



April 23, 2018

Juliet Squire, Board Chair
Harmony DC Public Charter School
62 T Street NE
Washington, DC 20002

Dear Ms. Squire:

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

- School eligible for 5-year Charter Review during 2018-19 school year
- School earned a Tier 3 score on the Performance Management Framework during 2016-17 school year

Qualitative Site Review Report

A Qualitative Site Review team conducted on-site reviews of Harmony DC Public Charter School (Harmony DC PCS) between February 26, 2018 – March 9, 2018. Enclosed is the team's report. You will find that the Qualitative Site Review Report focuses primarily on the following areas: classroom environment and instruction.

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

Sincerely,



Naomi DeVeaux
Deputy Director

Enclosures
cc: Emin Cavusoglu, CEO/Principal

Qualitative Site Review Report

Date: April 23, 2018

Campus Information

Campus Name: Harmony DC Public Charter School (Harmony DC PCS)

Ward: 5

Grade levels: K-5

Qualitative Site Review Information

Reason for visit:

- School eligible for 5-year Charter School Review
- School earned a Tier 3 score on the Performance Management Framework during 2016-17 school year

Two-week window: February 26, 2018 – March 9, 2018

QSR team members: One DC PCSB staff member/special education specialist and one consultant

Number of observations: 7

Total enrollment: 93

Students with Disabilities enrollment: 14

English Language Learners enrollment: 0

In-seat attendance on observation days:

Visit 1: February 26, 2018 – 88.0%

Visit 2: March 1, 2018 – 92.4%

Summary

Harmony DC Public Charter School's mission is:

To prepare students for higher learning in a safe, caring, and collaborative atmosphere through a quality learner-centered educational program with a strong emphasis on science, technology, engineering, and mathematics.

The QSR team observed some evidence of the school's mission as it relates to the atmosphere; however, the team did not observe significant evidence that the school is meeting its mission as it relates to the educational program.

The school's environment was calm and caring. Anti-bullying posters, student awards, and some "Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics" (STEM) posters hung on the hall walls. There were also behavioral reminders about how to walk in the halls and motivational messages posted throughout the school.

The educational program, however, was not learner-centered. There was limited to no student choice and all learning was driven by the teacher. In the majority of observations, academic rigor was low. Student inquiry was limited as was an

emphasis on critical thinking. The QSR team observed very limited integration of STEM other than students using Chromebooks or iPads during center rotations or when other work was completed. Additionally, there was no evidence of Engineering learning opportunities.

During the QSR two-week window, the team used the Charlotte Danielson *Framework for Teaching* to examine classroom environments and instructional delivery (see Appendix I). The QSR team scored 71% of observations as proficient but only one of the observations as distinguished in the Classroom Environment domain. In the components of *Establishing a Culture for Learning* and *Managing Student Behavior*, 86% of observations rated as proficient, making these the highest scoring components for the school overall. Student behavior in the majority of classrooms was appropriate and teachers were swift with redirection as needed. One teacher repeatedly insisted that all students follow the expectation in the small group. When a student struggled the teacher gave a reminder and waited for compliance. Students expended effort to learn and teachers conveyed high expectations. In one observation the teacher insisted on precision and all students willingly participated in every activity. However, the only component with any distinguished score was *Creating an Environment of Respect and Rapport*. Students demonstrated respect for the teacher and each other. The teacher created an environment where intellectual risks were the norm and students participated willingly in the class discussion.

The QSR team scored 54% of observations as proficient in the Instruction domain and none as distinguished. The *Using Questioning and Discussion Techniques* component had the lowest scores overall, just 43% earning a score of proficient and none as distinguished. In the basic observations the teacher's questions led students along a single-path of inquiry and little to no discussion between students occurred. In several classrooms teacher questions were of low cognitive challenge and did not invite students to explain their thinking. For example, one teacher asked questions to individual students during independent work. Each question was aligned to the procedural solution of the math problem rather than asking students to explain their thinking or explore their incorrect answers.

In-School Suspension

The QSR team noted that there was a room designated for In-School Suspension. The space was assigned to the Dean of Students and Culture and contained a room with desks. At the time of the observation, no one was in the room.

Governance

A DC PCSB staff member reviewed the minutes from Harmony's October 5 and November 9, 2017 board meetings. A quorum was present at both meetings. The

board discussed its bylaws, enrollment concerns, and fundraising needs. The board also considered the possible addition of sixth grade in school year 2018-19.

Specialized Instruction for Students with Disabilities

Prior to the two-week window, Harmony DC PCS completed a questionnaire about how it serves its students with disabilities (SWD). Reviewers looked for evidence of the school's articulated program in the general education classroom and resource room, consisting of a pull-out and self-contained observation. While three observations included evidence of small-group instruction with the support of an aide in the general education classroom, observations overall lacked any meaningful specialized instruction in the inclusion setting, differentiated support and resources in the pull-out setting, or rigor in the self-contained setting. Therefore, the school did not effectively achieve the quality special education program as described by the school in the questionnaire.

- To support the learning of SWD, the school reported that they offer resources such as teacher assistants in the general education setting, and intervention programs such as Reading Eggs, Aleks, and iReady lessons. All teachers are provided manipulatives and consultations to help differentiate instruction. In one general education classroom, the teacher and an assistant divided the students into small groups where students were all working on differentiated assignments focused on literacy. Students in this classroom used manipulatives such as iPad programs, headphones, and flashcards that effectively engaged students in learning. However, the use of manipulatives and resources as described were not observed in other observations.
- To provide accommodations according to the IEPs of SWD, the school listed several common IEP accommodations such as extended time on assignments, use of calculators or tables, preferential seating, and frequent breaks. In one observation the reviewer saw evidence of a calculator and multiplication charts used in the resource classroom. The reviewer did not see any of the of other accommodations during the other observations.
- To provide modifications according to the IEPs of SWD, the school described differentiation of class work and homework, standards-based grading rubrics, and support for major classroom projects. In one general education observation, the reviewer did see small groups with an aide supporting students to access literacy. In the self-contained setting, students worked on differentiated tasks or worksheets with the support of a paraprofessional/aide (e.g., tracing letters, copying math definitions, placing stickers on a Minion activity workbook, watching a Sesame Street counting video). It is unclear whether the modified tasks completed in the self-contained were rigorous

enough for the students' ability levels. The reviewer did not see the use of any differentiated support of any kind in the pull-out observation.

THE CLASSROOM ENVIRONMENT¹

This table summarizes the school’s performance on the Classroom Environment domain of the rubric during the unannounced visits. The label definitions for classroom observations of “distinguished,” “proficient,” “basic,” and “unsatisfactory” are those from the Danielson framework. The QSR team scored 71% of classrooms as “distinguished” or “proficient” for the Classroom Environment domain. Please see Appendix III for a breakdown of each subdomain score.

The Classroom Environment	Evidence Observed	School Wide Rating	
<p>Creating an Environment of Respect and Rapport</p>	<p>The QSR team scored 57% of the observations as distinguished or proficient in this component. The majority of students participated willingly and several teachers explicitly encouraged respectful interactions. In one proficient observation one adult calmly talked to an upset student to find out what the problem was. Another student then went over and tried to help.</p> <p>In the distinguished observation the students willingly participated and the teacher encouraged every student's efforts. The teacher paraphrased student responses and asked them to build on each other's ideas. All students participated in a partner share and many raised their hands to share out at the end.</p>	Distinguished	14%
	<p>The QSR team rated 43% of the observations as basic in this component. In these observations interactions were inconsistent. One teacher asked a student to come work with them three times. The student continually interrupted the teacher and finally, the teacher walked away. In another observation a student asked the teacher if they could help and the teacher curtly told them, "No. If I don't ask you to do something, please don't ask."</p>	Basic	43%
	<p>The QSR team scored none of the observations as unsatisfactory in this component.</p>	Unsatisfactory	0%
	<p>The QSR team scored none of the observations as unsatisfactory in this component.</p>	Unsatisfactory	0%

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

The Classroom Environment	Evidence Observed	School Wide Rating	
Establishing a Culture for Learning	<p>The QSR team scored 86% of the observations as proficient and none as distinguished in this component. In the majority of these observations, students understood their role as learners and expended effort to complete their work. Teachers conveyed high expectations for students as well. In one observation the task involved students recording their reading. The teacher gave the direction, "You're going to record yourself reading these phrases. Later we can go back we can go back and see how much we've grown."</p>	Distinguished	0%
	<p>In another observation during small group instruction, the teacher insisted on precise use of language and high levels of effort from students. The teacher clearly distinguished between fractional units and fractions as well as the concept of equal parts. During the lesson the teacher repeatedly ensured students used proper terms and showed multiple models to ensure student understanding.</p>	Proficient	86%
	<p>The QSR team rated 14% of the observations as basic in this component. In this observation, the teacher appeared to be going through the motions and had inconsistent expectations for students. In one part of the lesson the teacher did not allow students to participate and asked them to instead just watch. While the teacher's back was turned to write on the board, the students giggled and whispered to each other. The teacher ignored one student who wanted help. In another part of this same observation, the teacher assigned students watching a Sesame Street video the non-rigorous task of writing down the numbers they saw in the video.</p>	Basic	14%
	<p>The QSR team scored none of the observations as unsatisfactory in this component.</p>	Unsatisfactory	0%

The Classroom Environment	Evidence Observed	School Wide Rating	
Managing Classroom Procedures	<p>The QSR team scored 57% of the observations as proficient and none as distinguished in this component. In many observations materials were readily available to students and neatly organized in the rooms. Students in some classrooms helped with transitions and material management when asked. In a few observations students needed minimal direction during center rotation because they were able to refer to a clear chart posted on the board. In another observation students transitioned into partner talk quickly and effectively. Several teachers used timers or count-down strategies to manage transitions.</p>	Distinguished	0%
	<p>The QSR team rated 43% of the observations as basic in this component. In a few observations directions for transitions were unclear requiring teachers to repeat themselves several times. In one observation some students required additional guidance in order to follow procedures. In another observation the students relied on the teacher through every step of the lesson. When work was completed, students had to wait for the teacher to check before they could get a Chromebook, for example. This resulted in students sitting idly and in a loss of instructional time.</p>	Basic	43%
	<p>The QSR team scored none of the observations as unsatisfactory in this component.</p>	Unsatisfactory	0%
Managing Student Behavior	<p>The QSR team scored 86% of the observations as proficient and none as distinguished in this component. In the majority of observations student behavior was generally appropriate and teachers responded to misbehaviors consistently and swiftly. Several teachers narrated positive behavior as a way to provide a model of students meeting the expectations. When teachers gave reminders, they were specific and respectful. In one observation when a student interrupted an adult, they replied, "Ok I'm talking right now, when I'm finished then you can ask me a question then we can talk. Do you understand?" The student nodded and complied.</p>	Distinguished	0%
		Proficient	86%

The Classroom Environment	Evidence Observed	School Wide Rating	
	<p>The QSR team rated 14% of the observations as basic in this component. In this observation the teacher attempted to respond to misbehaviors with uneven results. One student continued to interrupt the teacher even after redirection. Eventually the teacher walked away and the student continued to interrupt the teacher and other students with off-topic comments.</p>	Basic	14%
	<p>The QSR team scored none of the observations as unsatisfactory in this component.</p>	Unsatisfactory	0%

INSTRUCTION

This table summarizes the school’s performance on the Instruction domain of the rubric during the unannounced visits. The label definitions for classroom observations of “distinguished,” “proficient,” “basic,” and “unsatisfactory” are those from the Danielson framework. The QSR team scored 54% of classrooms as “proficient” for the Instruction domain and none as “distinguished”. Please see Appendix III for a breakdown of each subdomain score.

Instruction	Evidence Observed	School Wide Rating	
<p>Communicating with Students</p>	<p>The QSR team scored 57% of the observations as proficient and none as distinguished in this component. In these observations teachers clearly explained the tasks and content. Lessons were frequently scaffolded and teachers invited students to try several strategies. In one observation students had copies of the teacher’s presentation. The worksheet practice aligned to the lesson and required students to attempt to solve problems in a variety of ways. In another observation students worked in various small groups and the teacher offered several strategies for students to name parts and fractions. By the end of another observation, the teacher ensured students understood the task by repeating the directions and using multiple examples.</p>	<p>Distinguished</p>	<p>0%</p>
		<p>Proficient</p>	<p>57%</p>

Instruction	Evidence Observed	School Wide Rating	
	<p>The QSR team rated 43% of the observations as basic in this component. In a few observations the teacher had to either repeat the directions several times or show students how to complete the task multiple times. Even after this repetition, several students remained unclear. In other observations the teacher's explanation of content was procedural or contained minor errors. In one observation, the teacher asked students to name the elements on the cover of the book. The students named features such as title, author, and illustrator; however, these elements were not actually on the cover of the book. In another observation the teacher's explanation of content was procedural, sometimes confusing, and generally consisted of a monologue with minimal opportunities for students to think strategically and independently.</p>	Basic	43%
	<p>The QSR team scored none of the observations as unsatisfactory in this component.</p>	Unsatisfactory	0%
<p>Using Questioning/Prompts and Discussion Techniques</p>	<p>The QSR team scored 43% of the observations as proficient and none as distinguished in this component. In these observations the teachers' questions promoted student thinking. One teacher modeled dividing a paper into fractional parts and asked students to describe what they did, encouraging students to note whether there were equal parts. In another observation students engaged in a discussion building off of each other's ideas. Another teacher asked, "Can you tell me what helped you arrive at that answer? Tell me about your evidence." A student then went to the front of the board and underlined the words that led him to change his response to the correct answer.</p>	Distinguished	0%
		Proficient	43%

Instruction	Evidence Observed	School Wide Rating	
	<p>The QSR team rated 43% of the observations as basic in this component. In several observations teacher questions led students along a single path of inquiry with one right answer. In one observation the question began as somewhat open ended: "Why do we have the table of contents?" but the student who responded only gave a partially correct answer, "So we can read the next book and follow the line and when we get there, we can get another book". The teacher responded, "Very good." In another observation the teacher talked through the problem and solved it him/herself during one-on-one interactions with students.</p>	Basic	43%
	<p>The QSR team rated 14% of the observations as unsatisfactory in this component. In this observation the teacher's explanation of content consisted of a monologue and mainly rhetorical questions that did not invite student thinking. One student attempted to explain their thinking, but the teacher told the student "no" when the student wanted to share their thoughts. The student was later unwilling willing to answer an example problem on the board.</p>	Unsatisfactory	14%
<p>Engaging Students in Learning</p>	<p>The QSR team scored 57% of the observations as proficient and none as distinguished in this component. In these observations students engaged with the content and teachers scaffolded for support. Lessons had a clearly defined structure and most pacing was appropriate to allow time for students to engage meaningfully. In one observation the teacher introduced similar content to each small group but scaffolded it differently to allow each student to engage. The teacher used visual models, oral and written language, and had a reference chart nearby for students. In another observation the teacher had a timer and the pace of the lesson allowed students to engage with the assignment in multiple modalities and with several examples to reinforce the content. Students had a packet to record their</p>	Distinguished	0%

Instruction	Evidence Observed	School Wide Rating	
	answers and a chart of problem solving strategies on their desks.	Proficient	57%
	The QSR team rated 43% of the observations as basic in this component. In these observations the learning tasks were of low cognitive challenge and students were mostly passive or compliant learners. In a few observations the assignments required rote recall. In one observation students participated in several tasks that required them to review spelling words. In another students copied what the teacher wrote on the board. In yet another observation, students worked on a Minions workbook with stickers or doing a maze puzzle while other students copied words or sentences while others watched.	Basic	43%
	The QSR team scored none of the observations as unsatisfactory in this component.	Unsatisfactory	0%
Using Assessment in Instruction	The QSR team scored 57% of the observations as proficient and none as distinguished in this component. In these observations teachers provided feedback to individual students, small groups of students, and/or the class as a whole. When needed, teachers adjusted to ensure students understood. In one observation the teacher encouraged students to reread a passage or try again when the answer was incorrect. Another teacher circulated and asked a student what they they thought. The student responded to a comprehension question on the board and then the teacher answered, "If that's what you think, I want you to discuss with your team."	Distinguished	0%
		Proficient	57%

Instruction	Evidence Observed	School Wide Rating	
	<p>The QSR team scored 29% of the observations as basic in this component. In these observations teachers either monitored student understanding through one method or did not provide criteria for quality work. In one observation students were sent to work independently on a task with some choice but limited connection to the previous class discussion. The class discussed refraction of light but were asked to draw clouds, the sun, and rainbows. In another observation the teacher monitored learning with only some individuals and did not ask students to explain their thinking about their work. Instead, the teacher told them which answers were incorrect and then corrected the answers for students.</p>	Basic	29%
	<p>The QSR team rated 14% of the observations as unsatisfactory in this component. In this observation the teacher asked students to complete problems after reviewing an example. Students were unable to answer the questions independently and the teacher made no attempt to readjust the lesson. The teacher then completed the answers for the problems when students did not arrive at the correct answer themselves.</p>	Unsatisfactory	14%

APPENDIX I: THE CLASSROOM ENVIRONMENT OBSERVATION RUBRIC

The Classroom Environment	Unsatisfactory	Basic	Proficient	Distinguished
Creating an Environment of Respect and Rapport	Classroom interactions, both between the teacher and students and among students, are negative or inappropriate and characterized by sarcasm, putdowns, or conflict.	Classroom interactions are generally appropriate and free from conflict but may be characterized by occasional displays of insensitivity.	Classroom interactions reflect general warmth and caring, and are respectful of the cultural and developmental differences among groups of students.	Classroom interactions are highly respectful, reflecting genuine warmth and caring toward individuals. Students themselves ensure maintenance of high levels of civility among member of the class.
Establishing a Culture for Learning	The classroom does not represent a culture for learning and is characterized by low teacher commitment to the subject, low expectations for student achievement, and little student pride in work.	The classroom environment reflects only a minimal culture for learning, with only modest or inconsistent expectations for student achievement, little teacher commitment to the subject, and little student pride in work. Both teacher and students are performing at the minimal level to "get by."	The classroom environment represents a genuine culture for learning, with commitment to the subject on the part of both teacher and students, high expectations for student achievement, and student pride in work.	Students assumes much of the responsibility for establishing a culture for learning in the classroom by taking pride in their work, initiating improvements to their products, and holding the work to the highest standard. Teacher demonstrates as passionate commitment to the subject.
Managing Classroom Procedures	Classroom routines and procedures are either nonexistent or inefficient, resulting in the loss of much instruction time.	Classroom routines and procedures have been established but function unevenly or inconsistently, with some loss of instruction time.	Classroom routines and procedures have been established and function smoothly for the most part, with little loss of instruction time.	Classroom routines and procedures are seamless in their operation, and students assume considerable responsibility for their smooth functioning.
Managing Student Behavior	Student behavior is poor, with no clear expectations, no monitoring of student behavior, and inappropriate response to student misbehavior.	Teacher makes an effort to establish standards of conduct for students, monitor student behavior, and respond to student misbehavior, but these efforts are not always successful.	Teacher is aware of student behavior, has established clear standards of conduct, and responds to student misbehavior in ways that are appropriate and respectful of the students.	Student behavior is entirely appropriate, with evidence of student participation in setting expectations and monitoring behavior. Teacher's monitoring of student behavior is subtle and preventive, and teachers' response to student misbehavior is sensitive to individual student needs.

APPENDIX II: INSTRUCTION OBSERVATION RUBRIC

Instruction	Unsatisfactory	Basic	Proficient	Distinguished
Communicating with Students	Teacher's oral and written communication contains errors or is unclear or inappropriate to students. Teacher's purpose in a lesson or unit is unclear to students. Teacher's explanation of the content is unclear or confusing or uses inappropriate language.	Teacher's oral and written communication contains no errors, but may not be completely appropriate or may require further explanations to avoid confusion. Teacher attempts to explain the instructional purpose, with limited success. Teacher's explanation of the content is uneven; some is done skillfully, but other portions are difficult to follow.	Teacher communicates clearly and accurately to students both orally and in writing. Teacher's purpose for the lesson or unit is clear, including where it is situated within broader learning. Teacher's explanation of content is appropriate and connects with students' knowledge and experience.	Teacher's oral and written communication is clear and expressive, anticipating possible student misconceptions. Makes the purpose of the lesson or unit clear, including where it is situated within broader learning, linking purpose to student interests. Explanation of content is imaginative, and connects with students' knowledge and experience. Students contribute to explaining concepts to their peers.
Using Questioning and Discussion Techniques	Teacher makes poor use of questioning and discussion techniques, with low-level questions, limited student participation, and little true discussion.	Teacher's use of questioning and discussion techniques is uneven with some high-level question; attempts at true discussion; moderate student participation.	Teacher's use of questioning and discussion techniques reflects high-level questions, true discussion, and full participation by all students.	Students formulate many of the high-level questions and assume responsibility for the participation of all students in the discussion.
Engaging Students in Learning	Students are not at all intellectually engaged in significant learning, as a result of inappropriate activities or materials, poor representations of content, or lack of lesson structure.	Students are intellectually engaged only partially, resulting from activities or materials or uneven quality, inconsistent representation of content or uneven structure of pacing.	Students are intellectually engaged throughout the lesson, with appropriate activities and materials, instructive representations of content, and suitable structure and pacing of the lesson.	Students are highly engaged throughout the lesson and make material contribution to the representation of content, the activities, and the materials. The structure and pacing of the lesson allow for student reflection and closure.
Using Assessment in Instruction	Students are unaware of criteria and performance standards by which their work will be evaluated, and do not engage in self-assessment or monitoring. Teacher does not monitor student learning in the curriculum, and feedback to students is of poor quality and in an untimely manner.	Students know some of the criteria and performance standards by which their work will be evaluated, and occasionally assess the quality of their own work against the assessment criteria and performance standards. Teacher monitors the progress of the class as a whole but elicits no diagnostic information; feedback to students is uneven and inconsistent in its timeliness.	Students are fully aware of the criteria and performance standards by which their work will be evaluated, and frequently assess and monitor the quality of their own work against the assessment criteria and performance standards. Teacher monitors the progress of groups of students in the curriculum, making limited use of diagnostic prompts to elicit information; feedback is timely, consistent, and of high quality.	Students are fully aware of the criteria and standards by which their work will be evaluated, have contributed to the development of the criteria, frequently assess and monitor the quality of their own work against the assessment criteria and performance standards, and make active use of that information in their learning. Teacher actively and systematically elicits diagnostic information from individual students regarding understanding and monitors progress of individual students; feedback is timely, high quality, and students use feedback in their learning.

Appendix III: SCORE BREAKDOWN BY COMPONENT

Percent of:	2a	2b	2c	2d	3a	3b	3c	3d
Unsatisfactory	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	14%	0%	14%
Basic	43%	14%	43%	14%	43%	43%	43%	29%
Proficient	43%	86%	57%	86%	57%	43%	57%	57%
Distinguished	14%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
Subdomain Average	2.71	2.86	2.57	2.86	2.57	2.29	2.57	2.43

	Domain 2	Domain 3
% of Proficient or above	71%	54%
Domain Averages	2.75	2.46