# QUALITATIVE SITE REVIEW REPORT

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

KIPP DC – WILL Academy Public Charter School (KIPP DC – WILL PCS) it part of the KIPP DC PCS network. This campus opened in 2006. It is part of the Shaw facility, which also includes Grow Academy (PK – K) and Lead Academy (1 – 3). KIPP DC – WILL PCS serves 344 students in grades 4 through 8 in Ward 6. The DC Public Charter School Board (PCSB) conducted a Qualitative Site Review (QSR) in February 2015 because KIPP DC – WILL 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 two PCSB staff members and one Special Education Consultant conducted 14 observations. A member of the QSR team 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 may have observed a teacher twice. The QSR team also collected evidence regarding the school's stated mission and goals.

The QSR team scored 86% of the observations as distinguished or proficient in the Classroom Environment domain. KIPP DC – WILL PCS performed well on these elements of the domain because teachers and students showed genuine enthusiasm for the content and learning, classroom procedures were effective and in some cases truly efficient, students were well behaved, and teachers proactively managed student behavior.

The QSR team scored 94% of the observations as distinguished or proficient in the Instruction domain. In the Instruction domain, 100% of the observations were rated proficient or distinguished for three elements: Communicating with Students, Engaging Students in Learning, and Using Assessment in Instruction. Almost all students were consistently engaged in their lessons, which had clear objectives and outcomes. Teachers scaffolded content to address student understanding and anticipated potential areas of misunderstanding, providing multiple ways for students to absorb and process the lesson. The QSR team rated 75% of the observations proficient or distinguished in the other element of this domain, Using Questioning/Prompts and Discussion Techniques. While the teachers used questioning to deepen student understanding and called on most students (even those who did not initially volunteer), discussions only occasionally enabled students to talk to one another.

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 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 |
|---|---|
| Mission:<br><br>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. | The evidence gathered during this QSR shows that KIPP DC – WILL Academy PCS is working to meet the KIPP DC mission.<br><br>***Create and sustain the highest quality school system***<br>The quality of the school is demonstrated by its high ratings on the *Framework for Teaching rubric*. The QSR team rated 86% of observations as proficient or distinguished in the *Classroom Environment* domain. This domain measures the extent to which the school has created an environment of respect, a strong culture of learning, and successfully implements effective classroom procedures and manages student behavior. Students were well-behaved in classrooms and hallways, and teachers established a cognitively busy environment with effective procedures to maximize instructional time. The QSR team rated 94% of classrooms as proficient or distinguished on the *Instruction* domain, which addresses communicating with students, engaging students in learning, and assessing students' learning. Students were engaged in their learning, and were supported by teachers through artful scaffolding of content.<br><br>***Develop knowledge, skills, and character***<br>The strength of KIPP DC – WILL PCS's scores on the *Instruction* domain speaks to this element of the school's mission, particularly the development of students' knowledge and skills. In some cases the QSR team observed teachers actively teaching lessons on character development, such as discussing how students can sometimes |

| Mission and Goals | Evidence |
|---|---|
| | misinterpret each other's actions and do or say hurtful things as a result. |
| | ***Students become thoughtful, influential, and successful in the competitive world***<br>The QSR team noted that KIPP DC – WILL PCS teachers frequently probed students for deeper thinking. Teachers encouraged students to use full sentences with correct grammar and pronunciation, and used instructional strategies to make sure all voices were heard. The overall quality of the observations is a testament to KIPP DC – WILL PCS's effectiveness in preparing students to be thoughtful, influential, and successful as the Danielson Rubric is designed to measure these skills. |
| **Goals:** | |
| Students will demonstrate academic proficiency at a performance level that makes students competitive for outstanding public or private secondary schools of their choice. | The QSR team observed teachers regularly assessing students' academic proficiency and preparing them with the skills they will need to excel in secondary schools: the ability to work and assess their work independently; strong communication skills, both in speaking and writing; and self-regulation of behavior and classroom procedures. |
| 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. | KIPP DC – WILL PCS prepared its students to succeed in high school by providing a creating a strong culture for learning. The QSR team scored 93% of the observations as proficient or distinguished in Establishing a Culture for Learning and 100% of observations were rated proficient or distinguished in Engaging Students in Learning.<br><br>Students were reminded of the importance of their futures in multiple ways, including bulletin boards ("Are you ready for the transition to Upper School?"), tee shirts with their graduation year written on the |

| Mission and Goals | Evidence |
|---|---|
| | back, and college/university banners throughout the hallways and classrooms. |
| Students will have high attendance rates (the school will maintain daily attendance of 93% or greater). | Most classrooms had very few empty seats and observers did not note students coming late to school or class. |
| Students will benefit from enrichment activities. | The QSR team did not observe any enrichment activities offered outside of the school day. However, the QSR team noted information posted about some enrichment activities, such as Songfest and Black History Month events. |
| Principals will create an educational program and foster a school environment that facilitates student academic and social improvement. | As discussed above in relation to the school mission, KIPP DC – WILL PCS has created a school environment focused on student academic achievement and character building. The school's effectiveness in Communicating with Students (100% proficient or distinguished), Engaging Students in Learning (100% proficient or distinguished), and Establishing a Culture for Learning (93% proficient or distinguished) are evidence of an environment that facilitates academic improvement. While the school's ratings in the *Classroom Environment* domain (86% proficient or distinguished) were not as strong as those in the *Instruction* domain, the QSR team noted teachers focusing on the school's social values, such as Never Give Up ("I like that persistence!") and Be Nice ("I care a lot about everyone being kind and nice to each other.") Posters in the hallway reinforced these values, such as classes competing to complete a BINGO poster with blocks like "demerit free class," and a poster about community service opportunities. |

| Mission and Goals | Evidence |
|---|---|
| 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. |
| 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. | The QSR team noted that the school appeared to be safe and conducive to learning, with very little student misbehavior, and none that was dangerous or disruptive of other students' learning. The classroom environments were safe and orderly, supported by effective and efficient classroom procedures and students' and teachers' intellectual engagement in the lesson content. The hallways were similarly safe and orderly, both during classes and during transitions between class periods. |

| Mission and Goals | Evidence |
|---|---|
| | The QSR Team observed security personnel at each entrance. They required identification from each visitor upon entering the building. A staff member accompanied all visitors as they moved through the building. |

**THE CLASSROOM ENVIRONMENT[1]**

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 86% 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 64% of the observations as proficient and none as distinguished in this component. The majority of teachers were respectful of students, and students were uniformly respectful of their teachers and each other. In one observation a teacher said only the student's name when he was not quiet after a transition to whole group, and the student immediately apologized to the teacher. Teachers did not yell to get students' attention. In some observations, teachers spoke at a whisper and students listened silently. | Distinguished | 0% |
| | | Proficient | 64% |
| | The QSR team rated 36% of the observations as basic and none as unsatisfactory in this component. The QSR team noted a few cases of disrespect between teachers and students. In one observation students whispered to each other while the teacher was speaking. In another observation students were subtly but not disruptively noncompliant, such as students repeatedly ignoring a teacher's directions. | Basic | 36% |
| | | Unsatisfactory | 0% |
| **Establishing a Culture for Learning** | The QSR team rated 93% of the observations as distinguished or proficient in this component. Teachers displayed genuine enthusiasm for learning and/or the lesson content, through words (e.g., "Let's celebrate our work," "I love the | Distinguished | 14% |

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

| The Classroom Environment | Evidence Observed | School Wide Rating | |
|---|---|---|---|
| | resilience."), actions (e.g., high fives, smiles), and systems (e.g., space on the white board for Shout Outs). Many teachers corrected students' speech even if it was not directly connected to the lesson content, such as pronunciation or using full sentences when answering questions. | Proficient | 79% |
| | The QSR team rated less than 10% of the observations as basic or unsatisfactory. | Basic | 7% |
| | | Unsatisfactory | 0% |
| **Managing Classroom Procedures** | The QSR team rated 93% of the observations as distinguished or proficient in this component. Transitions from one activity to another were efficient (e.g., students starting the Do Now as soon as they entered the room). Teachers across classrooms used similar structures to manage student behavior, such as paychecks/pride points. Students were aware of the classroom procedures, such as trading a sharpened pencil for a dull one; in many instances, these processes were completed non-verbally without disrupting instruction. Many teachers also gave countdowns before transitions and repeated instructions in multiple ways, including pointing at references on posters, projectors, etc. | Distinguished | 21% |
| | | Proficient | 72% |
| | The QSR team rated less than 10% of the observations as basic or unsatisfactory. | Basic | 7% |
| | | Unsatisfactory | 0% |
| **Managing Student Behavior** | The QSR team scored 93% of the observations as distinguished or proficient in this component. The students at KIPP DC – WILL PCS were very well behaved in almost every observation. Teachers responded clearly and promptly to student misbehavior, which was largely minor and non-disruptive. | Distinguished | 21% |

Qualitative Site Review Report      KIPP DC – WILL Academy PCS      April 9, 2015

8

| The Classroom Environment | Evidence Observed | School Wide Rating | |
|---|---|---|---|
| | In some observations teachers were proactive, such as one teacher rubbing a student's back to calm him down when he started getting restless during circle time. Teachers used positive reinforcement to model appropriate behavior; such as telling the class that "Kevin" had his desk arranged properly and was sitting appropriately. | Proficient | 72% |
| | The QSR Team rated less than 10% of the observations as basic or unsatisfactory. | Basic | 7% |
| | | 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 95% of the observations as "distinguished" or "proficient" for the Instruction domain.

| Instruction | Evidence Observed | School Wide Rating | |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Communicating with Students** | The QSR team scored 100% of the observations as distinguished or proficient in this component with an impressive 29% rated as distinguished. Most (if not all) teachers posted the day's activities and objectives on the board. Many teachers situated the lesson within broader learning, referring to prior lessons and students' life experiences, such as using an example about an after school interaction between two students to demonstrate the importance of point of view. When students struggled with the content, teachers scaffolded the content, such as using particular vocabulary or breaking a question into smaller pieces. | Distinguished | 29% |
| | | Proficient | 71% |
| | The QSR Team rated none of the observations as basic or unsatisfactory. | Basic | 0% |
| | | Unsatisfactory | 0% |
| **Using Questioning/Prompts and Discussion Techniques** | The QSR team scored 75% of the observations as distinguished or proficient in this component. Teachers asked open-ended questions that were cognitively challenging, and asked follow-up questions to probe for deeper responses (e.g., after a student answered a question about the text, the teacher followed-up with, "And what does that say about your world?") Teachers drew on students' answers to continue the class discussion, such as asking the class why a student's answer was correct. Some teachers actively called on students who did not raise their hands to answer the question. | Distinguished | 8% |
| | | Proficient | 67% |

| Instruction | Evidence Observed | School Wide Rating | |
|---|---|---|---|
| | In the 25% of classrooms rated basic, the QSR team noted low-level, occasionally rapid-fire questioning that was entirely driven by the teacher. Students had few or no opportunities to discuss the content with their peers. | Basic | 25% |
| | | Unsatisfactory | 0% |
| **Engaging Students in Learning** | The QSR team scored a remarkable 100% of the observations as distinguished or proficient in this component. In many observations all students were consistently engaged in the instructional activities, which were aligned with the instructional outcomes. In several cases, students served as resources for one another, either in small group work or by supporting each other in answering questions. Students who finished a specific activity, such as a computer-based quiz, easily transitioned to other instructional tasks, such as independent reading. In observations rated distinguished, teachers gave students extensive choice in how they completed tasks (e.g., "You can choose what you write about, as long as you back it up from the text.") | Distinguished | 14% |
| | | Proficient | 86% |
| | The QSR team rated none of the observations as basic or unsatisfactory. | Basic | 0% |
| | | Unsatisfactory | 0% |
| **Using Assessment in Instruction** | The QSR teams scored an impressively high 100% of the observations as distinguished or proficient in this component. Most teachers observed used assessment strategies within the learning activities, such as questioning, informal feedback either spoken or written on student papers, or written performance tasks. Most teachers circulated throughout the | Distinguished | 21% |

| Instruction | Evidence Observed | School Wide Rating | |
|---|---|---|---|
| | lesson, reviewing students' work, asking comprehension questions, and occasionally telling the whole class about something an individual had said or done. In one observation students were assessing their work against a rubric. All students had some idea of what high quality work looks like (e.g., work posted on the walls, teacher pointing out one student's work as an example, reminding students what they have to do to earn all the points on an assignment). | Proficient | 79% |
| | The QSR Team rated none of the observations as basic or unsatisfactory. | Basic | 0% |
| | | 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 situation 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 may 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 |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| **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. |