



January 30, 2020

Terry Golden, Board Chair  
421 P Street NW  
Washington, DC 20001

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 WILL Academy Public Charter School (KIPP DC WILL Academy PCS) between November 11, 2019 to November 22, 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 WILL Academy PCS.

Sincerely,

Rashida Young  
Chief School Performance Officer

Enclosures  
cc: School Leader

## Qualitative Site Review Report

**Date:** January 30, 2020

### **Campus Information**

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

**Ward:** 6

**Grade levels:** Fifth through eighth

### **Qualitative Site Review Information**

**Reason for Visit:** School eligible for 20-year review during the 2020-2021 school year

**Two-week Window:** November 11, 2019 - November 22, 2019

**QSR Team Members:** One DC PCSB staff member including one special education (SPED) specialist and two consultants

**Number of Observations:** 15 including two unscored SPED pullouts

**Total Enrollment:** 334

**Students with Disabilities Enrollment:** 55

**English Language Learners Enrollment:** 2

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

**Visit 1:** November 20, 2019 – 95.5%

Visit 2: November 21, 2019 – 94.7%

Visit 3: November 22, 2019 – 87.3%

**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 Qualitative Site Review (QSR) team observed mixed evidence that KIPP DC WILL Academy PCS is meeting its mission. DC PCSB observers saw students in most classrooms engaged in academically rigorous tasks. Students engaged in content-related discussions, asked and answered questions from their peers, and used technology as a resource. While teachers held students to high standards in some classrooms, in other classrooms student engagement was varied. Students in these classrooms rarely explained their thinking and teachers frequently attempted to use small groups but only a few students participated. Teachers across the campus used shared language related to behavior management like, "Demerits," and "Merits." At

times, students complied with teachers' expectations and other times they did not, resulting in lost instructional time.

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 56% of observations as distinguished or proficient in the Classroom Environment domain. The highest-rated components were *Establishing a Culture for Learning (2b)*, *Engaging Students in Learning (2c)*, and *Managing Student Behavior (2d)* with 58% of observations scored as proficient and none as distinguished in each of these components. While these components received the highest scores within the domain, as noted above only a little over half of these observations scored as proficient. Teachers in these observations used a variety of resources such as laptops and high-quality texts to maintain student engagement. Student behavior in these observations was generally appropriate and teachers used gentle reminders like chants and positive narration to redirect instances of student misbehavior. Teachers often attempted to ensure that students completed high-quality work, however student engagement varied widely across classrooms.

The QSR team scored 71% of observations as proficient and none as distinguished in the Instruction domain. The highest-rated component in the Instruction domain was *Communicating with Students (3a)* with 82% of observations scored as proficient and none as distinguished in this component. Teachers clearly communicated the purpose of the lesson to students through modeling, repetition, and the use of think-aloud activities. Throughout many observations, teachers insisted that students use grade-appropriate and content-related vocabulary in classroom discussions and when responding to prompts.

### 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 WILL 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. Overall, DC PCSB completed five SPED observations in four different classroom environments. Staff could only score two of the observations, given the small number of students in most observations. However, all of the SPED observations were used to evaluate whether the school implements its stated program with fidelity.

Overall, DC PCSB observers found that the school did implement its stated program with fidelity, as evidenced by the school's use of a continuum of services in different settings. The QSR team observed an inclusion environment with co-teaching that provided accommodations and supports to students. However, in another inclusion observation, only the SPED teacher was present despite the class schedule indicating it should have been a co-taught classroom with both a SPED and general education teacher. While in both inclusion observations the content was challenging for students, the behavior management was not always effective, and teachers had to repeat directions and redirect students continuously. This caused loss of instructional time. In the class where the SPED facilitated the inclusion class alone, students engaged in physical horseplay and inappropriate behavior, and the teacher had to stop their lesson to address the students' misbehavior. The SPED observations conducted outside of the general education setting included pull-out services and resource classrooms where small groups of students were present. In each of these classrooms there was only one SPED teacher present. In both the pull-out and resource room settings, teachers demonstrated various levels of knowledge regarding scaffolding content and successfully engaging students with rigorous activities. In one observation, the teacher provided students individualized support and remediation in basic reading skills. In this observation, students did not receive grade-level content but the instruction appeared to be an adaptive curriculum based on the students' needs. Key trends from the SPED observations are summarized below.

- To demonstrate that co-planning occurred, the school explained that DC PCSB staff would see evidence of general education teachers and SPED teachers working together seamlessly, in which the observers should not be able to easily identify which teacher was the SPED provider versus the general educator. However, the SPED specialist saw little evidence of co-planning as articulated by the school. Two of the five SPED observations were in an inclusion classroom setting, but co-teaching only occurred in one of these observations. In this observation it was evident who was the SPED teacher versus the general educator because the general education teacher primarily facilitated the lesson while the SPED teacher circulated the classroom and supported students with academic work and behavior. In the other inclusion observation, the SPED teacher taught the class without the general education teacher. In this observation, the teacher stated to the class that it was a challenging day because they only had one teacher. In this observation, the SPED teacher struggled to manage classroom behaviors.
- 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 KIPP DC Learning Center; and related services provided by aids and specialized service providers in and out of the general education setting. In addition to two inclusion classrooms, DC PCSB observed two pull-out sessions and a resource classroom. In these observations class sizes were small, and the level of rigor for the content covered was equal to what students received in the general education setting. The teachers effectively managed challenging behaviors and supported students with high academic needs by showing patience, scaffolding instructions, and constantly checking for student understanding. The SPED specialist found that teachers maintained a high level of expectations for students in the non-general education settings; however, the level of instruction varied from class to class. In one pull-out class, the teacher explained content clearly and with devotion to the content. The teacher used rich language to introduce the lesson and students were 100% engaged. In another class, the students watched a movie and the teacher periodically stopped the video to discuss reading comprehension components such as identifying setting and characters. In this observation, students disengaged with the lesson at times, and one student attempted to walk out of the class without permission.

- As a program that uses co-teaching, the school stated in its questionnaire that KIPP DC WILL Academy PCS trains its teachers on the six co-teaching models by Marilyn Friend,<sup>1</sup> of which the school primarily uses alternative team-teaching, parallel co-teaching, and station teaching. The SPED observer saw evidence of co-teaching in an inclusion classroom where the model being implemented was One Teach, One Assist. Many students in this observation presented challenging behaviors, such as talking off-task and walking around the classroom undirected. Nearly half of the students in this observation were disengaged from the learning task, and both the SPED teacher and the other adult in the room spent a significant amount of time addressing off-task behaviors.
- To provide accommodations and modifications according to the Individualized Education Plans (IEP) of SWD, KIPP DC WILL Academy PCS stated that accommodations and modifications frequently change to meet

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<sup>1</sup> Marilyn Friend 6 co-teaching models, <https://ctserc.org/component/k2/item/50-six-approaches-to-co-teaching>

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 in both the pull-out sessions and the resource classroom used timers to keep students on task and to help with pacing of their lessons. The school stated that it also provides modifications according to the IEPs of SWD that may include adjustments in the content and curriculum, or the use of read-aloud activities and manipulatives. The SPED specialist saw evidence of modification when the teacher used a movie to teach student about literary concepts. With the support from the teacher, students had to focus on identifying the setting and characters and analyze the characters in the movie.

## THE CLASSROOM ENVIRONMENT<sup>2</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 56% 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 <sup>3</sup>	
<b>Creating an Environment of Respect and Rapport</b>	The QSR team scored 50% of the observations as proficient and none as distinguished in this component. In the proficient observations talk between teachers and students was uniformly respectful. In one observation the teacher referred to students as "baby" and "friend." In another observation, when a student correctly answered a problem, the teacher responded by saying, "I appreciate you, thank you." Students in these observations often clapped, snapped, or cheered for their peers when they answered a problem correctly or received positive feedback from the teacher.	Distinguished	0%
	The QSR team scored 50% of the observations as basic in this component. In the basic observations the quality of interactions between teacher and students was uneven, with occasional disrespect. In one observation students who arrived late pushed one another as they rushed through the door at the same time. In another observation students entered the room without being greeted by the teacher. Teachers in these observations often ignored instances of disrespectful behavior from students. For example, the teacher reprimanded some students for engaging in off topic conversations, while allowing others to do so.	Proficient	50%
	The QSR team scored none of the observations as unsatisfactory in this component.	Basic	50%
		Unsatisfactory	0%

<sup>2</sup> Teachers may be observed more than once by different review team members.

<sup>3</sup> 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.

<b>Establishing a Culture for Learning</b>	The QSR team scored 58% of the observations as proficient and none as distinguished in this component. In the proficient observations teachers communicated the importance of the content. In one observation the teacher said, "I want to make sure you get this, repeat what s/he said." All students listened attentively as their peers took turns repeating after one another. Teachers in these observations expected high levels of student effort. For example, one teacher frequently asked students to relay information back to them to ensure they understood.	Distinguished	0%
		Proficient	58%
	The QSR team scored 42% of observations as basic in this component. In the basic observations teachers conveyed high expectations for only some students. In one observation, during independent work time, some students sat idle, talked to their peers, or exhibited other off-task behaviors like brushing their hair. During this observation, when students regrouped to review the answers, several students sat idle and did not check their work.	Basic	42%
	The QSR team scored none of the observations as unsatisfactory in this component.	Unsatisfactory	0%

<b>Managing Classroom Procedures</b>	The QSR team scored 58% of the observations as proficient and none as distinguished in this component. In the proficient observations classroom routines functioned smoothly. In one observation students had class jobs and helped to pass out materials to their classmates. In another observation the teacher counted down from ten as students transitioned to the line. At the end of the count down all students lined up quietly at the door. Teachers in these observations often used timers and gave students warnings to indicate the amount of time remaining.	Distinguished	0%
		Proficient	58%
	The QSR team scored 42% of the observations as basic in this component. In the basic observations classroom routines functioned unevenly. In one observation the teacher attempted to regroup students using a countdown by saying, "Bring it back in 3,2,1," and several students continued to talk before the teacher attempted the countdown again. In another observation the teacher attempted to manage the transition for students as they went to bathroom. The teacher attempted to keep track of students who needed to go but often forgot and had to repeatedly reassign students to different positions in line resulting in loss of instructional time.	Basic	42%
	The QSR team rated none of the observations as unsatisfactory in this component.	Unsatisfactory	0%

<b>Managing Student Behavior</b>	The QSR team scored 58% of the observations as proficient and none as distinguished in this component. In the proficient observations student behavior was generally appropriate. Teachers in these observations used positive narration and proximity to monitor student behavior and gave demerits when necessary. In one observation when a student became distracted the teacher offered them a new seat saying, "Let's move so you can be a bit more successful and not so distracted." The student moved immediately and started working.	Distinguished	0%
		Proficient	58%
	The QSR team scored 33% of the observations as basic in this component. In the basic observations the teacher attempted to maintain order in the classroom but with uneven success. In one observation a student sat on top of the desk. The teacher attempted a countdown to which the student briefly complied but later got back onto the table, eventually the teacher moved on as the student continued sitting on the table.	Basic	33%
	The QSR team scored less than 10% of the observations as unsatisfactory in this component.	Unsatisfactory	8%

**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><b>Communicating with Students</b></p>	<p>The QSR team scored 82% of the observations as proficient and none as distinguished in this component. In the proficient observations teachers explained what students would be learning. In one observation the teacher began by saying, “We are going to do a reteach of what should have happened yesterday,” and “We are going to do it in a different way today.” Teachers in these observations describe specific strategies that students might use. For example, the teacher told one student, “That means you need two more paragraphs and one to two references for each.”</p>	Distinguished	0%
	<p>The QSR team scored 18% of the observations as basic in this component. In the basic observations teachers had to clarify the learning task so that students could complete it. In one observation the teacher told students they would discuss a film that they watched recently. Students gave responses that indicated confusion and the teacher had to clarify the task several times.</p>	Basic	18%
	<p>The QSR team scored none of the observations as unsatisfactory in this component.</p>	Unsatisfactory	0%

<b>Using Questioning/Prompts and Discussion Techniques</b>	<p>The QSR team scored 75% of the observations as proficient and none as distinguished in this component. In the proficient observations teachers used open-ended questions to invite student thinking and participation. Teachers in these observations used strategies like turn-and-talk to help students engage in meaningful discussion about topics like drug addiction in the Black community and the origins of the Thanksgiving holiday. In another observation the teacher encouraged students to build on each other's responses. For example, after one student gave an answer, the teacher responded by saying, "How could you rephrase that so the reader really understands what you are trying to say?" Teachers in these observations used think-aloud activities to restate student responses to the class before asking follow-up questions. For example, the teacher said, "[Student X] said he wished he knew the total number of types of coins. I want you to write what information you think you need."</p>	Distinguished	0%
		Proficient	75%
	<p>The QSR team scored 25% of observations as basic in this component. In the basic observations teachers called on many students, but only a small number actually participated in the discussion. In one observation, the teacher asked questions rapid fire and although many students gave incorrect responses, the teacher did not take time to explain the correct answers. In another observation when students gave incorrect responses, teachers simply moved on or asked other students to answer the question without providing wait time.</p>	Basic	25%
	<p>The QSR team scored none of the observations as unsatisfactory in this component.</p>	Unsatisfactory	0%

<b>Engaging Students in Learning</b>	The QSR team scored 64% of the observations as proficient and none as distinguished in this component. In the proficient observations materials and resources required intellectual engagement. In one observation students had choice of whether they completed an assignment on a laptop or by writing in their journals. In another observation the teacher challenged students to think critically about a text. The teacher asked students to make a claim, find evidence to support the claim, and evaluate the strength of their claim. Pacing in these lessons was efficient and allowed students the opportunity to complete all assignments within the allotted time.	Distinguished	0%
		Proficient	64%
	The QSR team scored 36% of the observations as basic in this component. In the basic observations, only some students intellectually engaged with the learning tasks. In one observation students spent several minutes completing a Do Now activity that simply asked them to circle the correct answer. In another observation, during independent work time, many students either engaged in off-topic conversations or sat idly instead of working.	Basic	36%
	The QSR team scored none of the observations as unsatisfactory in this component.	Unsatisfactory	0%

<b>Using Assessment in Instruction</b>	The QSR team scored 64% of the observations as proficient and none as distinguished in this component. In the proficient observations teachers elicited evidence of student understanding. In one observation teachers frequently monitored and checked in on student progress. Teachers provided students with specific feedback like, "Help me figure out how you got that answer," and "What's a different way to say that?" In another observation students themselves evaluated whether or not evidence they selected from the text was strong enough to support their argument.	Distinguished	0%
		Proficient	64%
	The QSR team scored 36% of the observations as basic in this component. In the basic observations teachers provided feedback that was vague and not geared towards future improvement. In one observation the teacher reviewed student work and simply told them whether or not their work was correct or incorrect. Teachers in these observations often gave general feedback or feedback based solely on student behavior.	Basic	36%
	The QSR team scored none of observations as unsatisfactory in this component.	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 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.
<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: DOMAIN AVERAGES BY COMPONENT**

Percent of:	2a	2b	2c	2d	3a	3b	3c	3d
Unsatisfactory	0%	0%	0%	8%	0%	0%	0%	0%
Basic	50%	42%	42%	33%	18%	25%	36%	36%
Proficient	50%	58%	58%	58%	82%	75%	64%	64%
Distinguished	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
<b>Subdomain Average</b>	<b>2.50</b>	<b>2.58</b>	<b>2.58</b>	<b>2.50</b>	<b>2.82</b>	<b>2.75</b>	<b>2.64</b>	<b>2.64</b>

	Domain 2	Domain 3
% of Proficient or above	56%	71%
<b>Domain Averages</b>	<b>2.54</b>	<b>2.71</b>