

January 12, 2017

Donald Hense, Board Chair Friendship Public Charter School – Southeast Elementary Academy 645 Milwaukee Place SE Washington, DC 20032

Dear Mr. Hense:

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:

 School eligible to petition for 20-year Charter Review during 2017-18 school year

Qualitative Site Review Report

A Qualitative Site Review team conducted on-site reviews of Friendship PCS – Southeast Academy between November 7, 2016 through December 2, 2016. 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 Friendship PCS-Southeast Academy.

Sincerely,

Naomi DeVeaux Deputy Director

Enclosures cc: School Leader

Qualitative Site Review Report

Date: January 12, 2017

<u>Campus Information</u> Campus Name: Friendship Public Charter School – Southeast Elementary Academy Ward: 8 Grade levels: PK3-5

Qualitative Site Review (QSR) Information

Reason for visit: School eligible to petition for 20-year Charter Review during 2017-18 school year Observation window: November 7, 2016 - December 2, 2016 QSR team members: 2 DC PCSB staff, 2 consultants including 1 SPED specialist Number of observations: 22 Total enrollment: 533 Students with Disabilities enrollment: 52 English Language Learners (ELLs) enrollment: 0 In-seat attendance on the days the QSR team conducted observations: Visit 1: November 7, 2016 - 93.1% Visit 2: November 10, 2016 - 87.8% Visit 3: November 14, 2016 - 91.6% Visit 4: November 17, 2016 - 93.1% Visit 5: November 28, 2016 - 95.3%

Summary

The school's mission is:

...to provide a world-class education that motivates students to achieve high academic standards, enjoy learning, and develop as ethical, literate, well-rounded and self-sufficient citizens who contribute actively to their communities.

The QSR team saw mixed evidence that Friendship PCS – Southeast Elementary Academy was providing an environment for high academic standards or enjoyment of learning. In some observations students appeared to be engaged, however many teachers were more focused on procedural routines rather than exploring content.

During the QSR two-week window, the team used the Charlotte Danielson *Framework for Teaching* to examine classroom environments and instructional delivery (see Appendix I). The QSR team scored 56% of observations as distinguished or proficient in the <u>Classroom</u> <u>Environment</u> domain. It is noteworthy that in 2012-13, this domain scored significantly higher, at 83% of observations scoring as distinguished or proficient. In that report the QSR team noted the effective use of a school-wide behavior management system that was not noted in this year's review. For this year's review, in the component of *Creating an Environment of Respect and Rapport*, the QSR team scored 73% of observations as proficient or distinguished making it the highest scored component of the Danielson Framework. The team observed a high level of care and respect throughout the school

and in most classrooms. In the component of *Managing Student Behavior* over half of classroom observations scored as basic or unsatisfactory. The QSR team observed some teachers using the school-wide behavior management system, ClassDojo, but several of these teachers were ineffective at redirecting student behavior. In about half of all observations, there were several students misbehaving. For example, some students shouted in the classrooms, others crawled under tables to sing, and others engaged in social talk during work times. While no egregious behaviors were observed, many of these misbehaviors were not addressed by teachers, resulting in loss of learning time for these students.

The QSR team scored 39% of observations as distinguished or proficient in the <u>Instruction</u> domain. In 2012-13, the percentage of classrooms at this level was 50%. The highest rated component in this domain is the *Using Assessment in Instruction* component where only 46% of observations scored proficient or distinguished. The team observed some teachers using running records or student conferences to check student understanding. The other three components in this domain all scored similarly, and included at least two observations at the unsatisfactory level. The lowest scoring component was *Using Questioning and Discussion Techniques* with 67% of all observations scored as basic or unsatisfactory. The QSR team noted that in most observations, learning tasks required minimal intellectual engagement or strategic thinking. Many of the tasks required rote work or single correct answers.

DC PCSB had to overcome many logistical obstacles to conduct the reviews across the Friendship PCS organization. DC PCSB meets with each school prior to the QSR to explain the QSR process. During this time Friendship PCS asked DC PCSB to change many of the observation windows. DC PCSB changed the dates and Friendship PCS agreed to the dates of the new observation windows.

Friendship PCS was late in getting the requested documents to DC PCSB including: schedules, room numbers, goals charts, board meeting minutes, etc. In many cases the schedules were incorrect and had to be resubmitted to DC PCSB. Friendship PCS scheduled testing during every QSR window. One school also scheduled professional development during the window without telling DC PCSB. This resulted in many observers not being able to conduct their observations. DC PCSB had to extend the review windows for multiple schools in order to collect data.

Governance

DC PCSB reviewed Friendship PCS' October board meeting minutes. A quorum was present. The Finance Committee approved the LEA's clean audit and discussed the net income and enrollment trends. The School Performance Committee reviewed academic data from each campus. The Board discussed the LEA's upcoming charter review.

Specialized Instruction for Students with Disabilities

Prior to the two-week window, Friendship PCS – Southeast Elementary Academy responded to a DC PCSB questionnaire regarding the provision of instruction to students with disabilities. Although the school provides students with disabilities with a variety of resources, the school implements other program hallmarks, including the use of informal

assessments, differentiation, and co-teaching models, with uneven success. The special education reviewer noted the following evidence of the school's articulated program.

- To support the learning of students with disabilities in all settings, the school explained that teachers have access to a range of resources: online curriculum resource interventions that align with Friendship's English Language Arts (ELA) and math curricula, low-tech manipulatives ranging from counters to handheld clocks, visual aids, graphic organizers, leveled libraries and high tech resources such as chrome books, and a Promethean board. In general education classrooms, the reviewer saw students completing exit tickets on an online program. In special education pull-out classes, students used handheld clocks and Wilson Reading System materials and manipulatives.
- The school also noted that teachers use a variety of informal assessments to help gauge student understanding. One teacher effectively instructed students to use non-verbal agree/disagree signals as they reviewed answers. Some teachers ended instruction with an exit ticket. In one pull-out class, the teacher assigned students an exit ticket that directly related to the lesson's aim. In a co-taught class, the teachers assigned an exit ticket through an online program. Two problems asked students to round a number to the hundreds place and to compare two numbers. However, once students inputted their responses, the program provided incorrect answers. The teachers noticed the mistakes and discussed them, but they did not address them with the class. Therefore, the students received incorrect feedback.
- The school described multiple examples of differentiation in the SPED questionnaire: scaffolded questioning techniques, small group instruction and centers, a personalized course packet with individualized remediation or enrichment materials, one-on-one coaching with a student, and guided reading instruction. In an inclusive classroom, teachers led different groups of students through various activities. The reviewer did not observe any other forms of differentiation in inclusive classrooms. In a pull-out setting, a teacher used the Wilson Reading Program to guide a small group of third- and fourth-grade students through word study activities.
- The school wrote that inclusive classrooms implement co-teaching models. The reviewer observed the co-teaching models "One Teach, One Assist" and "Station Teaching" in two separate inclusive rooms.

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 review or charter renewal process, DC PCSB staff will use quantitative data to assess whether the school met those goals.

Mission and Goals	Evidence
Mission: The mission of Friendship Public Charter School is to provide a world-class education that motivates students to achieve high academic standards, enjoy learning, and develop as ethical, literate, well-rounded, and self-sufficient citizens who contribute actively to their communities.	There is limited evidence that Friendship Public Charter School – Southeast Elementary Academy is meeting its mission. Evidence included: Common-core aligned instructional resources, such as Eureka math, and standards were evident in many classrooms and in a few observations students demonstrated joy in learning as demonstrated by smiles, celebrations, and what looked like authentic connections between teachers and students. In many observations students actively participated in and sometimes led transitions, material preparation, and clean up. However, observers saw limited evidence of how the school supports ethical, well-rounded students who contribute to their communities. The culture was often driven by compliance to directions and instruction was teacher-directed or procedural in nature.
Goals:	
PMF Indicator #1: Student Progress – Academic Improvement over time in English Language Arts (ELA) PMF Indicator #2: Student Achievement – Meeting or exceeding academic standards in ELA	In many classrooms the QSR team observed literacy centers where students rotated into different areas to complete a variety of tasks. However, the level of student engagement and content-focused work was inconsistent. Several tasks were unmanaged and did not have an assessment feature built in for students or teachers. The QSR team noted that the majority of teachers' questions were not designed to promote deep thinking. Only in

Mission and Goals	Evidence
	several early childhood classrooms were discussions rich and meaningful, but this was not observed in other classrooms. The QSR team also saw the use of the Wilson Reading Program, a literacy intervention.
PMF Indicator #1: Student Progress – Academic Improvement over time in math PMF Indicator #2: Student Achievement – Meeting or exceeding academic standards in math.	There was a wide variety of instructional practices in the math classrooms observed. In one math classroom, the teacher clearly modeled the steps for solving the type of problems presented. However, in another classroom, students struggled to explain their work to their peers, demonstrating that they were able to plug numbers in to solve, without the conceptual understanding of why. Math discourse between students was limited in most observations. Eureka Math, a common- core aligned resource was available in several classrooms.
PMF Indicator # 3: Gateway – Outcomes in key subjects that predict future educational success	The school indicated that teachers use small group instruction to teach literacy. For third-grade literacy this would include guided reading, word work, and other literacy centers. The QSR team observed examples of small group instruction. Several teachers facilitated reading groups or worked on specific ELA skills with a small group of students. In some observations a second adult in the room also pulled small groups.
PMF Indicator #4: School Environment – Predictors of future student progress and achievement	DC PCSB measures attendance to evaluate the climate of a school. DC PCSB believes that if students are not in school, they lose opportunities for learning. In-seat attendance ¹ on the days the QSR team conducted observations:

 $^{^{1}}$ This data has not been validated by the school. DC PCSB pulled the data in December 2016.

Mission and Goals	Evidence
	Visit 1: November 7, 2016 - 93.1% Visit 2: November 10, 2016 - 87.8% Visit 3: November 14, 2016 - 91.6% Visit 4: November 17, 2016 - 93.1% Visit 5: November 28, 2016 - 95.3%

THE CLASSROOM ENVIRONMENT²

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 56% of classrooms as "distinguished" or "proficient" for the Classroom Environment domain.

The Classroom Environment	Evidence Observed	School Wide	Rating
Creating an Environment of Respect and Rapport	f The QSR team scored 73% of the observations as distinguished or proficient in this component. Interactions between adults and students were respectful. Teachers modeled polite language and showed care and concern for students,	Distinguished	9%
	even those coming in late. In one distinguished observation the teacher engaged a tardy student by asking if he had eaten breakfast already, about his weekend, and if he was feeling better since he had been sick.	Proficient	64%
	The QSR team scored 27% of observations as basic in this component. In these observations teachers used abrupt or curt language, or used sarcasm to redirect students. At times teachers were inconsistent in how they responded to students. In one observation several students were off-task, but only one student was given a consequence. In another observation a teacher threatened to call a parent and started to do so without the student being clear what the infraction was.	Basic	27%
	The QSR team scored none of the observations as unsatisfactory in this component.	Unsatisfactory	0%

² Teachers may be observed more than once by different review team members.

The Classroom Environment	Evidence Observed	School Wide	Rating
Establishing a Culture for Learning	The QSR team scored 45% of the observations as distinguished or proficient in this component. Many teachers praised students and several classrooms provided opportunities for students to cheer for each other. Students appeared to participate willingly even though some appeared cautious to take intellectual risks, as right answers were the expectation.	Distinguished	5%
	In one observation students recited a chant, "We work hard. We never give up." In another observation one of the teachers persevered with a struggling student beyond the small group's instructional time. The teacher tried several strategies to help the student better understand the content, including technology, repetition, and movement.	Proficient	40%
	The QSR team scored 50% of the observations as basic in this component. The QSR team noted that several teachers appeared to be going through the motions and were focused more on-task completion than work quality. In one review lesson, the teacher did not encourage the students to use proper vocabulary even though it was central to the lesson content. In another observation students presented dioramas to the class. Students in the audience raised their hands to ask questions, but the teacher did not allow them to ask anything.	Basic	50%
	The QSR team rated less that 10% of the observations as unsatisfactory in this component.	Unsatisfactory	5%

The Classroom Environment	Evidence Observed	School Wide	Rating
Managing Classroom Procedures	ssroom Several classrooms had well managed routines	Distinguished	9%
	QSR team also observed several examples of seamless transitions, for example when students needed to use the bathroom. In a few distinguished observations, students helped each other clean up and begin the next task, or led a warm up exercise.	Proficient	41%
	The QSR team scored 50% of observations as basic in this component. In these observations routines and procedures were inconsistent and required moderate to significant amounts of teacher prompting and redirection. One teacher spent the majority of the lesson reviewing transitions and what students should be doing in centers. In several classrooms students lost a significant amount of instructional time because transitions and routines heavily depended on instructions from the teacher. In a few observations teachers did not have materials prepared for students to use in small group work. This delay resulted in loss of instructional time.	Basic	50%
	The QSR team scored none of the observations as unsatisfactory in this component.	Unsatisfactory	0%
Managing Student Behavior	The QSR team scored 45% of the observations as distinguished or proficient in this component. Teachers in these observations consistently monitored student behavior, addressing it when needed. In many classrooms teachers encouraged students to work through their	Distinguished	9%

The Classroom Environment	Evidence Observed	School Wide	Rating
	problems together, sometimes offering suggestions of language students could use in the process. Other teachers offered extrinsic rewards from the treasure box or Class Dojo points when students demonstrated the desired behavior.	Proficient	36%
	The QSR team scored 50% of observations as basic in this component. In these observations teachers inconsistently implemented standards of conduct and monitored student behavior. In one observation the teacher said that students who were not following directions would not be allowed to work on the carpet. When a small group of children were off-task, she then only asked two students to leave the carpet. In other observations teachers did not address students' inappropriate language and behaviors.	Basic	50%
	The QSR team rated less than 10% of the observations as unsatisfactory in this component.	Unsatisfactory	5%

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 39% of classrooms as "distinguished" or "proficient" for the Instruction domain.

Instruction	Evidence Observed	School Wie Rating	de
Communicating with Students	The QSR team scored 36% of the observations as proficient in this component. Some teachers stated the purpose or goal for the lesson either on the board or verbally. In several morning meetings, teachers engaged students not	Distinguished	0%
	only with the content of writing and reading, but also with the agenda for the day. One teacher reviewed what students would be working on at each center, holding up samples of student work as a visual reminder.	Proficient	36%
	The QSR team scored 55% of the observations as basic in this component. In several observations teachers had to repeat directions due to student confusion. The QSR team also observed a preponderance of procedural explanations from teachers, with few examples of opportunities for strategic thinking. One teacher asked students to copy her notes. These students were then unable to apply their learning in the lesson's exit ticket and several answers were incorrect. Several teachers also made content errors or did not correct student errors during instruction. One student indicated that polar bears and penguins lived in the same habitat. This was unaddressed by the teacher.	Basic	55%

Instruction	Evidence Observed	School Wie Rating	de
	The QSR team rated less than 10% of the observations as unsatisfactory in this component.	Unsatisfactory	9%
Using Questioning/Prompts and Discussion Techniques	Questioning/Prompts and Discussion observations as proficient in this component. Several teachers asked	Distinguished	0%
		Proficient	33%
	The QSR team scored 57% of the observations as basic in this component. Most questions were procedural or had a single correct answer. Some teachers asked students to explain their answers but the lack of student responses indicated that this was possibly an unfamiliar task. The QSR team observed some teachers asking students to turn and talk to share and respond to each other's thinking but frequently students were unable to explain their answers beyond naming their process.	Basic	57%

Instruction	Evidence Observed	School Wie Rating	de
	The QSR team scored 10% of the observations as unsatisfactory in this component. In these observations the teacher was the center of all interactions and did not promote dialogue among students. These teachers asked students recall or questions of low cognitive challenge. At times teachers answered their own questions instead of allowing sufficient wait time for students.	Unsatisfactory	10%
Engaging Students in Learning	The QSR team scored 41% of the observations as proficient in this component. Many lessons had a clearly defined structure, such as center rotations with small group instruction, as well as appropriate pacing. The materials for instruction were appropriate in many classrooms and included student-made	Distinguished	0%
	books, play resources aligned to the curricular unit, and sorting cards. In several observations students appeared to remain intellectually engaged during teacher modeling and explanations.	Proficient	41%

Instruction	Evidence Observed	School Wie Rating	de
	The QSR team rated 50% of the observations as basic in this component. Many of the learning tasks required recall and student engagement remained largely passive. For example, one lesson was a whole group lecture for the entire observation. At least half of the class became disengaged or stopped paying attention. In another observation students presented their work individually but the teacher did not ask the rest of the class to respond to the presented material, nor was the presenting student asked questions about their work. In another observation students copied what was on the board or in their text without interpreting the content themselves. In other observations the pacing of instruction was uneven and either included unnecessary wait time or was rushed and students were unable to finish their work.	Basic	50%
	The QSR team rated less than 10% of the observations as unsatisfactory in this component.	Unsatisfactory	9%
Using Assessment in Instruction	The QSR team scored 46% of the observations as proficient in this component. Teachers asked questions to elicit evidence of student understanding. In	Distinguished	0%
	several observations teachers used running records or other note-taking methods during small group instruction. Other teachers provided specific feedback to students and asked for repetition of the correct answer.	Proficient	46%

Instruction	Evidence Observed	School Wie Rating	de
	The QSR team scored 45% of observations as basic in this component. In these observations the assessment criteria seemed unclear to students. In one observation a student began writing complete sentences in a handout packet. The teacher saw what the student was doing and said the student did not have to do that. This indicated unclear assessment criteria. In another observation even though the teacher circulated during independent work time, the feedback given did not support students' ability to complete the task on their own.	Basic	45%
	The QSR team rated less than 10% of the observations as unsatisfactory in this component.	Unsatisfactory	9%

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.

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.
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 II: INSTRUCTION OBSERVATION RUBRIC