November 21, 2013

Lester Matlock, Board Chair
DC Bilingual PCS
1420 Columbia Road, NW
Washington, DC 20009

Dear Mr. Matlock:

The Public Charter School Board ("PCSB") conducts Qualitative Site Reviews ("QSR") to gather and document evidence to support school oversight. According to the School Reform Act § 38-1802.11, 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 2013-14 school year for the following reason(s):

- o School eligible for 10-year Charter Review during 2013-14 school year

Qualitative Site Review Report
A QSR team conducted on-site review visits of DC Bilingual PCS between October 11 and October 18, 2013. The purpose of the site review is for PCSB to gauge the extent to which the school's goals and student academic achievement expectations were evident in the everyday operations of the public charter school. To ascertain this, PCSB staff and consultants evaluated your classroom teaching by using an abridged version of the Charlotte Danielson *Framework for Teaching* observation rubric. We also visited a board meeting in order to observe the school's governance as it relates to fulfilling its mission, and charter goals.

Enclosed is the team's report. You will find that the Qualitative Site Review Report is focused 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 DC Bilingual PCS. Thank you for your continued cooperation as PCSB makes every effort to ensure that DC Bilingual PCS is in compliance with its charter.

Sincerely,

Naomi DeVeaux
Deputy Director

Enclosures
cc: Wanda Perez

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

DC Bilingual Public Charter School ("DC Bilingual PCS") is a Spanish/English dual language immersion school serving 350 students in pre-kindergarten-3 through 6th grade. The mission of the school is to implement an academically demanding dual language program which will foster bilingualism and biliteracy in all children. The review team observed teachers actively engaging students in a wide variety of learning tasks, which challenged students to think, explore, and explain their learning in both Spanish and English. Teachers frequently asked students to explain how they came up with a certain answer or why they wrote a problem in a particular way.

The school is in the process of adopting the Public Charter School Board's ("PCSB") Performance Management Framework ("PMF") as its charter goals and student achievement expectations. The school has shown progress on these new goals by increasing the PMF score every year since the PMF was first implemented in 2010-11. The review team observed strong indications that the school will continue to challenge students, particularly in reading and mathematics, to continue to perform well on the PMF.

The review team used the Charlotte Danielson *Framework for Teaching* rubric to conduct 28 classroom observations at DC Bilingual PCS over a two-week period. One member of the review team speaks Spanish fluently and observed most of the Spanish classrooms. While other non-Spanish-speaking members of the review team also observed Spanish classrooms, these reviewers gave a "not applicable" rating for some instructional elements due to the inability to understand the teacher's questions to the students.

On average, 97% of classrooms received a rating of proficient or exemplary for the Classroom Environment domain and 87% of classrooms for the Instructional Delivery domain. The two areas of the rubric in which the school scored highest were Managing Classroom Procedures and Managing Student Behavior. Each teacher observed had effective, if not efficient, routines in place to minimize the loss of instructional time and student behavior was closely and consistently monitored. However, the areas with the overall lowest scores, Questioning and Discussion Techniques and Assessment in Instruction still had 80% of the observations score proficient or exemplary.

The school offers a full continuum of special education services, and, regardless of the setting, students received individualized attention and instruction. Small group activities provided differentiated instruction for all students. All teachers, including the special education teachers, participated in the routines and transitions to maximize learning for every child.

The school has also created a safe, healthy learning environment for students. On the walls of the building are signs for "Together We Lead" and that appears to be the theme of the educational program. Co-teaching in classrooms was strong but it is apparent that this is a student- centered learning environment where students have choice and feel safe to discuss and share. The school also focuses on healthy food. A sign in the entryway lets parents know that candy and treats are not allowed in the school. Observers also saw a variety of healthy foods served to students for snacks and lunches.

As part of the QSR process, a PCSB staff member also observed a board meeting at the school on October 15, 2013 at 8:00am. A quorum was present at the meeting. The board discussed new questions about DC International related to special education, facility, new students, diversity, leadership, and common core state standards. The board also discussed the budget and the conflict of interest policy. The principal gave an update on the PMF, Middle State mid-term accreditation and the ongoing QSR. The management company, CentroNia, also gave an update on the search for a permanent facility.

CHARTER MISSION, GOALS, AND ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENT EXPECTATIONS

DC Bilingual is in the process of amending its charter to adopt the Performance Management Framework ("PMF") as its goals and student academic achievement expectations. The school has not chosen any additional goals at this time but plans to adopt a goal to affirm its bilingual focus and is in discussions with PCSB. However, for the purpose of this review, the QSR team looked for evidence of effective instruction to support student academic progress and achievement in reading and math, including an emphasis on moving students to advanced levels and securing reading proficiency by 3rd grade and math proficiency by 8th grade.

Mission and Goals	Evidence
Mission: Within the well-established and stated mission of the Calvary Bilingual Multicultural Learning Center (CBMLC), creating a community of learning for children, youth, families and staff, lies the core mission of the new charter school to implement an academically demanding dual language program which will foster bilingualism and biliteracy for all children.	DC Bilingual PCS students receive 50% of their instruction in English and 50% in Spanish. The review team observed the dual language immersion program characterized by academic rigor and developmentally appropriate instruction. The common core state standards were taught in both languages in literacy and numeracy. The students and teachers spoke only in Spanish in those classrooms that covered core subjects of Spanish literacy and science and observers noted evidence of literacy objectives reinforced in both English and Spanish through printed materials in both languages, including posters, learning objectives, Fountas and Pinnell reading materials, and word walls. Teachers engaged students with academically demanding work, in-depth discussions, and continuous assessment of learning.
1. Provide examples of effective instruction supporting student academic progress and achievement in reading and math.	Teachers maximized instructional time in all classrooms by having limited transition time. Teachers encouraged students to share opinions, think independently, and agree or disagree with classmates in a supportive environment. Teachers taught Common Core State Standards across all grade levels and promoted critical thinking through questioning and discussion techniques. Teachers asked open-ended, challenging questions for students to grapple with as they worked through assignments. In one class, the teacher asked first grade students to complete a "thinking bubble" to show what a character in a short, silent movie was thinking. The assignment required students to define "thinking" and to figure out someone's thoughts from facial expressions. Students enjoyed using small white boards at their tables

Mission and Goals	Evidence
	to display the assignment and the teacher gave critical, specific feedback to elicit evidence of understanding.
2. Does the school emphasize moving students to advanced levels of proficiency in reading and math?	Observers saw teachers teaching the Common Core State Standards in both languages and preparing students to move to increasingly higher levels of reading. In Spanish reading, a first grade teacher asked students to analyze text by asking specific exploratory questions. Observers witnessed explicit vocabulary development in Spanish in most classrooms. One class was analyzing a novel by having students express opinions and support them with evidence from the text. All classrooms had a variety of reading materials, both non-fiction and fiction, though the Spanish classrooms did not have as many reading materials as the English classrooms. The school library was an additional source of materials for all students.

Teachers in math classes focused on why answers to questions were correct or incorrect. Students had the opportunity to explain their thought process at arriving to an answer. Teachers also grouped students based on ability for some assignments. The teacher questioned student thinking constantly in both groups but had higher-level questions for one group to expand their thinking. |
| 3. How does the school promote reading proficiency by third grade and math proficiency by eighth grade? | The review team observed students reading texts in both languages and teachers challenged students with in depth questioning and analysis to increase understanding of the passages. One class was analyzing a novel, explaining vocabulary line by line. The teacher also asked the students to support their opinions of issues raised in the novel. Tutors were working one-on-one with kindergarten students to support reading instruction. In the pre-kindergarten classrooms, teachers took every opportunity to increase pre-literacy skills by talking with students about their interests and reading books to them, even during transitions. Starting with pre-kindergarten-3, teachers asked higher level thinking questions about texts read and teachers asked students to explain their answers across all grades. Teachers also grouped students in ways to maximize learning. Teachers differentiated their questions to each |

Mission and Goals	Evidence
	group to challenge the students. To prepare students to be proficient in 8th grade math, teachers focused on higher order questions and requested students to explain their thought processes when working through problems.
4. Describe the culture of learning and support in the classrooms.	DC Bilingual is a student-centered, engaging environment with low student-to-teacher ratio and high levels of student choice to complete learning tasks. Special education teachers co-teach with general education teachers and it is difficult for the observer to tell who is who. In every classroom observed, the team of teachers flowed through the routines to maximize learning for all students. One teacher would transition between activities while the other would lead a class discussion. Most of the teachers observed were very attentive to students and focused on the quality of student work. Teachers placed an emphasis on instruction and the learning process. In a few instances, teachers were not engaged with students during choice time. Students, in these classes, focused on independent tasks while the teacher completed tasks.
5. Report on the day's attendance of students in each classroom observed.	Observers noted that desks and tables were generally full without many empty seats.

CLASSROOM ENVIRONMENTS[1]

This rubric summarizes the school's performance on the Classroom Environments elements of the rubric during the unannounced visits. The label definitions for classroom observations of "limited", "satisfactory", "proficient" and "exemplary" are those from the Danielson framework. PCSB considers any rating below "proficient" to be under the standard of quality expected of DC charter schools. On average, 97% of classrooms received a rating of proficient or exemplary for the Classroom Environment domain.

Class Environment	Evidence Observed	School Wide Rating	
Creating an Environment of Respect and Rapport	In over 90% of the observations, teachers and students exhibited mutual warmth and respect towards each other. Teachers used and encouraged polite terms, such as "please" and "thank you." In a few classrooms, students displayed high levels of active listening as they responded to their peer's comments during a discussion by indicating agreement with the speaker and respect for each other as individuals. Teachers also took the time for individual interactions with students. In many observations, the teachers crouched next to a student to have a one-on-one conversation. They demonstrated genuine warmth and caring through hugs and conversations about home. In a few classrooms, despite teacher-student interactions being generally respectful, the interactions were business-like and impersonal.	Limited	0%
		Satisfactory	7%
		Proficient	79%
		Exemplary	14%
Establishing a Culture for Learning	Teachers demonstrated high expectations for student learning and behavior across all grade levels in over 90% of the classrooms. Teachers posted expectations for learning on the walls and reinforced them through their comments. Teachers asked students to show their best work and to "stretch your brains" when working through challenging tasks. Another teacher reinforced persistence as she reminded students "all good thinkers revise their work." Students displayed consistent efforts to complete high quality work as they worked in small group activities or collaborated with partners. Teachers used verbal and non-verbal actions, such as high fives, to reinforce student confidence and participation. Students continued to remain actively engaged in the assigned activities regardless of whether the teachers monitored them.	Limited	0%
		Satisfactory	7%
		Proficient	82%
		Exemplary	11%
Managing Classroom Procedures	All classrooms observed were proficient or exemplary in Managing Classroom Procedures. Co-teaching teams modeled smooth, seamless transitions that kept	Limited	0%

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

Class Environment	Evidence Observed	School Wide Rating	
	students actively engaged between activities. One teacher set out supplies or prepared snacks while the second teacher completed group tasks or led students to line up. In the pre-kindergarten classrooms, one teacher continued to read to tables of students who were still eating while another teacher led a group to the bathroom and the third teacher helped two tables clean up. Students actively participated in transitions by cleaning up books, moving baskets to the tables, or clearing snack. Teachers prepared each activity's supplies ahead of time. The transition from whole group, to small group, to independent work was also efficient in all of the classes observed.	Satisfactory	0%
		Proficient	75%
		Exemplary	25%
Managing Student Behavior	All classroom teachers were proficient or exemplary in Managing Student Behavior. While little to no misbehavior was observed, the review team observed teachers engaged in proactive, preventive measures such as sitting on the carpet with students, moving from student to student, allowing students to play, and moving students for optimum seating arrangements. The review team observed close monitoring of student progress and behavior in all classrooms. Teachers circulated and used proximity to redirect the start of off task behavior. Teachers praised positive behavior and signaled students to "sit smart" in all classrooms. Teachers posted and referred to standards of conduct consistently in each classroom. Additionally, teachers consistently utilized the behavior management system at the school by tracking warnings and consequences on a clipboard for each student.	Limited	0%
		Satisfactory	0%
		Proficient	86%
		Exemplary	14%

INSTRUCTIONAL DELIVERY

This rubric summarizes the school's performance on the Instructional Delivery elements of the rubric during the unannounced visits. The label definitions for classroom observations of "limited", "satisfactory", "proficient" and "exemplary" are those from the Danielson framework. PCSB considers any rating below "proficient" to be under the standard of quality expected of DC charter schools. On average, 87% of classrooms received a rating of proficient or exemplary for the Instructional Delivery domain.

Instructional Delivery	Evidence Observed	School Wide Rating	
Communicating with Students	In over 95% of the observations, teachers stated a clear purpose for the lesson and checked for understanding through questions or hand signals. A high level of student comprehension was evident by students' responses and the ability of students to complete the assigned tasks. Teachers pointed out possible areas for misunderstanding and gave clear explanations of concepts. All teachers observed used rich, age appropriate language to introduce students to a wide range of vocabulary terms and explained the definitions. One observer gave an N/A score.	Limited	0%
		Satisfactory	4%
		Proficient	74%
		Exemplary	22%
Using Questioning and Discussion Techniques	In 80% of the observations, teachers scored proficient or exemplary in Using Questioning and Discussion Techniques. Teachers effectively used higher order questions to facilitate student learning. Teachers used "what, why, and how" questions to promote critical thinking and to guide students to identify evidence to support their thinking. Teachers maintained effective wait time to engage students in discussion and often asked students to explain their thought process. In one notable classroom, students engaged classmates in academic discussion without ongoing mediation by the teacher. Twenty percent of the observations were satisfactory in this area. Some classrooms had minimal questioning, possibly due to the structure of the activity. In these instances, teachers worked independently and did not engage students through questions. Three observers gave an N/A score.	Limited	0%
		Satisfactory	20%
		Proficient	60%
		Exemplary	20%

Instructional Delivery	Evidence Observed	School Wide Rating	
Engaging Students in Learning	Over 90% of classrooms were proficient or exemplary in Engaging Students in Learning. Teachers structured learning tasks to keep students engaged and active. Students had choice in the approach or through the results of many tasks. In a kindergarten classroom, students chose from a variety of books, and had the choice of reading with a partner or asking one of the teachers to read with them. In upper grades, teachers encouraged students to explore different ways to solve math equations and then explain their process to peers. In all classrooms, teachers aligned the activities with the posted objectives and the classroom materials and resources supported instruction. When used, teachers integrated technology to enhance instruction. One class watched a silent, short film. The teacher paused the video at various times for students to explore what the characters were thinking after specific events of the film. Students were encouraged to be creative and share their pictures drawn on their white boards.	Limited	0%
		Satisfactory	7%
		Proficient	71%
		Exemplary	21%
Using Assessment in Instruction	Eighty percent of the observations were proficient or exemplary in Using Assessment in Instruction. In these classrooms, teachers closely monitored student progress through questioning to determine student understanding. Most teachers circulated to provide specific feedback to individual students. In one classroom, students provided feedback to each other as they collaborated to complete tasks in addition to verifying the accuracy of their work against criteria posted in the classroom.

A few classrooms did not provide evidence of assessment. During some choice times, teachers remained passive, with interactions limited to praising students' positive behavior.

Three observers gave an N/A score. | Limited | 0% |
		Satisfactory	20%
		Proficient	76%
		Exemplary	4%

APPENDIX I: CLASSROOM ENVIRONMENT OBSERVATION RUBRIC

Class Environment	Limited	Satisfactory	Proficient	Exemplary
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: INSTRUCTIONAL DELIVERY OBSERVATION RUBRIC

Instructional Delivery	Limited	Satisfactory	Proficient	Exemplary
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.

Instructional Delivery	Limited	Satisfactory	Proficient	Exemplary
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.