



May 3, 2019

Stephen Messner, Board Chair  
Kingsman Academy Public Charter School  
1375 E St NE  
Washington, DC 20002

Dear Mr. Messner,

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 2018-19 school year for the following reason(s):

- School eligible for 5-year charter review during 2019-20 school year

### **Qualitative Site Review Report**

A Qualitative Site Review team conducted on-site reviews of Kingsman Academy Public Charter School between March 4, 2019 – March 15, 2019. 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 Kingsman Academy Public Charter School.

  
Deputy Director

Enclosures  
cc: Shannon Hodge, Executive Director

## Qualitative Site Review Report

**Date:** May 3, 2019

### **Campus Information**

**Campus Name:** Kingsman Academy Public Charter School (Kingsman Academy PCS)

**Ward:** 6

**Grade levels:** Sixth through twelfth

### **Qualitative Site Review Information**

**Reason for Visit:** School eligible for 5-year charter review during 2019-20 school year

**Two-week Window:** March 4, 2019 – March 15, 2019

**QSR Team Members:** Two DC PCSB staff members including one special education (SPED) specialist and one alternative education consultant

**Number of Observations:** 14

**Total Enrollment:** 302

**Students with Disabilities Enrollment:** 121

**English Language Learners Enrollment:** n<10

**In-seat Attendance on Observation Days:**

**Visit 1:** March 5, 2019 (2 observers) – 75.4%

**Visit 2:** March 14, 2019 – 100.0% – 80.3%

### **Summary**

Kingsman Academy PCS's mission is "to provide an individualized and rigorous education in a supportive environment to prepare scholars for post-secondary success and responsible citizenship." Kingsman Academy PCS's middle school is characterized by small classes and individualized instruction. The high school offers four distinct programs: 1) Odyssey – preparation for college, career, or trade school; 2) ace360 – an athletic training program in which students build relationships with their coaches who teach the students' core academic classes; 3) Bridging the Gap – small group instruction and learning expeditions; and 4) Raising Individual Students towards Excellence (R.I.S.E.) – an evening program to accommodate self-paced schedules with blended learning.

During the Qualitative Site Review (QSR) two-week window, the team used the Charlotte Danielson *Framework for Teaching* to examine classroom environment and instruction in Odyssey, ace360, and Bridging the Gap (see Appendix I and II). The QSR team scored 50% of observations as distinguished or proficient in the Classroom Environment domain. The highest rated component was *Managing Classroom Procedures*, with 80% scoring proficient. Most teachers respected student autonomy and maintained classrooms where learning time was maximized. In the other three components in the Classroom Environment domain (*Respect and Rapport, Culture for Learning, Managing Student Behavior*), slightly less than half of observations were rated as proficient or distinguished.

Scores trended higher in the Instruction domain overall. The QSR team scored 59% of observations as distinguished or proficient. In each component, the majority of observations were rated as proficient or distinguished.

### Governance

Stephen Messner chairs the Kingsman Academy PCS Board of Trustees. The school's bylaws require the board to meet nine times per year, and the School Reform Act (SRA)<sup>1</sup> requires charter schools to have two parents and a majority of DC residents on the board. Kingsman Academy PCS has been compliant with its bylaws and the SRA for the past five years.

### Specialized Instruction for Students with Disabilities

Prior to the two-week window, Kingsman Academy PCS completed a questionnaire about how it serves its students with disabilities (SWD). Reviewers looked for evidence of the school's articulated program. Overall, the school succeeded at providing students with global accommodations and lessons rooted in Universal Design for Learning<sup>2</sup> (UDL). However, the effectiveness of these supports varied across classroom environments, resulting in students inconsistently engaging in learning.

- Because of its high population of SWD and other needs, Kingsman Academy PCS implements global accommodations, especially to the instructional setting and regarding the timing and scheduling of assignments and assessments. Students have the opportunity to listen to music while working to reduce outside distractions, use alternative workplaces in the classroom, take frequent breaks, and receive support from staff. DC PCSB observed all of these accommodations, but the classrooms where these strategies were implemented successfully had clearly established routines for their use within the broader classroom structure. An aide worked with a preassigned group of students. Directions were written and stated aloud, and teachers circulated frequently, monitoring behavior and providing academic feedback.
- As part of its overarching education plan, the school has adopted UDL. Teachers plan lessons to increase student success by providing them with multiple means of engagement, representation, and action and expression. In each of the three scored observations, students worked on differentiated materials, such as texts or math problems, based on student progress or interest, which aligns with the “action and expression” principle of UDL. Teachers also provided multiple forms of representation, including texts, videos, and model-building, to make content comprehensible for all students. Nonetheless, engagement faltered when a differentiated activity failed to

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.dcpccb.org/policy/school-reform-act>

<sup>2</sup> Universal Design for Learning (UDL) is an educational framework based on research in the learning sciences, including cognitive neuroscience, that guides the development of flexible learning environments that can accommodate individual learning differences

challenge student thinking. Some required students to recall information, whereas others invited students to apply their learning. The number of students on task increased as the activity's cognitive demand increased. Furthermore, smooth functioning of classroom procedures and well-paced and well-structured lesson plans contributed to higher levels of student engagement in the UDL lessons. In two classrooms, significant instructional time was lost as students found their seats and the teachers distributed materials.

**THE CLASSROOM ENVIRONMENT<sup>3</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 50% 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>	The QSR team scored 42% of the observations as proficient and none as distinguished in this component. The quality of interactions between teachers and students and among students was respectful. Students willingly participated in classroom discussions with encouragement from their teachers. Students said, “thank you,” and “god bless you” to one another when appropriate. In one observation a student was apprehensive about completing a math problem on the board in front of her peers. The teacher assured her the class would only provide constructive criticism. The students asked questions and made recommendations in a helpful manner. Teachers respected students’ choice and boundaries. One student walked into a classroom late and the teacher welcomed her, saying, “Do you want to join up with a group?” The student said, “No, I’m not in the mood,” and the teacher replied, “Ok, you do you.” Another teacher connected a student’s plans for her future with the non-fiction text. As students finished their work, the same teacher checked with each student personally. For example, to one student, s/he said, “Way to finish strong. How’s your mom since we last spoke. Is she ok?”	Distinguished	0%
		Proficient	42%

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<sup>3</sup> Teachers may be observed more than once by different review team members.

The Classroom Environment	Evidence	School Wide Rating	
	<p>The QSR team scored 58% of the observations as basic in this component. All teachers demonstrated respect in their interactions with their students, but in these observations student-to-student interactions were sometimes disrespectful. They occasionally called each other names or used inappropriate language. When teachers did not respond they did not escalate these behavioral instances, and the net result of all interactions was neutral, conveying neither warmth nor conflict. In one observation, for example, a student called a peer an “idiot” for getting the wrong answer and the teacher did not address the disrespectful comment.</p>	Basic	58%
	<p>The QSR team scored none of the observations as unsatisfactory in this component.</p>	Unsatisfactory	0%
<b>Establishing a Culture for Learning</b>	<p>The QSR team scored 40% of the observations as proficient and none as distinguished in this component. Teachers communicated the importance of learning and demonstrated high regard for students’ abilities. These classrooms were warm and conducive to risk-taking and participation. In one observation the teacher discouraged students from using Google to find answers saying, “You know the parts of an element and you can do this. We’ve been doing this for some time now, and I’m sure you will be okay without Google.” In another observation a student confidently responded to a teacher’s inquiry, saying, “I don’t want help. I can do this on my own. I’ve got this. I remember what we did from the other day.” One teacher used the content to encourage a student saying, “Ooh, you’re going to face a problem and just give up? What would Sojourner have done? What happened to fortitude in the face of adversity?”</p>	Distinguished	0%
		Proficient	40%

The Classroom Environment	Evidence	School Wide Rating	
	<p>The QSR team scored 60% of observations as basic in this component. In these observations teachers held high expectations for some, but not all students; or students demonstrated minimal commitment to learning. In one observation a student quickly got to work completing a more advanced assignment and received praise from the teacher. However, high expectations were not universally reinforced. Instead of completing their warm-up, other students drew on their whiteboards while another student talked on the phone. The teacher did not encourage them to complete their work on their own and they did not engage with the task.</p>	Basic	60%
	<p>The QSR team scored none of the observations as unsatisfactory in this component.</p>	Unsatisfactory	0%
<b>Managing Classroom Procedures</b>	<p>The QSR team scored 80% of the observations as proficient and none as distinguished in this component. With minimal teacher prompting, students quickly entered the classroom, located their materials, and began work. Students followed directions quickly, either to begin an assignment or to transition to small groups, resulting in minimal loss of instructional time. Teachers often projected an agenda and a timekeeping device. Students handled scientific equipment with professionalism and maturity, indicating clear lab procedures had been established.</p>	Distinguished	0%
		Proficient	80%
	<p>The QSR team scored none of the observations as basic in this component.</p>	Basic	0%

The Classroom Environment	Evidence	School Wide Rating	
	<p>The QSR team scored 20% of the observations as unsatisfactory in this component. In two observations a considerable amount of time was lost due to unclear classroom procedures. In one observation there was confusion about where students should sit. The teacher had to move each student and the materials s/he had laid out. The students repeatedly asked to retrieve supplies but there were not enough balloons for everyone to complete the assignment. Students were confused about what to do with their supplies and end products once they finished the assignment.</p>	Unsatisfactory	20%
<b>Managing Student Behavior</b>	<p>The QSR team scored 57% of the observations as distinguished or proficient in this component. In the distinguished observation the behavior was completely appropriate. Students were given the option to work by themselves or in groups. The teacher respected student choice and autonomy and in turn, the students engaged with the task. When working with small groups, teachers consistently monitored the room.</p>	Distinguished	7%
	<p>Student behavior varied in proficient observations, but teachers always acted in a way that respected student dignity. For example, in one observation, a student completely refused to acknowledge the teacher's words or presence. The teacher remained persistent and patient. Ultimately, the student was removed from the room by another adult, but successfully returned and got back to work on his project. In other observations student behavior was generally appropriate. When teachers asked students to put phones away, they did so. Teachers did not ignore misbehavior, but instead calmly reminded students of behavior expectations.</p>	Proficient	50%



The Classroom Environment	Evidence	School Wide Rating	
	<p>The QSR team scored 36% of the observations as basic in this component. In these observations the teachers attempted to respond to misbehavior with uneven results. Cell phones were an issue in these observations. Sometimes students refused to put away their phones and the teachers responded inconsistently. At times, students were permitted to engage in off-topic activities (scrolling through phones, talking to peers, sleeping) for extended periods of time.</p>	Basic	36%
	<p>The QSR team scored less than 10% of observations as unsatisfactory in this component.</p>	Unsatisfactory	7%

## 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 59% 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>	The QSR team scored 69% of the observations as proficient and none as distinguished. These teachers provided the class with an overview of the day's objective, clearly explaining and modeling for students how to use materials. Most teachers used PowerPoints, visuals, and tactile resources to explain academic concepts. Some teachers invited student participation in their explanations and modeled how to complete tasks before releasing students to work on their own.	Distinguished	0%
	The QSR team scored 31% of the observations as basic in this component. In one observation the teacher had to clarify the learning tasks so that students could complete them. Another teacher told students to copy text from the board so they could look up each term on Google and take notes. There was no structure or clarity of purpose. In another observation the teacher started by saying, "Please get started. The objective is right there." However, many students worked on packets that were not aligned to the lesson objective while one student had a conversation with the teacher that was unrelated to the objective.	Proficient	69%
	The QSR team scored none of the observations as unsatisfactory in this component.	Basic	31%
		Unsatisfactory	0%

Instruction	Evidence	School Wide Rating	
<b>Using Questioning/ Prompts and Discussion Techniques</b>	<p>The QSR team scored 50% of the observations as proficient and none as distinguished in this component. In these observations the teachers created genuine discussion among students. In one observation students worked in small groups to read, discuss, and respond to non-fiction texts. The teacher circulated the classroom and asked open-ended discussions to promote student thinking. In another observation the teacher developed a Jeopardy game using the current lesson content. Almost all students were engaged and excited to discuss among their groups. In another observation a group of students listened to an audiobook and discussed the meaning of the central conflict in the story without teacher prompting.</p>	Distinguished	0%
		Proficient	50%
	<p>The QSR team scored 50% of the observations as basic in this component. Although teachers asked some high-level questions, teachers did not push students to explain their thinking. In one observation one student dominated the classroom discussion, while in another, the teacher only called on a handful of students who were actively engaged and wanted to contribute. Some teachers only asked students to recall facts. For example, one teacher asked, "Can we describe living things the same way we would describe a plant?" The student said, "no," and there were no follow-up question to prompt the student to explain his thinking.</p>	Basic	50%
<p>The QSR team scored none of the observations as unsatisfactory in this component.</p>	Unsatisfactory	0%	

Instruction	Evidence	School Wide Rating	
<b>Engaging Students in Learning</b>	The QSR team scored 54% of the observations as proficient and none as distinguished in this component. In these observations teachers expertly involved all students in the lesson using multimedia, probing questions, student choice, and movement. Lessons had clearly defined structures, and the pacing between activities was appropriate. In a few observations the teacher provided multiple texts that students could choose from depending on their interests. Students engaged productively in small groups, taking turns solving math problems, discussing texts, and conducting scientific experiments.	Distinguished	0%
		Proficient	54%
	The QSR team scored 38% of the observations as basic in this component. In these observations the assigned activities differed drastically: some required students to recall information whereas others invited students to apply their learning. Student engagement was inconsistent and in some classrooms students had considerable “downtime” as teachers did not provide an extension activity for those who finish early. In one observation some students talked instead of completing the warm-up. The teacher attempted to encourage student participation with uneven success.	Basic	38%
	The QSR team less than 10% of the observations as unsatisfactory in this component.	Unsatisfactory	8%

Instruction	Evidence	School Wide Rating	
<b>Using Assessment in Instruction</b>	<p>The QSR team scored 64% of the observations as proficient and none as distinguished in this component. In these observations assessment was embedded within the lessons. In one observation students had a culminating exit ticket in each small group that required them to cite textual evidence to make a claim before rotating to the next task. In another observation students conducted a lab experiment with the overall goal of writing chemical equations. Teachers monitored the progress of the class by providing direct instruction and academic feedback to small groups that was specific and oriented toward future improvement.</p>	Distinguished	0%
		Proficient	64%
	<p>The QSR team scored 27% of the observations as basic in this component. In one observation the teacher monitored progress of the class by sharing the answers to the warm-up, but it was unclear which students understood the skill and which ones needed more practice. In other observations teachers only provided feedback when students sought out help or clarification.</p>	Basic	27%
	<p>The QSR team scored less than 10% of the observations as unsatisfactory in this component.</p>	Unsatisfactory	9%

## APPENDIX I: CLASSROOM ENVIRONMENT 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 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%	20%	7%	0%	0%	8%	9%
Basic	58%	60%	0%	50%	31%	50%	38%	27%
Proficient	42%	40%	80%	36%	69%	50%	54%	64%
Distinguished	0%	0%	0%	7%	0%	0%	0%	0%
<b>Subdomain Average</b>	<b>2.42</b>	<b>2.40</b>	<b>2.60</b>	<b>2.43</b>	<b>2.69</b>	<b>2.50</b>	<b>2.46</b>	<b>2.55</b>

	Domain 2	Domain 3
% of Proficient or above	50%	59%
<b>Domain Averages</b>	<b>2.46</b>	<b>2.55</b>