



Qualitative Site Review Protocol

for

DC Public Charter Schools

Updated July 2016

DC Public Charter School Board
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QUALITATIVE SITE REVIEW

The Qualitative Site Review

The purpose of the Qualitative Site Review (QSR) is to provide DC PCSB board members, DC PCSB staff, public charter school leaders, and other community members with qualitative evidence to complement the quantitative evidence gathered in the Performance Management Framework (PMF).

Qualitative Site Reviews are comprised of two components that are conducted at the campus level and two that are conducted at the school level:

- a. An introductory meeting with school leaders to gather information about the school's mission, vision, and academic program (school);
- b. Unannounced school visits (campus);
- c. Observation of a school's board meeting (school);
- d. Observation of a school event(s) if it is pertinent to the school's goals (campus).

The QSR team produces a final report containing an overall assessment for each campus within the Local Education Agency (LEA), which is sent to the school leader and the board chair within eight to ten weeks after the visits.

Classroom observations are at the heart of the QSRs. DC PCSB staff and consultants who are certified in using the Charlotte Danielson *Framework for Teaching* rubric, will conduct classroom observations during the pre-determined two-week window. These observations are unannounced. During the observations, staff and consultants will gather qualitative evidence in two specific domains: Classroom Environment and Instruction (please see Appendix A).

Reasons for Qualitative Site Reviews

In school year 2016-17, DC PCSB may complete QSRs at campuses for one of the following reasons or at the Board’s discretion:

- Eligible to petition for 15-year Charter Renewal during the 2017-18 school year.
- Eligible for five-year or ten-year Charter Review during the 2017-18 school year.
- School designated Focus or Priority by the Office of the State Superintendent of Education (OSSE)
- Tier 3 ranking on the Performance Management Framework (PMF)

Qualitative Site Review (QSR)		
Reason for Review	Timeline	Type of Review
New School Visit	First year of operation	New School Review
Tier 3 Monitoring	Each year of Tier 3 status	QSR
Charter Reviews	Year prior to charter review	QSR
Charter Renewals	Year prior to charter renewal	QSR
Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) Monitoring	Each year of Focus or Priority Status	QSR

Conducting the Qualitative Site Visit

Pre Visit Meeting

DC PCSB assumes that the school leader will act as the coordinator and liaison for the QSR Visit; however, the school has the option of designating another person to assume this role. DC PCSB works with the designated person to ensure that key documents are provided to DC PCSB and the review team prior to the on-site visits.

DC PCSB will invite the school leader(s) to meet prior to the two-week window. DC PCSB will meet with school leadership to discuss the following items:

- Introductions/Purpose of the Meeting
- Overview of Qualitative Site Visit Process
- School’s Mission and Goals and how they are implemented in the school
- Site Visit Logistics
- Details about unannounced site visit window

- Discussion about Board Meetings and School Events (if applicable)

We will also discuss the alignment of the QSR with the charter renewal/review process for schools undergoing charter renewal or review.

The following documents should be submitted electronically (please see Required Documentation):

- Master/Daily Schedule
- School Calendar
- Teacher Roster
- Special Education Teacher Schedule
- Special Education Questionnaire
- English Language Learner Teacher Schedule
- English Language Learner Questionnaire
- ESEA Questionnaire
- Goals Evidence Table

Unannounced Visits during the Two-Week Window

At the pre-visit meeting, DC PCSB and the school agree upon a two-week window during which the QSR team may arrive at various times to observe classrooms and the school. It is requested at the pre-visit meeting that the school let DC PCSB know of dates in the two-week window when students would not be in classes (professional development days, field trips, testing, etc.)

DC PCSB will give a list of possible observers to the school. DC PCSB will inform the school of changes prior to the two-week window. Schools should plan on observers staying in the school for four to six hours. Some classrooms may be observed more than once. DC PCSB's goal is to observe more than 75% of the teaching staff, with a focus on the core content teachers.

Classroom visitors will not be disruptive to classroom activities. Visitors will not interrupt the lesson and will take cues from the teachers and students as to where to sit. The classroom visitor will most likely be taking notes on a computer during the observation.

DC PCSB staff will be responsible for their own meals and are not permitted to accept gifts, including meals, from DC Charter Schools in the course of performing their official duties. If the school leader learns of any improprieties by the observer, s/he should notify Taunya Nesin, tnesin@dcpcsb.org immediately to address their concerns.

Governing Board Meeting

A DC PCSB staff member or consultant will attempt to observe the majority of one governing board meeting for the school. The purpose of this visit is to gauge the extent to which the school's governance is providing effective

oversight of the charter school. In the event that a DC PCSB staff member or consultant cannot attend a governing board meeting, DC PCSB reviews the most recent board meeting minutes posted to EpiCenter to inform the QSR.

In-School Suspension

A DC PCSB staff member will conduct a short observation of the in-school suspension room(s) if the school has an in-school suspension policy.

School Event

A DC PCSB staff member may observe part of an event at the school that is aligned to the school's goals.

Inclement Weather

If the school is closed due to inclement weather during a two-week window, the window will extend beyond the number of days the school was closed.

QSR Reports

After the two-week window, the team prepares a written report. The team lead will set up a meeting with school leadership to go over the findings soon after the two-week window has ended. This meeting will be via conference call unless an in person meeting is requested. The goal of the debrief is to share evidence-based findings with the school collected throughout the two-week observation period. DC PCSB will send a completed report to the school's board chair and school leader eight to ten weeks after the two-week window. The report will be used to inform charter renewals, charter reviews, and to provide the Board with complementary evidence to support (or not) a PMF score. Please see Appendix F for a sample QSR report template.

The school can respond to findings in the report that it disagrees with by submitting a written response to PCSB's Deputy Director, naomi@dcpcsb.org.

Additional Dispute with QSR Results

If a school disagrees with the results, the school must provide the following for DC PCSB:

- Evidence/documentation of improvement efforts
- A written request to receive a follow-up visit

If DC PCSB agrees to conduct a follow-up visit, the visit will occur over a one-month window and 50% of teachers will be randomly selected and observed.

Qualifications for the follow-up visit: Schools must be undergoing the charter renewal/review process, perform low on the QSR (a domain *Framework for Teaching* score less than 50%), and have a Tier 3 rating for at least two of the previous four years.

In most cases, the initial QSR visit will occur the year prior to the review/renewal period. Evidence from the QSR and the follow-up visit will support the charter renewal/review process.

Team Organization and Reflection

In addition to the team lead, the QSR team includes other DC PCSB staff and consultants who are assigned to visit the school during the two-week window. The QSR team will consist of two or more individuals, depending on the number of core-content teachers in the school. A consultant or staff member who is trained in observing special education instruction is assigned to visits for schools undergoing charter renewal or review. If the school has English Language Learners (ELLs), a consultant or staff member who is trained in observing ELL instruction will also be assigned to the QSR team.

Required Documentation

Checklist – Pre-visit documentation – due to DC PCSB electronically	Submitted?
1. Master/Daily Schedule that clearly indicates the subjects taught and times, teachers, and room assignments for all classes and In-School Suspension	
2. School Calendar to include all non-school days, half days, assemblies, school-wide assessments, etc.	
3. Teacher Roster that includes all teacher’s names, room numbers, subject and/or grade taught or administrative role, number of years teaching, and number of students in the classroom (See template in Appendix B)	
4. SPED Teacher Schedule that includes the lead teaching or co-teaching class and room assignment of each special education teacher (if school is undergoing the charter renewal/review process)	
5. SPED Questionnaire to provide information about and context for the special education supports at your school (See Appendix C) (if school is undergoing the charter renewal/review process)	
6. ELL Questionnaire to provide information about and context for the ELL instruction and supports at your school (See Appendix D)	
7. ESEA Questionnaire to provide information about instructional strategies to support the school’s Focus subgroup for Focus schools and overall academic improvement for Priority schools (See Appendix E).	
8. Goals Evidence Table that gives the team information on how they can expect to see progress toward your charter goals (See template in Appendix F).	

Responsibilities of the School Leader

Pre-Visit

- A. Review the QSR Protocol and speak with the school leadership team to orient them to the purpose of the QSR. It is the expectation of the QSR team that all classrooms in the school will be available for observations.
- B. After receiving the QSR notification email from DC PCSB, confirm the dates of the pre-visit meeting and the two-week window within one week.
- C. Review the required documentation list and gather the information the QSR team needs to submit for the pre-visit meeting. Send the documents to DC PCSB QSR Coordinator electronically. These documents will be used to prepare the QSR team for the visits.

During the Two-Week Window

- A. Confirm with school staff that visitors will arrive unannounced to observe classrooms.
- B. Provide front office staff with the list of possible visitors.

After the Two-Week Window

- A. Attend scheduled debrief with the QSR team lead (by phone or in person).
- B. Review the QSR report. Disseminate and discuss finding with constituent groups.
- C. School leader may prepare a written response to be sent to PCSB.

Work Flow and Timeline

Pre-Visit Meeting	Timeline
DC PCSB: sends out initial email with pre-visit meeting dates and QSR protocol	At least two to three months prior to the Two-Week Window
SCHOOL: confirms date for pre-visit meeting and two-week window	As soon as possible upon receipt
SCHOOL: prepares pre-visit documents and sends electronically to DC PCSB	Electronically submitted after the pre-visit meeting
DC PCSB: organizes QSR teams and disseminates school information to the members of each team	Two-weeks prior to Two-Week Window
After the Two-Week Window	Timeline
DC PCSB team lead (with input from team members): creates a draft QSR report, with evidence-based findings	Within one week after the Two-Week Window
DC PCSB QSR Team: reviews the draft report to ensure that it is accurate and aligned with the QSR team's impressions and opinions of the school	Within two weeks after the Two-Week Window
DC PCSB: issues the final QSR report to the board chair and school leadership that will also go in the school's permanent file and be used to evaluate the school's performance for high-stakes reviews (e.g., 5- and 10-year charter reviews, low PMF performance reviews), and charter renewal.	Within eight to ten weeks after the Two-Week Window
SCHOOL: may prepare a written response to the QSR report	As soon as possible after the final report is issued

Acknowledgements: This document is based in part on work by the New York State Education Department.

Appendix A



DC PCSB

Qualitative Site Review Rubric

Updated July 2016

Domains 2 and 3: Framework for Teaching Classroom Observation Tool

Citations:

1. Charlotte Danielson, The Framework for Teaching Evaluation Instrument, 2013

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.

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/ Prompts 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
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 B

Appendix C

Special Education Questionnaire

Directions: Please have your campus' special education coordinator answer the following questions with a brief response for each (1-4 sentences).

1. Who is involved in determining instructional outcomes for students with disabilities (SWDs)?
2. What resources do general educators (GenEd teachers) have in their classrooms in order to support the learning of SWDs?
3. When do your GenEd teachers and special educators (SPED teachers) co-plan for lessons? What is the outcome of this meeting?
4. How do your GenEd teachers know how to provide specific accommodations and modifications based on the IEPs of SWDs?
5. How do your SPED teachers learn more about the needs of individual students with disabilities on their caseload, aside from just reading the student's IEPs?
6. What types of informal assessments/checks do GenEd and SPED use in order to gauge student understanding specifically for SWDs?
7. What does "differentiating a lesson" look like in your inclusive classrooms?
8. What does inclusionary support look like at your school (e.g., consultative sessions between the SPED and GenEd Teacher, one-one instructional support in the classroom between a SPED teacher and student(s), co-teaching with a GenEd and SPED teacher, etc.)?

Appendix D

English Language Learner Questionnaire

Directions: Please have your campus' ELL coordinator answer the following questions with a brief response for each (1-4 sentences).

What is the model of instruction for ELL students?
Who is involved in determining instructional outcomes for English Language Learners?
What resources do you general educators have in their classrooms in order to support ELL learning?
When do your general educators and ELL teachers co-plan for lessons? What is the outcome of this meeting?
How do your general educators know how to provide specific accommodations and modifications for ELL students?
What types of informal assessments/checks do general and ELL teachers use in order to gauge student understanding?
What does "differentiating a lesson" look like in your inclusive classrooms?

Appendix E

ESEA Questionnaire

Directions: Please answer each of the following questions with a brief response (1-4 sentences).

Focus Schools
What instructional strategies are teachers using for the Focus subgroup in the identified subject (English Language Arts or Math)?
What evidence should we see in the classroom when observing these subjects?
Priority Schools
What instructional strategies are teachers using to improve English Language Arts or Math instruction?
What evidence should we see in the classroom when observing these subjects?

Appendix F

Appendix G

Sample Qualitative Site Review Report



<Date>
<Board Chair's Name>, Board Chair
<Campus Name>
<Campus Address>
<Washington, DC Zip Code>

Dear <Board Chair>:

The DC Public Charter School Board (DC PCSB) conducts Qualitative Site Reviews to gather and document evidence to support school oversight. According to the School Reform Act § 38-1802.11, DC PCSB shall monitor the progress of each school in meeting the goals and student academic achievement expectations specified in the school's charter. Your school was selected to undergo a Qualitative Site Review during the 2016-17 school year for the following reason(s):

- School eligible to petition for 15-year Charter Renewal during 2017-18 school year
- School eligible for 5-year Charter Review during 2017-18 school year
- School eligible for 10-year Charter Review during 2017-18 school year
- School designated Focus or Priority by Office of the State Superintendent of Education (OSSE)

Qualitative Site Review Report

A Qualitative Site Review team conducted on-site reviews of <Campus Name> between <Dates>. 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 <Campus Name>.

Sincerely,

Naomi DeVeaux
Deputy Director

Enclosures
cc: School Leader

Qualitative Site Review Report

Date:

Campus Name:

Ward:

Grade levels:

Reason for visit:

Two-week window:

QSR team members: (e.g., 2 DC PCSB staff, 2 consultants, ELL specialist, SPED specialist)

Number of observations:

Total enrollment:

Students with Disabilities enrollment:

English Language Learners enrollment:

In-seat attendance during the two-week window:

Visit 1:

Visit 2:

Visit 3:

Visit 4:

Summary

<Overview of visit paragraph>

<Short description of In-School Suspension room(s) – 2 or 3 sentences>

<Governance description – 3 or 4 sentences about board meeting observation>

<SPED paragraph>

<ELL paragraph for schools with ELLs>

<ESEA monitoring paragraph for Focus and Priority schools>

CHARTER MISSION, GOALS, AND ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENT EXPECTATIONS

This table summarizes qualitative evidence related to the goals and academic achievement expectations as detailed in the school’s charter and subsequent charter amendments. Some charter goals can only be measured quantitatively. The Qualitative Site Review (QSR) team recorded evidence of what the school is doing on the ground to meet these quantitative goals. During the 5-year charter review, 10-year charter review, or 15-year charter renewal process, DC PCSB staff will use quantitative data to assess whether the school met those goals.

Mission and Goals	Evidence
Mission:	
Goals:	

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 XX% 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		Distinguished	%
		Proficient	%
		Basic	%
		Unsatisfactory	%
Establishing a Culture for Learning		Distinguished	%
		Proficient	%
		Basic	%
		Unsatisfactory	%
Managing Classroom Procedures		Distinguished	%
		Proficient	%
		Basic	%
		Unsatisfactory	%
Managing Student Behavior		Distinguished	%
		Proficient	%
		Basic	%
		Unsatisfactory	%

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

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 XX% of the observations as “distinguished” or “proficient” for the Instruction domain.

Instruction	Evidence Observed	School Wide Rating	
Communicating with Students		Distinguished	%
		Proficient	%
		Basic	%
		Unsatisfactory	%
Using Questioning/Prompts and Discussion Techniques		Distinguished	%
		Proficient	%
		Basic	%
		Unsatisfactory	%
Engaging Students in Learning		Distinguished	%
		Proficient	%
		Basic	%
		Unsatisfactory	%
Using Assessment in Instruction		Distinguished	%
		Proficient	%
		Basic	%
		Unsatisfactory	%