



DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA  
PUBLIC CHARTER SCHOOL BOARD

October 29, 2015

Marc Fisher, Board Chair  
Inspired Teaching Demonstration PCS  
200 Douglas St NE  
Washington, DC 20002

Dear Mr. Fisher:

The Public Charter School Board (PCSB) conducts Qualitative Site Reviews to gather and document evidence to support school oversight. According to the School Reform Act § 38-1802.11, 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 2015-16 school year for the following reason:

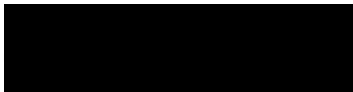
- School eligible for 5-year Charter Review during 2015-16 school year

**Qualitative Site Review Report**

A Qualitative Site Review team conducted on-site reviews of Inspired Teaching Demonstration PCS between September 28 and October 7, 2015. Enclosed is the team's report. You will find that the Qualitative Site Review Report focuses primarily on the following areas: charter mission and goals, classroom environments, and instructional delivery.

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

Sincerely,



Naomi DeVeaux  
Deputy Director

Enclosures  
cc: School Leader

## Qualitative Site Review Report

**Date:** October 27, 2015

**Campus Name:** Inspired Teaching Demonstration PCS

**Ward:** 5

**Grade levels in school year 2015-16:** Pre-kindergarten 3 – grade 7

**Enrollment in school year 2015-16:** 268

**Reason for visit:** 5-year review

**Two-week window:** September 28 - October 7, 2015

**Number of observations:** 20

### Summary

Inspired Teaching Demonstration Public Charter School's (Inspired Teaching PCS) has the following mission: at the Inspired Teaching Demonstration Public Charter School, a professional learning community of master teachers and teacher residents ensures that a diverse group of students achieve their potential as accomplished learners, thoughtful citizens, and imaginative and inquisitive problem solvers through a demanding, inquiry-based curriculum.

Inspired Teaching PCS is designed to provide an inquiry-based curriculum and to support students and teachers as learners. With a Master or Lead Teacher and a Resident or Associate Teacher in every classroom, students have access to support from multiple adults who share the implementation of the school's mission and vision. There is a focus on the culture of the building as evidenced through the student work displayed in the hallways and the classrooms.

In many instances the curriculum allowed students to work through concepts in different ways to complete the assignments, including students choosing activities to focus on when completing a task. In a first grade classroom, students could choose from Library, Read Along, and other reading centers. Students knew how to sign up for a center and focus on the activity independently. Overall classrooms were cognitively busy environments with students engaged in many different learning experiences.

The QSR team scored 76% of the observations as distinguished or proficient in the Classroom Environment domain. In these observations teachers and students had a good rapport with each other and a culture of respect and learning permeated throughout the school. Classroom management in the lower grades was relatively strong whereas observations of the upper grades showed less consistent implementation of classroom procedures and student behavior management. In these observations there was less engagement from students overall, and fewer systems to encourage active learning and focused behavior.

The QSR team scored 74% of the observations as distinguished or proficient in the Instruction domain. Classrooms were intellectually engaging and most students knew what was expected of them during work times. Teachers asked thought-provoking questions and many used effective forms of assessment to determine what students were learning.

Prior to the two-week window, Inspired Teaching PCS provided answers to specific questions posed by PCSB regarding the provision of instruction to students with disabilities in the Special Education Questionnaire. The questionnaire states that general education teachers and special education teachers work together collaboratively to co-plan regarding ensuring that Students with Disabilities (SWDs) are adequately served at Inspired Teaching PCS. During the special education (SPED) observation, in which the SPED teacher pushed into the general education class, it was not fully evident that the SPED and general education teacher had planned the lesson together. The SPED teacher played a passive and insignificant role in the class as a silent monitor of students. In other SPED observations (including push-in, pull-out, self-contained settings), the students appeared to be comfortable in their learning environment, and most of the students seemed to have very positive relationships with their teachers. In one observation a teacher made a reference to a student's IEP goal while they worked together. The majority of observations showed that students with disabilities appear to have access to ample supports and a warm, nurturing environment at the school.

**CHARTER MISSION, GOALS, AND ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENT EXPECTATIONS**

This table summarizes Inspired Teaching Demonstration PCS’s goals and academic achievement expectations as detailed in its charter and subsequent Accountability Plans, and the evidence that the Qualitative Site Review (QSR) team observed of the school meeting those goals during the Qualitative Site Visit.

<b>Mission and Goals</b>	<b>Evidence</b>
<p>Mission: At the Inspired Teaching Demonstration Public Charter School, a professional learning community of master teachers and teacher residents ensures that a diverse group of students achieve their potential as accomplished learners, thoughtful citizens, and imaginative and inquisitive problem solvers through a demanding, inquiry-based curriculum.</p>	<p>Inspired Teaching Demonstration PCS is working to meet its mission.</p> <p>There were at least two teachers in each classroom. Master and Lead teachers led most whole group lessons while Resident Teachers assisted small groups and individual students. Students worked in groups on hands on science projects, read and discussed literature, and devised questions about the curriculum topics. In the early childhood and elementary classrooms, the team observed students making choices in book selection and ways to solve problems, a focus on student voice and strong levels of respect for all individuals. In the upper grades, there was a focus on problem-solving and thoughtful citizenship but also inconsistencies in the implementation of these practices by both teachers and students. The majority of the math lessons in both upper and lower grades were procedural, which does not align with the school's mission to be an inquiry-based school.</p>
<p>Goals: PMF Goal #1: Student Progress – Academic Improvement over time <i>Effective instruction supporting student academic progress and achievement in reading and math.</i></p>	<p>In elementary classrooms, students used manipulatives to explore math concepts and participating in Guided Reading lessons, differentiated to their reading levels. In some math lessons students were asked to follow procedures to complete a task and there was less focus on student-driven strategies.</p>

Mission and Goals	Evidence
<p>PMF Goal #2: Student Achievement – Meeting or exceeding academic standards <i>Moving students to advanced levels of proficiency in reading and math</i></p>	<p>Teachers differentiated instruction in some observations, particularly during Guided Reading groups and independent reading. Students were encouraged to make choices that aligned to their interests and ability levels. For example, in one classroom, students self-selected books to read during independent reading time. In another observation, students designed their own planets and made choices about weather and climate patterns in their construction.</p>
<p>PMF Goal # 3: Gateway – Outcomes in key subjects that predict future educational success <i>Promotion of reading proficiency by third grade and math proficiency by eighth grade</i></p>	<p>Reading and math skills were embedded in the early childhood (PS, PK) classrooms in various centers. There was a focus on problem-solving and oral language in these classrooms. In the elementary and upper grades classrooms, students engaged in Guided Reading groups, independent reading, vocabulary work, and Literature Circles. The math instruction included the use of the enVision Math program, student-generated strategies, and completing work from the board.</p>
<p>PMF Goal #4: Leading Indicators – Predictors of future student progress and achievement <i>Culture of learning and support in the classrooms</i></p>	<p>In the majority of observations, as well as throughout the hallways of the building, there was a strong culture of learning. The school's focus on the Four I's: Intellect, Inquiry, Imagination, Integrity was evident on many walls throughout the building, both with inspirational messages and related student work. Having at least two adults in each classroom allowed students to have access to any needed support. In all classrooms, both adults engaged with students on a regular basis, from leading small groups to supporting individuals during work times. The culture of learning and support in the upper grades was less consistent. There</p>

Mission and Goals	Evidence
	<p>were fewer norms for behavior posted in classrooms and teachers allowed more disruptions to the learning environment.</p>
<p>Governance:</p>	<p>A PCSB staff member reviewed approved board-meeting minutes from the school's fourth quarter of school year 2014-15. At both the March 16 and May 18 board meetings in 2015 a quorum was present. The board discussed building completion, legal issues, enrollment, and staffing during the school updates. Committees focusing on finance, fundraising, and governance also gave updates to the board. In the May meeting the board adopted a budget for 2015-16 and adopted amendments to the board bylaws. In addition the board approved three new members.</p>

## THE CLASSROOM ENVIRONMENT<sup>1</sup>

This table summarizes the school’s performance on the Classroom Environments 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 76% of classrooms as “distinguished” or “proficient” for the Classroom Environment domain.

The Classroom Environment	Evidence Observed	School Wide Rating	
<b>Creating an Environment of Respect and Rapport</b>	The QSR team scored 80% of the observations as distinguished or proficient in this component. Interactions between teachers and students as well as among students were friendly and respectful. All students were called by name and many teachers used encouraging words to support students through challenges, both academic and social. The majority of students actively engaged in class.	Distinguished	25%
		Proficient	55%
	The QSR team scored 20% of the observations as basic in this category. In these observations, there were inconsistent interactions between the teacher and students. One teacher’s attempts at redirection were only successful sometimes, while another teacher was curt with students and did not invite them to explain or participate.	Basic	20%
	The QSR team rated none of the observations as unsatisfactory in this component.	Unsatisfactory	0%
<b>Establishing a Culture for Learning</b>	The QSR team scored 90% of the observations as distinguished or proficient in this component. Teachers shared high expectations for all learners, and most students understood what they were supposed to do in the	Distinguished	5%

<sup>1</sup> Teachers may be observed more than once by different review team members.

The Classroom Environment	Evidence Observed	School Wide Rating	
	classroom. In centers in the early childhood classrooms and in independent reading in the early grades, students chose their work and sustained attention for a developmentally appropriate time. Risk taking and participation were celebrated, sometimes with unique cheers.	Proficient	85%
	The QSR team scored 10% of the observations as basic in this component. One teacher walked away from struggling students. In another observation a teacher sat at a computer for an extended period of time while students were not working on the assigned task.	Basic	10%
	The QSR team rated none of the observations as unsatisfactory in this component.	Unsatisfactory	0%
<b>Managing Classroom Procedures</b>	The QSR team scored 70% of the observations as proficient or distinguished in this component. In these classrooms, which included all of the early childhood classrooms, teachers continually talked to students and engaged them in discussions even during snack and they moved students from read aloud to centers without students getting off-task or losing instructional time as students gathered materials and started work without teachers intervening. Teachers employed methods such as “call and response” in many classrooms to assist with transitions and redirection.	Distinguished	10%
		Proficient	60%



The Classroom Environment	Evidence Observed	School Wide Rating	
	<p>The QSR team scored 30% of the observations as basic in this component. In these observations teachers did not have an apparent system for transitions and getting ready for class, which resulted in lost instructional time and the need to repeat directions multiple times. In one observation students who finished early were told to "hold tight" for several minutes with nothing to do.</p>	Basic	30%
	<p>The QSR team rated none of the observations as unsatisfactory in this component.</p>	Unsatisfactory	0%
Managing Student Behavior	<p>The QSR team scored 65% of the observations as distinguished or proficient in this component. In these observations norms for behavior were established, posted and referenced by teachers when redirecting, who also used non-verbal cues and proximity to redirect. At times students reminded their classmates of the expectations.</p>	Distinguished	15%
		Proficient	50%
	<p>The QSR team scored 35% of the observations as basic in this component. Observers did not see teachers referencing behavioral rules or, in some cases, see established norms for behavior. In some observations, consequences were named but not enacted and/or some students were allowed to continue disrupting the class without redirection.</p>	Basic	35%
	<p>The QSR team rated none of the observations as unsatisfactory in this component.</p>	Unsatisfactory	0%

## INSTRUCTION

This table summarizes the school’s performance on the Instruction domain of the rubric during the unannounced visits. The label definitions for classroom observations of “distinguished,” “proficient,” “basic,” and “unsatisfactory” are those from the Danielson framework. The QSR team scored 74% of observations as “distinguished” or “proficient” for the Instruction domain.

Instruction	Evidence Observed	School Wide Rating	
<b>Communicating with Students</b>	The QSR team scored 85% of the observations as proficient in this component. Strategy work was a focus in many observations, both in reading and in math. In one observation a student named and shared a math strategy that was then used by other students in the class to solve the problem. Several teachers modeled strategies for students to use in their work and both teachers and students used rich language.	Distinguished	0%
		Proficient	85%
	The QSR team scored 15% of the observations as basic in this component. In one observation students became off-task when the teacher reviewed material, as the purpose of the lesson was not explicit and the explanation was circuitous. When students asked questions, the teacher was unable to offer clarity. In another observation there were content errors on posters in the room and in the language used by the teacher.	Basic	15%
The QSR team rated none of the observations as unsatisfactory in this component.	Unsatisfactory	0%	

Instruction	Evidence Observed	School Wide Rating	
<b>Using Questioning/Prompts and Discussion Techniques</b>	<p>The QSR team scored 70% of the observations as distinguished or proficient in this component. In most of the observations, the majority of the students in the class participated in both small and large group settings. Teachers used various techniques such as calling on students, asking general questions, polling the class to see who agrees/disagrees, and asking students to explain their answers. Students were consistently engaged in answering open-ended questions to keep them stimulated. In one observation a student told the teacher he disagreed with her about the motive for the character's action in a class book and he was encouraged to explain his position.</p>	Distinguished	5%
		Proficient	65%
	<p>The QSR team scored 25% of the observations as basic in this component. In these observations, teachers did not use students' responses and ideas, instead they lectured. When student responses were requested, they were simple, such as repeating back facts they learned in an earlier class, or they went unanswered.</p>	Basic	25%
	<p>The QSR team rated less than 10% of the observations as unsatisfactory in this component.</p>	Unsatisfactory	5%
<b>Engaging Students in Learning</b>	<p>The QSR team scored 75% of the observations as distinguished or proficient in this component. In these observations students were intellectually engaged through centers and projects. In one observation students worked on a science project and helped each other by providing suggestions for their peer's work.</p>	Distinguished	10%
		Proficient	65%

Instruction	Evidence Observed	School Wide Rating	
	<p>The QSR team scored 25% of observations as basic in this component. In one observation the students spent the majority of the time watching the teacher. When the teacher attempted to engage the students in discussion, students were not focused or actively participating.</p>	Basic	25%
	<p>The QSR team rated none of the observations as unsatisfactory in this component.</p>	Unsatisfactory	0%
<p><b>Using Assessment in Instruction</b></p>	<p>The QSR team scored 65% of the observations as distinguished or proficient in this component. Students engaged in individual conferences with their teacher to demonstrate their understanding. In another observation, during one Guided Reading group, the teacher listened and provided scaffolding and feedback to individual students as they read. Yet another teacher referenced a rubric. Many Resident Teachers also supported individual students in centers or during work times by circulating to address questions, or sitting to work with students to engage them further.</p>	Distinguished	5%
		Proficient	60%
	<p>The QSR team scored 25% of the observations as basic in this component. In these observations teachers monitored student understanding globally or not at all. Several teachers asked for one-word answers to questions and did not ask students to explain their thinking. During these observations the criteria for assessment was not made clear to students nor was specific feedback given that would support students in creating high-quality work.</p>	Basic	25%

Instruction	Evidence Observed	School Wide Rating	
	<p>The QSR team rated 10% of the observations as unsatisfactory in the use of assessment in instruction. In these observations there was little to no support offered to struggling students and little to no indication that the teachers monitored student learning. In one observation homework was checked for completion but not content. The focus of any check for understanding was limited to task completion not content mastery.</p>	Unsatisfactory	10%

**APPENDIX I: THE CLASSROOM ENVIRONMENT OBSERVATION RUBRIC**

The Classroom Environment	Unsatisfactory	Basic	Proficient	Distinguished
<p><b>Creating an Environment of Respect and Rapport</b></p>	<p>Classroom interactions, both between the teacher and students and among students, are negative or inappropriate and characterized by sarcasm, putdowns, or conflict.</p>	<p>Classroom interactions are generally appropriate and free from conflict but may be characterized by occasional displays of insensitivity.</p>	<p>Classroom interactions reflect general warmth and caring, and are respectful of the cultural and developmental differences among groups of students.</p>	<p>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.</p>
<p><b>Establishing a Culture for Learning</b></p>	<p>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.</p>	<p>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.”</p>	<p>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.</p>	<p>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.</p>

<b>The Classroom Environment</b>	<b>Unsatisfactory</b>	<b>Basic</b>	<b>Proficient</b>	<b>Distinguished</b>
<b>Managing Classroom Procedures</b>	Classroom routines and procedures are either nonexistent or inefficient, resulting in the loss of much instruction time.	Classroom routines and procedures have been established but function unevenly or inconsistently, with some loss of instruction time.	Classroom routines and procedures have been established and function smoothly for the most part, with little loss of instruction time.	Classroom routines and procedures are seamless in their operation, and students assume considerable responsibility for their smooth functioning.
<b>Managing Student Behavior</b>	Student behavior is poor, with no clear expectations, no monitoring of student behavior, and inappropriate response to student misbehavior.	Teacher makes an effort to establish standards of conduct for students, monitor student behavior, and respond to student misbehavior, but these efforts are not always successful.	Teacher is aware of student behavior, has established clear standards of conduct, and responds to student misbehavior in ways that are appropriate and respectful of the students.	Student behavior is entirely appropriate, with evidence of student participation in setting expectations and monitoring behavior. Teacher's monitoring of student behavior is subtle and preventive, and teachers' response to student misbehavior is sensitive to individual student needs.

## APPENDIX II: INSTRUCTION OBSERVATION RUBRIC

Instruction	Unsatisfactory	Basic	Proficient	Distinguished
<b>Communicating with Students</b>	Teacher's oral and written communication contains errors or is unclear or inappropriate to students. Teacher's purpose in a lesson or unit is unclear to students. Teacher's explanation of the content is unclear or confusing or uses inappropriate language.	Teacher's oral and written communication contains no errors, but may not be completely appropriate or may require further explanations to avoid confusion. Teacher attempts to explain the instructional purpose, with limited success. Teacher's explanation of the content is uneven; some is done skillfully, but other portions are difficult to follow.	Teacher communicates clearly and accurately to students both orally and in writing. Teacher's purpose for the lesson or unit is clear, including where it is situated within broader learning. Teacher's explanation of content is appropriate and connects with students' knowledge and experience.	Teacher's oral and written communication is clear and expressive, anticipating possible student misconceptions. Makes the purpose of the lesson or unit clear, including where it is situated within broader learning, linking purpose to student interests. Explanation of content is imaginative, and connects with students' knowledge and experience. Students contribute to explaining concepts to their peers.
<b>Using Questioning and Discussion Techniques</b>	Teacher makes poor use of questioning and discussion techniques, with low-level questions, limited student participation, and little true discussion.	Teacher's use of questioning and discussion techniques is uneven with some high-level question; attempts at true discussion; moderate student participation.	Teacher's use of questioning and discussion techniques reflects high-level questions, true discussion, and full participation by all students.	Students formulate many of the high-level questions and assume responsibility for the participation of all students in the discussion.
<b>Engaging Students in Learning</b>	Students are not at all intellectually engaged in significant learning, as a result of inappropriate activities or materials, poor representations of content, or lack of lesson structure.	Students are intellectually engaged only partially, resulting from activities or materials or uneven quality, inconsistent representation of content or uneven structure of pacing.	Students are intellectually engaged throughout the lesson, with appropriate activities and materials, instructive representations of content, and suitable structure and pacing of the lesson.	Students are highly engaged throughout the lesson and make material contribution to the representation of content, the activities, and the materials. The structure and pacing of the lesson allow for student reflection and closure.

Instruction	Unsatisfactory	Basic	Proficient	Distinguished
<p><b>Using Assessment in Instruction</b></p>	<p>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.</p>	<p>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.</p>	<p>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.</p>	<p>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.</p>