



2014-15 Renewal Report

Capital City Public Charter School

May 18, 2015

DC Public Charter School Board
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RENEWAL DECISION AND KEY FINDINGS

After reviewing the renewal application¹ submitted by Capital City Public Charter School (“Capital City PCS”), as well as the school’s record established by the DC Public Charter School Board (“PCSB”), PCSB concludes that Capital City PCS meets the standard for charter renewal set out in the District of Columbia School Reform Act of 1995, D.C. Code §§ 38-1802 *et seq.* (the “SRA”). Based on this finding, the PCSB Board voted 6-0 on May 18, 2015 to approve the school’s renewal application and renew the school’s charter for a second fifteen-year term, on the condition that the school renegotiate its goals and academic achievement expectations (“academic expectations”).

Capital City PCS has neither materially violated applicable law nor its charter, and is in compliance with the SRA’s requirements regarding procurement contracts. The school’s fiscal health is strong, with its net assets increasing each year, and no findings or concerns have been identified in the school’s fiscal audits.

Capital City PCS fully met all but one of its charter goals and academic expectations, and partially met the one remaining academic expectation. The academic expectation that was partially met was in the area of mathematics, where student growth was often low, as was proficiency among the school’s English Language Learners (“ELLs”).

Goals met included those related to its Expeditionary Learning programming, community engagement, and school culture. The qualitative and quantitative evidence analyzed as the foundation of this charter renewal clearly demonstrate that Capital City PCS provides a collaborative and community-oriented pre-kindergarten through twelfth grade program for a diverse population through learning expeditions.

To assess the school’s academic goals expectations, PCSB reviewed the school’s performance in academic years 2010-11 through 2013-14. During this time, Capital City PCS has been expanding, with the school graduating its first senior class in 2012.² In 2012-13, as Capital City PCS moved to a larger facility, the school increased its enrollment from 634 to 944 students. Along with this expansion, the school reconfigured its campuses, detailed further below in the report. The school’s ongoing expansion has resulted in a much larger student body, along with an increased number of students with disabilities (“SWDs”) – from 93 students in 2010-11 to 140 in 2014-15; and an increased rate of ELLs – from 84 students in 2010-11 to 174 ELLs in 2014-15.³

As Capital City PCS approached the 2012-13 expansion, the school’s academic performance exceeded the state proficiency average in reading and math at all grade levels. In 2012-13 and 2013-14, with increased student enrollment, the school remained at the state proficiency average in both subjects. Also, the school’s composition proficiency remained at the state average over the past two years.

¹ See Capital City PCS renewal application, attached to this report as Appendix A.

² See Appendix A, p. 3.

³ Data sourced from Capital City PCS’s 2010-11 and 2013-14 annual reports, attached to this report as Appendices B and C, respectively.

However, over the course of the school's expansion, student growth in math, as measured by the two-year median growth percentile ("MGP") has been for the most part below the fiftieth percentile, although math MGP increased at the lower and high school campuses from 2012-13 to 2013-14.⁴ Over the past two years, the school's middle school SWD and ELL math performance has been particularly low, below the sector in both proficiency and growth.

Over the course of its charter, Capital City PCS has adhered to the educational philosophy described in its charter and established a strong culture for learning. In its renewal application, as well as other strategic documents submitted as part of this renewal analysis, Capital City PCS describes a clear and detailed plan to continue improving the academic outputs of all students, with a particular focus on its English Language Learners. PCSB will closely monitor the school's execution of the school's plan over the coming years, as well as its academic progress and achievement.

The school has 37 goals and expectations, a high number that is not consistent with best practice. The PCSB Board voted that Capital City PCS renegotiate its charter goals as a condition of renewal, and that among other goals and expectations, that the school set academic expectations around student growth in reading and math, along with academic expectations regarding ELL reading and math proficiency and growth.⁵

CHARTER RENEWAL STANDARD

The standard for charter renewal is established in the SRA: PCSB shall approve a school's renewal application, except that PCSB shall not approve the application if it determines one or both of the following:

- (1) The school committed a material violation of applicable laws or a material violation of the conditions, terms, standards, or procedures set forth in its charter, including violations relating to the education of children with disabilities; or
- (2) The school failed to meet the goals and student academic achievement expectations set forth in its charter.⁶

Separate and apart from the renewal process, PCSB is required by the SRA to revoke a school's charter if PCSB determines that the school (1) has engaged in a pattern of non-adherence to generally accepted accounting principles ("GAAP"); (2) has engaged in a pattern of fiscal mismanagement; and/or (3) is no longer economically viable.⁷

Given the SRA's standard for charter renewal, as well as PCSB's obligation to revoke a school's charter if it has engaged in the above types of fiscal misconduct, this report is organized into three sections. Sections One and Two are analyses of the school's academic performance and legal compliance, respectively, and serve as the

⁴ Capital City PCS, in response to this report, noted that an analysis of one-year MGPs would demonstrate the school's increased performance in student growth in math and reading. However, it is PCSB's policy, as established by a working group comprised of PCSB staff and school leaders, to use two-year MGPs as a measure of student growth.

⁵ Should the school elect to adopt the PMF as its goals, student growth would be automatically incorporated.

⁶ D.C. Code §38-1802.12(c).

⁷ D.C. Code §38-1802.13(b).

basis for the PCSB Board’s renewal decision. Section Three is an analysis of the school’s fiscal performance – included so that in the case that a school is found to have met the standard for charter renewal but has also engaged in fiscal mismanagement the PCSB Board can assess a school accordingly.

SCHOOL OVERVIEW

Capital City PCS began operation in 2000 under authorization from PCSB and currently serves children in pre-kindergarten-3 through twelfth grade in Ward 4. Its mission is:

Capital City enables a diverse group of students to meet high expectations; develop creativity, critical thinking, and problem-solving skills; achieve deep understanding of complex subjects; and acquire a love of learning along with a strong sense of community and character. We will graduate young adults who are self-directed, intellectually engaged, and possess a commitment to personal and civic responsibility.⁸

Capital City PCS implements the Expeditionary Learning model, where students conduct in-depth investigations of a theme or topic through research, projects, fieldwork, and service. The school implements the Responsive Classroom® and Developmental Designs® frameworks as its socio-emotional programming.

On April 25, 2006, Capital City PCS submitted a petition to amend its charter to allow it to operate a high school program. The PCSB Board approved this amendment, with the school expanding to the ninth grade in 2008-09, and adding a grade each year thereafter. Its first senior class graduated in June 2012.⁹ In 2012-13, as Capital City PCS moved to a larger facility, PCSB voted to increase the school’s enrollment ceiling from 740 to 1000, with the school growing from 634 students in 2011-12 to 944 students in 2012-13. As part of this increased enrollment, Capital City PCS began offering pre-kindergarten-3 and added additional elementary school classrooms.¹⁰

Also in 2012-13, Capital City PCS expanded from two campuses at separate locations with overlapping grades (a lower school with grades PK-8, and an upper school with grades 6-12) to three campuses: a lower school (grades PK3-4) middle school (grades 5-8), and high school (grades 9-12). PCSB determined that the school’s reconfiguration resulted in significant demographic changes to its lower and middle school, qualifying both campuses as “new” for purposes of accountability and reporting. Information about the school’s early childhood performance is included in the table below:

Campus	Grade Levels	2014-15 Student Enrollment	2010-11 Accountability Plan	2011-12 Accountability Plan	2012-13 EC PMF Pilot¹¹	2013-14 EC PMF
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⁸ See Appendix C.

⁹ Renewal application, p. 3.

¹⁰ See November 18, 2011 letter from Karen Dresden, Capital City PCS Head of School, to Mr. Brian Jones, PCSB Board Chair, attached to this report as Appendix T.

¹¹ Capital City PCS opted to participate in the EC Pilot PMF.

Lower School	K-2	N/A	5 of 7 targets	7 of 7 targets	N/A	N/A
	PK3-2	220	N/A	N/A	Met 5 of 7 targets	Met or exceeded 10 of 10 indicator floors

The school’s overall performance data on PCSB’s PMF, which incorporates many indicators beyond reading and math proficiency, including academic growth, attendance, and reenrollment (the “PMF”) is summarized in the table below.

Campus	Grade Levels	2014-15 Student Enrollment	2010-11 PMF	2011-12 PMF	2012-13 PMF	2013-14 PMF
Lower School	3-8	N/A	73.1% Tier 1	65.3% Tier 1	N/A	N/A
	3-4	102	N/A	N/A	37.1% No tier – new campus	50.7% Tier 2
Middle School	6-8	N/A	75.2% Tier 1	63.5% Tier 2	N/A	N/A
	5-8	320	N/A	N/A	46.7% No tier – new campus	44.1% Tier 2
High School	9-12	329	64.6% Tier 2	53.9% Tier 2	66.4% Tier 1	69.9% Tier 1

Previous Charter Reviews

Five-Year Charter Review

In 2005-06, PCSB conducted a five-year charter review of Capital City PCS. The school was found to have met three of four academic performance standards (with the fourth standard inapplicable to the school), and all non-academic performance standards in place at the time.¹² PCSB found the school’s governance and finances to also be strong. Based on this review, the PCSB Board voted at its January 23, 2006 meeting to continue the school’s charter, on the condition that the school submit an inventory of its assets, and provide a timeline for accreditation of its pre-kindergarten through eighth grade program.¹³ The record is unclear as to when the PCSB Board lifted this conditional continuance and granted full continuance to the school.

Ten-Year Charter Review

In February 2010, per PCSB policy in place at the time, PCSB conducted a preliminary charter review of Capital City PCS and then conducted a charter review the following year. If a school did not meet all relevant standards in its preliminary review, it would have a year to make improvements before its charter review the following academic year. In Capital City PCS’s preliminary charter review, PCSB found that the school had met five of seven academic targets, and met all non-academic and organizational performance standards in

¹² See 5-year charter review, attached to this report as Appendix D.

¹³ See PCSB Board Meeting Minutes from January 23, 2006, attached to this report as Appendix E.

place at that time.¹⁴ The following year, PCSB conducted the school’s charter review, finding that Capital City PCS met the standard for charter continuance.¹⁵ Regarding the school’s academic performance, PCSB found that students who attended the school for two years made large gains in reading and math.¹⁶ PCSB found that the school’s English Language Learners “struggled with achieving proficiency” but noted that ELL reading and math proficiency rates had improved over the past two years. Finally, Capital City PCS was found to have a strong school climate and to be “extremely successful with regards to satisfaction of students and parents.”¹⁷ Based on this review, the PCSB Board voted on February 28, 2011 to fully continue the school’s charter.

SECTION ONE: GOALS AND ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENT EXPECTATIONS

The SRA requires PCSB to review whether a school has met its goals and academic expectations at least once every five years. Goals and academic expectations are only considered as part of the renewal analysis if they were included in a school’s charter, charter amendment, or accountability plans approved by the PCSB Board (collectively, the “Charter”).

The table below summarizes PCSB’s determinations (based on the school’s performance from 2010-11 through 2013-14) as to whether Capital City PCS met its goals and academic expectations. These determinations are further detailed in the body of this report.

	Goals and Academic Expectations	Met?
1	Parents will attend conferences, exhibitions and showcases of student work, and other events. Parents will volunteer in support of the school.	Yes
2	a	Yes
	Establish a culture of shared leadership where school staff and parents have a voice in decision-making	
3	b	Yes
	To welcome family members as partners who can play an integral role in shaping the school’s culture.	
4	a	Yes
	To provide a safe and supportive environment in which students can share ideas and help one another learn.	
5	b	Yes
	To create a respectful, compassionate, nurturing, engaging, and physically and emotionally safe place.	
6	a	Yes
	To promote a strong culture of best effort, high expectations, teamwork, adventure, service, and respect for diversity	
7	b	Yes
	To encourage responsibility, respect, compassion, service, and appreciation of diversity in all school community members	
	To create meaningful student leadership opportunities and a student body authentically engaged in school governance	
8	a	Yes
	To conduct an inclusive annual school review.	
	b	
9	c	Yes
	To regularly collect and analyze evidence to assess progress toward a common vision, set improvement goals, and develop a comprehensive school improvement plan.	
10	c	Yes
	To engage all members of the community in continuous improvement through a system of shared decision-making and ongoing school review.	

¹⁴ See Capital City PCS Preliminary Charter Review Analysis, attached to this report as Appendix S.

¹⁵ See Capital City PCS Ten-Year Charter Review documents, attached to this report as Appendix R.

¹⁶ See Appendix R.

¹⁷ See Appendix R.

	d	To involve teachers, students, and parents as a collaborative community of reflective learners engaged in ongoing assessment, planning, and action to improve teaching and learning.	
	a	To personalize teaching and learning through small class sizes, advisory, and flexibility in scheduling and course formats.	
	b	To arrange schedules, student grouping, teacher teams, and resources to support high-quality learning expeditions and a school culture based on Expeditionary Learning and Responsive Classroom.	
7	c	To utilize the CES philosophy of student-as-worker, teacher-as-coach as the core of instructional practice.	Yes
	d	To provide longer and more flexible blocks of time for project-based learning, fieldwork, team planning, and community-building activities.	
	e	To adopt multi-year teaching to strengthen classroom relationships and improve academic results.	
		Capital City will be a learning community for teachers as well as students.	
	a	Teachers will receive the training and support they need to successfully implement the educational program and best support individual students.	
	b	To create a student-centered environment where teachers encourage students not only to solve problems but to pose problems.	
8	c	To establish a tone of unanxious expectation, decency, and trust among students, staff, and families.	Yes
	d	To develop school structures, policies, and rituals that enable adults and students to take risks and go beyond their perceived limits.	
	e	To promote inquiry and innovation in classroom practice, through discussion and critique of instructional practice and of learning expeditions.	
	f	To establish a culture of reflection, critique, revision, and collaboration among teachers and students.	
	a	To assess learning through portfolios, exhibitions of work, and student performance of authentic tasks.	
9	b	To use portfolio assessment to demonstrate students' knowledge, skills, and character, and as a means of understanding curriculum and instructional practice.	Yes
	c	To use assessment of student work to discover what students know and how they learn and to improve instruction and curriculum.	
	a	To implement learning expeditions - long-term, in-depth investigations of a theme or topic that engage students through authentic research, projects, fieldwork, service, adventure - as the core of teaching and learning.	
10	b	To see evidence of high academic achievement, critical thinking, essential skills and habits, personal development, and high-quality original work.	Yes
	c	To develop learning expeditions that are clearly linked to DC content standards.	
11		Students will become competent, independent readers.	Yes
12		Students will become effective oral and written communicators.	Yes
13		Children will be able to reason mathematically and effectively present their thinking to others.	Partially
14		To promote critical thinking, high-quality original work, and the acquisition of skills necessary for transition to college or career.	Yes
15		To operate the school as a well-run and successful non-profit corporation.	Yes
16		To ensure the business operations of the school are in harmony with its mission and educational goals.	Yes
17		To develop a stable enrollment and expanding funding sources.	Yes
18		To make careful financial decisions without sacrificing the quality of the educational program.	Yes

1. **Goal: Parents will attend conferences, exhibitions and showcases of student work, and other events. Parents will volunteer in support of the school.**

Assessment: **Capital City PCS met this goal.** Each year since 2010-11, at least 97% of parents attended at least one student conference during the school year.¹⁸ The school offered three parent conferences a year until its expansion in 2012, when it added a fourth conference for parents in August before the school year began.

Parent Conferences

The school reports that in most grades, parent conferences are led by students, who present their work and discuss progress towards learning targets. Interpreters are available for these conferences upon request. The school's parent attendance conference rate has been 97% or above over the past four school years.¹⁹

Other Opportunities for Parent Involvement

Capital City PCS describes other opportunities for parent involvement in its renewal application.²⁰

- Parents participate in an active Parent School Association ("PSA").
- The school invites parents to attend biannual Celebrations of Learning at each campus, where students exhibit their work from the previous semester.
- In 2013-14, the school offered several parent workshops, including a math workshop at its lower school that was attended by more than 100 families.
- Parents participate in school cultural events, including Hispanic and black history months.
- Parents volunteer to coach sports teams, chaperone fieldwork, and help with other school events.

2a. **Goal: Establish a culture of shared leadership where school staff and parents have a voice in decision-making.**

2b. **Goal: To welcome family members as partners who can play an integral role in shaping the school's culture.**

2c. **Goal: To engage all members of the community in continuous improvement through a system of shared decision-making and ongoing school review.**

Assessment: **Capital City PCS met these goals.** In its renewal application,²¹ Capital City PCS describes several ways that staff and parents are involved with school decision-making:

- Parents participate in the PSA, with PSA leadership meeting monthly with school leadership;
- Several working groups comprised of parents and staff helped plan for the school's 2012 expansion and move, giving input on the education programs, the library, the school garden, and playground, among other things.

¹⁸ See parent conference sign-up sheets, attached to this report as Appendix F.

¹⁹ See Appendix F.

²⁰ See Appendix A, p. 7.

²¹ See Appendix A, pp. 7-8.

- Parents and staff are involved in hiring new school leadership.
- Each campus has an Instructional Leadership Team, comprised of teachers who help set campus priorities and goals, and plans for professional development, among other things.
- The Technology Leadership Team is comprised of teachers and plans for technology integration throughout the Capital City PCS campuses.
- In 2012-13, an Equity Planning Team was formed that focuses on issues of race and equity in regards to professional development, hiring, parent engagement, and student experiences.

3a. **Goal: To provide a safe and supportive environment in which students can share ideas and help one another learn.**

3b. **Goal: To create a respectful, compassionate, nurturing, engaging, and physically and emotionally safe place.**

Assessment: **Capital City PCS met these goals.** The school’s discipline, attendance, reenrollment, as well as qualitative evidence, supports that the schools met these goals.

Discipline Rates

Capital City PCS’s suspension and expulsion rates are detailed below.

PK-8 Suspension Rates				
	2010-11	2011-12	2012-13	2013-14
Capital City PCS – Lower School	1.2%	None	3.7%	5.0%
Capital City PCS – Middle School	10.0%	11.1%	17.1%	10.1%
PK-8 Charter Sector Rate	9.8%	11.8%	13.6%	11.8%

High School Suspension Rates				
	2010-11	2011-12	2012-13	2013-14
Capital City PCS – High School	14.2%	18.7%	12.5%	16.6%
DC Charter High School Average	19.6%	25.0%	23.6%	20.7%

High School Expulsion Rates				
	2010-11	2011-12	2012-13	2013-14
Capital City PCS – High School	1.5% (3 students) ²²	2.5% (7 students)	0.6% (2 students)	1.5% (5 students)
DC Charter High School Average	2.1%	0.5%	0.3%	0.8%

Attendance and Reenrollment

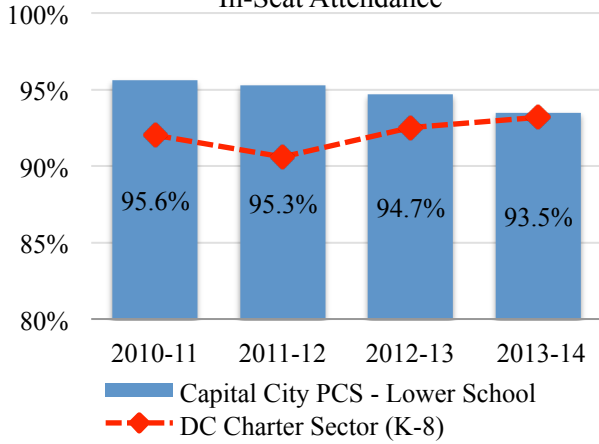
Capital City PCS has exceeded its early childhood attendance targets since 2010-11. Also, its in-seat attendance rates have been above the charter sector average each year since 2010-11. The school’s reenrollment rate has exceeded the charter sector at each of its campuses over the past four years.

²² In 2010-11, two middle school students were also expelled from Capital City PCS.

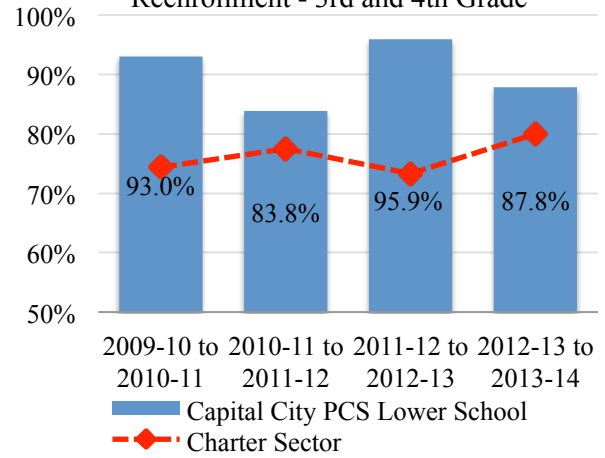
Early Childhood Attendance Targets		
Year	Target	Target Met?
2010-11	On average, pre-kindergarten through second-grade students will attend school 91% of the days.	Yes. The average daily attendance was 95.5%.
2011-12		Yes. The average daily attendance was 97.1%.
2012-13		Yes. The average daily attendance was 98.2%.
2013-14	In-seat attendance rate – PK3 and PK4 students	91.5% Above EC PMF floor of 80.0%
2013-14	In-seat attendance rate – K-2 students	93.6% Above EC PMF floor of 82.0%

Early Childhood Reenrollment Targets		
Year	Target	Target Met?
2010-11	At least 85% of eligible pre-kindergarten through second-grade students will reenroll.	Yes 92.6% of students reenrolled for the 2011-12 school year.
2011-12		Yes 95.8% of students reenrolled for the 2011-12 school year.
2012-13		Yes 94.1% of students reenrolled for the 2012-13 school year.
2013-14	Reenrollment rate – K-2 students	95.1% Above EC PMF floor of 60.0%

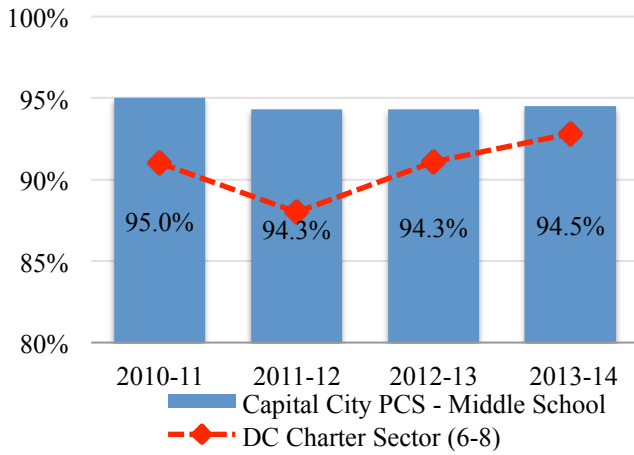
Capital City PCS: Lower School
In-Seat Attendance



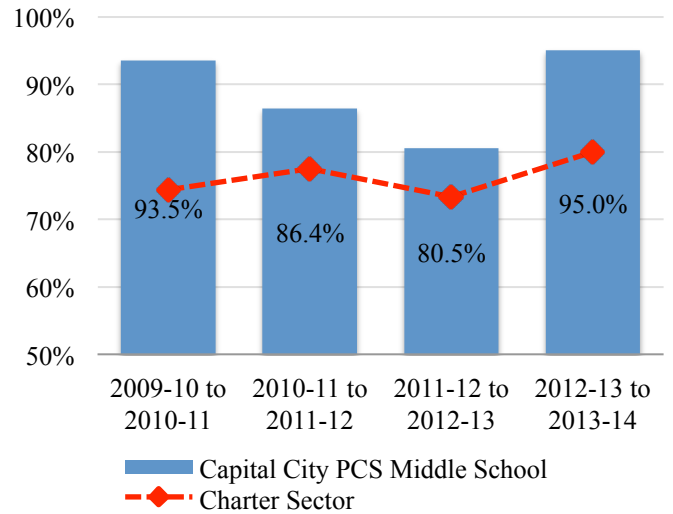
Capital City PCS: Lower School
Reenrollment - 3rd and 4th Grade



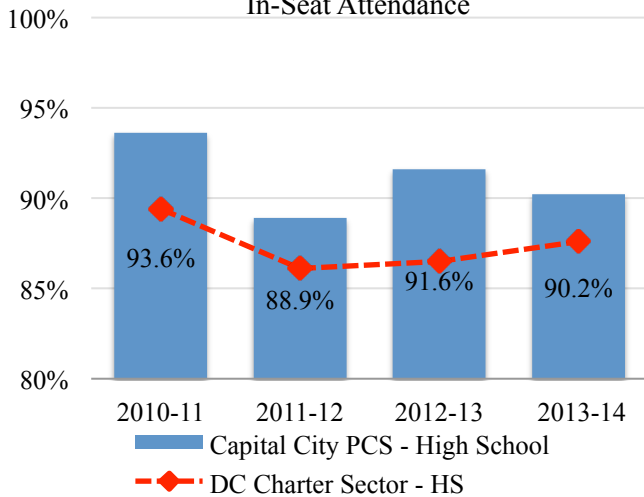
Capital City PCS: Middle School
In-Seat Attendance



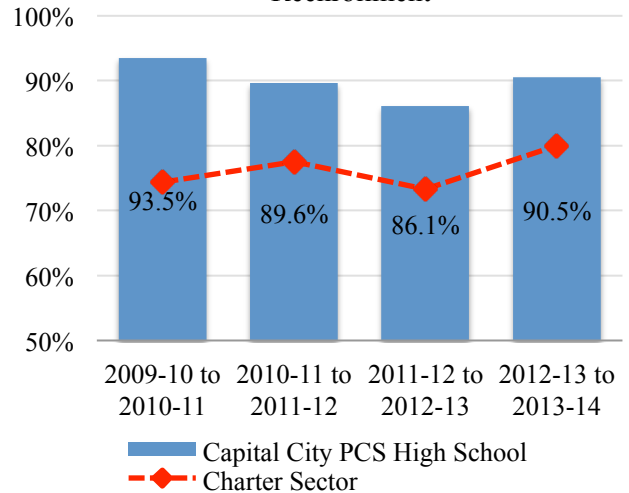
Capital City PCS: Middle School
Reenrollment



Capital City PCS: High School
In-Seat Attendance



Capital City PCS: High School
Reenrollment



Qualitative Evidence

As part of the review process, in January 2014, PCSB conducted a Qualitative Site Review (“QSR”) of each of Capital City PCS’s three campuses.²³ PCSB reviewers observed the following evidence in support of these goals. At each Capital City PCS campus, PCSB reviewers found 80% or more of the teaching staff to be proficient or exemplary on the Classroom Environment domain of Charlotte Danielson’s *Framework for Teaching*.

Lower School	Talk between teachers and students and among students was uniformly respectful. Teachers consistently referred to students as “friends” and demonstrated warmth and caring through personalized conversations. ²⁴
Middle School	In 80% of observations, “teachers and students were uniformly respectful with one another. Teachers spoke to students in a positive voice. Teachers were tactful and positive in giving feedback to students, even when making corrections.” ²⁵
High School	Throughout the classrooms, teachers and students were respectful of and friendly towards one another; teachers held genuinely high expectations of student behavior; classroom procedures functioned effectively, resulting in little loss of instructional time; and teachers proactively managed student behavior. ²⁶

4a. **Goal: To promote a strong culture of best effort, high expectations, teamwork, adventure, service, and respect for diversity.**

4b. **Goal: To encourage responsibility, respect, compassion, service, and appreciation of diversity in all school community members.**

Assessment: **Capital City PCS met these goals.** There is much evidence in the school’s record that it has promoted the culture described in these goals. In particular, in the school’s January 2014 QSR, PCSB reviewers found numerous examples of the school meeting these goals, in particular that students treated each other and Capital City PCS staff members respectfully.²⁷

Service

Capital City PCS describes in its renewal application how each campus has established a culture of service among its community.²⁸

Lower Campus	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Each week, all students and staff participate in a “campus-wide service time” where teachers lead student groups in contributing to the school community. • As part of a learning expedition, first grade students “raised awareness about Colony Collapse Disorder” at the local farmers market and raised money for
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²³ See Capital City PCS Lower, Middle, and High School Qualitative Site Review reports, attached to this report as Appendices G, H, and I, respectively.

²⁴ See Appendix G, p. 12.

²⁵ See Appendix H, p. 8.

²⁶ See Appendix I, p. 2.

²⁷ See Appendix H, p. 5; Appendix I, p. 8.

²⁸ See Appendix A, pp. 11-12.

	beehives for the school by selling beeswax candles.”
Middle Campus	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Each Crew develops a community service project. Past projects include collecting art supplies for a hospital, and volunteering at an animal shelter. • As part of a learning expedition about immigration, students “researched and told the life story of immigrants within our community and raised awareness about immigrant rights.”
High Campus	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Completing 100 hours of community service is a graduation requirement. • Advisory groups develop community service projects. • In 2013-14, high school students began a tutoring group for lower school students. • As part of a learning expedition about fish ecology, students raise and release fish into the DC ecosystem.

Adventure

Capital City PCS employs a full-time Adventure Coordinator who organizes adventures for students. The school writes in its renewal application that adventures are often connected to learning expeditions, and describes adventures including “hiking, rock climbing, swimming, ice skating, and canoeing.”²⁹

Appreciation of Diversity

During the January 2014, QSR, PCSB reviewers found that Capital City PCS “school appeared to appreciate diversity. Classroom libraries contained a variety of multicultural literature. A few hall displays celebrated the school staff’s different cultures; displays showed staff and their families in authentic clothes that represented their heritages.”³⁰

In its renewal application, Capital City PCS described its staff equity initiative:

Following the significant expansion of 2012-13, Capital City embarked on an equity initiative, led by an equity steering committee comprised of staff members from all campuses. The school committed a significant amount of professional development days before and during the 2012-13 school year to this equity work. The entire staff, including faculty as well as central office, operations, facilities, and food service staff, was included in the sessions, which utilized groups of approximately 30-40 people each. These groups were led by internal facilitators and remained stable throughout the duration of the school year. Over the course of the year, facilitators led their groups through various workshops and sessions, requiring staff to grapple with ideas that were at times uncomfortable and new. Staff members were challenged to have courageous conversations and to speak their truth in the context of their equity working groups.³¹

²⁹ See Appendix A, p. 13.

³⁰ See Appendix G, p. 8.

³¹ See Appendix A, p. 13.

5. **Goal: To create meaningful student leadership opportunities and a student body authentically engaged in school governance.**

Assessment: Capital City PCS met this goal. Capital City PCS described numerous student leadership and governance opportunities for its high school students, as follows.

- Upper class students lead an annual four-week freshman orientation.
- Eleventh grade students are selected to manage grade level meetings, team building activities, and community service projects.
- Rising twelfth grade students nominate and elect senior class officers.
- High school students founded a Gay-Straight Alliance.

Capital City PCS also describes in its renewal application how its students were engaged in its 2012 expansion:

- Seventh and Eighth grade students studied green building, and presented research and recommendations for the new school in front of the Capital City PCS Board of Trustees.
- First and second grade students designed the school's new playground as part of a healthy bodies expedition. "They visited local playgrounds..., surveyed students..., met with architects and safety experts, and presented their final design recommendations to the Kaboom! Design Committee."
- Students gave input on the new school's athletic spaces, gardens, and library.

6a. **Goal: To conduct an inclusive annual school review.**

6b. **Goal: To regularly collect and analyze evidence to assess progress toward a common vision, set improvement goals, and develop a comprehensive school improvement plan.**

6c. **Goal: To engage all members of the community in continuous improvement through a system of shared decision-making and ongoing school review.**

6d. **Goal: To involve teachers, students, and parents as a collaborative community of reflective learners engaged in ongoing assessment, planning, and action to improve teaching and learning.**

Assessment: Capital City PCS met these goals. Each year, as part of the Expeditionary Learning curriculum, the school reviews its implementation of that program, focusing on curriculum, instruction, assessment, culture, character, and leadership.³² These reviews are used by the school to improve its Expeditionary Learning program each year.

The school also analyzes academic data, including student performance on internal and external assessments. The school annually presents this data to staff and parents, to seek their input in how to improve the school's academic programming each year.

³² See Capital City PCS 2013-14 Expeditionary Learning Implementation Review Report, attached to this report as Appendix Q.

Qualitative Evidence

During the January 2014 QSR, PCSB reviewers observed the following qualitative evidence in support of these goals.

Lower School	In math classes, teachers asked students to explain their methodology to their small groups. When students were stuck in their explanations, teachers assisted them with prompting questions, such as “What did you do next to solve the problem?” In one classroom, when a student’s methodology was slightly off, the teacher asked the rest of the small group, “Does anyone have a difference of opinion?” Teachers praised students for their explanations of how to attack a problem and said, “You used a great strategy!” ³³
Middle School	In several classrooms students engaged in a feedback critique processes designed to help students develop quality work aligned to the learning targets. Students reflected on prior knowledge of themes in Harlem Renaissance poetry and compared and contrasted these themes with themes from modern day music. ³⁴

- 7a. **Goal: To personalize teaching and learning through small class sizes, advisory, and flexibility in scheduling and course formats.**
- 7b. **Goal: To arrange schedules, student grouping, teacher teams, and resources to support high-quality learning expeditions and a school culture based on Expeditionary Learning and Responsive Classroom.**
- 7c. **Goal: To utilize the CES philosophy of student-as-worker, teacher-as-coach as the core of instructional practice.**
- 7d. **Goal: To provide longer and more flexible blocks of time for project-based learning, fieldwork, team planning, and community-building activities.**
- 7e. **Goal: To adopt multi-year teaching to strengthen classroom relationships and improve academic results.**

Assessment: Capital City PCS met these goals.

The school describes in its renewal application that “at the middle and high school level, students are part of advisories or crews of 10-12 students that meet daily with an advisor and engage in a process for sharing and discussing critical issues.”³⁵ Each student’s schedule allows for longer blocks of time to allow them to focus on their Expeditionary Learning projects, including time for students to conduct fieldwork related to these projects.

Teachers’ schedules allow for common planning time, including a weekly grade level meeting where teachers “coordinate expedition plans, academic expectations, and teaching strategies.”³⁶ Additionally, scheduling allows for teaching teams to consult with administrators. There are two primary types of consultations – inclusion consulting is led by the Director of Student Services to discuss individual

³³ See Appendix G, p. 6.

³⁴ See Appendix H, p. 4.

³⁵ See Appendix A, p. 9.

³⁶ See Appendix A, p. 17.

students’ needs, and academic consulting relates to analyzing student data and discussing student progress towards goals.

Qualitative Evidence

During the January 2014 QSR, PCSB reviewers observed the following qualitative evidence in support of these goals.

Lower School	<p>The QSR team observed small student-to-teacher ratios in each class (approximately eight to ten students for every teacher in the room). Most classes had two staff, a teacher and teaching fellow, working with students; additional staff, including instructional assistants and inclusion specialists, also worked with students. The multiple staff members in each room were able to work with small groups of students (about three to four students each) and interact individually with students.³⁷</p> <p>...</p> <p>Teachers circulated classrooms during independent work time, and when a student was stuck, the teacher asked questions and allowed the student to explain his/her thought process to get started working again. During whole group instruction, teachers presented strategies to solve math or writing problems and let students choose which strategies would work best. Many teachers provided specific feedback to students to help them refine their strategies. During small groups, teachers initiated conversations but then encouraged fellow students to respond to one another.³⁸</p>
Middle School	<p>Teachers modeled the assignment and then circulated around the classroom to monitor and help individual students or students working in groups. Teachers often initiated the conversation and then encouraged students to think about how they arrived at solutions.³⁹</p>

- 8a. **Goal: Capital City will be a learning community for teachers as well as students. Teachers will receive the training and support they need to successfully implement the educational program and best support individual students.**
- 8b. **Goal: To create a student-centered environment where teachers encourage students not only to solve problems but to pose problems.**
- 8c. **Goal: To establish a tone of unanxious expectation, decency, and trust among students, staff, and families.**
- 8d. **Goal: To develop school structures, policies, and rituals that enable adults and students to take risks and go beyond their perceived limits.**
- 8e. **Goal: To promote inquiry and innovation in classroom practice, through discussion and critique of instructional practice and of learning expeditions.**
- 8f. **Goal: To establish a culture of reflection, critique, revision, and collaboration among teachers and students.**

³⁷ See Appendix G, p. 9.

³⁸ See Appendix G, pp. 9-10.

³⁹ See Appendix H, p. 6.

Assessment: Capital City PCS met these goals. The school discusses its adventure and professional development programs as evidence that the school met these goals. Additionally, there is significant qualitative evidence supporting that the school met these goals. Overall, the school has built a strong culture conducive to learning. For example, at the Capital City PCS – High School, “teachers modeled trust and unanxious expectations; teachers and students spoke frankly about their challenges, such as preparing for tests, time management, and planning. Students appeared to have strong relationships with their mentors built on frank feedback...”⁴⁰

Adventure Program

Capital City PCS employs a full-time Adventure Coordinator who plans and leads full-day trips for classes throughout the school year, including hiking, rock climbing, ice skating, and canoeing. The school writes in its renewal application that “these trips allow students to try new activities, engage in a group experience, take risks, and experience the outdoors.”⁴¹

Reflection/revision

The school writes that students often “include a reflection sheet for each piece of work that is placed in their portfolio, and students are expected to be able to articulate how and why they have revised a particular piece of work.”⁴²

Teachers collaborate by conducting peer observations of colleague’s classrooms.⁴³ Each Wednesday afternoon, students are dismissed early, and all teachers participate in professional development, with topics for the most part chosen by the school’s teacher-led Instructional Leadership Team. At times, the school offers differentiated professional development sessions for teachers to choose among.⁴⁴ In classroom observations, teachers modeled trust and unanxious expectations; teachers and students spoke frankly about their challenges, such as preparing for tests, time management, and planning. Students appeared to have strong relationships with their mentors built on frank feedback...”⁴⁵

Qualitative Evidence

PCSB reviewers observed the following qualitative evidence in support of the review.

Lower School	Teachers referred to students as “friends” and to their classrooms as “families”. To help staff with unanxious expectations, there is obvious extended planning time. This was evidenced by the effective co-teaching routines in the classroom... On Wednesday morning during Whole School Meeting, the school promoted a sense of whole-school community by singing songs
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⁴⁰ See Appendix I, p. 8.

⁴¹ See Appendix A.

⁴² See Appendix A, p. 19.

⁴³ See Appendix A, p. 19.

⁴⁴ See Capital City PCS 2013-14 professional development calendars, attached to this report as Appendix J.

⁴⁵ See Appendix I, p. 8.

	together and playing games. The focus of this meeting appeared to be on community and school values. ⁴⁶
Middle School	The team observed students openly and nicely talking to and working with teachers and each other, showing that there was an underlying trust and rapport among all staff and students. ⁴⁷
High School	In classroom observations, teachers modeled trust and unanxious expectations; teachers and students spoke frankly about their challenges, such as preparing for tests, time management, and planning. Students appeared to have strong relationships with their mentors built on frank feedback... ⁴⁸

9a. **Goal: To assess learning through portfolios, exhibitions of work, and student performance of authentic tasks.**

9b. **Goal: To use portfolio assessment to demonstrate students' knowledge, skills, and character, and as a means of understanding curriculum and instructional practice.**

9c. **Goal: To use assessment of student work to discover what students know and how they learn and to improve instruction and curriculum.**

Assessment: Capital City PCS met these goals. All Capital City PCS students prepare a portfolio over the course of the school year that they present to their parents twice a year at a student-led conference.⁴⁹ In the eighth and tenth grades, students prepare a “Passage Portfolio” that they present to a scoring panel. Capital City PCs notes that these students must “pass these panel presentations to matriculate to the next grade level.”⁵⁰

Lower School	Classrooms and hallways were covered in unique student work, such as bio poems, Hopes and Dreams assignments, expeditionary learning questions and research, and math explorations...
Middle School	The team observed students openly and nicely talking to and working with teachers and each other, showing that there was an underlying trust and report among all staff and students. ⁵¹ ... The QSR team observed that the hallways and classroom walls contained a myriad of student work, including class assignments and projects, and the progression of student performance. Students also shared their portfolios with other students in Crew class. ⁵²
High School	[T]here were several in-depth posters of student work posted in hallways and in some classrooms. These posters included student research on China and vocabulary posters with definitions, synonyms, and examples. ⁵³

⁴⁶ See Appendix G, p. 7.

⁴⁷ See Appendix H, p. 4.

⁴⁸ See Appendix I, p. 8.

⁴⁹ See Appendix C, p. 27.

⁵⁰ See Appendix C, p. 28.

⁵¹ See Appendix H, p. 4.

⁵² See Appendix H, p. 6.

⁵³ See Appendix I, pp. 10-11.

10a. **Goal: To implement learning expeditions - long-term, in-depth investigations of a theme or topic that engage students through authentic research, projects, fieldwork, service, adventure - as the core of teaching and learning.**

10b. **Goal: To see evidence of high academic achievement, critical thinking, essential skills and habits, personal development, and high-quality original work.**

10c. **Goal: To develop learning expeditions that are clearly linked to DC content standards.**

Assessment: **Capital City PCS met these goals.** The school has consistently implemented the Expeditionary Learning over the course of its charter. Students in most grade levels complete two expeditions per year, one of which usually has a humanities focus, and the other a focus on science. Learning Expeditions are aligned with Common Core standards for all academic subjects except for science, which is aligned with The Next Generation Science Standards. Eleventh grade students complete one year-long learning expedition. All twelfth grade students complete a senior expedition, through which students select a topic, “conduct research, meet with experts, design a project, complete a research paper, and present to a panel.”⁵⁴ 2013-14 Learning Expeditions are detailed in the table below.

Grade	Fall Expedition Topic	Spring Expedition Topic
PK	Families	Herbs
K	Pigeons	“Music Tells A Story”
1	Healthy Bodies	Bees!
2	Water	Homes
3	Rock Creek Park	Native Americans
4	“Africa is Not A Country”	Colonial America
5	Know Your Rights!	Chesapeake Bay

Grade	Fall Expedition Topic	Spring Expedition Topic
6	Our Community	Civil War
7	Immigration	Oceans in Crisis
8	Ancient Civilizations	Food
9	Fish Ecology	World Religions
10	Injustice	Water Quality
11	Food Justice	
12	Senior Expedition	

Qualitative Evidence

During the January 2014 QSR, PCSB reviewers observed the following qualitative evidence in support of these goals.

Lower School	The school designated expeditionary projects for each grade level. Evidence of the projects this far in the school year were posted in classrooms and hallways. Students in pre-kindergarten were exploring “Putting the Garden to Sleep;” during the QSR visits, students discussed how to care for a garden during the winter. Third graders were exploring Rock Creek Park and second graders were exploring water. Some of the questions associated with their expeditions were
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⁵⁴ See Appendix A.

	<p>“Why does water exist?”, “Was there more water 100 years ago?”, and “Why are people picking up trash?” Students in both grades had visited Rock Creek Park monthly this year, collected evidence from the park, and talked with Park Rangers to answer some of their questions. Students also conducted science experiments about water to answer some of their questions. The students had mixed water with other substances and tested water at different temperatures to see what happened.</p> <p>The fourth graders had expedition hour on their Friday schedules. The students were exploring the similarities and differences between Egypt and Mali. On the wall of the classroom was a graphic organizer with questions of what they wanted to learn and what they had learned so far. The students explored griot storytelling (oral record of African tribal history) during class and the teacher stated a professional griot storyteller would be visiting soon.⁵⁵</p>
Middle School	<p>The school designed expeditionary projects for each grade level in the middle school. The QSR review team saw evidence of learning expeditions in classrooms and in the hallways. Eighth graders completed an expedition entitled “Super-Sized or Civilized” in Science and Humanities and went to the art museum as part of the expedition. The sixth grade expedition focused on culture and community of students’ families and of the school.⁵⁶</p>

11. Goal: **Students will become competent, independent readers.**

Assessment: **Capital City PCS met this goal.** The school’s overall reading proficiency has remained at or near the state average over the course of its expansion. Reading MGP remained near 50 throughout the expansion, aside from a dip in the MGP of third and fourth grade students in 2012-13.⁵⁷ While for most part the school’s SWD reading proficiency rate remained at the state SWD average over the past four years, the reading proficiency of the school’s third through eighth grade ELL students has been below the state average during this time.

Early Childhood Literacy

While the school met all pre-kindergarten literacy targets, it had mixed performance in meeting its literacy growth and proficiency targets for kindergarten through second grade students.

Early Childhood Reading Progress		
Year	Target	Target Met?
2010-11	At least 89% of pre-kindergarten and kindergarten students will demonstrate progress on at least three of the six key grade level literacy indicators by the spring administration on the Phonemic Awareness Literacy Screening (“PALS”) assessment (or score at the 100% mark).	Yes (100% of students demonstrated progress or scored at the 100% mark.)

⁵⁵ See Appendix G, p. 8.

⁵⁶ See Appendix H, p. 5.

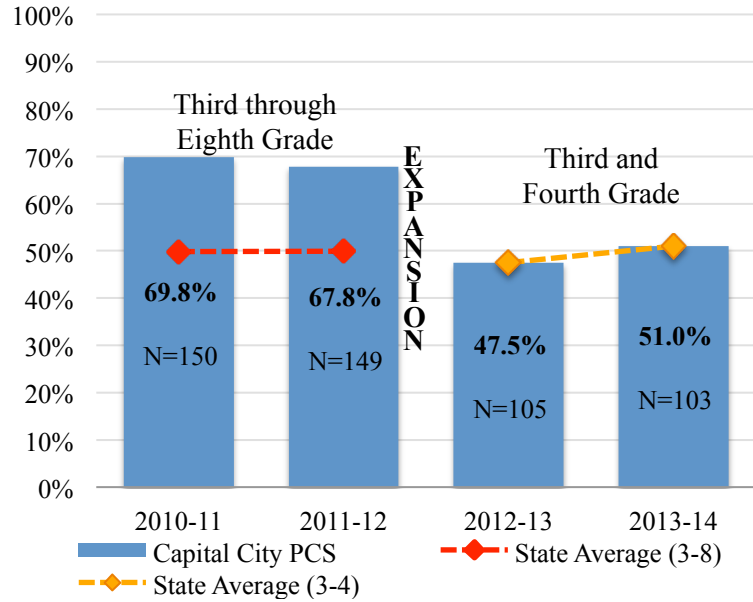
⁵⁷ PCSB’s policy is to analyze and report two-year MGPs. However, as part of Capital City PCS’s 2012-13 expansion, its lower and middle school campuses were classified as new campuses, with PCSB reporting a one-year MGP them. As such, in this report both one- and two-year MGPs are included for 2012-13 and 2013-14.

2011-12	At least 89% of pre-kindergarten and kindergarten students will demonstrate progress on at least three of the six key grade level literacy indicators by the spring administration on the PALS assessment (or score at the 100% mark).	Yes (100% of students demonstrated progress or scored at the 100% mark.)
2012-13		Yes (95.0% of students demonstrated progress or scored at the 100% mark.)
2013-14	Rate of pre-kindergarten-3 and -4 students achieving one year of growth or scoring proficient on the Teaching Strategies GOLD assessment.	88.9% of students Exceeded 60% EC PMF Score

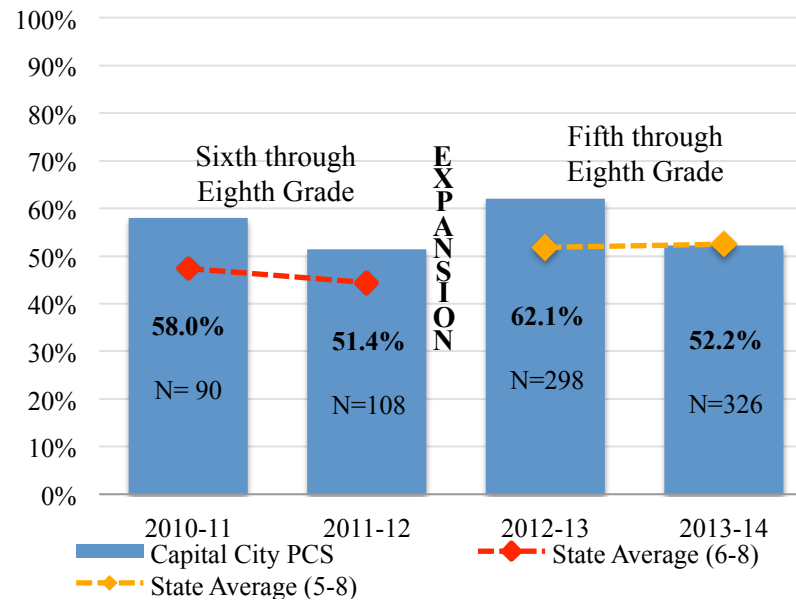
Early Childhood Reading Progress		
Year	Target	Target Met?
2010-11	At least 70% of first- and second- grade students will make at least the projected level of growth on the DRA.	No (60% of students made at least a year of growth.)
2011-12	70% of first and second- grade students will make at least the projected level of growth on the DRA.	Yes (75% of students made at least a year of growth.)
2012-13	70% of first and second- grade students will make at least the projected level of growth on the DRA.	No (68.0% of students made at least a year of growth.)

Early Childhood Reading Literacy		
Year	Target	Target Met?
2010-11	At least 70% of kindergarten through second grade students will score at or above grade level on the Developmental Reading Assessment (“DRA”).	No (62% of students scored at or above grade level.)
2011-12	70% of kindergarten through second grade students will score at or above grade level on the DRA.	Yes (73.2% of students scored at or above grade level.)
2012-13	70% of kindergarten through second grade students will score at or above grade level in reading on the DRA.	No (57.0% of students scored at or above grade level.)
2013-14	Rate of kindergarten through second grade students achieving one year of growth or scoring proficient on the PALS (K) or DRA (1st and 2nd) assessment.	81.3% of students Exceeded 60% EC PMF Score

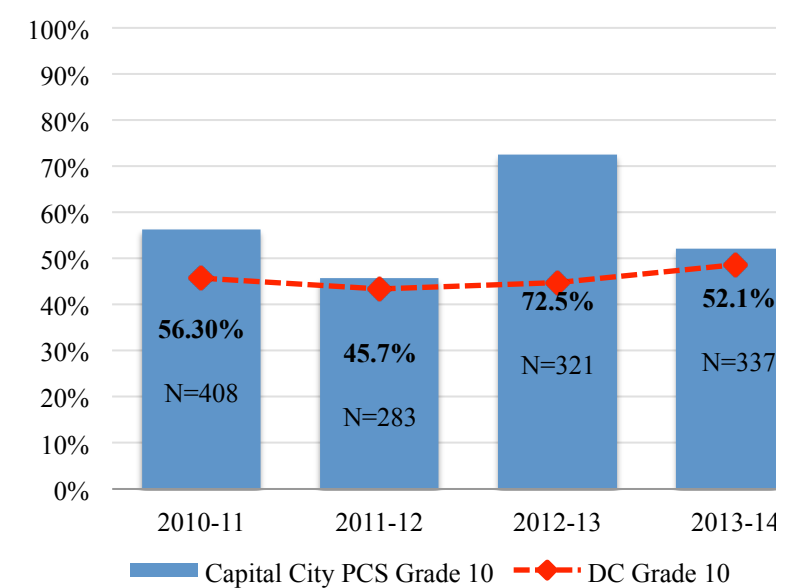
Capital City PCS: Lower School
DC CAS Reading Proficiency



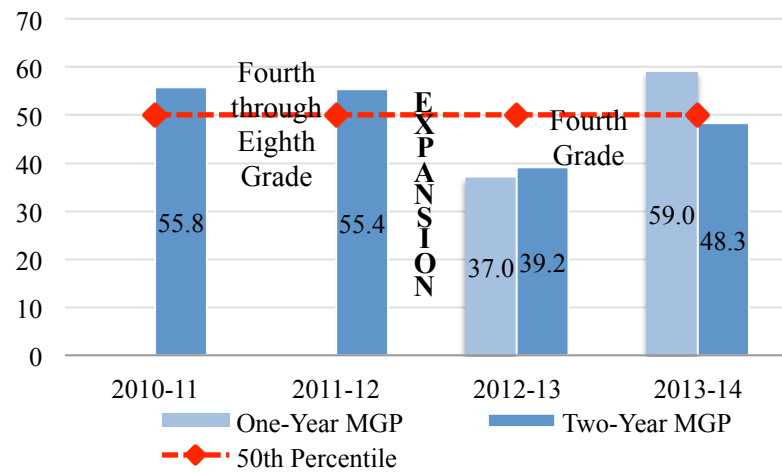
Capital City PCS: Middle School
DC CAS Reading Proficiency



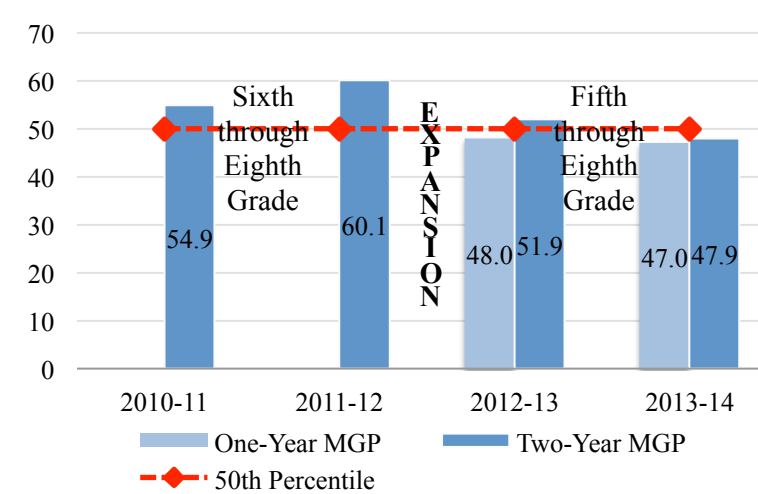
Capital City PCS: Grade 10
DC CAS Reading Proficiency



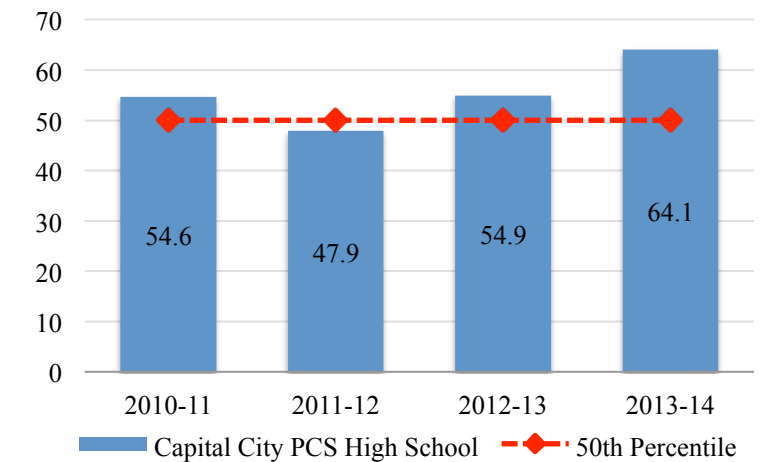
Capital City PCS- Lower School
Reading MGP

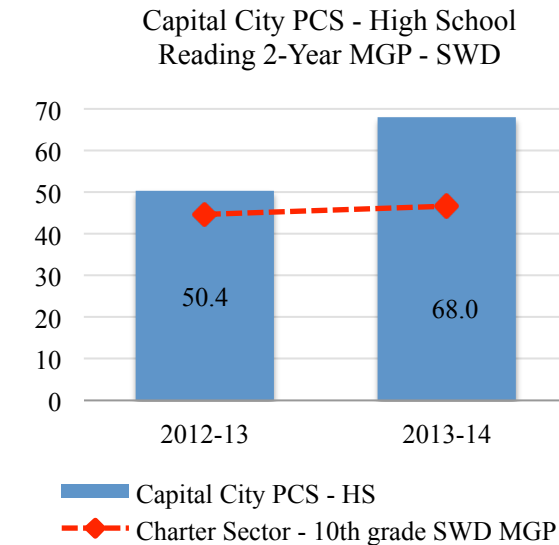
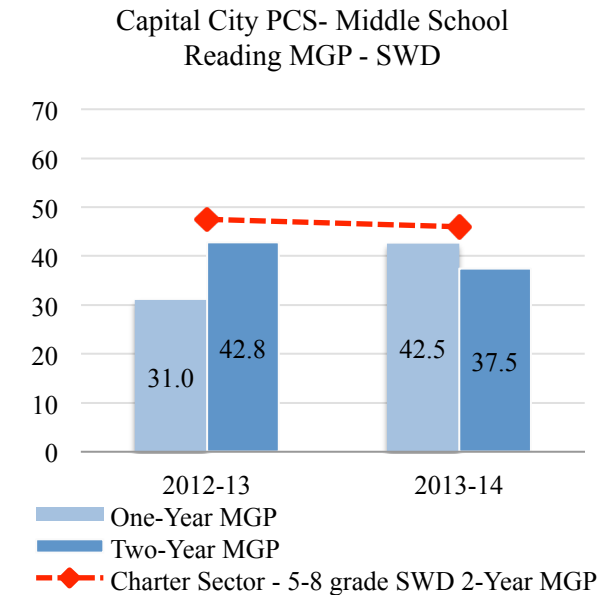
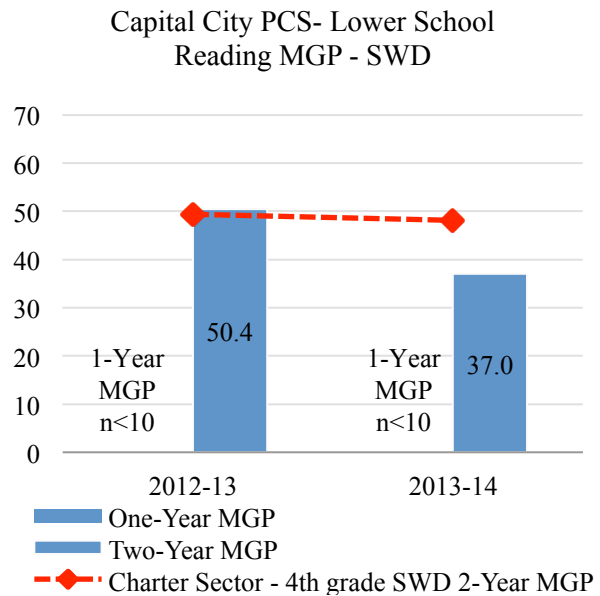
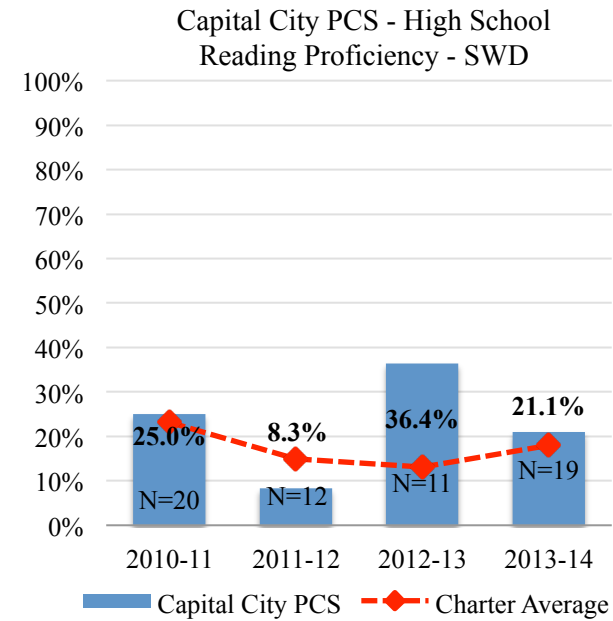
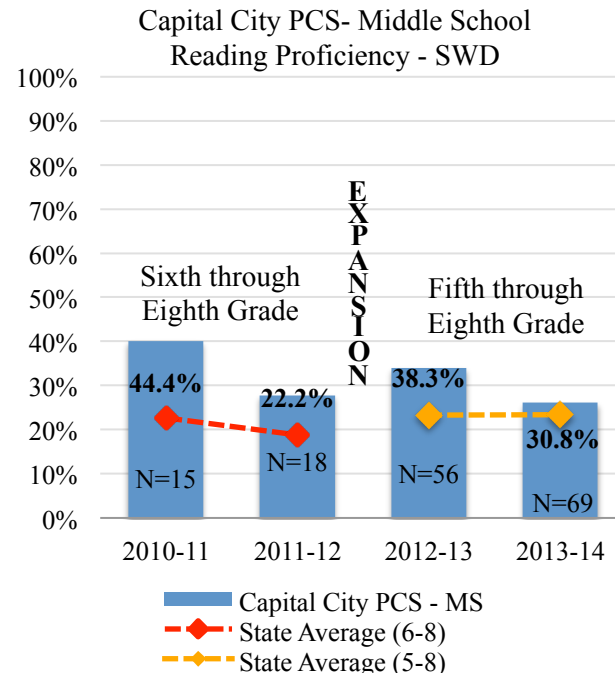
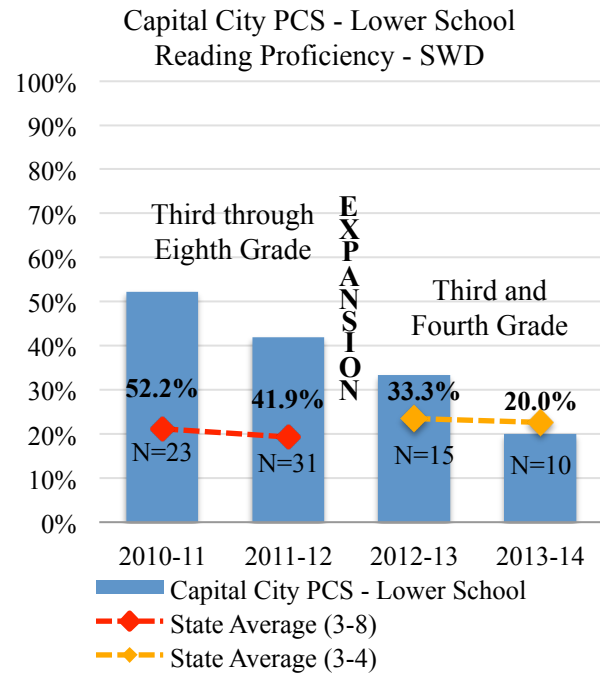


Capital City PCS- Middle School
Reading MGP

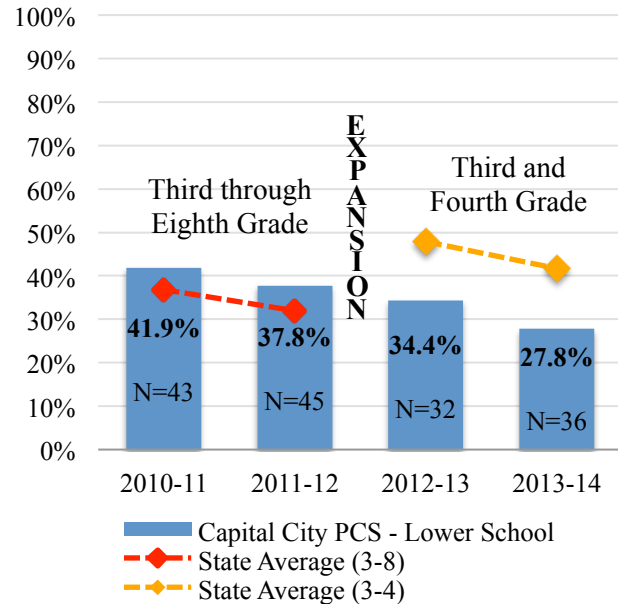


Capital City PCS-High School
Reading 2-Year MGP

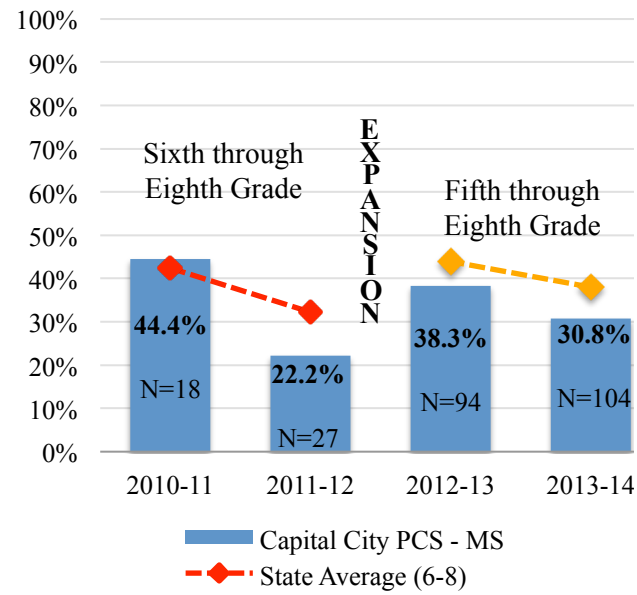




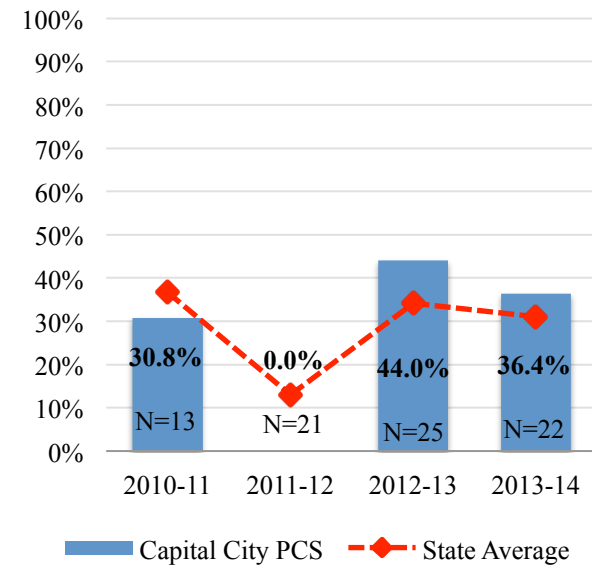
Capital City PCS- Lower School
Reading Proficiency - ELL



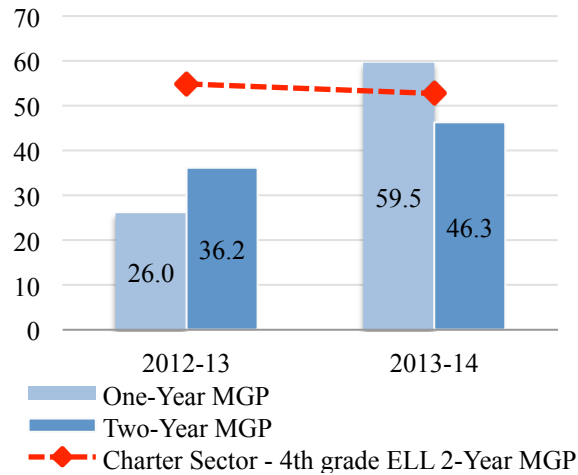
Capital City PCS- Middle School
Reading Proficiency - ELL



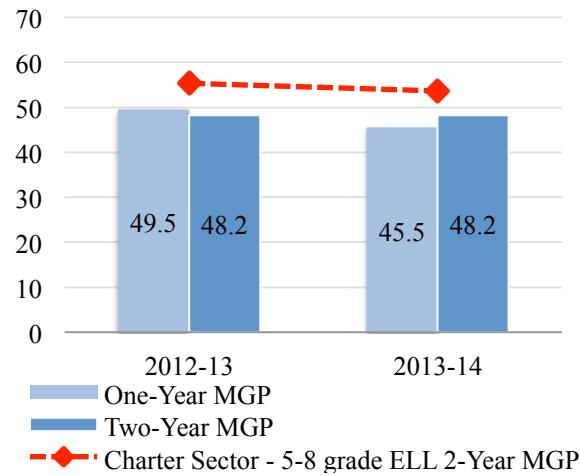
Capital City PCS-High School
Reading Proficiency - ELL



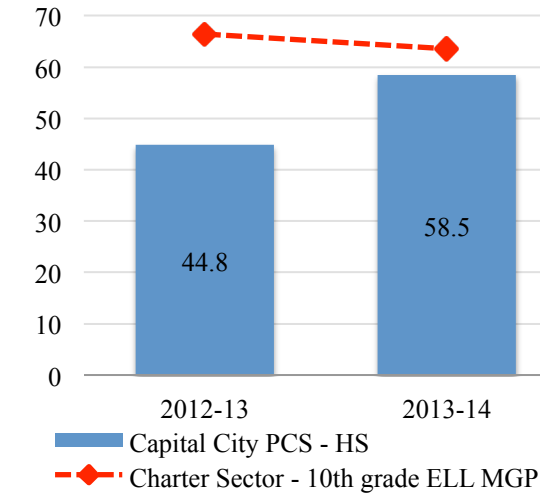
Capital City PCS- Lower School
Reading MGP - ELL



Capital City PCS- Middle School
Reading MGP - ELL



Capital City PCS-High School
Reading 2-Year MGP - ELL



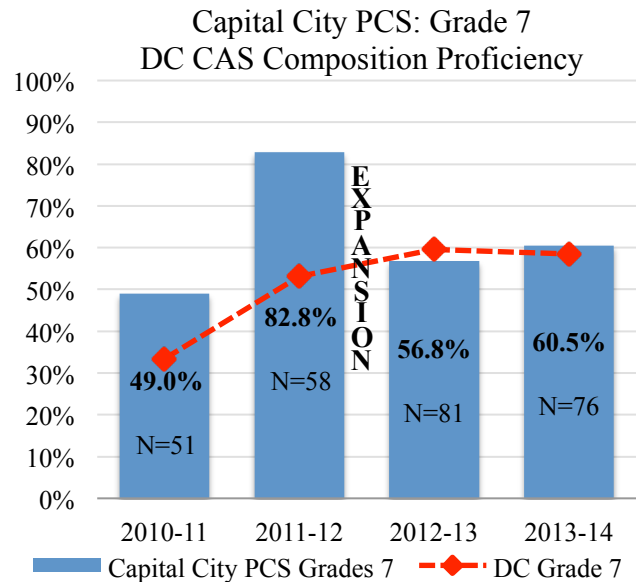
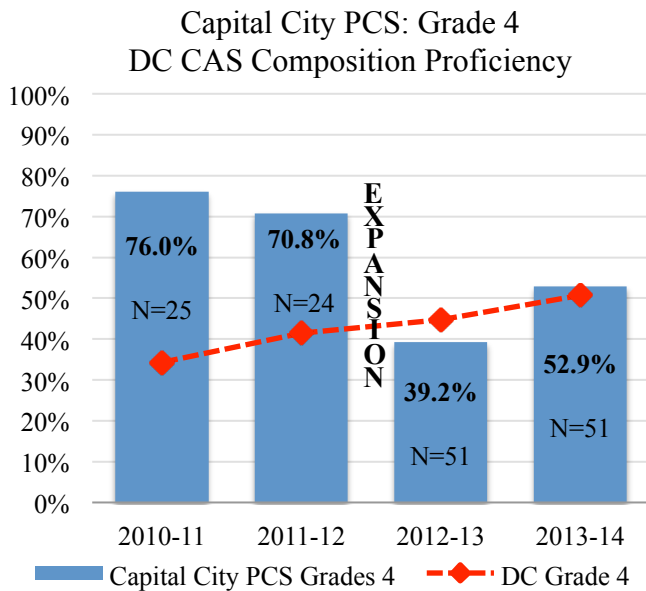
Qualitative Evidence

In 2014, 75%, 80%, and 65% of total classroom observations were rated proficient or exemplary in Instructional Delivery at Capital City PCS’s lower, middle, and high schools, respectively. PCSB reviewers observed the following qualitative evidence in support of the goal.

Lower School	On the wall of each classroom were rules for independent reading, such as “quiet”, “by yourself”, and “read the whole time”. Students followed these rules as they read... Teachers tracked the number of minutes the class read independently, usually on the board. After independent reading, the teachers moved to guided reading with small groups and independent writing for other students. ⁵⁸
Middle School	When teachers asked students to read material aloud, they did so with ease. Posters, expeditionary portfolios, mantras, activities and other information posted on walls encouraged students to read independently. School-wide activities included Word of the Week Chart posted in the wall in the hall and Mystery Word Puzzle folders posted in the hallways, where students can take a worksheet and solve the mystery. Teachers encouraged students to borrow books from the Book Nook in the hall and the team saw several students sitting on the floor in the hall reading books. ⁵⁹
High School	The QSR team noted in particular the high-level academic articles that students read, even in courses other than English. Teachers supported students in reading these challenging materials by scaffolding content and helping students with difficult vocabulary. Students were required to comprehend grade-level text in order to participate in open discussions of class materials.

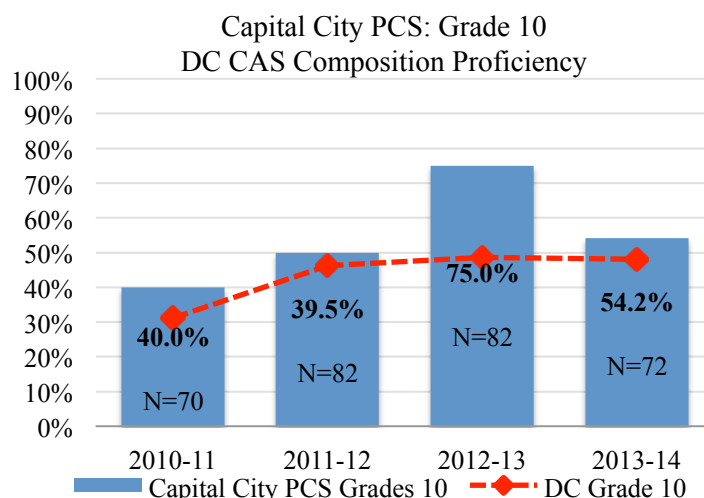
12. **Goal: Students will become effective oral and written communicators.**

Assessment: Capital City PCS met this goal. Through its expansion, Capital City PCS’s DC CAS composition rates have remained for the most part at or above the charter sector.



⁵⁸ See Appendix G, p. 5.

⁵⁹ See Appendix H, p. 3.



Qualitative Evidence

PCSB reviewers observed the following qualitative evidence in support of the review.

Lower School	The QSR team observed the school implementation of the Writer’s Workshop model consistently from pre-kindergarten through fourth grades... Teachers used turn-and-talk and “table talk” during activities, lunch, and snack time to allow students to practice oral communication. ⁶⁰
Middle School	In most classrooms, students participated in discussions with the entire class and with partners, following posted discussion norms. In a social studies class, students developed research papers following predetermined steps. ⁶¹
High School	In several classes, students were required to read the lesson material (sometimes aloud) and then participate in an open discussion of the material. Students wrote history essays, persuasive arguments, and symbolism essays... Students throughout the observations communicated effectively, using age- appropriate vocabulary and correct standard English.

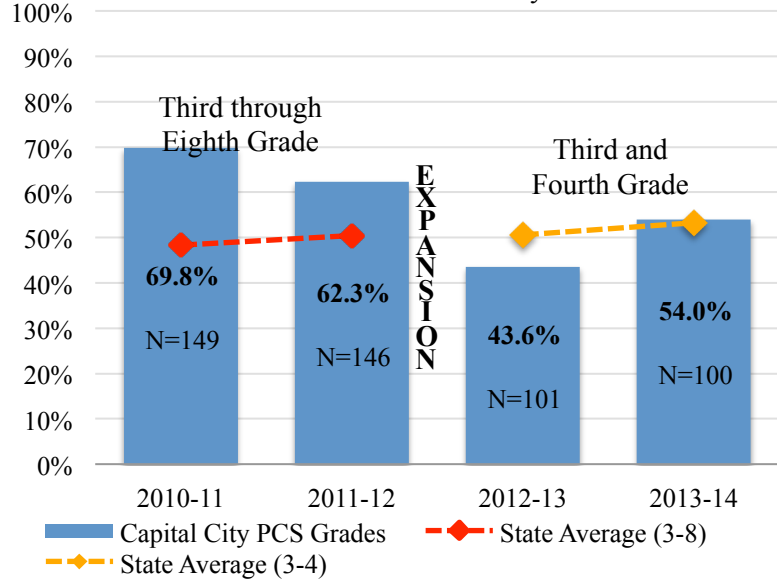
13. Goal: Children will be able to reason mathematically and effectively present their thinking to others.

Assessment: Capital City PCS partially met this goal. Capital City PCS’s overall math proficiency rates remained near or at the sector average throughout its expansion, with its high school math proficiency rate exceeding the sector average over the past two years. However, the school’s math two-year MGP was low in 2012-13 and 2013-14 across grades, except for tenth grade students in 2013-14, with a math MGP of 51.6. Capital City PCS’s middle school SWD math proficiency and MGP are particularly low (21.7% and 34.5%, respectively, in 2013-14) The school’s one-year MGP rate is showing an upward trend. In 2011-12, before the expansion, its middle school ELL math proficiency was 24.2 percentage points below the sector average, with a 23.0 and 17.9 percentage point gap remaining in 2012-13 and 2013-14, respectively.

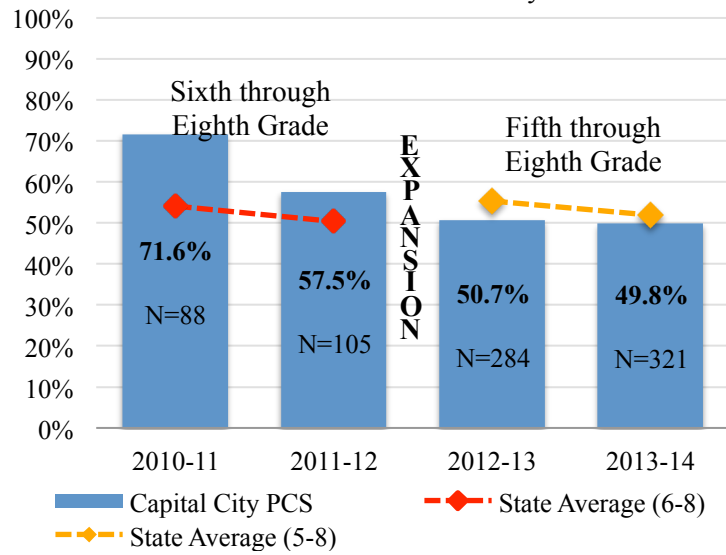
⁶⁰ See Appendix G, p. 6.

⁶¹ See Appendix H, pp. 3-4.

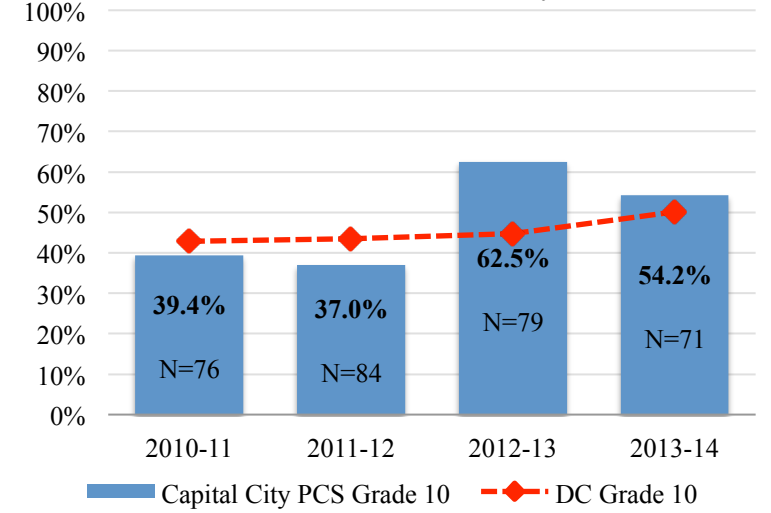
Capital City PCS: Lower School
DC CAS Math Proficiency



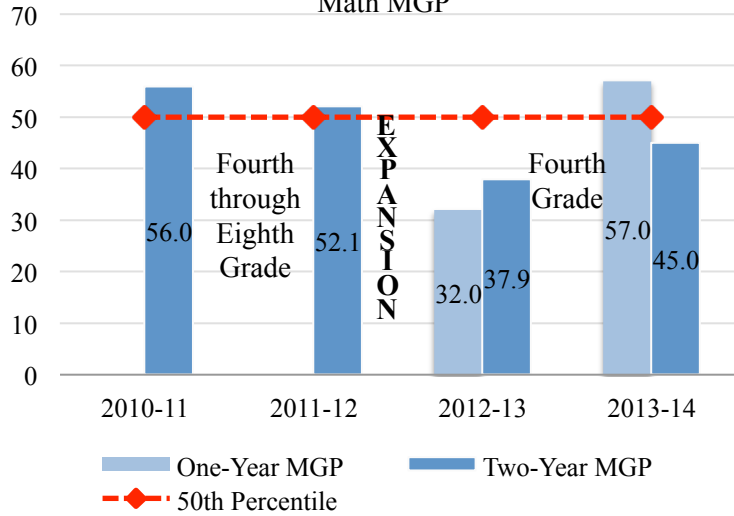
Capital City PCS: Middle School
DC CAS Math Proficiency



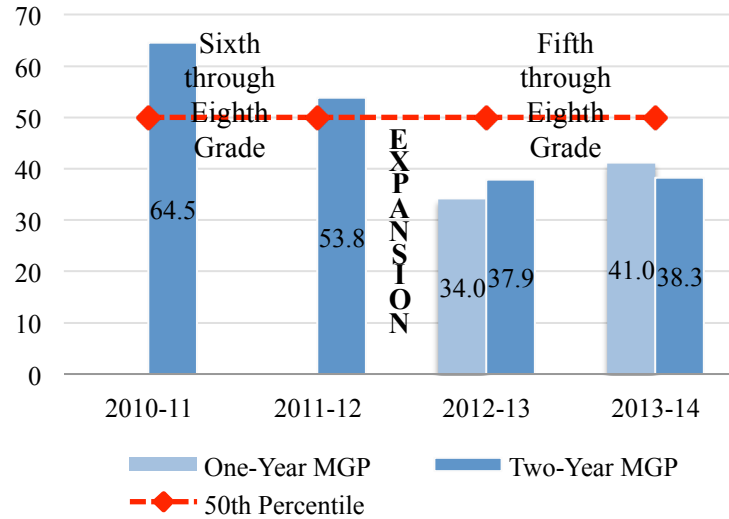
Capital City PCS: Grade 10
DC CAS Math Proficiency



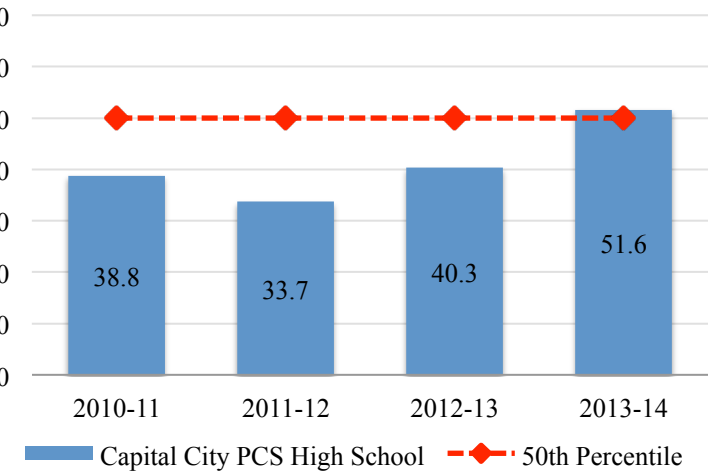
Capital City PCS- Lower School
Math MGP

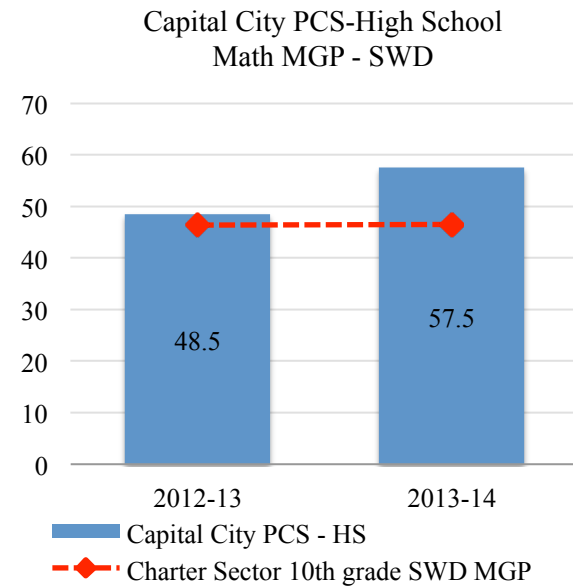
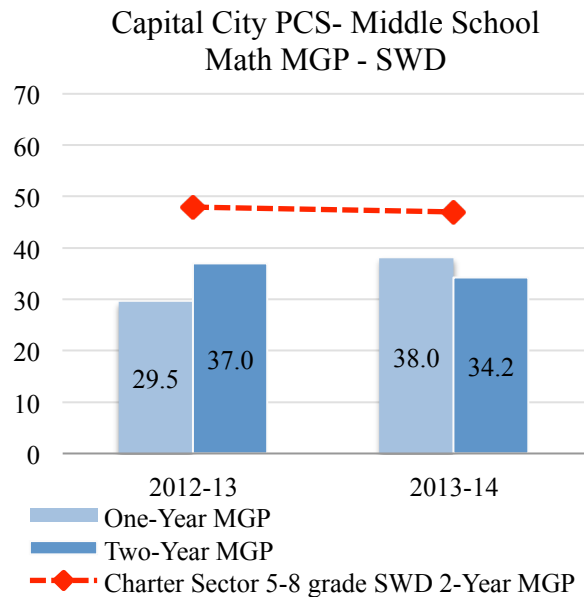
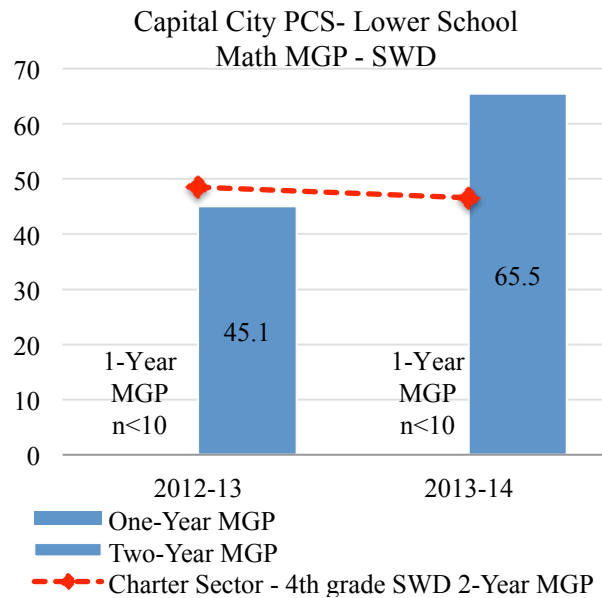
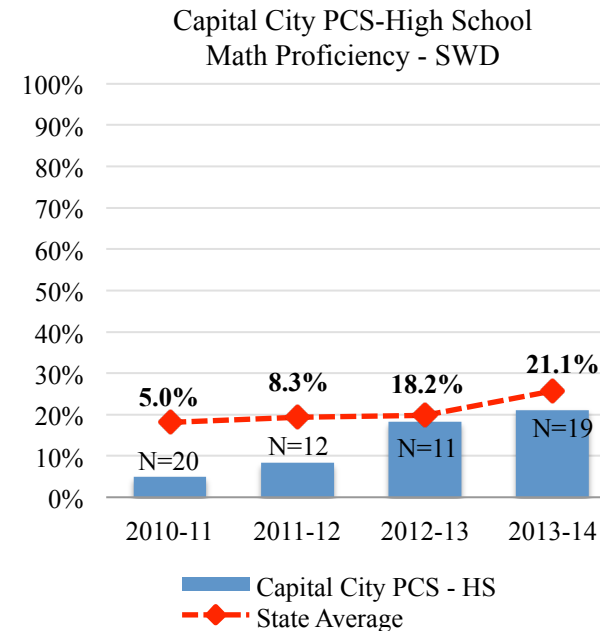
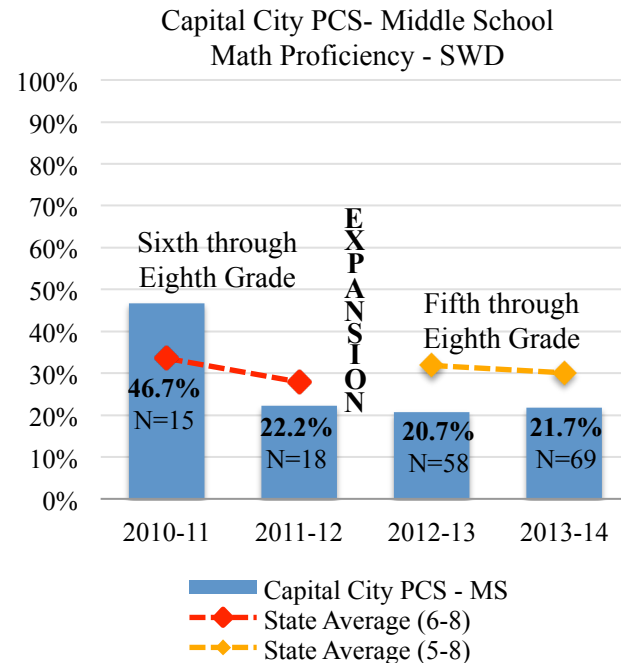
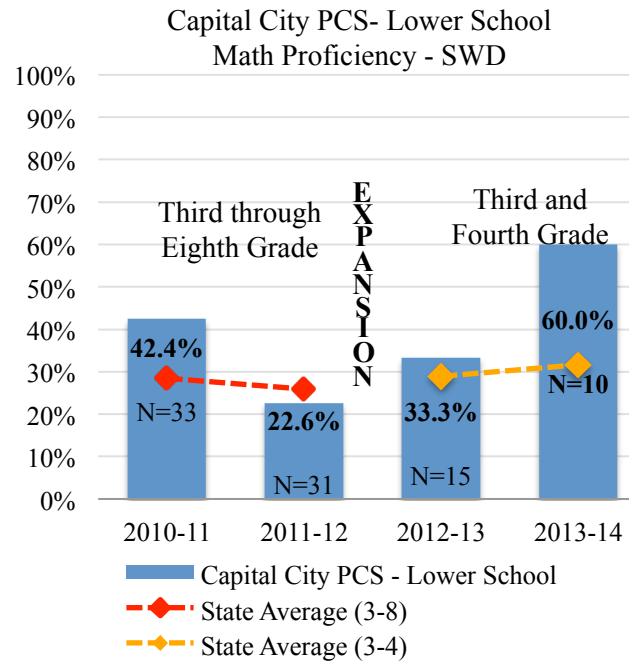


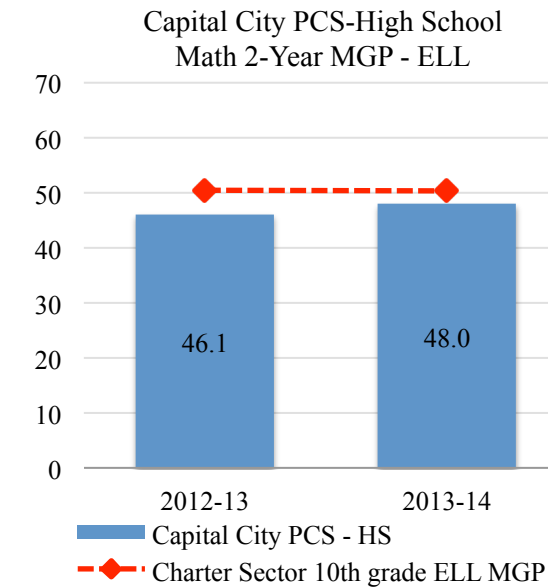
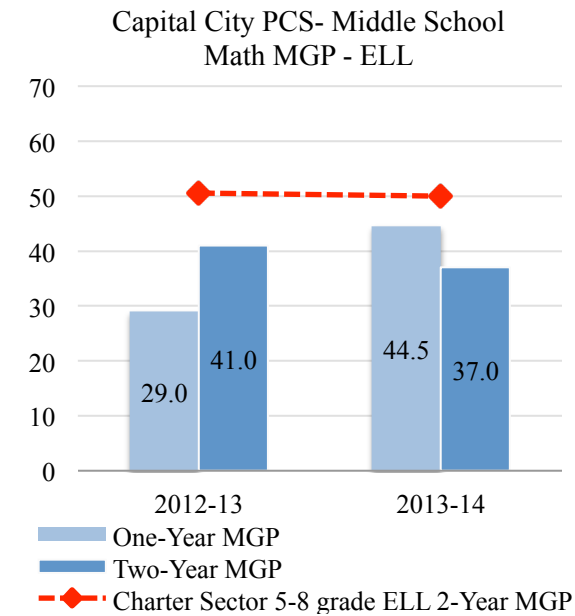
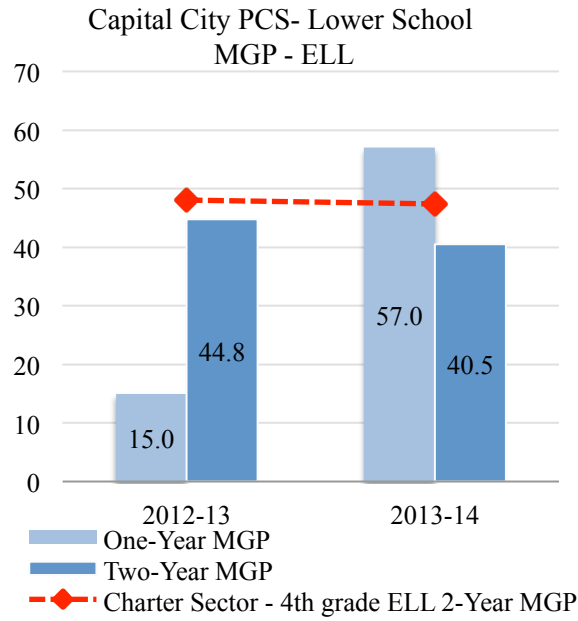
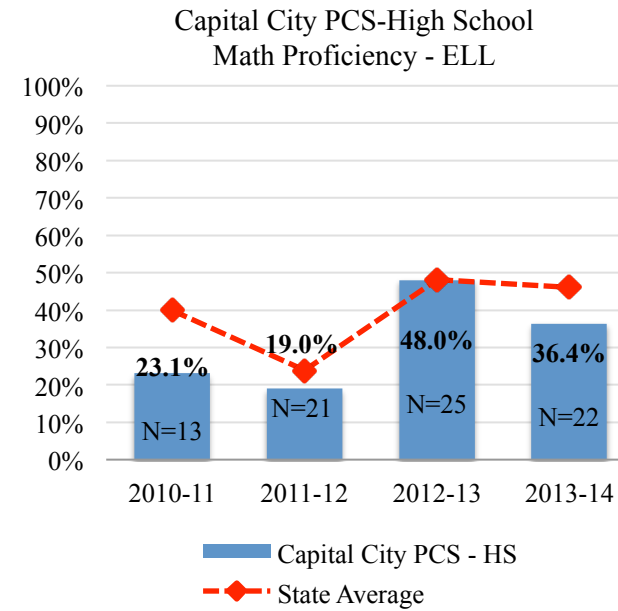
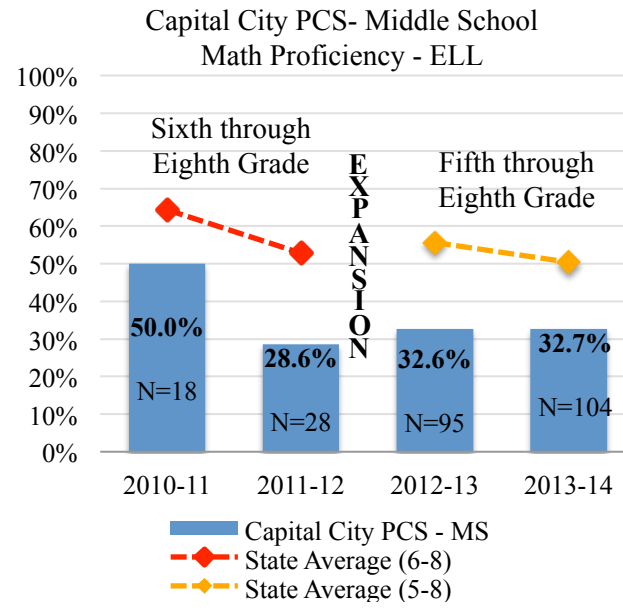
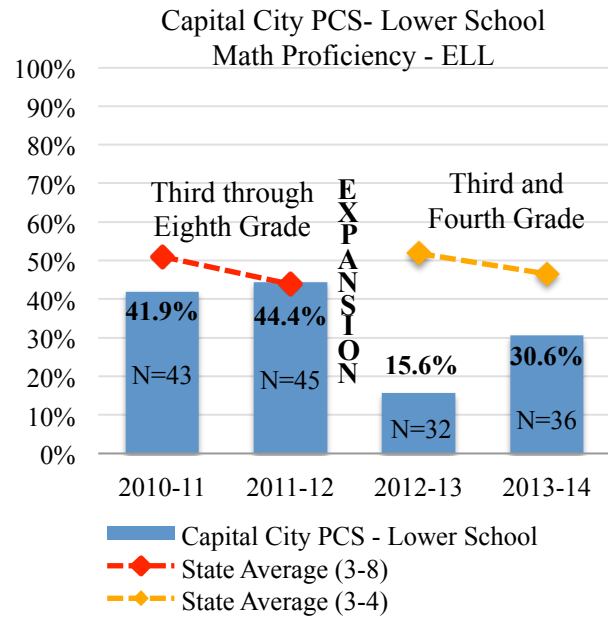
Capital City PCS- Middle School
Math MGP



Capital City PCS- High School
Math 2-Year MGP







Qualitative Evidence

PCSB reviewers observed the following qualitative evidence in support of the review.

Lower School	In math classes, teachers asked students to explain their methodology to their small groups. When students were stuck in their explanations, teachers assisted them with prompting questions, such as “What did you do next to solve the problem?” ⁶²
Middle School	In several math classes, the QSR review team observed teachers asking students to explain how they arrived at their answers. In one classroom, the teacher asked students for multiple solution pathways. In all classrooms, teachers asked students to share aloud their thinking and processes for solving equations. ⁶³
High School	In several observations students were routinely pushed to explain their mathematical reasoning to others. When students worked in small groups they had to present their answers to the larger group. In other classes students solved problems at the board and explained their method for solving the problem. ⁶⁴

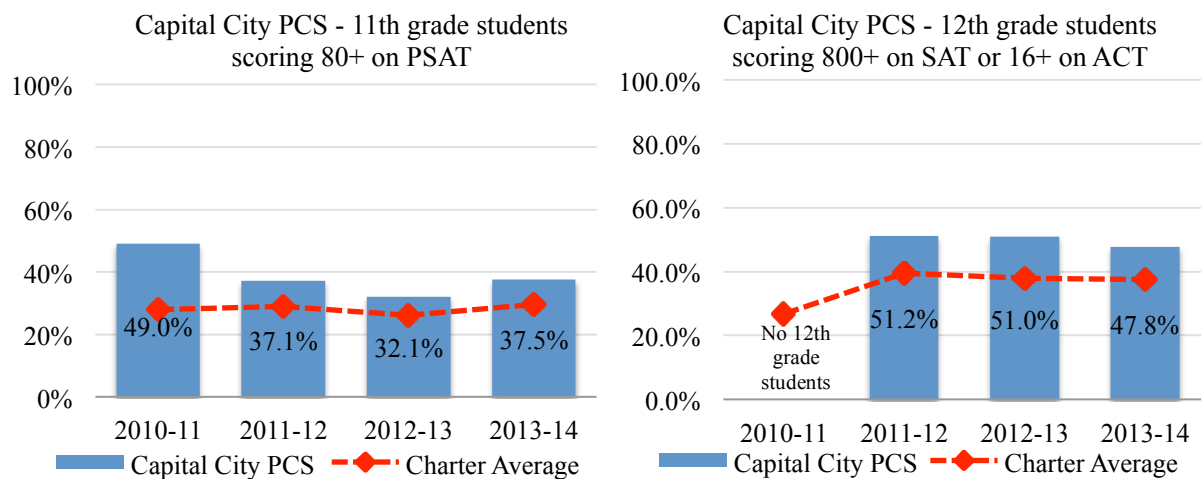
14. Goal: **To promote critical thinking, high-quality original work, and the acquisition of skills necessary for transition to college or career.**

Assessment: **Capital City PCS met this goal.** The school adopted this goal for its high school program. Student performance on several college readiness metrics support that the school met this goal. Capital City PCS students exceeded the charter sector average with their PSAT, SAT, and AP exam scores.

College Readiness Metrics

Over the past four years, Capital City PCS exceeded the charter sector rate in the following areas:

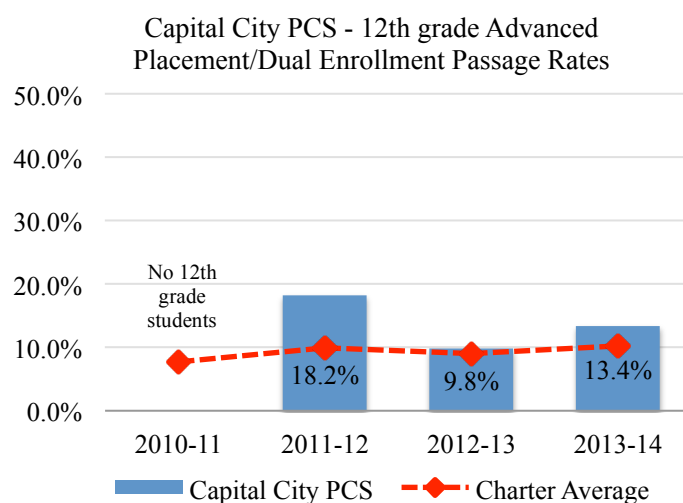
- Eleventh grade students achieving a combined score of 80 or more on the PSAT;
- Twelfth grade students achieving a combined score of 800 or more on the SAT, or a combined score of 16 or more on the ACT; and
- Twelfth grade students passing an Advanced Placement test or a dual enrollment course.



⁶² See Appendix G, p. 6.

⁶³ See Appendix H, p. 4.

⁶⁴ See Appendix I, pp. 6-7.



College Acceptance and Matriculation

The school reports that over the past three years, 150 students have graduated from its high school program, and that 100% of these students were accepted into at least one college.⁶⁵ The school also reports that 79% of these alumni are currently enrolled in college, with the first class of alumni entering their senior year of college in 2015-16. Finally, 95% of the school’s 2013-14 graduating class matriculated to college.

Qualitative Evidence

PCSB reviewers observed the following qualitative evidence in support of the review.

Lower School	In most cases, teachers incorporated higher-order thinking questions into lessons... The QSR team observed very few worksheets in use over the two weeks. Teachers asked students to be creative in their learning tasks to create original work. ⁶⁶
High School	With a few exceptions the QSR team’s observations were lacking in promoting critical thinking skills. Teachers’ questioning tended to be more focused on low-level questioning, rather than higher-order thinking skills; fewer than half of observations scored proficient on “Using Questioning and Discussion Techniques”... The QSR team noted several instances of teachers coaching students in the “soft skills” necessary for success in college and career. For example, several teachers talked about the importance of time management in college; one teacher led students through planning their study time for an upcoming AP exam, repeatedly stressing how they will need to be able to manage their study time in college. ⁶⁷

15a. Goal: **To operate the school as a well-run and successful non-profit corporation.**

Assessment: **Capital City PCS met this goal.** The school’s record supports that it met this goal. Meeting minutes from the school’s board of trustees are detailed and focused on consistent reflection and improvement in academic, operational, and fiscal areas. Capital City PCS’s fiscal audits demonstrate its fiscal strength, with the school’s net assets increasing each year, in line with the expansion of its programming. The school regularly

⁶⁵ In Capital City PCS’s 2013-14 high school PMF scorecard, the school’s college acceptance rate was 98.5%.

⁶⁶ See Appendix H, pp. 6-7.

⁶⁷ See Appendix I, p. 7.

pursues and attains outside grants and private donations in support of its programming. Finally, Capital City PCS has a strong compliance record, and in particular has a strong compliance record with the SRA’s requirements regarding procurement contracts.

16. Goal: To ensure the business operations of the school are in harmony with its mission and educational goals.

Assessment: Capital City PCS met this goal. A review of the minutes of the school’s board of trustees meetings indicates that operational and fiscal decisions are made to support the school’s mission and educational goals. The board of trustees regularly discusses the Capital City PCS’s academic performance, and reviews the school’s academic data. Also, at the beginning of most board meetings, the first agenda item is a “Mission Moment”, with the board focusing on different examples of how the school is meeting its mission.

17. Goal: To develop a stable enrollment and expanding funding sources.

Assessment: Capital City PCS met this goal. The school’s enrollment has been increasing in line with its expanding grades since 2007, with an increase of 310 students with the school’s 2012-13 move into its currently facility. Capital City has been fully enrolled each year with long waiting lists. The school has expanded its funding sources over the years, with numerous grants and donations.

Capital City PCS Enrollment					
	2010-11	2011-12	2012-13	2013-14	2014-15
Lower School	244	243	325	321	322
Middle School	294	391	298	326	320
High School			321	337	329
Total	538	634	944	984	971

Grants

When Capital City PCS opened, it was awarded the federal Comprehensive School Reform Demonstration Grant to implement its model.⁶⁸ The school expanded through the twelfth grade with a grant from the Coalition of Essential Schools and the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation.⁶⁹ Capital City PCS has received numerous other grants, including:

- Over the past three years, the school was awarded a grant from OSSE to support its school garden.⁷⁰
- In 2012, Capital City PCS was awarded a \$1 million grant through the federal Race to the Top program to expand its teaching fellows program.⁷¹
- In 2012, the school was awarded the Quality Schools Initiative Award, along with a \$50,000 grant, from Fight for Children, a nonprofit organization.⁷²

⁶⁸ See Appendix A, p. 4.

⁶⁹ See Appendix A, p. 3.

⁷⁰ See Appendix C, p. 41.

⁷¹ See 2012-13 annual report, p. 38, attached to this report as Appendix L.

⁷² See 2011-12 annual report, p. 32, attached to this report as Appendix M.

- In 2011-12, Capital City PCS received a \$200,000 grant from OSSE to disseminate its approach to instructional planning and assessments.

18. **Goal: To make careful financial decisions without sacrificing the quality of the educational program.**

Assessment: Capital City PCS met this goal. Over the past four years, the school has been one of the top ten fiscal performers among DC charter schools. Also during this time, Capital City PCS's net assets have increased each year, and no findings or concerns have been identified in the school's fiscal audits. The school is economically viable, and is in a strong fiscal position with 168 days of cash on hand in FY2014.

Also over these four years, through the course of the school's expansion, Capital City PCS has focused on maintaining the quality of its educational program. Indeed, since 2010-11 all Capital City PCS campuses achieved Tier 1 or Tier 2 status on the PMF. PCSB's QSR reports reflect a strong educational culture and that the school is meeting its charter goals and expectations.

SECTION TWO: COMPLIANCE WITH CHARTER AND APPLICABLE LAWS

The SRA requires PCSB to determine at least every five years whether a school has “committed a material violation of applicable laws or a material violation of the conditions, terms, standards, or procedures set forth in its charter, including violations relating to the education of children with disabilities.”⁷³ The SRA contains a non-exhaustive list of applicable laws, and PCSB also monitors charter schools for compliance with additional laws in annual compliance reviews. Below is a summary of the school’s compliance record.

Compliance Item	Description	School’s Compliance Status 2010-11 to present
Fair enrollment process D.C. Code § 38-1802.06	DC charter schools must have a fair and open enrollment process that randomly selects applicants and does not discriminate against students.	Compliant since 2010-11.
Notice and due process for suspensions and expulsions D.C. Code § 38-1802.06(g)	DC charter school discipline policies must afford students due process ⁷⁴ and the school must distribute such policies to students and parents.	Compliant since 2010-11.
Student health and safety D.C. Code §§ 38-1802.04(c)(4), 4-1321.02, 38-651	The SRA requires DC charter schools to maintain the health and safety of its students. ⁷⁵ To ensure that schools adhere to this clause, PCSB monitors schools for various indicators, including but not limited to whether schools: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - have qualified staff members that can administer medications; - conduct background checks for all school employees and volunteers; and - have an emergency response plan in place and conduct emergency drills as required by DC code and regulations. 	Compliant since 2010-11.
Equal employment D.C. Code § 38-1802.04(c)(5)	A DC charter school’s employment policies and practices must comply with federal and local employment laws and regulations.	In 2011-12, the school’s employee handbook was non-compliant, and the school was in the process of revising its employee handbook and seeking legal counsel. ⁷⁶ This issue was resolved by 2012-13.

⁷³ SRA § 38.1802.12(c).

⁷⁴ See *Goss v. Lopez*, 419 U.S. 565 (1975).

⁷⁵ D.C. Code § 38.1802.04 (c)(4)(A).

⁷⁶ See Capital City PCS Compliance Review Reports, attached to this report as Appendix N.

Insurance As required by the school's charter	A DC charter school must be adequately insured.	Compliant since 2010-11.
Facility licenses D.C. Code § 47-2851.03(d); D.C. Mun. Regs., tit. 14, §§ 14-1401 <i>et seq.</i>	A DC charter school must possess all required local licenses.	Compliant since 2010-11.
Highly Qualified Teachers Elementary and Secondary Education Act ("ESEA") 20 U.S.C. § 6301 <i>et seq.</i>	DC charter schools receiving Title I funding must employ "Highly Qualified Teachers" as defined by ESEA.	Compliant since 2010-11.
Proper composition of board of trustees D.C. Code § 38-1802.05	A DC charter school's Board of Trustees must have: an odd number of members that does not exceed 15; a majority of members that are DC residents; and at least two members that are parents of a student attending the school.	Compliant since 2010-11.
Accreditation Status D.C. Code § 38-1802.02(16)	A DC charter school must maintain accreditation from an SRA-approved accrediting body approved by the SRA.	Compliant since 2010-11. Though the school was compliant throughout the review period, the 2012-13 Compliance Review Report noted that accreditation had been awarded for the lower school only, and that upon expiration the school should seek accreditation for the whole LEA. ⁷⁷

Procurement Contracts

SRA §38-1802.04(c)(1) requires DC charter schools to utilize a competitive bidding process for any procurement contract valued at \$25,000 or more, and within three days of awarding such a contract, to submit to PCSB all bids received, the contractor selected, and the rationale for which contractor was selected. To ensure compliance with this law, PCSB requires schools to submit a "Determinations and Findings" form to detail any qualifying procurement contract that the school has executed.

⁷⁷ See Appendix N.

Capital City PCS has submitted all required procurement contract documentation since 2010-11.

Year	Qualifying contracts executed by Capital City PCS	Corresponding documentation submitted to PCSB
2010-11	14	14
2011-12	8	8
2012-13	18	18
2013-14	4	4

Special Education Compliance

Charter schools are required to comply with all federal and local special education laws, including, among others, the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act⁷⁸ (“IDEA”) and the Rehabilitation Act of 1973. The following section summarizes Capital City PCS’ special education compliance from 2011-12 to the present.

OSSE Special Education Compliance Reviews

The DC Office of the State Superintendent of Education (“OSSE”) monitors charter schools’ special education compliance and publishes three types of reports detailing these findings: (1) Annual Determinations; (2) On-Site Monitoring; and (3) Quarterly Findings (also called Special Conditions Reports). OSSE’s findings of Capital City PCS’ special education compliance are summarized below.

Annual Determinations

As required by a federal regulation, OSSE annually analyzes each LEA’s compliance with 20 special education compliance indicators, and publishes these findings in an Annual Determination report.⁷⁹ Each year’s report is based on compliance data collected several years earlier. As such, OSSE does not require schools to cure any compliance issues detailed in these reports. In 2014, OSSE published its 2011 Annual Determination reports (based on the school’s 2011-12 performance).

Capital City PCS’s Annual Determination compliance performance is detailed in the table below.⁸⁰

Year	Percent compliant with audited special education federal requirements	Determination Level
2010	66%	Needs Assistance
2011	74%	Needs Assistance
2012	88%	Meets Requirements

On-Site Monitoring Report

OSSE periodically conducts an on-site assessment of an LEA’s special education compliance with student-level and LEA-level indicators, and publishes its findings in an On-Site Monitoring Report. At the time, if a school

⁷⁸ 20 USC §1413(a)(5).

⁷⁹ As required by federal regulation 34 CFR § 300.600(c).

⁸⁰ See Capital City PCS annual determination reports, attached to this report as Appendix O.

was less than 95% compliant with a student-level and/or LEA-level indicator, it was required to implement corrections and report these corrections to OSSE. (Beginning in 2013, LEA’s are responsible for being 100% compliant with student-level indicators and LEA-level indicators on On-Site Monitoring Reports.)⁸¹

In 2011, OSSE published an on-site Compliance Monitoring Report of Capital City PCS based on the school’s performance in 2010-11.⁸² The school was required to implement corrections in the following areas:

On-Site Monitoring Report LEA-Level Compliance		
Compliance Area	Compliant? (If school is noncompliant, the area of noncompliance is noted)	Corrected?
Extended School Year	Compliant	N/A
Least Restrictive Environment	Noncompliant in providing a continuum of Alternative Placements	Yes
Individualized Education Program (“IEP”)	Compliant	N/A
Data	Noncompliant in entering new special students into state database	Yes
Fiscal	Noncompliant in having LEA code of conduct for employees administering grants	Yes

⁸¹ If the school was found to be less than 100% compliant with a student-level indicator that could not be cured retroactively, OSSE would identify the point of noncompliance as an LEA-level violation.

⁸² See 2010-11 On-Site Monitoring Report Attachments, attached to this report as Appendix P.

On-Site Monitoring Report – Student-Level Compliance			
Compliance Area	Compliant?	Noncompliant indicators	Corrected?
Initial Evaluation and Reevaluation	Compliant in four of eight indicators	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Providing procedural safeguards to parents • Attaining parent consent for reevaluation • IEP team reviewing existing data • Using a variety of sources to determine continued eligibility 	Yes
IEP	Compliant in four of sixteen indicators	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Inviting parent and student to IEP meeting • Notifying parent/student of meeting • Ensuring that the person identified as student’s parent meets definition in IDEA regulations • General education teacher attending IEP meeting • LEA designee attending IEP meeting • Including effect of disability in general curriculum/appropriate activities in student’s PLAAFP⁸³ • Including in IEP a description of how student progress is measured • Including in IEP a statement of measurable annual related services goals • Extending school year for students as determined necessary on individual basis • Transferring rights at age of majority • Implementing related services • Conducting Annual IEP review 	Yes
Least Restrictive Environment	Compliant in two of two indicators	N/A (Compliant)	N/A

Special Conditions Quarterly Reports

OSSE submits quarterly reports to the U.S. Department of Education’s Office of Special Education Programs detailing District of Columbia LEAs’ compliance in three areas: (1) Initial and Reevaluation Timelines; (2) Early Childhood Transition Timelines; and (3) Secondary Transition Requirements. **The school has since cured all points of noncompliance, and its compliance in these areas has improved from April 2012 to the time of the U.S. Department of Education’s publication.**

Quarterly Findings – April 2012 through March 2013				
	1st Quarter	2nd Quarter	3rd Quarter	4th Quarter
Initial Evaluation Timeline	Compliant	0 of 2 items compliant	Compliant	0 of 2 items compliant
Reevaluation Timeline	Compliant	0 of 1 items compliant	0 of 3 items compliant	1 of 2 items compliant
Secondary Transition	Compliant	0 of 9 items compliant	Compliant	3 of 7 items compliant

⁸³ Present level of academic achievement and functional performance.

Quarterly Findings – April 2013 through March 2014				
	1st Quarter	2nd Quarter	3rd Quarter	4th Quarter
Initial Evaluation Timeline	Compliant	Compliant	Compliant	Compliant
Reevaluation Timeline	Compliant	Compliant	Compliant	Compliant
Secondary Transition	12 of 18 items compliant	12 of 18 items compliant	Compliant	Compliant

Quarterly Findings – April 2014 through March 2015				
	1st Quarter	2nd Quarter	3rd Quarter	4th Quarter
Initial Evaluation Timeline	Compliant	Compliant	Compliant	TBD
Reevaluation Timeline	Compliant	Compliant	Compliant	TBD
Secondary Transition	Compliant	Compliant	Compliant	TBD

Blackman Jones Implementation Review

With compliance requirements pursuant to the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) and the 2006 Blackman Jones Consent Decree, OSSE manages and oversees the Blackman Jones database that tracks each LEAs' timely implementation of Hearing Officer Determinations (HODs) and Settlement Agreements (SAs).

As of July 2014, the Blackman Jones Database shows Capital City PCS has no HODs or SAs.

SECTION THREE:
FISCAL MANAGEMENT AND ECONOMIC VIABILITY

STANDARD OF REVIEW

Separate and apart from the standard for charter renewal, the SRA requires PCSB to revoke a school’s charter if PCSB determines that the school:

- Has engaged in a pattern of non-adherence to generally accepted accounting principles (“GAAP”);
- Has engaged in a pattern of fiscal mismanagement; and/or
- Is no longer economically viable.

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

Capital City PCS received the highest score on PCSB’s CHARM report in FY2011 and FY2012. Due to a timing difference related to their facilities renovation, the school’s score declined some in FY2013 but was still classified high performing. The school has no pattern of non-adherence to GAAP, nor are there indications that it engaged in a pattern of fiscal mismanagement. Over the past four years, the school has been one of the top ten performers among DC charter schools for most financial metrics.

FINANCIAL OVERVIEW

The following table provides an overview of Capital City PCS’s financial information over the past four fiscal years. Audited enrollment increased from 538 students in 2011 to 970 students in FY2014. Capital City PCS has experienced a positive change in net assets each of the four years resulting in a net asset position of over \$10MM in FY14.

	Audit Year			
	2011	2012	2013	2014
Audited Enrollment	538	634	944	970
Total DC Funding Allocation	\$ 8,268,671	\$ 10,897,563	\$ 16,062,386	\$ 17,635,011
Total Federal Entitlements and Funding	\$ 1,448,694	\$ 1,793,078	\$ 2,042,574	\$ 2,185,520
Unrestricted Cash and Cash Equivalents on 6/30/14	\$ 2,074,419	\$ 3,249,120	\$ 5,765,546	\$ 8,781,973
Total Assets	\$ 9,660,529	\$ 24,042,179	\$ 31,448,020	\$ 32,765,409
Total Current Assets	\$ 2,947,186	\$ 3,998,235	\$ 6,790,024	\$ 9,727,013
Total Liabilities	\$ 4,809,002	\$ 15,796,035	\$ 22,348,091	\$ 22,372,603
Total Current Liabilities	\$ 1,132,703	\$ 4,760,923	\$ 2,739,087	\$ 2,903,014
Net Asset Position	\$ 4,851,527	\$ 8,246,144	\$ 9,099,929	\$ 10,392,806
Total Revenues	\$ 10,051,771	\$ 15,228,469	\$ 18,758,561	\$ 20,402,341
Total Expenses	\$ 9,493,000	\$ 11,833,852	\$ 17,904,777	\$ 19,109,464
Change in Net Assets	\$ 558,771	\$ 3,394,617	\$ 853,784	\$ 1,292,877

SPENDING DECISIONS

The following table provides an overview of Capital City PCS’s spending decisions over the past four years. The school had an operating surplus in all four years, with a particularly large increase in FY2012, in line with its expansion. Capital City PCS’s distribution of spending is typical of DC charters, with 62% spent on salaries and benefits and 18% on occupancy in FY2014.

	Audit Year			
	2011	2012	2013	2014
Total Personnel Salaries and Benefits	\$ 6,236,805	\$ 7,574,133	\$ 11,660,773	\$ 12,629,433
Total Direct Student Costs	\$ 642,344	\$ 933,576	\$ 1,444,872	\$ 1,265,083
Total Occupancy Expenses	\$ 1,815,361	\$ 2,362,254	\$ 3,301,742	\$ 3,675,616
Total Office Expenses	\$ 200,843	\$ 201,332	\$ 344,136	\$ 373,408
Total General Expenses	\$ 597,647	\$ 762,557	\$ 1,153,254	\$ 1,165,924
Operating Surplus/(Deficit)	\$ 558,771	\$ 3,394,617	\$ 853,784	\$ 1,292,877
	as a percent of revenue			
Total Personnel Salaries and Benefits	62%	50%	62%	62%
Total Direct Student Costs	6%	6%	8%	6%
Total Occupancy Expenses	18%	16%	18%	18%
Total Office Expenses	2%	1%	2%	2%
Total General Expenses	6%	5%	6%	6%
Operating Surplus/(Deficit)	6%	22%	5%	6%

ADHERENCE TO GENERALLY ACCEPTED ACCOUNTING PRINCIPLES

Audits of Capital City PCS establish that the School has adhered to GAAP. The auditor expressed unqualified opinions on Capital City PCS’ financial statements in each of the past four years. The following table provides a summary of audit results for each of the past four fiscal years, during which time the school had no findings or concerns identified by auditors.

	2011	2012	2013	2014
Statement Opinion. Required when auditor finds areas of doubt/questionable matters.	Unqualified	Unqualified	Unqualified	Unmodified
Statement Material Weakness. A deficiency in internal control, indicating a reasonable possibility that a material financial misstatement will not be prevented.	No	No	No	No
Statement Non-Compliance. Auditor tests for compliance with certain provisions of laws, regulations, contracts, and grant agreements.	No	No	No	No
Program Opinion (A133). Review of compliance with federal requirements conducted when school receives \$500K+ in federal funds.	Unqualified	Unqualified	Unqualified	Unmodified
Program Material Weakness (A133). Lack of internal control over compliance with applicable laws, regulations, etc.	No	No	No	No
Findings & Questioned Costs. Findings important enough to merit attention by those charged with governance, with documentation of corrective action plans noting the responsible party.	0	0	0	0
Unresolved Prior Year Findings. Disclosure of prior audit findings that have not been corrected.	0	0	0	0
Going-Concern Issue. Indicates the financial strength of the school is questioned.	N/A	N/A	No	No
Debt-Compliance Issue. School was not in compliance with certain debt covenants. A debt-compliance issue may prelude insolvency.	N/A	N/A	No	No

FISCAL MANAGEMENT

Capital City PCS has not engaged in a pattern of fiscal mismanagement. The school consistently receives unqualified opinions on its financial statements. The school’s financial performance has been strong and it has built a solid balance sheet with good liquidity.

ECONOMIC VIABILITY

The school is economically viable. Audited enrollment has increased for several years in a row. The school’s total revenue was \$18.8 million and \$20.4 million in FY2013 and FY2014, respectively. Although total expenses have risen in line with enrollment increases, Capital City PCS has increased its net asset position in each of the last three years due to operating surpluses. The following tables provide a summary of financial results for the past four fiscal years. Areas of concern (where the school falls outside the norm among DC charter schools) are highlighted where applicable.

Financial Performance

PCSB assesses a school’s financial performance with three key indicators. The first indicator is a school’s “operating result” – how much its total annual revenues exceed its total annual expenditures. In general, PCSB recommends that a school’s annual operating results be positive. The school surplus has been positive in each of the last four years. Another indicator of a school’s financial performance is its earnings before depreciation (“EBAD”)⁸⁴, a financial performance measure of profitability before non-cash expenses are included. The school performed well on this measure as well. The aggregated three-year margin is a long-term measure of fiscal performance that tempers the impact of any single year fluctuations. The school’s three-year margin has also been positive over the past three years, and its FY2014 three-year margin of 10.2% placed the school among the top ten of DC charter schools in this area. **The school’s financial performance has been strong for the last four years.**

	Indicator of Concern	Audit Year			
		2011	2012	2013	2014
Operating Surplus/(Deficit)	< 0	\$ 558,771	\$ 3,394,617	\$ 853,784	\$ 1,292,877
Earnings Before Depreciation	< 0	\$ 961,285	\$ 3,825,988	\$ 2,158,991	\$ 2,854,955
Aggregated 3-Year Total Margin	< -1.5%	2.9%	13.9%	10.9%	10.2%

Liquidity

Two indicators of a school’s short-term economic viability are its current ratio⁸⁵ and its days of cash on hand.⁸⁶ A current ratio greater than one indicates a school’s ability to satisfy its immediate financial obligations. The school’s current ratio dipped below 1.0 in FY2012 but has otherwise been 2.5 or above. The school’s ratio was 3.4 in FY2014.

⁸⁴ EBAD is the change in net assets plus amortization and depreciation.

⁸⁵ A school’s current ratio is its current assets divided by current liabilities.

⁸⁶ “Cash on hand” equals unrestricted cash and cash equivalents divided by total expenditures divided by 360 days. It is a measure of the school’s ability to pay debts and claims as they come due.

Capital City PCS has generated very healthy cash flow from operations, except for FY2013 when its cash flow from operations was negative due to timing difference between incoming facilities renovation funds and investment of those funds. Despite this timing difference, overall the school’s cash position has increased each of the last four years. Typically, 90 days or more of cash on hand indicates a school can satisfy immediate obligations with cash. Less than 30 days of cash on hand is a liquidity concern. Capital City PCS’ cash on hand stood at 168 days at the end of FY2014. **Overall, Capital City PCS’ liquidity is strong.**

	Indicator of Concern	Audit Year			
		2011	2012	2013	2014
Current Ratio	< 0.5	2.6	0.8	2.5	3.4
Days of Cash On Hand	< 30	80	100	118	168
Cash Flow from Operations	< 0	\$ 956,345	\$ 4,519,299	\$ (371,518)	\$ 4,528,121
Multi-Year Cumulative Cash Flow	< 0	\$ 1,980,455	\$ 3,184,653	\$ 3,691,127	\$ 5,532,853

Debt Burden

A school’s debt ratio⁸⁷ indicates the extent to which a school relies on borrowed funds to finance its operations, and a ratio in excess of 0.92 is a concern to PCSB. Capital City PCS’s debt ratio increased from 0.5 in FY2011 to 0.71 in FY2013 due to the school’s move to new facilities. The debt ratio still remains comfortably below the 0.92 threshold and, the debt service ratio is 5%. **Therefore, Capital City PCS’s current debt burden does not pose concerns to its economic viability.**

	Indicator of Concern	Audit Year			
		2011	2012	2013	2014
Debt Ratio	> 0.92	0.50	0.66	0.71	0.68
Debt Service Ratio	> 10.0%	-1.8%	-0.6%	-3.4%	-4.1%

Sustainability

A school’s net assets⁸⁸ and primary reserve ratio⁷ demonstrate its sustainability. PCSB recommends that schools accrue net asset reserves equal to three to six months of operating expenditures and PCSB would be concerned with net assets reserves below zero. **The school’s metrics demonstrate sustainability, with a net asset position in excess of six months and positive primary reserves.**

	Indicator of Concern	Audit Year			
		2011	2012	2013	2014
Net Asset Position	< 0	\$4,851,527	\$8,246,144	\$ 9,099,929	\$ 10,392,806
Primary Reserve Ratio	< 0.00	0.51	0.70	0.51	0.54

⁸⁷ Debt ratio equals total liabilities divided by total assets.

⁸⁸ Net Asset Position equals total assets minus total liabilities.

⁷ Primary Reserve Ratio equals total net assets divided by total annual expenses.