>	<b>3.50</b>	<b>2.95</b>	<b>2.71</b>	<b>2.82</b>	<b>2.86</b>

	Domain 2	Domain 3
% of Proficient or above	95%	83%
<b>Domain Averages</b>	<b>3.24</b>	<b>2.84</b>