

QUALITATIVE SITE REVIEW

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

KIPP DC – Lead Academy Public Charter School (KIPP DC – Lead PCS) is part of the KIPP DC PCS network. This campus opened in 2012 and serves approximately 300 students in grades 1 - 4 in Ward 6. It is part of the Shaw facility, which also includes Grow Academy serving PK3 and PK4 and Will Academy serving grades 5 - 8. The DC Public Charter School Board (PCSB) conducted a Qualitative Site Review (QSR) in February 2015 because KIPP DC PCS is eligible to petition for 15-year Charter Renewal during the 2015-16 school year.

The QSR team conducted observations over the course of a two-week window, from February 2 through February 13, 2015. A team of a PCSB staff member, one Special Education Specialist, and one consultant conducted 14 observations. A PCSB staff member also attended a Board of Trustees meeting. The QSR team used Charlotte Danielson's *Framework for Teaching* Rubric throughout the observations and observed classrooms in mornings and afternoons. In some instances a QSR team member observed a teacher twice. The QSR team also collected evidence regarding the school's stated mission and goals.

The QSR team scored an impressively high 84% of the observations as distinguished or proficient in the Classroom Environment domain. The highest rated component within this domain was Establishing a Culture for Learning, with 100% of observations rated as proficient. Teachers established clear expectations for learning and achievement throughout the observations. The lowest rated component was Managing Classroom Procedures with 71% of the observations rated as proficient. In about a third of the observations, procedures and transitions were in place but frequent reminders and teacher intervention was required to guide the students to follow the routines.

The QSR team scored 77% of the observations as distinguished or proficient in the Instruction domain. The highest rated component within this domain was Communicating with Students, with 93% of observations rated as proficient or distinguished. Teachers communicated expectations for learning, directions, and procedures to students in a clear and engaging manner. The lowest rated component of the domain was Using Questioning/Prompts and Discussion Techniques with 57% of the observations as proficient. In some observations teachers framed questions to promote student thinking but only a few students participated in the discussion

The special education staff consists of special education teachers and related service providers who offer instruction to students with disabilities according to their Individualized Education Plans. Services are provided to students using a full-inclusion, co-teaching model and through other more restrictive instructional models as dictated by student need. Special educators schedule pullout instructional periods in small settings equipped with a variety of materials suited to developmental levels. In some cases students are serviced in one-on-one settings to facilitate the need for intensive support. In other cases, service providers push into the regular classrooms and work with students with disabilities in ways that modify tasks and accommodate student needs.

CHARTER MISSION, GOALS, AND ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENT EXPECTATIONS

This table summarizes KIPP DC – Lead 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.

Mission and Goals	Evidence
<p>Mission:</p> <p>KIPP DC’s mission is to create and sustain the highest quality school system for the most underserved communities in Washington, DC. KIPP DC students will develop the knowledge, skills, and character necessary to become thoughtful, influential, and successful citizens in the competitive world.</p>	<p>The evidence gathered during this QSR shows that KIPP DC – Lead Academy PCS is working to meet the KIPP DC mission.</p> <p><i>Create and sustain the highest quality school system</i> The quality of the school is demonstrated by its high ratings on the <i>Framework for Teaching rubric</i>. The QSR team rated 84% of observations as proficient or distinguished in the <i>Classroom Environment</i> domain. The QSR team observed academic rigor and learning activities that denote a positive focus and attention to a tightly developed instructional program. Students throughout observations demonstrated their common understanding of KIPP DC expectations by following school rules and helping facilitate effective procedures and routines.</p> <p><i>Develop knowledge, skills, and character</i> Teachers throughout observations fostered the development of knowledge, skills, and character in students. Teachers encouraged positive character traits by challenging students to remain calm and positive in both classrooms and hallways. In one observation a student showed citizenship by fixing a center sign that had fallen down, thereby leaving the area better than she found it, without asking for rewards or recognition.</p> <p><i>Students become thoughtful, influential, and successful in the competitive world</i></p>

Mission and Goals	Evidence
	<p>Observers saw evidence that KIPP DC – Lead PCS develops students who are thoughtful, influential, and successful. Students discussed ways to approach data collection through the use of a survey. Students also helped each other with math problems without the intervention of a teacher.</p>
Goals:	
<p>Students will demonstrate academic proficiency at a performance level that makes students competitive for outstanding public or private secondary schools of their choice.</p>	<p>The QSR team noted that students participated in a variety of learning tasks that would make them competitive for outstanding secondary schools of their choice. Reading instruction in grades 1-3 included: Core Knowledge Language Arts Skills, read alouds, and shared reading. The QSR team observed numerous My Math lessons and students using computers to complete ST Math lessons. Observers noted students writing across the content areas. Time on task was very high and there was little instructional time lost in most observations.</p>
<p>Students promoted from KIPP DC elementary schools are prepared to succeed in KIPP DC middle and high schools, as well as other competitive schools of their choice.</p>	<p>Throughout observations, KIPP DC – Lead PCS prepared students to succeed in high school by providing a nurturing learning environment and by engaging students in learning. Teachers established a strong culture for learning, with a remarkable 100% of observations rated as proficient in Establishing a Culture for Learning, which included teachers conveying importance of content, demonstrating high regard for student ability, and encouraging students to do their best. The QSR team scored 79% of observations as proficient or distinguished in Engaging Students in Learning.</p>
<p>Students will have high attendance rates (the school will maintain daily attendance of 93% or greater).</p>	<p>Most classrooms had very few empty seats. Observers did not notice students arriving late to school.</p>

Mission and Goals	Evidence
Students will benefit from enrichment activities.	School schedules included programs such as Saturday programs and enrichment activities.
Principals will create an educational program and foster a school environment that facilitates student academic and social improvement.	<p>The QSR team rated 93% of the observations as proficient or distinguished in Communicating with Students. Students appeared to be very engaged in their learning and teachers monitored students through discussions, math work on white boards, and small group work.</p> <p>The QSR team scored 100% of observations rated as proficient in Establishing a Culture for Learning. Teachers encouraged persistence on the part of students and recognized students' hard work.</p>
The Principal will ensure the fiscal and physical sustainability of the school.	The QSR team neither looked for nor observed any evidence related to this goal.
The Board will provide sufficient and effective support to school leaders.	A PCSB staff member attended the KIPP DC Board of Trustees meeting on September 17, 2014. A quorum was present. The attendees included members of the KIPP DC Board of Trustees and a representative from Bain Consulting who would be working with the school on strategic planning. KIPP representatives gave presentations on various aspects of the school's performance. The presentations focused on a discipline report, a finance committee report, a management report, a school performance report, and a real estate update.

Mission and Goals	Evidence
The school leader will create a culture among staff that facilitates professional growth.	The QSR team neither looked for nor observed any evidence related to this goal.
The school will create an environment in which parents will support and participate in their child’s education.	The QSR team neither looked for nor observed any evidence related to this goal.
The school will create a safe environment in which to learn.	Classroom observations were rated highly in the <i>Classroom Environment</i> domain, with 84% of observations rated as proficient or distinguished. The QSR Team observed security personnel at each entrance who required visitors to provide identification in order to enter the building. A staff member accompanied all visitors in the building.

THE CLASSROOM ENVIRONMENT¹

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 84% of the observations as “distinguished” or “proficient” for the Classroom Environment domain.

The Classroom Environment	Evidence Observed	School Wide Rating	
Creating an Environment of Respect and Rapport	The QSR team rated 86% of the observations as distinguished or proficient in Creating an Environment of Respect and Rapport with a remarkable 43% of the observations scored as distinguished. Teachers made connections with individual students and uniformly used respectful and encouraging tones. In one distinguished observation a teacher discretely talked to a student who was visibly upset. At the end of the short conversation the teacher said, “Thanks for telling me what was wrong.”	Distinguished	43%
		Proficient	43%
	The QSR team rated 14% of the observations as basic and none as unsatisfactory. Patterns of interaction were generally respectful with some inconsistencies. One student intentionally kicked a teacher’s cart when returning to group. In another observation two students in a small group spoke to each other with angry faces and tones without the teacher intervening.	Basic	14%
		Unsatisfactory	0%
Establishing a Culture for Learning	The QSR team rated 100% of the observations as proficient and none as distinguished in Establishing a Culture for Learning. Teachers communicated the importance of the material and established clear expectations for learning. In all observations teachers supported students and students put forth strong effort to complete their work and everyone celebrated when they obtained the correct answers. Teachers encouraged students with remarks such as, “Beautiful work. You’re getting it! I said you would if you stick with it!”	Distinguished	0%
		Proficient	100%

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

The Classroom Environment	Evidence Observed	School Wide Rating	
	The QSR team rated none of the observations as basic or unsatisfactory.	Basic 0%	0%
		Unsatisfactory	0%
Managing Classroom Procedures	The QSR team rated 71% of the observations as proficient and none of the observations as distinguished in Managing Classroom Procedures. Classroom routines ran smoothly. In one observation a student managed the slide show for the class. When the teacher said, “Ding!” the student changed the frame. In most observations students followed procedures without prompting. Some students raised their hands with fingers crossed, indicating that they needed to use the restroom. Without interrupting the learning teachers excused students. Transitions were smooth with little or no instructional time lost. Students transitioned from listening and answering questions to “turn and talk” without any need for teacher intervention.	Distinguished	0%
		Proficient	71%
	The QSR team rated 29% of the observations as basic and none of the observations as unsatisfactory. In a few observations routines did not always function without incident. Teacher cues did not always result in more students attending to the lesson. Some teachers tried to use proximity and quiet reminders but students remained off task.	Basic	29%
		Unsatisfactory	0%
Managing Student Behavior	The QSR team rated 79% of the observations as distinguished or proficient in Managing Student Behavior. Teachers silently and subtly monitored students’ behavior. Teachers used reward systems such as tickets, beans in a jar, and points that are tallied on an interactive whiteboard. Teachers’ responses to misbehavior were age-appropriate and maintained students’ dignity.	Distinguished	14%
		Proficient	65%

The Classroom Environment	Evidence Observed	School Wide Rating	
	<p>The QSR team rated 21% of the observations as basic and none as unsatisfactory. In a few observations teachers were unsuccessful in maintaining order throughout the lesson. In one observation a student pouted and argued in protest when the teacher required him to transition to the next station. Teachers in these observations worked to manage student behavior but had uneven results.</p>	Basic	21%
		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 77% of the observations as "distinguished" or "proficient" for the Instruction domain.

Instruction	Evidence Observed	School Wide Rating	
Communicating with Students	<p>The QSR team rated 93% of the observations as distinguished or proficient. In most observations teachers clearly stated learning objectives. The learning tasks were also aligned to the objectives. Teachers linked the purposes of the lessons to the larger curriculum and included students in reviewing and explaining content in the distinguished observations.</p> <p>Teachers modeled the process for completing math problems. Teachers also asked students to walk through their approaches to solving problems for the rest of the class. Teachers used rich language and reviewed the definitions of math vocabulary terms.</p>	Distinguished	36%
		Proficient	57%
	<p>The QSR team rated less than 10% of the observations as basic and none as unsatisfactory.</p>	Basic	7%
		Unsatisfactory	0%
Using Questioning/Prompts and Discussion Techniques	<p>The QSR team rated 57% of the observations as proficient and none as distinguished in Using Questioning and Discussion Techniques. Teachers used questions that were designed to promote thinking and understanding. In many observations teachers invited students to respond to each other. In other observations when one student could not answer a question, the teacher refrained from providing the answer but instead asked the student to ask another classmate.</p>	Distinguished	0%
		Proficient	57%

Instruction	Evidence Observed	School Wide Rating	
	The QSR team rated 43% of the observations as basic and none as unsatisfactory. In these observations students were led down a single path of inquiry with pre-determined answers. These observations also involved more “teacher talk” and very little student discussion.	Basic	43%
		Unsatisfactory	0%
Engaging Students in Learning	The QSR team rated 79% of the observations as distinguished or proficient in Engaging Students in Learning. Teachers designed activities in math and writing to invite student thinking. Students interpreted and completed graphs to understand how to use data to complete a word problem. In language arts students discussed character traits and how they would use them to develop characters in their writing. Students often had a choice in how to complete an assignment.	Distinguished	7%
	Across content areas the lessons had a clearly defined model. The lesson opening engaged student thinking and participation through discussion and modeling. As students worked independently, the teacher circulated and encouraged students to ask questions and explain their work.	Proficient	72%
	The QSR team rated 21% of the observations as basic and none as unsatisfactory. In some of these observations, a few students were not engaged in choral reading activities. In other observations the pacing of the lesson was slow. The teachers did not adjust the lesson as students got off task and did things such as roll on the carpet and have personal conversations during the lesson.	Basic	21%
		Unsatisfactory	0%
Using Assessment in Instruction	The QSR team rated 79% of the observations as proficient and none as distinguished. Teachers modeled skills and asked questions to assess student understanding. As students completed math problems, teachers	Distinguished	0%

Instruction	Evidence Observed	School Wide Rating	
	<p>circulated, looked at student work, and gave feedback. In one observation students eagerly volunteered answers and recorded correct answers on the board. Students received immediate individual feedback and understood how their work would be assessed.</p>	Proficient	79%
	<p>The QSR team rated 21% of the observations as basic and none as unsatisfactory. In a few observations the teachers answered the questions themselves when students did not produce the correct answer. The students also did not receive specific feedback about their work.</p>	Basic	21%
		Unsatisfactory	0%

APPENDIX I: THE CLASSROOM ENVIRONMENT OBSERVATION RUBRIC

The Classroom Environment	Unsatisfactory	Basic	Proficient	Distinguished
Creating an Environment of Respect and Rapport	Classroom interactions, both between the teacher and students and among students, are negative or inappropriate and characterized by sarcasm, putdowns, or conflict.	Classroom interactions are generally appropriate and free from conflict but 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.

The Classroom Environment	Unsatisfactory	Basic	Proficient	Distinguished
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.

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