



May 17, 2018

Dominique Fortune, Board Chair
Lee Montessori Public Charter School
3025 4th Street NE
Washington, DC 20017

Dear Ms. Fortune,

The DC Public Charter School Board (DC PCSB) conducts Qualitative Site Reviews (QSR) 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 QSR during the 2017-18 school year for the following reason(s):

- School eligible for 5-year Charter Review during 2018-19 school year

Qualitative Site Review Report

A QSR team conducted on-site reviews of Lee Montessori Public Charter School (Lee Montessori PCS) between April 2, 2018 – April 13, 2018. Enclosed is the team's report. You will find that the QSR 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 QSR at Lee Montessori PCS.

Sincerely,



Naomi DeVeaux
Deputy Director

Enclosures

cc: Chris Pencikowski, Head of School

Qualitative Site Review Report

Date: May 17, 2018

Campus Information

Campus Name: Lee Montessori Public Charter School (Lee Montessori PCS)

Ward: 5

Grade levels: Prekindergarten-3 (PK3) – 4

Qualitative Site Review Information

Reason for visit: School eligible for 5-year Charter Review during 2018-19 school year

Two-week window: April 2, 2018 – April 13, 2018

QSR team members: One DC PCSB staff member, one special education specialist, and one Montessori specialist

Number of observations: 11 (including one special education observation not included in scoring)

Total enrollment: 177

Students with Disabilities enrollment: 30

English Language Learners enrollment: 0

In-seat attendance on observation days:

Visit 1: April 5, 2018 – 98.3%

Visit 2: April 10, 2018 – 99.4%

Visit 3: April 11, 2018 – 100.0%

Summary

Lee Montessori PCS' mission is:

To create a peaceful, multi-age learning environment for preschool and elementary age children that fosters the physical, social, emotional and academic growth and development of students and produces life-long learners using the materials and philosophy developed by Maria Montessori and furthered by the Association Montessori Internationale.

Lee Montessori PCS is a fully articulated standard American Montessori International (AMI) program. Observers noted the following generalities during their visit: classrooms were peaceful and quiet and students were happy; lessons were well planned and taught with passion; students with all needs were fully supported; teachers understood the Montessori model and implemented it with fidelity.

During the QSR two-week window, the team used the Charlotte Danielson *Framework for Teaching* to examine classroom environment and instruction (see Appendix I and II). The QSR team scored virtually all observations -- 93% -- as distinguished or proficient in the

Classroom Environment domain, with just two observations rated as basic and none unsatisfactory. Each classroom was equipped with a complete complement of the Montessori Materials, including all of the more advanced math and language materials. Teachers were highly respectful of the students' space and work. Students were also generally respectful of each other. The teachers' tone and manner helped to model quiet, peaceful exchanges. The building had a quiet dignity that is the hallmark of an AMI Montessori school.

The QSR team scored all but one observation -- 97% -- as distinguished or proficient in the Instruction domain. Students were free to move around the classroom and choose what learning task they engaged in. All students had ample opportunities for individual choice and they freely collaborated with their peers and took accountability for their learning throughout the Montessori classroom.

Governance

DC PCSB reviewed Lee Montessori PCS' approved board meeting minutes from their January 2018 board meeting. A quorum was present. The Head of School reviewed the school's academic and operational performance. The board then met in Executive Session to discuss the Head of School's performance and approve the Head of School's evaluation and compensation for Fiscal Year (FY) 2018.

Specialized Instruction for Students with Disabilities

Prior to the two-week window, Lee Montessori PCS completed a questionnaire about how it serves its students with disabilities (SWD). Reviewers looked for evidence of the school's articulated program. Overall, the school's special education program implemented accommodations with fidelity. Support personnel and specialists were present and actively engaged in all classrooms at all times. In all general education observations and three pull-out reading intervention observations, the school evenly applied strategies for differentiation and checks for student understanding.

- To support the learning of SWD, the school reported that they offer resources such as a Special Education Technician (SPED Tech) in every classroom. In addition, General Education Teachers (GenEd Teachers) work with the Student Support Coordinator and/or the Child Study Coordinator to coordinate services and interventions for SWD. The QSR team observed effective pull-out sessions for reading intervention where students participated in targeted activities to increase reading fluency and accuracy, such as sight word games, timed reading fluency/accuracy activities and syllabic tapping while spelling high frequency words. A SPED Tech was present in most of the classrooms and worked with individual students as they moved around the classroom to engage in the Montessori Materials.

- To demonstrate that co-planning has occurred with special education teachers, the school explained that in elementary classrooms special education staff guide the follow-up work that is required after the general education teacher presents the initial presentation of a material/concept. DC PCSB's special education specialist observed that special education staff frequently collaborated with lead teachers in the classroom and were available to assist students as needed. The SPED Tech worked one-on-one with the students in the general education (GenEd) classroom. In one observation, a student had materials that were differentiated to support her specific learning needs. She was working with a box full of colored tiles to sort and count while the other students at her table were working on counting with a bead chain.
- As a program that does not utilize co-teaching, the school responded that reviewers would observe multiple adults in the classroom, including the Lead Teacher, the assistant, and the SPED Tech. DC PCSB's special education specialist noted the SPED Tech supported the needs of individual SWD through direct support in the classroom by answering questions, redirecting behavior, and focusing students on their tasks.
- The school stated that every child at the school has a personalized learning plan with accommodations made for every child. Some specific accommodations for SWD include visual schedules that outlines a student's plan for engaging in the Montessori classroom and incentive-based reward systems. The QSR team noted that students with all levels of need were able to engage and work through the content and the lessons using the Montessori Materials such as Color Tablets and Pink Tower. The students engaged in experiential practical life learning activities such as baking bread, making and serving tea, and table washing.
- The school wrote that in many cases an observer may not be able to easily identify modifications made for SWD as they would be blended seamlessly into the classroom. This was the case in the QSR team's observations. For example, the Montessori specialist on the team noted that in one classroom activity a student in a working group was given the same materials as the other group members but the product was differentiated. This lesson focused on a map of the U.S.A., which used the Montessori Three Period Approach. All the students in the group were engaged with the same materials, but one student focused on Period One (Naming), while the other students moved on to Period Two (Recognizing) and Period Three (Remembering). This differentiated approach to learning was subtly integrated in the lessons to ensure the accommodations for the SWD were discreet and individualized per the student's needs.

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 93% 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	School Wide Rating	
Creating an Environment of Respect and Rapport	<p>The QSR team scored 100% of the observations as distinguished or proficient in this component, with an extraordinary 90% scoring at the Distinguished level. Overall, there was no disrespectful behavior among students. When necessary, the students determined turn-taking practices and encouraged each other. In one observation two students discussed and determined whose turn it was to be in the middle seat without either student getting hurt or upset. In another observation a student struggled with an answer, and a peer applauded him and pat him on the back when he gave the correct answer. Students overwhelmingly participated without fear and praised each other. One student observed a peer’s writing and said, “Oh wow, that’s beautiful! I’m going to write one for you now.” One student inquired about why a peer was absent, asking his teacher, “Where is my friend, X?” The teacher responded, “I called his mom. He’s ok, but he’s sick today.” Students made tea for visitors to practice hospitality and sequencing.</p>	Distinguished	90%

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

The Classroom Environment	Evidence	School Wide Rating	
	Teachers were highly respectful of students' space and individuality. In one observation a teacher checked in with a student working on a USA Puzzle Map. The teacher said, "Do you want me to tell you the name of this state?" The student shook her head and the teacher replied, "I'm sorry, I didn't realize that I had disturbed you. I will come back at a better time." The student smiled at the teacher. In another observation a teacher said, "I know you're a little nervous about this [activity]. Do you want to do it with me?"	Proficient	10%
	The QSR team scored no observations as basic in this component.	Basic	0%
	The QSR team scored no observations as unsatisfactory in this component.	Unsatisfactory	0%
Establishing a Culture for Learning	<p>The QSR team scored 90% of the observations as distinguished or proficient in this component. Virtually all classrooms were cognitively busy places characterized by an evident shared belief in the importance of learning. Students and teachers held high expectations and expressed a desire to persist and work hard. One student said to a peer, "You took a long time with that work." The student replied, "Yeah, it took me a long time because I was working so hard." During a teacher check-in with a student the teacher said, "You need to put this diagram in your book. You must be very proud of yourself. It took a long time and you stuck with it."</p> <p>Students took it upon themselves to assist their classmates in understanding the content. One student said to a peer, "It's how, not who. Say it again." When one student struggled tapping out a word, the other student tapped with him, making eye contact as they did it together. The teacher insisted on precise use of language by having them repeat a word until correct. Teachers then incorporated missed words in their lessons to reinforce correct reading and usage. The students</p>	Distinguished	70%

The Classroom Environment	Evidence	School Wide Rating	
	<p>were excited to get new words to practice, exclaiming, "We are getting a new word!" One student was worried about missing out on a new word and asked his peer, "Did you get any new words when I wasn't here?"</p>	Proficient	20%
	<p>The QSR team scored 10% of the observations as basic in this component. In one observation a few students were disengaged from learning for extended periods of time, ten to fifteen minutes, without teacher intervention.</p>	Basic	10%
	<p>The QSR team scored no observations as unsatisfactory in this component.</p>	Unsatisfactory	0%
<p>Managing Classroom Procedures</p>	<p>The QSR team scored 90% of the observations as distinguished in this component. Students themselves ensured they made use of their learning time. Students monitored their time and accessed all materials without prompting or assistance.</p> <p>One teacher made use of a teachable moment to teach spatial manners. The teacher stated, "Student A, come sit here with Student B, C, and D. Sometimes in our environment, we want to get around someone who is blocking our way. I want to tell you what you can do when that happens. Listen and watch what I do." The teacher demonstrated with another child by saying, "May I pass by?" Each student had a turn to try it with another student.</p> <p>One student in a primary class removed the table washing materials from the shelf and began to set up her work. She lined the materials onto a mat and gathered the water to start her work. She carefully washed the table in a focused manner. Once she finished, she meticulously and methodically replaced all of the materials back on the tray. She stepped back away from the work and looked at it with a pleasant smile. An adult did not aid her and there was no adult near her.</p>	Distinguished	90%

The Classroom Environment	Evidence	School Wide Rating	
	<p>Two students in another class used the Thousand Chain in the hallway. Students set up the chain with tags that count to 1000. The materials were laid neatly along the chain in increments of 10. Students focused on the materials using a tray to manage their work. The conversation between the students remained on the materials and their counting sequence even though they were outside of the classroom in the hallway.</p> <p>In another classroom, the teacher noticed a student who was across the classroom who lost focus with his lesson and began to play with his chair. The teacher stood up and made eye contact with the student and used the American Sign Language symbol for chair. The student noticed and sat back down. The teacher did not utter a word but simply went back to what she was doing. During several other observations teachers used sign language to communicate procedures to students.</p>	Proficient	0%
	<p>The QSR team scored 10% of the observations as basic in this component. In this observation students interrupted the teacher giving a small group lesson multiple times to ask questions about materials and what they should be doing.</p>	Basic	10%
	<p>The QSR team scored no observations as unsatisfactory in this component.</p>	Unsatisfactory	0%
Managing Student Behavior	<p>The QSR team scored 90% of the observations as distinguished or proficient in this component. Student behavior was entirely appropriate in the majority of observations. At times, in proficient observations, the teachers intervened to teach students how to respectfully settle interpersonal conflicts, although most of the time students were able to do so without teacher support.</p>	Distinguished	70%

The Classroom Environment	Evidence	School Wide Rating	
	<p>For example, in one observation student A was saying the name of student B in a sing-song fashion. Student B got upset and said, "Stop saying my name like that!" The teacher intervened, turning to Student B and stating, "Can you say it softer and look directly at her so she knows you're speaking to her?" Student B complied and said directly to Student A, "Please, stop saying my name like that. It hurts my feelings."</p> <p>In another observation a group of students set up their mat a little too close to another group's mat. The teacher said, "It seems like you're distracted by having your mat so close. Please move your carpet down." Two students in another class got into a disagreement about who got the Bead Chains first. The teacher whispered, "Can you come here for a second?" S/he got down on the student's level and whispered something into his ear. The student quietly moved on to another activity.</p> <p>In other instances students worked out conflicts entirely on their own. One student called his peer a "horriblehead." The peer responded, "Hey, that's mean," and the student immediately apologized and said, "I'm going to write you a card."</p>	Proficient	20%
	<p>The QSR team scored 10% of the observations as basic in this component. In one observation students were unable to solve interpersonal conflicts despite teacher intervention. One student said to a peer, "You don't deserve to draw anyone," and the peer's body language indicated she was hurt. All students at one table put up their binders so as to not see each other. The teacher intervened and said, "Put down your binders. We have a visitor."</p>	Basic	10%
	<p>The QSR team scored no 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 97% of classrooms as “distinguished” or “proficient” for the Instruction domain. Please see Appendix III for a breakdown of each subdomain score.

Instruction	Evidence	School Wide Rating	
Communicating with Students	<p>The QSR team scored 100% of the observations as distinguished or proficient in this component. In distinguished observations the teachers effectively introduced the content and modeled when necessary. All students engaged in learning tasks, indicating that they knew what to do. In one observation a teacher was working with a student on the Stamp Game. The teacher stated, “We need to exchange here. Do you remember what exchange means?” The teacher demonstrated exchanging the Stamp Game, asking the student to record the answer and, using precise language, asked him to show her how to do another problem.</p>	Distinguished	50%
	<p>In all observations students knew how to use all of the Montessori Materials and worked both independently and in partners, carefully moving through each step of the process. In one observation two students were playing a sight reading game. One student said to his peer, “Ok, it’s time to beat the block!” The students worked together as the teacher described specific strategies that the students might use: “Follow along with your finger... tap out the word.”</p>	Proficient	50%
	<p>The QSR team scored no observations as basic in this component.</p>	Basic	0%

Instruction	Evidence	School Wide Rating	
	The QSR team scored no observations as unsatisfactory in this component.	Unsatisfactory	0%
Using Questioning/ Prompts and Discussion Techniques	<p>The QSR team scored 100% of the observations as distinguished or proficient in this component. In one distinguished observation the teacher presented a lesson on using adjectives to describe art. After looking at a photo of a sculpture, the teacher asked, "What is the artist trying to communicate? What is he trying to tell us?" Students shared in small groups and then the teacher built off their answers in a whole group discussion, "Where do you see evidence that he used these ideas – organization, voice, and conventions?" In one observation a student asked his peer, "How do you spell luck?" The student responded, "Think of Lee. Leeee - La - La." The student said, "It's an L!"</p> <p>In proficient observations the teacher used some low-level questions, but they were designed to promote student thinking. The teacher created discussions individually with students or with groups of students throughout the Uninterrupted Work Period. One teacher working with a student said, "Can you build two hundreds? How about five tens? Ok, show me 4,008 units." In another observation the teacher led a student in addition problems, asking, "When you did addition, what did you do with your beads?"</p>	Distinguished	57%
		Proficient	43%
	The QSR team scored no observations as basic in this component.	Basic	0%
	The QSR team scored no observations as unsatisfactory in this component.	Unsatisfactory	0%

Instruction	Evidence	School Wide Rating	
Engaging Students in Learning	<p>The QSR team scored 90% of the observations as distinguished or proficient in this component. Students were highly engaged in lessons and in Uninterrupted Work Time. In one observation students had the option of making bread. In another, the entire class knit while listening to a read-aloud and answering questions orally about the book. The materials and resources supported the learning goals. Students self-guided themselves from one activity to another without losing momentum or engagement. Students had a tremendous amount of choice regarding who they worked with, what they worked on, and the mediums they worked through. Students worked in and out of the physical classroom maturely and efficiently.</p>	Distinguished	60%
	<p>During lessons students were eager to raise their hands to answer questions and participation was the norm. In distinguished observations students asked questions of one another. For example, one student said (in response to a Holocaust reading), "People who are evil are gone, but they might return." Another student turned to his peer and said, "I agree with your comment and I would like to add that although they might return, the author is stating that he doesn't want them to." Students freely worked together and added relevant information in discussions with peers without prompting.</p>	Proficient	30%
	<p>The QSR team scored 10% of the observations as basic in this component. In one observation a few students were disengaged from learning for extended periods of time, ten to fifteen minutes, without teacher intervention.</p>	Basic	10%
	<p>The QSR team scored no observations as unsatisfactory in this component.</p>	Unsatisfactory	0%

Instruction	Evidence	School Wide Rating	
Using Assessment in Instruction	<p>The QSR team scored 100% of the observations as distinguished or proficient in this component. Teachers constantly “took the pulse” of the class, monitoring student understanding and repeating difficult words in new contexts. Teacher feedback was immediate and specific. In distinguished observations students knew how to give feedback to one another. In one observation the teacher coached students on how to give feedback. Two students worked together using the Sandpaper Letters. One student was the “teacher” and asked the other student to find a particular letter. The classroom teacher observed the “lesson” for a few minutes and then made a suggestion to modify the lesson to make it more challenging. The teacher asked the student acting as the “teacher” to require the other student to choose the correct beginning and ending sound of the word.</p> <p>In proficient observations teachers gave specific feedback to improve student outcomes. One teacher reviewed each student’s work and gave individualized feedback: “You need the past tense of this word...You need a closing sentence... Did you finish your map? Let me see it... Can you make two more addition problems... Can you give me more detail in this paragraph?”</p>	Distinguished	78%
		Proficient	22%
	<p>The QSR team scored no observations as basic in this component.</p>	Basic	0%
	<p>The QSR team scored no observations as unsatisfactory in this component.</p>	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.
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%	0%	0%	0%
Basic	0%	10%	10%	10%	0%	0%	10%	0%
Proficient	10%	20%	0%	20%	50%	43%	30%	22%
Distinguished	90%	70%	90%	70%	50%	57%	60%	78%
Subdomain Average	3.90	3.60	3.80	3.60	3.50	3.57	3.50	3.78

	Domain 2	Domain 3
% of Proficient or above	93%	97%
Domain Averages	3.73	3.59