DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA
PUBLIC CHARTER SCHOOL BOARD

January 30, 2015

Ms. Deborah Lockhart
Excel Academy Public Charter School, LEAD and DREAM
2501 Martin Luther King, Jr. Ave, SE
Washington, DC 20020

Dear Ms. Lockhart,

The DC Public Charter School Board (PCSB) conducts Qualitative Site Reviews to gather and document evidence to support school oversight. According to the 2014 Memorandum of Understanding that PCSB has with the Office of the State Superintendent of Education (OSSE) around implementation of the 2012 Waiver to the Elementary and Secondary Education Act, PCSB must "Ensure that public charter schools identified as Focus or Priority are providing interventions and supports to students and their teachers consistent with that school's Intervention and Support Plan" (p.5). OSSE designated Excel Academy a Focus School for the performance of your students with disabilities on the math portion of the 2014 DC CAS; it is currently in its first year of Focus status.

> Please see the following link for information about the requirements for exiting Focus status:
> http://osse.dc.gov/sites/default/files/dc/sites/osse/release_content/attachments/OSSE_Revisions%20-%20Executive%20Summary%20-%20All%20Principles%20-%205%2017%2012%20FINAL.pdf

A Qualitative Site Review team conducted on-site reviews of Excel Academy PCS between December 1 and December 12, 2014. 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 both classrooms and a board meeting against these goals. This evaluation was informed by using an abridged version of the Charlotte Danielson *Framework for Teaching* observation rubric. PCSB also attended a scheduled day on December 3, 2014 to observe how the school's Focus intervention strategies are being implemented in classrooms.

Enclosed is the team's report. We appreciate the assistance and hospitality that you and your staff gave the monitoring team in conducting the Qualitative Site Review and ESEA monitoring.

Sincerely,

[redacted]

Naomi DeVeaux
Deputy Director

Enclosures
cc: School Leader

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Excel Academy Public Charter School (Excel PCS) serves 726 students across two campuses in the same location: *DREAM* and *LEAD*, in grades pre-kindergarten-3 (PK3) through sixth grade (eventually growing to eighth grade) in Ward 8. Excel PCS - *DREAM* serves 570 students in PK3 through third grade. Excel PCS- LEAD serves 156 students in fourth through sixth grade and will eventually include grades seven and eight. The DC Public Charter School Board (PCSB) conducted a Qualitative Site Review (QSR) and Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) monitoring in December 2014 because Excel PCS was designated as Focus for its underperformance of special education students on the state math assessment by Office of the State Superintendent of Education (OSSE). OSSE stated that because the school split after its Focus identification, both campuses (*DREAM* and *LEAD*) would retain the designation during the 2014-15 school year. Both campuses will be required to meet the exit criteria for Focus schools, according to the ESEA Waiver. This report disaggregates evidence related to both campuses.

The QSR team conducted observations over the course of a two-week window, from December 1 through December 12, 2014. A team of two PCSB staff members (including PCSB's Special Education Specialist) and one consultant conducted observations of 11 classrooms at the DREAM campus and seven classrooms at the LEAD campus. Prior to the two-week window, Excel PCS provided answers to specific questions posed by PCSB regarding the provision of instruction to students with disabilities. The reviewer who conducted special education-specific observations noted the following based on the answers provided by the school. First, in most observations, teachers utilized SMART boards, computers, and multi-modality instruction, including verbal, visual, kinesthetic, and spatial components. Teachers worked with their students in a variety of flexible grouping, mainly in whole group, small group/stations, or individually, which were conducive to the provision of direct and timely feedback to students. However, in most observations, the QSR team noted infrequent checks for understanding of all students, and no use of exit tickets, which was described by the school as a means to gauge student mastery of content after a lesson.

A QSR team member attended a scheduled day, set by the school, to collect evidence related to the school's Focus strategies targeted towards math achievement of students with disabilities on December 3, 2014, including (for both campuses): small group instruction and intervention, differentiation, the use of math stations, increasing opportunities for students to use technology, and co-planning between the special education and general education teachers. A PCSB staff member also attended a Board of Trustees meeting on December 9, 2014.

The majority of evidence collected during the scheduled day centered on the school's effective implementation of strategies to improve the math performance of students with disabilities. At the DREAM campus, observers noted mixed reviews of individual students using technology and differentiation of instruction in math classes. They noted some evidence of specific strategies being used such small group instruction. They also observed that the co-planning during the scheduled day between the special education and general education teachers consisted of them reviewing the skills students had practiced leading up to the end of the semester, plans for the upcoming weeks, and a discussion of individual students needing further support on specific skills. Similarly, at the LEAD campus, the observers noted mixed reviews of students using technology and differentiation in math classes. The QSR team consistently saw teachers at the LEAD campus asking students to justify their

responses in math. Observers also saw the strong use of small groups and math stations during math lessons at the LEAD campus, but did not have the opportunity to observe co-planning.

The QSR team used Charlotte Danielson's *Framework for Teaching* Rubric throughout the observations and observed classrooms in mornings and afternoons. In some instances, a QSR team may have observed a teacher twice.

The QSR team scored 75% of the observations at Excel PCS – *DREAM* as distinguished or proficient in the Classroom Environment domain. The components of *Creating an Environment of Respect and Rapport, Establishing a Culture for Learning,* and *Managing Classroom Procedures* were consistently high, with 82% of observations scoring proficient or distinguished. Classroom environments were warm and friendly. Teachers consistently praised student effort and classroom routines were well-established. The lowest rated element within the Classroom Environment domain was *Managing Student Behavior,* with 54% of observations scored as proficient or distinguished. Attempts to respond to misbehavior in some observations had uneven results.

The QSR team scored 71% of the observations at Excel PCS – *LEAD* as distinguished or proficient in the Classroom Environment domain. The highest rated element within this domain was Managing Classroom Procedures. Teachers used chimes, chants and well-established routines to maximize learning time as students transitioned from one activity to another. Similar to results at the *DREAM* campus, the lowest rated element within the Classroom Environment domain at the *LEAD* campus was *Managing Student Behavior,* with 57% of observations scored as proficient or distinguished. Redirection of misbehavior in some classrooms was ineffective as students continued off-task behavior.

The QSR team scored 52% of the observations at Excel PCS – DREAM as distinguished or proficient in the Instruction domain. The highest rated element within this domain was Communicating with Students, with 64% of observations rated as distinguished or proficient. Teachers explained content to students clearly and in many cases modelled the learning task to be completed. The lowest rated elements within this domain were Using Questioning and Discussion Techniques and Using Assessment in Instruction, with 45% of observations rated as proficient or distinguished. In some observations, questioning was entirely teacher led and there was no indication of what high quality work looked like.

The QSR team scored 63% of the observations at Excel PCS –LEAD as distinguished or proficient in the Instruction domain. The highest rated element within this domain was Communicating with Students, with 86% of observations rated as proficient or distinguished. Teachers presented content clearly, and in many cases students participated in explanations of content to the rest of the class. The lowest rated element within this domain was Using Questioning and Discussion Techniques, with 45% of observations as proficient or distinguished. Consistent with observations from the *DREAM* campus, many observations had little to no student to student interaction, with the discussion predominantly teacher-led.

CHARTER MISSION, GOALS, AND ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENT EXPECTATIONS

This table summarizes Excel Academy Public Charter School's goals and academic achievement expectations as detailed in its charter and subsequent Accountability Plans, and the evidence that the Qualitative Site Review (QSR) team observed during the Qualitative Site Visit.

Mission and Goals	Evidence
Mission: Excel Academy's mission is to provide pre-school through eighth grade girls a solid academic foundation and enrichment opportunities to prepare them to succeed in high school and college and to develop the skills and confidence they need to make healthy, positive lifestyle choices.	Excel Academy PCS is making progress towards meeting its mission based on the QSR Team's observations, though observations in the Instructional Delivery domain at both campuses were rated significantly lower than those in the Classroom Environment domain. Throughout the school building's environment, inclusive of both the *DREAM* and *LEAD* campuses, observers saw evidence of messaging around **preparation and success.** Motivational posters were located throughout both campuses, with the words and definitions for "Achievement," "Sisterhood," and "Leadership," along with the mission related poster "Educate. Empower. Excel." Classrooms were designated by the names of universities and short descriptions of the universities hung outside of classrooms, helping prepare students as college-focused. Posters with motivational messages hung throughout the school, including posters that said: "Girls Count: I know my place….VALUE!"; "IDEALS- Integrity, Discipline, Enjoyment, Achievement, Leadership, Sisterhood; and the Excel Academy Creed: "Like ALL great women, we EXCEL!" Many posters included pictures of famous women including Lorraine Hansberry and Toni Morrison. Observers during the scheduled day and observation window noted that intervention classes were offered at both campuses (for specific information related to intervention classes at each campus, please see the *School Improvement Strategies* section of this report). ***Solid Academic Foundation*** As fully described later in this report under the *Framework for Teaching* section, particularly the *Instructional Delivery* domain 52%

Mission and Goals	Evidence
	of the observations at DREAM and 63% at LEAD earned a score of proficient or distinguished. ***Enrichment Opportunities*** While enrichment opportunities may be present at the school, PCSB neither looked for nor observed evidence of enrichment beyond school hours. However, the team saw evidence that the school offers enrichment opportunities during school hours. They saw bulletin board titled "Technology Lab Poster" with images of students participating in "Excel Academy News" media program and "This is how we code" with the hashtag #kidscancode and images of students "coding" on computers. The school schedule indicates that students have physical education, music, and Spanish classes. ***Development of Skills and Confidence for healthy, positive lifestyle choices*** Overall throughout both the *DREAM* and the *LEAD* campuses, observers saw evidence of a positive and respectful environment that may lead to **healthy, positive lifestyle choices for students.** Generally, teachers' tone with students was positive and encouraging. Observers noted that positive encouragement came mostly through merit-to-merit systems, with external factors motivating students' positive behavior (such as points, stickers, etc.). For further information related to the positive environment at each campus, please see the *Framework for Teaching* section of this report, specifically the *Classroom Environment* domain.
Goals:	
PMF Goal #1: Student Progress – Academic improvement over time	The QSR team saw a range of instructional activities in English Language Arts and math classes at both the *DREAM* and *LEAD* campuses.

Mission and Goals	Evidence
Effective instruction supporting student academic progress and achievement in reading and math.	Only 45% and 67% of observations in the element of Assessing Student Performance at DREAM and LEAD (respectively) were rated as proficient, with none of the observations rated as distinguished at either campus. In order to show student improvement over time, QSR observers looked for a range of instructional activities, differentiated instruction, and assessing for understanding. The instructional strategies observed at the school are described below. *DREAM* In English Language Arts students analyzed ancient Greek myths through the teacher asking comprehension questions. Using a variety of modalities during phonics instruction including written and oral techniques, a teacher had students spell out words as they stretched out the individual sounds the letters made, showing the students pictures of the words, and asking students to use the words in new sentences. In math classes students practiced with patterns in small groups, traced and counted their fingers, and learned rhymes to remember how to form a number. Students represented numbers with their fingers after seeing a number line on the board and practiced subtraction and addition problems as a whole class with the teacher. *LEAD* In English Language Arts classes students watched a film and answered the teachers' questions around comparisons between the film and the book, proofread essays comparing the same film to the book, and wrote short responses to questions related to the Middle Ages and learned related vocabulary.

Mission and Goals	Evidence
	In math classes students added fractions, compared fraction sizes using manipulatives, graphed points on a four quadrant grid, and calculated percentages by completing individual worksheets and by working in small groups. Students worked on solving one- by two-digit multiplication problems using the distributive property and area models. Students worked in stations, with some students receiving direct instruction, guided practice with a special education teacher, and individual practice on computer stations. For additional information related to math instruction at the *DREAM* and *LEAD* campuses, please see the *School Improvement Strategies* section of this report.
PMF Goal #2: Student Achievement – Meeting or exceeding academic standards *Moving students to advanced levels of proficiency in reading and math*	The QSR team observed mixed evidence of teachers **moving students to advanced levels of proficiency in reading and math** at the *DREAM* and *LEAD* campuses. *DREAM* In English Language Arts classes, teachers differentiated instruction by asking students to come up with words that rhymed with other words to create their own sentences, and by working in small groups on books at their levels. Differentiation in math was mixed. Teachers differentiated students' learning product by asking them individually to describe patterns. As a whole group, teachers asked students to represent a number line with their bodies and teachers taught rhymes to help them remember how to form two-digit numbers. Teachers differentiated through small groups and stations as well. Some observers saw little to no evidence of differentiation in math. Evidence related to differentiation in math

Mission and Goals	Evidence
	classes by campus may be found in the *School Improvement Strategies* section of this report. *LEAD* In English Language Arts classes as noted above, teachers differentiated instruction through learning product, asking students questions to compare a book to a film and asking students to write short answers to questions about the factors that caused the fall of the Roman Empire. The QSR team saw intervention classes for math made up of fewer than ten students in which students either worked independently at computer stations, in a small group for guided practice, or as a whole group. Further evidence related to differentiation in math classes by campus may be found in the *School Improvement Strategies* section of this report. Additional information related to differentiation across subject areas at both campuses may be found in the *Framework for Teaching* section of this report, the *Instructional Delivery* element of *Engaging Students in Learning* While school leadership said that observers should see teachers assessing for understanding through the use of exit tickets, their use was not observed at either campus. Observers noted teachers conducting verbal checks for understanding of students who volunteered to answer comprehension questions. For additional information related to assessing student learning across subject areas at both the *DREAM* and *LEAD* campuses, please see the *Framework for Teaching* section of this report, the *Instructional Delivery* element of *Using Assessment in Instruction.*

Mission and Goals	Evidence
PMF Goal #3: Gateway – Outcomes in key subjects that predict future educational success *Promotion of reading proficiency by third grade and math proficiency by eighth grade*	The QSR team observed inconsistent promotion of reading proficiency by third grade. In one classroom the teacher asked students to whisper read in unison, though there was no indication that the teacher was listening to individual students for accuracy or fluency. Teachers in early grades promoted literacy skills by asking students to sound out words, to rhyme and make compound words, and reading leveled books. For information related to the promotion of math proficiency by eighth grade, please see the *School Improvement Strategies* section of this report, specifically the information related to the *LEAD* campus.
PMF Goal #4: Leading Indicators – Predictors of future student progress and achievement *Culture of learning and support in the classrooms*	As fully described later in this report under the Framework for Teaching section, particularly the Classroom Environment domain 75% of the observations at DREAM and 71% at LEAD earned a score of proficient or distinguished.
Governance:	A member of the PCSB staff attended the Excel Academy PCS Board Meeting on December 9, 2014. Seven board members were present along with the school's new CEO/Head of School and Chief of Staff. The Head of School reported on a number of new hires, including an interim executive principal, teachers, operations assistant, director of development and a critical response staff member. She also reported on staff openings expected for the following year, including content specialists. Five issues remain outstanding related to the Enrollment Audit. The Head of School also discussed ANet assessments, the PMF score, upcoming training on inquiry-based instruction, low in-seat attendance and the formation of an attendance committee, an arts integration approach to instruction, the upcoming PARCC assessment, and Middle States accreditation. During the Financial

Mission and Goals	Evidence
	and Audit report, the school was reported to have finished "in the black" though noted that expenses had increased drastically possibly due to an increase in legal fees.

THE CLASSROOM ENVIRONMENT[1]

This table summarizes the school's performance on the Classroom Environments domain of the rubric during the unannounced visits. The label definitions for classroom observations of "distinguished," "proficient," "basic," and "unsatisfactory" are those from the Danielson framework. At the *DREAM* campus, the QSR team scored 75% of observations as "distinguished" or "proficient" for the Classroom Environment domain. At the *LEAD* campus, the QSR team scored 71% of 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	***DREAM*** The QSR team scored 82% of the observations as proficient or distinguished in Creating an Environment of Respect and Rapport. Interactions among the teacher and students were kind and respectful, with teachers making connections with most students. Teachers encouraged students' positive behavior by giving out high fives and saying things like "I'm going to throw out silent stars, just catch it!" They also encouraged warm interactions among students by saying things like, "Send your love to STUDENT!" as students responded by wiggling their fingers at the student who needed positive reinforcement. ***LEAD*** The QSR team scored 71% of the observations as proficient and none of the observations as distinguished in Creating an Environment of Respect and Rapport. Teachers' interactions with students were warm and	Distinguished-DREAM	9%
		Distinguished-LEAD	0%
		Proficient-DREAM	73%

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

The Classroom Environment	Evidence Observed	School Wide Rating	
	encouraging, as teachers handed out high fives and said things like, "Thank you for showing leadership!" Students showed respect for teachers by following directions when asked the first time and staying on task. Student interactions are warm and friendly, as in one classroom where students danced together during a "vocabulary party."	Proficient-LEAD	71%
	DREAM The QSR team scored 18% of the observations as basic and none of the observations as unsatisfactory. Observers noted few instances of teachers making personal connections with students. Interactions between teachers and students were uneven in some observations. In one observation, the teacher ignored a student who was crying though another student offered a hug. In another observation the teacher said to another adult in the room (in front of students), "I don't like this time of day. I like them [students] in the afternoon." Teachers in a couple of classrooms had to remind students multiple times to be respectful to each other with uneven results, as some students stopped talking over their classmates and others continued doing so. ***LEAD*** The QSR team scored 29% of the observations as basic and none of the observations as unsatisfactory. Interactions in some classrooms were uneven, with the teacher responding harshly to some students who were off task, and friendly with other students who were also off task, as in one observation where the teacher yelled at one group of students who were off task but laughed and joked with another group of students who were also off task.	Basic-DREAM	18%
		Basic-LEAD	29%
		Unsatisfactory-DREAM	0%
		Unsatisfactory-LEAD	0%

The Classroom Environment	Evidence Observed	School Wide Rating	
Establishing a Culture for Learning	***DREAM*** The QSR team scored 82% of the observations as proficient and none of the observations as distinguished in Establishing a Culture for Learning. Students put forth good effort to complete high quality work as they enthusiastically participated in the class discussion. Teachers encouraged high quality work by saying things like "Use the chart when you solve the problem. We have to get your speed up!" and by pointing out the specific academic behavior that they wanted to see students doing (using their fingers to count or using a number line). Teachers constantly praised students during whole group and small group instruction, saying "Kiss your brains!" and encouraged students to recognize each others' efforts by saying "Everybody, let's give her some energy!" Students put forth good effort to complete work, enthusiastically participating and responding to the teachers' questions. ***LEAD*** The QSR team scored 71% of the observations as proficient or distinguished in Establishing a Culture for Learning. Many students participated in whole group discussions by politely raising their hands. Teachers praised students by saying things like, "Nice!" and "Perfect job!" as students got correct answers. Teachers encouraged persistence by supporting students, saying, "It's ok if you don't know how to do it. I'm going to help you." Teachers gave students strategies to check their work, as in a math lesson where the class discussed the Estimation Strategy when students were working on multiplication problems independently. Teachers communicated enthusiasm for the subject area, as in one classroom where the teacher constantly made connections between new vocabulary and the students' lives.	Distinguished-DREAM	0%
		Distinguished-LEAD	14%
		Proficient-DREAM	82%
		Proficient-LEAD	57%

The Classroom Environment	Evidence Observed	School Wide Rating	
	DREAM The QSR team scored 18% of the observations as basic and none of the observations as unsatisfactory. In some observations students merely complied with expectations by being silent during the whole-group lesson, but did not indicate their commitment to learning. . ***LEAD*** The QSR team scored 29% of the observations as basic and none of the observations as unsatisfactory. The focus of some classrooms seemed to be task completion rather than completion of high quality work. In other classrooms student engagement was inconsistent, requiring constant teacher prompting as the teachers said things like "I should see a lot more getting done here!"	Basic-DREAM	18%
		Basic-LEAD	29%
		Unsatisfactory-DREAM	0%
		Unsatisfactory-LEAD	0%
Managing Classroom Procedures	***DREAM*** The QSR team scored 82% of the observations as proficient and none of the observations as distinguished in Managing Classroom Procedures. Students generally followed established rules and procedures, like raising their hands to request to go to the bathroom. Teachers minimized transition time by pre-sharpening pencils and asking students to point to the table students would go to next during center time. Teachers also maximized instructional time during transitions by asking students to count by fives and then tens as they moved to the next learning station.	Distinguished-DREAM	0%
		Distinguished-LEAD	0%

The Classroom Environment	Evidence Observed	School Wide Rating	
	LEAD The QSR team scored 86% of the observations as proficient and none as distinguished in Managing Classroom Procedures. Teachers had well-established routines in most classrooms. Students knew how to access classroom passes in most classrooms, avoiding disruption to the rest of the class as they needed to get water or use the bathroom. In another classroom as the teacher sounded a chime, students immediately stopped to listen for additional directions. Teachers also used countdowns to signal transitions. In some observations, students asked the teacher if they could help with handing out materials.	Proficient-DREAM	82%
		Proficient-LEAD	86%
	DREAM The QSR team scored 18% of the observations as basic and none as unsatisfactory. While teachers had well-established routines in most observations, the consistent operation of these was rough in some cases. Teachers asked students to track with their eyes and keep their hands in "Scholar Position", and in some observations had to repeat this numerous times. In another observation the teacher had to repeat numerous times how to properly return from a bathroom break. ***LEAD*** The QSR team scored 14% of the observations as basic and none as unsatisfactory. In some observations, student transitions happened at different times and rates requiring the teachers' multiple promptings before all students were prepared for the next learning activity.	Basic-DREAM	18%
		Basic-LEAD	14%
		Unsatisfactory-DREAM	0%
		Unsatisfactory-LEAD	0%

The Classroom Environment	Evidence Observed	School Wide Rating	
Managing Student Behavior	***DREAM*** The QSR team scored 54% of the observations as proficient or distinguished in Managing Student Behavior. Students respectfully communicated with classmates as appropriate, as in one observation where a student asked a classmate to read quietly. Teachers' responses to misbehavior were consistent and appropriate as in one observation where the teacher's response to student misbehavior included an explanation for why the behavior was inappropriate (because it was unsafe). In another observation the teacher was respectful and welcoming to a student who had spent time outside the classroom in a "cool down zone." Teachers encouraged positive behavior by saying things like, "Let's see how many friends we can get who have perfect behavior!" ***LEAD*** The QSR team scored 57% of the observations as proficient or distinguished in Managing Student Behavior. In most classrooms teachers posted behavior expectations and monitored behavior frequently through a type of point system, tracking points on a board on the iPad. Teachers gently redirected by saying things like, "Now is not the time to be doing that," when students engaged in off task behavior and by counting down from ten to one as a student took too long to return to her seat. There was virtually no misbehavior in one classroom as students were fully engaged in the learning task throughout the entire lesson.	Distinguished-DREAM	9%
		Distinguished-LEAD	14%
		Proficient-DREAM	45%
		Proficient-LEAD	43%
	DREAM The QSR team scored 45% of the observations as basic and none as unsatisfactory. In some observations, the teachers' attempts to respond to misbehavior had uneven results. In one observation the teacher repeated numerous times that students could have lunch and watch a movie if they cooperated and several students did not respond to this incentive.	Basic-DREAM	45%

The Classroom Environment	Evidence Observed	School Wide Rating	
	Systems of tracking student behavior were not universally clear with only global consequences given to misbehavior. Some teachers' responses seemed overly harsh with one teacher yelling forcefully at students, "What are you doing? Sit down!" Behavior tracking systems were somewhat inconsistent as in one classroom where the teacher had written student names under a smiley face and a sad face depending on the student behavior; later the teacher referenced a color behavior chart that seemed to be unrelated to the smiley faces. ***LEAD*** The QSR team scored 43% of the observations as basic and none as unsatisfactory. In some observations, teachers' redirection of misbehavior was global, inconsistent, and ineffective at changing student behavior. Students continued to socialize as the teachers instructed students to quiet down and prepare for lunch.	Basic-LEAD	43%
		Unsatisfactory-DREAM	0%
		Unsatisfactory-LEAD	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. At the DREAM campus, the QSR team scored 52% of observations as "distinguished" or "proficient" for the Instruction domain. At the LEAD campus, the QSR team scored 63% of observations as "distinguished" or "proficient" for the Instruction domain.

Instruction	Evidence Observed	School Wide Rating	
Communicating with Students	***DREAM*** The QSR team scored 64% of the observations as proficient and none as distinguished in Communicating with Students. Teachers' directions and procedures were clear and anticipated student misunderstanding, as when one teacher walked through students orally and visually through the procedures for a phonics lesson. Teachers explained learning tasks by using multiple examples and modeling, such as giving students examples for how they should fill out graphic organizers, complete geo boards, and sort pictures by the word's first letter. ***LEAD*** The QSR team scored 86% of the observations as proficient and none as distinguished in Communicating with Students. Teachers had clear structures in place for lessons, with many lessons modelled after "I do, we do, you do." Explicit vocabulary instruction was part of many observations as teachers emphasized the meaning of words. Teachers asked students to participate in the explanation of content by modelling the procedure to get to the correct answer. Teachers presented content clearly, giving students multiple strategies to use to complete math problem as in one lesson focused on single digit by double-digit multiplication. In some observations students participated in the explanation of content, as in one where students explained to each other the possible causes for the fall of the Roman Empire.	Distinguished-DREAM	0%
		Distinguished-LEAD	0%
		Proficient-DREAM	64%
		Proficient-LEAD	86%

Instruction	Evidence Observed	School Wide Rating	
	DREAM The QSR team scored 36% of the observations as basic or unsatisfactory. Teachers neither stated nor had written the purpose of the lesson. In one observation a teacher finished one read aloud and moved on to another with no explanation for what students should be listening for or thinking about, making it unclear what the students were supposed to be learning. In another observation the teacher made significant content errors and students left the lesson confused. ***LEAD*** The QSR team scored 14% of the observations as basic and none as unsatisfactory. In some observations teachers had to clarify the learning task multiple times, as students seemed confused as to how to complete it despite various explanations.	Basic-DREAM	27%
		Basic-LEAD	14%
		Unsatisfactory-DREAM	9%
		Unsatisfactory-LEAD	0%
Using Questioning/Prompts and Discussion Techniques	***DREAM*** The QSR team scored 45% of the observations as proficient and none of the observations as distinguished in Using Questioning/ Prompts and Discussion Techniques. Teachers asked a mix of low level and high level questions to promote student thinking and understanding. Teachers asked cognitively challenging, open-ended questions like, “What idea can you use?”; “How do we know how many counters to use?”; and “Why did I stop counting at this number?” Teachers also asked students to make predictions about what might happen next in their experiment. ***LEAD*** The QSR team scored 43% of the observations as proficient and none as distinguished in Using Questioning/ Prompts and Discussion Techniques. Teachers asked students to explain answers and further	Distinguished-DREAM	0%
		Distinguished-LEAD	0%
		Proficient-DREAM	45%

Instruction	Evidence Observed	School Wide Rating	
	probed with more challenging questions. Teachers asked students to walk them through strategies to solve math problems, like "How do you set up your box strategy? What's your first step?" Students in these observations were fully engaged in the lesson, answering questions enthusiastically without constant prompting from the teachers.	Proficient-LEAD	43%
	DREAM The QSR team scored 54% of the observations as basic or unsatisfactory. In many observations the line of questioning was solely from teacher to student with few students asked to explain their answers. No questioning or discussion techniques were observed during the lesson in one observation, with instruction entirely teacher-led and no opportunities for students to respond to or ask questions. In other observations teachers did not attempt to engage all students in the discussion, only the students that volunteered. Others asked students questions that required them only to recall facts. ***LEAD*** The QSR team scored 57% of the observations as basic and none as unsatisfactory. Consistent with observations from the *DREAM* campus, many observations included question and answer from teacher to student with no student to student interaction. In some observations questioning required only recall with little probing, as in one where the teacher asked questions entirely from the teacher's guide without following up based on the student's specific responses.	Basic-DREAM	36%
		Basic-LEAD	57%
		Unsatisfactory-DREAM	18%
		Unsatisfactory-LEAD	0%

Instruction	Evidence Observed	School Wide Rating	
Engaging Students in Learning	***DREAM*** The QSR team scored 55% of the observations as proficient and none as distinguished in Engaging students in Learning. Most students were intellectually engaged in lessons even without ongoing mediation from the teacher, reading to themselves or completing math problems independently as teachers walked around to check on progress. Teachers used a variety of groupings appropriate for lesson objectives, learning through a mini-lesson in whole group and then practicing independently as the teacher walked around, and in small groups practicing math skills learned during guided practice. Teachers used a variety of modalities as in a phonics lesson that included written, oral and kinesthetic techniques. During the oral part of a lesson, the teacher asked students to use their hands to stretch out words to hear individual sounds as they said the words out loud. Students tapped their fingers as they pronounced each individual word part. ***LEAD*** The QSR team scored 57% of the observations as proficient and none of the observations as distinguished in Engaging Students in Learning. Teachers used a variety of grouping, including small groups. Students were engaged in learning activities without constant mediation by the teacher, as at small groups where teachers had put directions at each of the stations. Pacing and structure allowed for student engagement in most observations, as in one where the teacher began with a review of the prior day's material, moved on to the Do Now, and then worked on a class reading of a text covering new material and asking frequent comprehension questions.	Distinguished-DREAM	0%
		Distinguished-LEAD	0%
		Proficient-DREAM	55%
		Proficient-LEAD	57%

Instruction	Evidence Observed	School Wide Rating	
	DREAM The QSR team scored 45% of the observations as basic and none as unsatisfactory. Structure and pacing was unclear in some observations, with some lessons dragging and others feeling rushed as many students failed to complete individual learning tasks before the teacher started on the next learning activity. Student engagement was not universally high across classrooms, with some students socializing or walking around the classroom as the teacher tried to present new content, or remaining silent as they were supposed to be participating in a turn-and-talk. ***LEAD*** The QSR team scored 43% of the observations as basic and none as unsatisfactory. Some observations gave students little opportunity to be intellectually engaged, as in one observation where the teacher spent the entire time going through the procedure for students to complete without giving students the opportunity to practice and in other observations focused entirely on whole-group instruction with no participation by students.	Basic-DREAM	45%
		Basic-LEAD	43%
		Unsatisfactory-DREAM	0%
		Unsatisfactory-LEAD	0%
Using Assessment in Instruction	***DREAM*** The QSR team scored 45% of the observations as proficient and none as distinguished in Using Assessment in Instruction. Teachers consistently asked comprehension questions throughout lessons to ensure student understanding. Teachers provided specific and timely feedback to students related to their responses. In some observations teachers	Distinguished-DREAM	0%

Instruction	Evidence Observed	School Wide Rating	
	assessed student understanding efficiently and individually, as in one observation where the teacher asked students to show that they knew how to make an "X" with their hands and helping students that had difficulty and asking students to hold up the next shape that should come in a pattern. ***LEAD*** The QSR team scored 67% of the observations as proficient and none of the observations as distinguished in Using Assessment in Instruction. Teachers monitored understanding by asking questions and scaffolded where necessary by modeling. Teachers followed up individually with students who initially had a difficult time with the learning task. Teachers assessed individual understanding and provided specific feedback as they worked in small groups, asking students to put answers on white boards and hold them up for the rest of the group. Teachers asked students to assess their own understanding of a concept, asking for a show of fingers from zero to five, zero meaning the student felt she did not understand and five meaning the student understood complete. Teachers also asked students to help each other monitor understanding by comparing answers before the teacher came around to check.	Distinguished-LEAD	0%
		Proficient-DREAM	45%
		Proficient-LEAD	67%
	DREAM The QSR team scored 54% of the observations as basic or unsatisfactory. In some observations teachers gave no indication of what high-quality work looked like. In other observations teachers did not seem to assess student learning at all, as instruction was entirely teacher led with no participation or response requested from students. Teachers in some classrooms failed to respond to incorrect responses, without further explanation or scaffolding around the content. It was	Basic-DREAM	45%
		Basic-LEAD	33%

Instruction	Evidence Observed	School Wide Rating	
	unclear how the teacher was assessing the learning of all students, calling on only the students who volunteered answers. ***LEAD*** The QSR team scored 33% of the observations as basic and none as unsatisfactory. Consistent with observations from the DREAM campus, there did not appear to be any criteria for quality established. Teachers in other observations used only one method for checking understanding with no attempts at self or peer assessment.	Unsatisfactory-DREAM	9%
		Unsatisfactory-LEAD	0%

APPENDIX I: THE CLASSROOM ENVIRONMENT OBSERVATION RUBRIC

The Classroom Environment	Unsatisfactory	Basic	Proficient	Distinguished
Creating an Environment of Respect and Rapport	Classroom interactions, both between the teacher and students and among students, are negative or inappropriate and characterized by sarcasm, putdowns, or conflict.	Classroom interactions are generally appropriate and free from conflict but may be characterized by occasional displays of insensitivity.	Classroom interactions reflect general warmth and caring, and are respectful of the cultural and developmental differences among groups of students.	Classroom interactions are highly respectful, reflecting genuine warmth and caring toward individuals. Students themselves ensure maintenance of high levels of civility among member of the class.
Establishing a Culture for Learning	The classroom does not represent a culture for learning and is characterized by low teacher commitment to the subject, low expectations for student achievement, and little student pride in work.	The classroom environment reflects only a minimal culture for learning, with only modest or inconsistent expectations for student achievement, little teacher commitment to the subject, and little student pride in work. Both teacher and students are performing at the minimal level to "get by."	The classroom environment represents a genuine culture for learning, with commitment to the subject on the part of both teacher and students, high expectations for student achievement, and student pride in work.	Students assumes much of the responsibility for establishing a culture for learning in the classroom by taking pride in their work, initiating improvements to their products, and holding the work to the highest standard. Teacher demonstrates as passionate commitment to the subject.
Managing Classroom Procedures	Classroom routines and procedures are either nonexistent or inefficient, resulting in the loss of much instruction time.	Classroom routines and procedures have been established but function unevenly or inconsistently, with some loss of instruction time.	Classroom routines and procedures have been established and function smoothly for the most part, with little loss of instruction time.	Classroom routines and procedures are seamless in their operation, and students assume considerable responsibility for their smooth functioning.

The Classroom Environment	Unsatisfactory	Basic	Proficient	Distinguished
Managing Student Behavior	Student behavior is poor, with no clear expectations, no monitoring of student behavior, and inappropriate response to student misbehavior.	Teacher makes an effort to establish standards of conduct for students, monitor student behavior, and respond to student misbehavior, but these efforts are not always successful.	Teacher is aware of student behavior, has established clear standards of conduct, and responds to student misbehavior in ways that are appropriate and respectful of the students.	Student behavior is entirely appropriate, with evidence of student participation in setting expectations and monitoring behavior. Teacher's monitoring of student behavior is subtle and preventive, and teachers' response to student misbehavior is sensitive to individual student needs.

APPENDIX II: INSTRUCTION OBSERVATION RUBRIC

Instruction	Unsatisfactory	Basic	Proficient	Distinguished
Communicating with Students	Teacher's oral and written communication contains errors or is unclear or inappropriate to students. Teacher's purpose in a lesson or unit is unclear to students. Teacher's explanation of the content is unclear or confusing or uses inappropriate language.	Teacher's oral and written communication contains no errors, but may not be completely appropriate or may require further explanations to avoid confusion. Teacher attempts to explain the instructional purpose, with limited success. Teacher's explanation of the content is uneven; some is done skillfully, but other portions are difficult to follow.	Teacher communicates clearly and accurately to students both orally and in writing. Teacher's purpose for the lesson or unit is clear, including where it is situation within broader learning. Teacher's explanation of content is appropriate and connects with students' knowledge and experience.	Teacher's oral and written communication is clear and expressive, anticipating possible student misconceptions. Makes the purpose of the lesson or unit clear, including where it is situated within broader learning, linking purpose to student interests. Explanation of content is imaginative, and connects with students' knowledge and experience. Students contribute to explaining concepts to their peers.
Using Questioning and Discussion Techniques	Teacher makes poor use of questioning and discussion techniques, with low-level questions, limited student participation, and little true discussion.	Teacher's use of questioning and discussion techniques is uneven with some high-level question; attempts at true discussion; moderate student participation.	Teacher's use of questioning and discussion techniques reflects high-level questions, true discussion, and full participation by all students.	Students formulate may of the high-level questions and assume responsibility for the participation of all students in the discussion.
Engaging Students in Learning	Students are not at all intellectually engaged in significant learning, as a result of inappropriate activities or materials, poor representations of content, or lack of lesson structure.	Students are intellectually engaged only partially, resulting from activities or materials or uneven quality, inconsistent representation of content or uneven structure of pacing.	Students are intellectually engaged throughout the lesson, with appropriate activities and materials, instructive representations of content, and suitable structure and pacing of the lesson.	Students are highly engaged throughout the lesson and make material contribution to the representation of content, the activities, and the materials. The structure and pacing of the lesson allow for student reflection and closure.

Instruction	Unsatisfactory	Basic	Proficient	Distinguished
Using Assessment in Instruction	Students are unaware of criteria and performance standards by which their work will be evaluated, and do not engage in self-assessment or monitoring. Teacher does not monitor student learning in the curriculum, and feedback to students is of poor quality and in an untimely manner.	Students know some of the criteria and performance standards by which their work will be evaluated, and occasionally assess the quality of their own work against the assessment criteria and performance standards. Teacher monitors the progress of the class as a whole but elicits no diagnostic information; feedback to students is uneven and inconsistent in its timeliness.	Students are fully aware of the criteria and performance standards by which their work will be evaluated, and frequently assess and monitor the quality of their own work against the assessment criteria and performance standards. Teacher monitors the progress of groups of students in the curriculum, making limited use of diagnostic prompts to elicit information; feedback is timely, consistent, and of high quality.	Students are fully aware of the criteria and standards by which their work will be evaluated, have contributed to the development of the criteria, frequently assess and monitor the quality of their own work against the assessment criteria and performance standards, and make active use of that information in their learning. Teacher actively and systematically elicits diagnostic information from individual students regarding understanding and monitors progress of individual students; feedback is timely, high quality, and students use feedback in their learning.

SCHOOL INTERVENTION AND SUPPORT STRATEGIES

The following table summarizes Excel PCS's strategies and evidence collected by PCSB for the purposes of the 2012 ESEA Flexibility Waiver. PCSB observed the school implementing those strategies at both campuses during both the scheduled day on December 3, 2014 and the observation window from December 1 through December 12, 2014.

PCSB leaves it to the discretion of school leadership to determine the best use of time during the scheduled day of observations for the purposes of Focus intervention strategies. Therefore it may not be possible to observe certain strategies chosen by the school. In cases where PCSB did not have the opportunity to observe the strategy, we will use the following statement: "While this strategy may be in place, PCSB neither looked for nor observed any evidence related to this strategy." Different language is used to indicate poor implementation of a given strategy.

Strategy Described In Intervention Plan	School's Description of Strategy on the Ground	Evidence
Excel PCS - DREAM		
1. Improved student technology knowledge and skills	o Students will demonstrate their skills during independent practice using computer apps o Purchase of 6-10 computers to be used with students WD during their pull-out services o Establish a technology class for students o Emphasis on such technology techniques, such as, next, go, drag and drop, correct/change response	During the scheduled day, the PCSB staff member discussed **the use of technology** with school staff. Excel PCS – DREAM staff is working on obtaining a grant through OSSE that would allow them to purchase eight to ten additional laptop computers. The staff wants to ensure that students, particularly third grade special education students, have both the content knowledge and the computer literacy in order to be successful on the PARCC. Excel PCS staff has noticed that older students are more familiar with navigating computers, while the students in younger grades need more exposure and opportunities to explore keyboards. School leadership plans to revise the school schedule to include a "specials" **technology class** for third grade special

		education students once they receive the laptops. Students would go to this class between one and three times per week to practice typing, inputting answers, and moving the mouse around. This has not yet been implemented, as the school is waiting for the grant from OSSE. During the observation window evidence related the **use of technology** was mixed. In a small number of classrooms, students used computers individually, while in others there was little to no technology use. Observers saw the use of interactive white boards throughout consistently throughout classrooms. In one intervention class students used iPads for a Reading A to Z session.
2. Provide common co-planning opportunities between the general education teacher and the special education teacher	o Teachers co-plan during a common planning time o Lesson plans identify differentiating strategies that engage students visually and tactilely o Students use manipulatives to practice mathematics skills o Teachers check for understanding by having students justify their answers o Increased kinesthetic opportunities for students	During a scheduled day observation, teachers (both special education and general education) **co-planned** by discussing their plans to review math concepts over the coming two weeks before the end of the semester. They discussed the sequence of skills they had to hit with students after the break and moved on to discussing individual student needs. The special education teacher highlighted successful strategies used with some students to help the general education teacher reinforce these in class.

	o Analyze exit slip data and use information to drive instruction o Students can demonstrate their understanding of math concepts	During both the scheduled day and the observation window, **observers saw mixed evidence of differentiation strategies that engaged students visually and tactilely**. In one observation on the scheduled day, students counted as a group and then in pairs by looking at a grid displayed on the interactive white board. The teacher used a poem about the number ten to help students remember how to write it and called on individual students to say the poem and has students show ten on their fingers. In another observation during the scheduled day, students sat on the rug as the teacher had students came to the front to show a certain number with their fingers. Students then returned to their desks to trace their fingers and count the number of fingers on each hand as teachers circulated and provided individual assistance and feedback. During the observation window some observers saw little to no differentiation. Observers did not see evidence of teachers **checking for understanding by having students justify answers or exit slips** on the scheduled day or during the observation window. Consistent with observations from the LEAD campus, PCSB's special education observer saw a **mix of service delivery models** throughout observations with some special

		education teachers conducting small group instruction and others circulating throughout the classroom without intervening with students as the general education teacher taught.
3. Provide direct instruction and Math practice stations during the Math block	o Small group instruction with a teacher o Math stations set up for students to rotate among the stations o Small group intervention for students who need additional assistance to grasp a concept o Set up computer games to reinforce Math concepts o Tutoring opportunities for students outside the regular school day o Involve parents by giving them guidance and tools to help their student	PCSB observed **some evidence of small groups** during the observation window. Small groups worked with teachers on patterns, answering questions around what makes something a pattern, guessing the next shape in a pattern, and building their own patterns. Students went to stations after a mini-lesson on addition and subtraction; stations included working directly with the teacher, a dice game, playing an addition/subtraction version of Go Fish with the teaching assistant. Students circulated after a timer went off. PCSB did not observe students using **computer games.** While this strategy may be in place, PCSB neither looked for nor observed **tutoring opportunities outside the school day** or **parental involvement** in helping students with math.
4. Provide PD training in Math Instruction	o Give teachers opportunities to attend professional development	While this strategy may be in place, PCSB neither looked for nor observed evidence

	training in Math instruction to improve instruction o Give teachers an opportunity to share professional development training information o Purchase Math materials as recommended by teachers after professional development opportunities o Observe teachers using best practice strategies as suggested during professional development trainings	related to **professional development training** in math instruction. For evidence related to **instructional strategies in math**, please see the *Mission and Goals* section of this report, goals number one and two. For evidence related to overall **quality of instruction**, please see the *Framework for Teaching* section of this report, in the *Instructional Delivery* domain.
Excel PCS - LEAD		
1. Improve student technology knowledge and skills	o Tests and quizzes on the computer, such as Socrative, Edmodo, Nutmeg o Students will demonstrate increased accuracy in Math concepts and skills	Throughout observations on the scheduled day and unscheduled observation window, PCSB observers saw mixed evidence of **students' use of technology.** In some classrooms on both the scheduled day and the observation window, students played math games independently on computers while teaches provided instruction in small groups. Teachers had posters up that described the "computer station" and had directions that students were to follow to log in to programs like Edmodo. Teachers worked on interactive white boards during math classes as they presented new material such as multiplication problems from arrays and partial products. In some classrooms there was no use of computers by students. Observers noted the

		use of interactive white boards in every classroom.
2. Provide common co-planning opportunities between the general education teacher and the special education teacher	o Teachers co-plan during a common planning time o Lesson plans identify differentiating strategies that engage students visually and tactilely o Students use manipulatives to practice mathematics skills o Teachers check for understanding by having students justify their answers o Increased kinesthetic opportunities for students o Analyze exit slip data and use information to drive instruction	While this strategy may be in place, PCSB neither looked for nor observed evidence **of co-planning with** teachers from the LEAD campus. Throughout observations on the scheduled day, teachers asked students to **justify their answer**. The PCSB observer witnessed teachers asking students to walk through the steps of solving multiplication problems, explain their thought process behind creating multiplication problems based on arrays, and justify how students came to the correct least common denominator. During the observation window and scheduled day, observers saw inconsistent implementation of **differentiation, including the use of manipulatives and kinesthetic opportunities.** In some classrooms at the LEAD campus, observers saw only whole group instruction and activities with no differentiation in learning process or learning product. In other observations, teachers differentiated through small groups. Special education teachers provided individual feedback to students as they practiced multiplication problems on worksheets. The teacher in another small group asked students

		to walk through their reasons for representing arrays in different ways through multiplication problems. In at least one observation during the scheduled day and one during the observation window, students had the opportunity to **engage visually** with the lesson as the teacher drew arrays on the board to represent multiplication problems and when the teacher had drawn a number line on the board to help students answer math problems. In other classrooms, observers saw students rotating through math stations with small groups, as described in strategy #3. Students in one observation used small pieces that represented fractions as they worked through adding and subtracting fractions. The small pieces gave students a visual representation of the fraction and helped students differentiate which fraction was larger. During the observation window, PCSB's special education observer saw a **mix of service delivery models** throughout observations with some special education teachers conducting small group instruction and others circulating throughout the classroom without intervening with students as the general education teacher taught. For additional information related to **differentiation strategies, the use of manipulatives and kinesthetic**

		opportunities, please see the evidence related to strategy #3, below PCSB did not observe the use of **exit slips** during the scheduled day.
3. Provide direct instruction and Math practice stations during the Math block	o Small group instruction with a teacher o Math stations set up for students to rotate among the stations o Small group intervention within class block for students who need additional assistance to grasp a concept o Tutoring opportunities for students outside the regular school day o Involve parents by giving them guidance and tools to help their student	During the scheduled day and the observation window, the PCSB observer saw various math classes with students working in **small groups**. Students worked independently at computers on math games, teachers provided direct instruction and guided practice to small groups while other small groups worked with a special education teacher. Teachers used small group time to point out and pre-empt potential misconceptions. In one observation, the small group working with the special education teacher practiced multiplication problems as the teacher watched each student's work and asked the students to verbalize the steps they were going through to complete the problems. She provided instant feedback to students as she noticed their progress, praising correct work and asking students to continue talking through incorrect problems. In other observations, small groups broke into pairs to work on problems collaboratively, and then came back together to report results to the rest of the group. Small groups rotated from **station to station** throughout observations.

		During the **intervention block** on the scheduled day, about seven students were pulled out of their math block to work with the special education teacher. The teacher had a mnemonic device to help students practice order of operations. The use of manipulatives helped students visualize fractions and distinguish between different sizes and proper and improper fractions. While this strategy may be in place, PCSB neither looked for nor observed **tutoring opportunities** outside the school day or **parental involvement** in helping students with math.
4. Provide PD training in Math Instruction	o Give teachers, both general education and special education teachers, opportunities to attend professional development training in Math instruction to improve instruction o Give teachers an opportunity to share professional development training information o Purchase Math materials that supplement the Math curriculum as recommended by teachers after professional development opportunities o Observe teachers using best practice strategies as suggested	While this strategy may be in place, PCSB neither looked for nor observed evidence related to **professional development training in math instruction** or **the purchase of math materials.** For evidence related to **instructional strategies in math**, please see the *Mission and Goals* section of this report, goals number one and two. For evidence related to overall **quality of instruction**, please see the *Framework for Teaching* section of this report, in the *Instructional Delivery* domain.

	during professional development trainings o Improved instruction using best practices in teaching Math skills and concepts	