



January 10, 2020

Terry Golden, Board Chair
KIPP DC Honor Academy Public Charter School
3301 Wheeler Road SE
Washington, DC 20032

Dear Mr. Golden:

The DC Public Charter School Board (DC PCSB) conducts Qualitative Site Reviews (QSR) 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 QSR during the 2019-20 school year for the following reason(s):

- School eligible for 20-year Charter Review during 2020-21 school year

Qualitative Site Review Report

A QSR team conducted on-site reviews of KIPP DC Honor Academy Public Charter School (KIPP DC Honor Academy PCS) between October 21, 2019 to November 1, 2019. Enclosed is the team's report. You will find that the QSR 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 QSR at KIPP DC Honor Academy PCS.

Sincerely,

Rashida Young
Chief School Performance Officer

Enclosures
cc: School Leader

Qualitative Site Review Report

Date: January 10, 2020

Campus Information

Campus Name: KIPP DC Honor Academy Public Charter School (KIPP DC Honor Academy PCS)

Ward: 8

Grade levels: Fourth through eighth

Qualitative Site Review Information

Reason for Visit: School eligible for 20-year review during the 2019-2020 school year

Two-week Window: October 21, 2019 - November 1, 2019

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

Number of Observations: 11

Total Enrollment: 270

Students with Disabilities Enrollment: 49

English Learners Enrollment: 3

In-seat Attendance on Observation Days:

Visit 1: October 29 – 94.7%

Visit 2: October 30 – 93.5%

Visit 3:

Visit 4:

Summary

According to its mission, KIPP DC is

a non-profit network of high-performing, college-preparatory public charter schools in Washington, D.C. All KIPP DC schools are tuition-free, open-enrollment schools, and actively recruit and serve students in the city's most educationally underserved communities. At KIPP DC, there are no shortcuts. Highly skilled teachers and leaders, more time in school, a rigorous college preparatory-curriculum, and a strong culture of high expectations and support help our students make significant academic gains and continue to excel in high school and college. The DC PCSB Board approved KIPP DC PCS to transfer to KIPP DC PCS the assets of the former Somerset Preparatory PCS starting in SY 2019 – 2020.

The Qualitative Site Review (QSR) team observed strong evidence that KIPP DC Honor Academy PCS is fulfilling its mission. DC PCSB observers saw evidence of a culture of high expectations and perseverance to complete tasks. Teachers demonstrated a sense of urgency, maximized instructional time, and in most observations provided students with engaging learning opportunities.

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 93% of observations as distinguished or proficient in the Classroom Environment domain. The highest-rated component was *Creating an Environment of Respect and Rapport (2a)*, with 100% of observations scored as proficient or distinguished. Talk between students and teachers was highly respectful. Observers noted that teachers encouraged and praised students verbally and nonverbally. Students greeted their peers politely, worked collaboratively in small groups, and cheered for their classmates as they answered questions correctly. The QSR team scored 71% of observations as distinguished or proficient in the Instruction domain. The highest-rated component in the Instruction domain was *Communicating with Students (3a)*, with 90% of observations scored as proficient. Instruction was clear; teachers modeled expectations, and conceptualized tasks in broader learning goals. Most teachers incorporated vocabulary seamlessly and encouraged students to use precise language.

Governance

Terry Golden chairs the KIPP DC PCS Board of Trustees. The School Reform Act requires all DC public charter schools to have a majority of DC residents and two parents, which the school has been compliant with for the past five years.

Specialized Instruction for Students with Disabilities

Prior to the two-week window, KIPP DC Honor Academy PCS completed a questionnaire about how it serves its students with disabilities (SWD). The QSR team looked for evidence of the school's articulated SPED program. DC PCSB observers scored 92% of the school's SPED observations as proficient or distinguished in the Classroom Environment domain of the Danielson rubric, while 75% of SPED observations scored proficient or distinguished in the Instruction domain. Overall, the school implemented its stated program with fidelity, as evidenced by high levels of positive classroom interactions between all members of the class and clear expectations for students' learning and achievement. In some SPED observations, teachers provided students with challenging work and continuously encouraged students to use precise language. While it was evident that the school had strong interventions in place to support SWD, there were also some uneven results regarding students' level of engagement, in which not all students participated in classroom activities. DC PCSB observed three of the five SPED teachers that were on the roster provided by KIPP DC Honor PCS, and all three observations were in non-general education settings that were taught by a single teacher with class sizes ranging between four to nine students. Key trends from the SPED observations are summarized below.

- While the school explained in its SPED questionnaire that KIPP DC Honor Academy PCS uses co-teaching as one of its instructional models, the SPED specialist did not observe any co-teaching during the observation window. During all three SPED observations, the DC PCSB observer only saw evidence of specialized instruction outside of the general education setting that was facilitated by a single SPED teacher in each class.
- To support the learning of SWD, the school stated in its SPED questionnaire that it offers resources and specialized education through a continuum that includes, inclusion (e.g., co-teaching or consultation in the general education classroom); workshops that consist of individual or small-group instruction; a resource room where students receive targeted core subject instruction; full-time specialized instruction and support out of the general education setting at the Learning Center; and related services provided by aids and specialized service providers in and out of the general education setting. DC PCSB observed two classrooms at the Learning Center and a resource classroom. In these observations, class sizes were small, and the content was both grade-level appropriate and challenging for students. Teachers provided targeted support to students and addressed students' social and emotional needs. Additionally, teachers exhibited patience when students became frustrated with work or a challenging social situation.

The SPED specialist found that teachers maintained a high level of expectations for students at the Learning Center; however, the implementation of instructional scaffolding was inconsistent at times. In one of the observations, the teacher scaffolded the lesson by using manipulatives to explain the concept and deliver instruction for part of the class period. For the remainder of the class, the teacher remained at the board lecturing while students copied what was written on the board. In another observation, the teacher provided visuals on the board for the students to reference during an activity, but the teacher did not provide much direct support to students during their independent work time to ensure they were grasping the content.

- To provide accommodations and modifications according to the Individualized Education Plans (IEP) of SWD, KIPP DC Honor Academy PCS stated that accommodations and modifications frequently change to meet the needs of its students. During the observations, the SPED specialist saw evidence of teachers using strategies, such as repetition of directions, re-teaching content, small-group, and individualized instruction, and preferential seating. Teachers at both the Learning Center and in the resource classroom used timers to keep students on task and to help with pacing of their lessons.

While the school also stated that it provides modifications according to the IEPs of SWD that may include adjustments in the content and curriculum or the use of “read-alouds” and manipulatives, the SPED specialist did not observe any evidence of such modifications during the observation window.

THE CLASSROOM ENVIRONMENT¹

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 93% 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 ²	
<p>Creating an Environment of Respect and Rapport</p>	<p>The QSR team scored 100% of the observations as distinguished or proficient in this component. In the distinguished observations, students respectfully corrected one another when necessary. For example, during one observation when a student participated loudly in a lesson and talked over their peers, a classmate told the student, "Chill out, brother." In response, the student began raising his/her hand, sitting on the chair appropriately, and lowered his/her voice. In another observation, a student respectfully corrected the teacher when the teacher made an error, and the teacher graciously thanked the student. In all of these observations the interactions between teachers and students, and among students, were highly compassionate and respectful.</p> <p>In the proficient observations talk between the teacher and students, and among students, was uniformly respectful. For example, during one observation, as students worked independently the teacher assigned them “plus ten” points and acknowledged them by name. The teacher celebrated students that were on-task and said things like, “That was excellent, plus ten.”</p>	Distinguished	27%
		Proficient	73%
	<p>The QSR team rated none of the observations as basic in this component.</p>	Basic	0%
	<p>The QSR team rated none of the observations as unsatisfactory in this component.</p>	Unsatisfactory	0%

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

² DC PCSB does not report out qualitative evidence if less than 10% of observations in any given component earned a “basic” or “unsatisfactory” level of performance.

Establishing a Culture for Learning	The QSR team scored 91% of the observations as distinguished or proficient in this component. In the distinguished observations teachers conveyed high expectations for learning for all students and insisted on hard work. In one observation the teacher repeatedly probed student thinking and insisted on everyone's participation. Teachers made comments such as, "I need 100% participation," and "Let me push further."	Distinguished	27%
	In the proficient observations the teachers conveyed an expectation of high levels of student effort. In one observation, the teacher told the student to analyze their efforts. Another teacher reminded the students of the quote of the week and to not let their fears set limitations. Several teachers specifically praised students' efforts and attempts to solve problems.	Proficient	64%
	The QSR team scored less than 10% of observations as basic in this component.	Basic	9%
	The QSR team rated none of the observations as unsatisfactory in this component.	Unsatisfactory	0%
Managing Classroom Procedures	The QSR team scored 100% of the observations as distinguished or proficient. In the distinguished observation students themselves ensured that classroom routines functioned smoothly. For example, one student had a clipboard and was responsible for assigning points to students for following directions.	Distinguished	9%
	In the proficient observations routines functioned smoothly with minimal prompting. In one observation students quickly gathered their materials and sat quietly at their desks until they were given the signal to transition. Students then transitioned quickly and quietly to the door with minimal support from the teacher. As students left the room, the teacher said, "Let's go," and led by example. Students also used hand signals to get the teacher's attention for bathroom use, to request a pencil, and other routines. Some teachers cued students with step-by-step instructions for transitions, such as "Step 1, Step 2," and students responded uniformly.	Proficient	91%

	The QSR team rated none of the observations as basic in this component.	Basic	0%
	The QSR team rated none of the observations as unsatisfactory in this component.	Unsatisfactory	0%
Managing Student Behavior	The QSR team scored 82% of the observations as distinguished or proficient. In the distinguished observations student behavior was almost entirely appropriate, and any student misbehavior was minor and swiftly handled. In one observation a student was fidgety and did not stay in the designated seat. In response, the teacher asked the student to assist with physical tasks during the remaining time of the instructional block. The student assisted the teacher with moving the chart paper and erasing the board, and while doing so the student continued to stay engaged. In another observation, students respectfully intervened with classmates at appropriate moments to ensure their peers complied with the standards of conduct. For example, students corrected each other and encouraged each other to get ready during a transition so their group could earn table points.	Distinguished	55%
	In the proficient observations student behavior was generally appropriate, and the teachers successfully responded to disrespectful behavior among students. Several teachers managed disrespectful behaviors through redirection, positive narration, or extrinsic motivators, all of which set the tone for a polite and respectful environment. In these observations, the teacher monitored student behavior against established standards of conduct. In another observation, with the exception of one student, the teacher's responses to students' misbehaviors were almost entirely effective.	Proficient	27%

	<p>The QSR team scored 18% of the observations as basic in this component. In the basic observations teachers attempted to maintain order in the classroom, but with uneven success. In these observations, teachers had limited success in redirecting and reengaging students who were off task. In one observation the teacher did not consistently remind students to stop talking. The teacher reminded students of consequences, but the teacher did not follow through with the consequences, and the disruptive behaviors persisted.</p>	Basic	18%
	<p>The QSR team rated none of the observations as unsatisfactory in this component.</p>	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 71% 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	
<p>Communicating with Students</p>	<p>The QSR team scored 90% of the observations as proficient and none as distinguished in this component. In the proficient observations, the teachers’ explanation of content was clear and invited student participation and thinking. In one observation, a teacher explained, “Remember, you need to show your work. If these three steps are not shown, I will not be able to accept your answer.” The majority of teachers clearly communicated the purpose for the lesson or task and contextualized it in a broader goal. All classrooms had a learning goal posted visually for students. In some observations, students were asked to read the goal out loud while other teachers read the goal explicitly or referred to it throughout the lesson. Several teachers referenced specific strategies, often including anchor charts posted on the wall for students to look at during their work time.</p>	Distinguished	0%
		Proficient	90%
	<p>The QSR team rated none of the observations as basic in this component.</p>	Basic	0%
	<p>The QSR team scored 10% of the observations as unsatisfactory. In the unsatisfactory observation, the teacher made serious content errors that affected students’ understanding of the lesson. While the teacher attempted to explain strategies that students could use to complete their assigned task, the teacher did not appropriately model them and therefore led students down a path of incorrect problem-solving.</p>	Unsatisfactory	10%

Using Questioning/ Prompts and Discussion Techniques	<p>The QSR team scored 55% of the observations as proficient and none as distinguished in this component. In the proficient observations teachers used open-ended questions, inviting students to think and offer multiple answers. In one observation, one student described an incident in the story that was not related to the prompt. The teacher redirected the student by asking, "Now, was that an important part of the story? Let's read it again." The student later read aloud a portion of the book and was able to answer the story prompt correctly. The teacher questioned the student, "Why is this important?" to get the student to persist.</p>	Distinguished	0%
	<p>The QSR team scored 45% of observations as basic in this component. In the basic observations teachers invited students to respond to one another's ideas, but few students responded. Students rarely, if ever, built upon their peers' answers, and the teacher did not follow up with additional questions to challenge or probe further. In one observation, the teacher called on many students, but only a few actually participated in the discussion. Then when the teacher asked, "What was the initial amount?" students shouted out and guessed answers. The teacher told students that the correct answer was in the handout she had given them, but one student stated they still didn't know the correct response. In another observation, the teacher remained at the board and demonstrated how to complete the assignment with few opportunities to engage in any direct questioning or discussion with their peers.</p>	Basic	45%
	<p>The QSR team rated none of the observations as unsatisfactory in this component.</p>	Unsatisfactory	0%

Engaging Students in Learning	<p>The QSR team scored 64% of the observations as distinguished or proficient. In the distinguished observations, virtually all students demonstrated that they were intellectually engaged in the lesson. For example, students read independently and answered the related prompt without much assistance from the teacher. They also independently selected books when they completed their work and asked their peers for support.</p>	Distinguished	9%
	<p>In the proficient observations teachers invited students to explain their thinking as part of completing tasks. In one observation when a teacher taught students about writing a thesis statement, the teacher asked students to provide the support, with pages and quotes from their book and share their reasoning. In half of the observations, students demonstrated or verbally shared their thinking and problem-solving. Teachers scaffolded instruction and provided sufficient time for students to be intellectually engaged. Many of the lessons that staff observed followed a similar sequence of the teacher first modeling the activities for students, then allowing the class to solve the problem together, before finally giving students time to work independently.</p>	Proficient	55%
	<p>The QSR team scored 36% of the observations as basic. In these observations, the pacing of the lesson was uneven; the timing of the lessons was suitable in parts but rushed or dragged in others. In one observation the pacing of the lesson led many students to finish early. As students finished, they sat idly or proceeded to read a book. The task in this observation also required a significant amount of copying and limited opportunity to think about the text independently. In another observation, the students worked independently for five minutes and then the teacher spent fifteen minutes walking students through the same problems they had just completed.</p>	Basic	36%
	<p>The QSR team rated none of the observations as unsatisfactory in this component.</p>	Unsatisfactory	0%

Using Assessment in Instruction	The QSR team scored 80% of the observations as proficient and none as distinguished in this component. In the proficient observations the teachers elicited evidence of student understanding. In one observation, the teacher said, "I see you noticed an object on pages 39-40. Read this for me and show me where the object is. I will tell you where to start." In another observation, the teacher cautioned one student by saying, "Be careful, you are changing the denominator. Let me show you." After the teacher modeled how to solve the problem correctly, the student was able to solve the problem successfully. Several teachers used strategies such as modeling, referring to rubrics, or naming what was required for credit on the assignment directly. In one observation the teacher named how and when students would receive feedback on their essay.	Distinguished	0%
		Proficient	80%
	The QSR team scored 30% of the observations as basic in this component. In the basic observations the teacher monitored understanding through a single method, or without eliciting evidence for understanding. For example, in one observation, the feedback was limited to right and wrong answers, with little to no probing of students' understanding. In another observation, teachers worked with individual students who were confused, but these students had to self-identify as needing help in order for teachers to assist them.	Basic	20%
	The QSR team rated none of the observations as unsatisfactory in this component.	Unsatisfactory	0%

APPENDIX I: THE CLASSROOM ENVIRONMENT OBSERVATION RUBRIC

The Classroom Environment	Unsatisfactory	Basic	Proficient	Distinguished
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 sometimes 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.

APPENDIX II: INSTRUCTION OBSERVATION RUBRIC

Instruction	Unsatisfactory	Basic	Proficient	Distinguished
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.
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.

APPENDIX III: DOMAIN AVERAGES BY COMPONENT

Percent of:	2a	2b	2c	2d	3a	3b	3c	3d
Unsatisfactory	0%	0%	0%	0%	10%	0%	0%	0%
Basic	0%	9%	0%	18%	0%	45%	36%	20%
Proficient	73%	64%	91%	27%	90%	55%	55%	80%
Distinguished	27%	27%	9%	55%	0%	0%	9%	0%
Subdomain Average	3.27	3.18	3.09	3.36	2.80	2.55	2.73	2.80

	Domain 2	Domain 3
% of Proficient or above	93%	71%
Domain Averages	3.23	2.72