February 5, 2014

Mr. Christopher Siddall, Board Chair
Meridian Public Charter School
2120 13th Street, NW
Washington, DC 20009

Dear Mr. Siddall,

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 designated as Focus/Priority by Office of the State Superintendent of Education

Qualitative Site Review Report
A QSR team conducted on-site review visits of Meridian Public Charter School ("Meridian PCS") between December 9 and December 13, 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.

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 Meridian PCS. Thank you for your continued cooperation as PCSB makes every effort to ensure that Meridian PCS is in compliance with its charter.

Sincerely,

Naomi DeVeaux
Deputy Director

Enclosures
cc: School Leader

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Meridian Public Charter School ("Meridian PCS") operates one charter school in ward one, serving 586 students in pre-kindergarten-3 through eighth grades. DC Public Charter School Board ("PCSB") conducted a qualitative site review ("QSR") at Meridian PCS in December 2013 because the school was designated as a Focus school by the Office of the State Superintendent of Education's ("OSSE") accountability and classification system under the 2012 Elementary and Secondary Education Act ("ESEA") waiver. The school also underwent a charter renewal this year, but the renewal decision was made prior to the QSR visits, as the school underwent a QSR visit in spring 2013.

PCSB conducted observations over a one-week window from December 9 through December 13, 2013. PCSB typically conducts a two-week window for QSRs, however the school could not reschedule their Middle States Review, needed for accreditation, which took place during the week of December 2, 2013. A team of four PCSB staff members (including a staff member experienced with English Language Learners) conducted observations of 24 classrooms spanning all grade levels, including classrooms where more than one teacher was present. Observers visited the school on multiple days throughout the week-long window and saw classes in the morning and in the afternoon, with two observers spending whole days at the school. In some instances, the review team may have observed one teacher twice.

While Meridian PCS is meeting its mission of cultivating students' love of learning and instilling discipline to succeed, observers noted the prevalence of whole-group instruction and limited independent learning. Students demonstrated a positive attitude towards school and learning, and teachers were generally kind, friendly and respectful towards students. Teachers maintained order and kept track of discipline in most classrooms and the reviewers saw limited to no examples where behavior detracted from the lesson. Instruction was mostly teacher-centered, with students answering questions along a limited path of inquiry, leaving limited opportunity to explore academic content in their own way. The school worked to enhance students' reading and writing abilities in various ways across grade levels, with pre-kindergarten teachers reading stories to students and asking comprehension questions and teachers developing students' vocabulary by working with word roots and encouraging students to use target vocabulary. Observers saw mixed evidence of how the school develops the ability to think critically and solve problems; in some classrooms, teachers encouraged students to explain their understanding while in other classrooms, teachers required only one-word responses to questions.

On average, 71 % of classrooms received a rating of proficient or exemplary for the Classroom Environment domain. Managing Student Behavior was the highest rated element within this domain, with 81% of observations rated as proficient or above. Teachers consistently acknowledged positive behavior and in many observations, behavior was entirely appropriate. Establishing a Culture for Learning received the lowest rating, with 62% of observations rated as proficient or above. Commitment to learning on the part of students and teachers was

inconsistent throughout the school, and observers noted that students' commitment to learning was generally aligned to how engaged and interested they were in the lessons.

On average, 61% of classrooms received a rating of proficient or exemplary for the Instructional Delivery domain. Communicating with Students was the highest rated element within the Instructional Delivery domain, with 75% of observations rated as proficient or above. Teachers presented content clearly, and explanations were generally free of errors. Teachers consistently referred to what students would be learning throughout lessons. Using Questioning and Discussion Techniques was the lowest rated element within this domain, with half of all observations rated as proficient or above. In many classrooms, questioning followed a single path of inquiry, and required one word responses. Observers saw limited student interaction in many classes, as interactions mainly consisted of teacher-student interactions rather than student to student interactions.

The observation team saw the beginning stages of implementation for many of the school's strategies to support improved academic achievement of its Focus subgroups, Hispanic students. Throughout classrooms and hallways, observers gathered evidence of the use of Achievement Network ("ANet") assessments. Teachers discussed specific strategies with students, and data boards throughout the school showed Meridian PCS's performance compared to the performance of DCPS students. PCSB saw some differentiation and co-teaching, with mixed models of co-teaching; in some classrooms, co-teachers taught in parallel, while in others, one teacher taught while the other assisted. PCSB saw limited implementation of cooperative learning strategies and the SIOP model for ELL instruction.

CHARTER MISSION, GOALS, ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENT EXPECTATIONS, AND GOVERNANCE

This table summarizes Meridian PCS'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 of the school meeting those goals during the Qualitative Site Visit.

Mission and Goals	Evidence
Mission: Meridian Public Charter School's mission is to instill within each and every student a lifelong love of learning, the inspiration to dream, the discipline to succeed, and the skills they need to reach for the stars. Meridian Public Charter School seeks to give each child the foundation of basic skills they need to succeed in today's world, while at the same time stimulating each child to learn, explore, and develop their own special talents.	Observers saw mixed evidence of how Meridian PCS is fulfilling various elements of its mission. Observers saw students' love of learning and the cultivation of creativity in some observations, though noted the predominance of teacher-centric instruction in others. Students in some classrooms enthusiastically completed highly-differentiated individual assignments including those using technology; students had the opportunity to work in the iMac lab on individual projects. In an ELA class, students had been working on stories that required them to imagine that they were a holiday character; two students were eager to share their stories with a PCSB observer. In an early childhood classroom, students enthusiastically shared their ideas for vocabulary words that began with a certain letter.

The review team also observed evidence of the school instilling the discipline to succeed within their students. Observers rated 81% of classrooms as proficient or above in the *Framework for Teaching* Classroom Environment element of Managing Student Behavior. Teachers posted school values in classrooms and on hallway walls. Teachers kept track of discipline through color charts and by giving students "warnings." Students generally stayed on task throughout lessons. Students wore uniforms and walked quietly and in an orderly way throughout the hallways. An observer also saw evidence of a school-wide competition about school safety.

However, observers did not see the school emphasizing the part of its |

Mission and Goals	Evidence
	mission that focuses on "stimulating each child to learn to explore and develop their own special talents." Instead, observers noted the prevalence of whole-group instruction and limited examples of independent learning throughout the building. Many classroom observations consisted of the teacher presenting the content to the entire class and asking the whole-group questions along a single path of inquiry, with little choice for students in the learning process or the learning product. As described in further detail in the Instructional Delivery element of Using Questioning and Discussion Techniques, the review team rated half of the observations as below proficient. Students had limited opportunities to explore content with peers or on their own without mediation from the teacher.
1. Students will be confident, independent readers.	Observers saw a variety of evidence that the school cultivates confident, independent readers. In ELA classes, teachers focused on specific reading skills, like identifying character traits, sequencing, and predicting what would happen in a story based on the pictures. Classrooms had in-class libraries, with at least some of these organized by student interest, such as "adventure" or "sports". If students finished a particular learning task before the rest of the class was ready to move on, teachers in at least two classrooms encouraged them to read silently. Teachers in pre-kindergarten "PK" classrooms enthusiastically read stories aloud to students, asking students questions about the reading and encouraging the students to use context clues. In at least two ELA classes, however, teachers discussed the use of literary devices in passages but required little or no reading of the passages by the students.
2. Students will be strong, independent writers and speakers.	Teachers fostered students' ability to be strong independent writers and speakers through a variety of activities. In at least two observations, observers saw students editing their original writing pieces. One of

Mission and Goals	Evidence
	these pieces required students to write journal entries as holiday characters of their choosing (such as a toy baby doll and a Christmas fairy). In at least two PK classes, students practiced writing. In one classroom, students practiced writing their name and date, made up a story and shared it with classmates, and collaborated with the teacher to form sentences out of words. With regard to developing students' speaking ability, teachers primarily cultivated this through whole-group instruction, by asking questions of students who volunteered. In at least one observation of PK students, students answered questions in complete sentences. In at least two observations of math classrooms, the teacher asked students to explain their thinking behind their solutions to the entire class. Students had few opportunities to work collaboratively with partners, or to share presentations beyond the questions related to content that the teacher was presenting. One observer received a tour of the school building from two student ambassadors. The students walked around the building with the observer, telling them about different classrooms and the donors who contributed to the classroom. Students were articulate and thoughtful, frequently asking the observer if they had any questions.
3. Students will be able to think critically and solve problems effectively.	The QSR team observed mixed evidence of how the school cultivates students' ability to think critically and solve problems effectively. In a few math classrooms, teachers asked students to explain their answers and how they got them; when students got a partial answer, some teachers in math classes encouraged them to persist until they arrived at the correct answer. In another math classroom, however, students mainly practiced drill-like activities on rounding; when a student got the wrong answer, the student usually did not have the opportunity to explain their thinking, as the teacher would reiterate the rules of rounding before moving on to the next student for a correct answer.

Mission and Goals	Evidence
	Multiple observers noted that students were passive learners, as teachers guided most of the lessons, and students listened, watched, and answered the teachers' questions. Students in one class watched a video during the entire class as the teachers asked questions such as, "What sound does the letter make?" Students in another class answered questions about parts of speech as the teacher diagrammed sentences on the board.
4. Students will become independent learners and will complete independent papers, reports, and performances, culminating in a high-stakes independent project before they graduate	As discussed in Goal #3, observers generally saw direct instruction, with students passively learning through teacher-directed presentations of content, though PCSB did see a couple of examples of small group work. In at least two classrooms, students edited their own work. Besides these two examples, observers did not see evidence of individual papers, reports, or performances.
5. Students will have a positive attitude towards school and learning. The school will create a welcoming environment for student and adult learning.	Students generally demonstrated a positive attitude towards school and learning, as the school created a welcoming environment, though this was not completely consistent throughout observations. The reception area of the school was bright and welcoming with holiday displays. Classrooms and hallways were generally decorated with school values and academic work along with positive messages. In some classroom observations, students demonstrated their commitment to learning through their high engagement and participation. In one observation, a student initiated questions about particular vocabulary words. In another observation, the teacher created a welcoming environment for students and instilled confidence in them in the learning task by telling all of them, "This is going to be easy-peasy for you. I just want to make sure that you are prepared for the next part." Teachers created a positive environment by recognizing the efforts of their students, and by encouraging students to recognize the efforts of their peers. In one classroom, the teacher encouraged students to clap for another student

Qualitative Site Review Report   Meridian Public Charter School   February 5, 2014

6

Mission and Goals	Evidence
	after students answered a question correctly. Throughout many observations, teachers told students, "Great job!" In a few classrooms, students' positive attitude towards learning was less consistent and seemed to be related to how engaged in the lesson students were. Students engaged in creative projects, such as technology projects involving iMacs or creating their own stories, demonstrated positive attitudes through high levels of on-task behavior; in classrooms with more passive learning, students seemed less positive on the whole as demonstrated by off-task behavior. In one classroom, the teacher engaged in direct instruction and some students were engaged while others had their heads down or socialized. In another classroom, the teacher worked with a small group of students as other students were supposed to complete a worksheet on parts of speech; however, these students socialized, moved around the classroom, and engaged in otherwise non-academic behavior (scribbling, examining glasses, or fooling around with shoelaces).
6. Students will treat themselves, other students, staff, and the physical plant with respect. Students will work collaboratively and resolve conflicts effectively and safety.	Students generally treated themselves, other students, staff, and the physical plant with respect. As described in greater detail in the *Framework for Teaching* Classroom Environment element of Creating an Environment of Respect and Rapport, reviewers rated 67% of observations as proficient or exemplary in this element. Students were generally respectful to one another in hallways and in classrooms. Students walked through the hallways with a purpose, without idling in the restrooms or the hallways. Students helped each other with cleaning up in various classrooms, demonstrating respect for their school's physical plant. Observers saw few examples of students working collaboratively, but noted that in these examples, students worked together without conflict. Students worked collaboratively in learning centers completing partner work in both a science and a literacy class.

Qualitative Site Review Report   Meridian Public Charter School   February 5, 2014

7

Mission and Goals	**Evidence**
7. Students will embrace diversity. The school will strive to recruit and retain a diverse group of students, teachers, staff, administrators, and board members.	The QSR team neither looked for nor observed any evidence related to this goal.
8. Students will contribute to their school and community.	The QSR Team observed students contributing to their school community in various ways. They created safety signs in a contest to promote a bully-free zone. They also delivered lunches to their classmates. One observer saw some of the older students walking younger students around the school building. Students in one classroom cleaned up their scissors and glue without incident. In a PK class, a student encouraged another student to put his materials away in a friendly way. As described in Goal #2, one observer also received a tour from two student ambassadors.
9. Teachers and staff will be highly qualified and demonstrate high expectations for all students.	The QSR team neither looked for nor observed any evidence related to teachers' highly qualified status. As detailed further in the *Framework for Teaching* Classroom Environment element of Establishing a Culture for Learning, just over half of the teachers demonstrated high expectations for students, with 62% of observations rated as proficient or exemplary. These teachers demonstrated high regard for student learning, praised students for academic work, and encouraged students to answer questions and explain their answers in many classroom observations. In some classroom observations, however, teachers' expectations were inconsistent. In one classroom, a teacher told students that a particular learning task, "should be easy for most" of the students. In another classroom, the teacher recognized some students when they called out the correct answer but not others.

Mission and Goals	Evidence
10. Families will see themselves as partners in their child's education and will be actively involved in the life of the school.	PCSB attempted to attend a parent event. The school sent a schedule, and informed PCSB that the events would take place between 8:30 and 9:30 am on the days specified on the schedule. The observer arrived on one of the days indicated, and the parent event coordinator explained that the days on the schedule were incorrect. It should be noted that the same thing occurred last year when a PCSB staffer attempted to attend a parent event. Observers noticed family information zones in hallways. The middle school hallway displayed information about upcoming high school fairs at Meridian PCS and area public and charter high schools. In another classroom observation, the teacher displayed pictures of students and families.
11. The school will be led by a Board of Trustees and a competent, effective leadership team headed by the principal.	PCSB reviewed the school's last two board meeting minutes which covered the last quarter of school year 2012-2013 and the first quarter of school year 2013-2014. The minutes from 2012-2013 include a synopsis of six different Board Meetings from April 2, 2013 through May 28, 2013. For each meeting, between eight and nine Board Members were present, along with legal counsel from Arent Fox LLP to support the Board Chair in providing an update of the status of Meridian PCS's internal investigation with respect to the 2012 DC CAS.

Qualitative Site Review Report   Meridian Public Charter School   February 5, 2014

9

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, 71 % 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	The QSR team rated approximately 67% of observations as proficient or exemplary in this element. Students were generally polite and kind to each other and the teacher, saying "Excuse me," and, "Thank you." Teachers referred to students politely, using words like "friends" or "ladies and gentlemen." In particularly strong observations, teachers demonstrated knowledge of students beyond the classroom, such as in one class where the teacher used the student's favorite flower to construct a sentence. In a PK classroom, the teacher demonstrated particular warmth towards students, calling them, "my love," and using a gentle hand on their shoulder to get them back on task.	Limited	4 %
		Satisfactory	29 %
	Respect for student dignity was inconsistent in the remaining classroom observations. One teacher demonstrated impatience as a student struggled to answer a question. Another teacher told a student in front of the entire class that the student didn't "know how to do [the math problem] yet," and "would probably get it in a month or two." The teacher in one observation told a student who responded to a question, "That don't make no sense." Students in a	Proficient	54 %
	small number of observations demonstrated disrespect for the teacher by rolling their eyes at the teacher's directions and ignoring the teacher's directives to get on task by continuing to socialize.	Exemplary	13 %

---

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

Class Environment	Evidence Observed	School Wide Rating	
Establishing a Culture for Learning	Reviewers rated 62% of observations as proficient or exemplary in "Establishing a Culture for Learning". Teachers generally showed enthusiasm and demonstrated high expectations for all students, providing encouragement and praise by saying things like, "I am so proud of my friends today. They were able to use the words we learned in lesson 10," and "You are so smart!" Students in many observations demonstrated enthusiasm for the work and put forth good effort to complete work of high quality, raising their hands with high energy to answer questions, indicating that they wanted to understand more fully by asking the teacher (unprompted) about the meaning of a word, and talking about their writing pieces with observes.

In over one-third of the classrooms, the observations showed a lack of an established culture for learning. In one observation, the teacher demonstrated little commitment to learning, failed to recognize student effort, yawned through the lesson, and asked the observer to switch places meaning this teacher would take notes as the observer taught. In some observations, student engagement was inconsistent, with students walking around and socializing rather than engaging in the learning task. | Limited | 4% |
		Satisfactory	33%
		Proficient	54%
		Exemplary	8%
Managing Classroom Procedures	In Managing Classroom Procedure, reviewers rated 71% of observations as proficient or above. Students in most observations raised their hands to answer questions and remained productively engaged in independent work even if the teacher was not working with them. Transitions were smooth, and teachers used established routines, such as "bubbles in your mouth" and "marshmallow steps" to get students to quietly move within the classroom, and using chants such as, "1..2…3… eyes on me."	Limited	8%
		Satisfactory	21%

Class Environment	Evidence Observed	School Wide Rating	
	However, routines were not consistently established in all observations, as in one where the teacher told students to line up for the bathroom, and most of the class got up and ran into line. The teacher then spent time telling students who already used the bathroom that they could not use it again and had to sit down. Adults in some observations were not productively involved in instruction for the entire class time, as in one classroom where the paraprofessional entered the room twenty minutes into the observation and left again after a few minutes, or in other classrooms where paraprofessionals remained inactive as students who had already transitioned from the carpet to their desks waited without productive work for the next set of directions.	Proficient	63%
		Exemplary	8%
Managing Student Behavior	Observers rated 81% of observations as proficient or exemplary in this element. "Managing Student Behavior" was the highest rated element within the Classroom Environment domain. In many observations, student behavior was entirely appropriate, with no evidence of misbehavior. Teachers used preventative action, such as calling students by name, circulating throughout the classrooms and using chants to prepare students to be successful as they refocused. Teachers acknowledged good behavior, saying things like, "Let me see what table is sitting nice and quietly and following directions," and, "I love how respectful my friends are being!"

Response to misbehavior in some classrooms was not universally effective, as in one classroom where the teacher permitted a couple of students to keep their heads down on the desk for a few minutes before addressing them, and in another classroom observation where the teacher noticed a student push another student without addressing it. | Limited | 0% |
		Satisfactory	17%
		Proficient	63%
		Exemplary	21%

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, 61% of classrooms received a rating of proficient or exemplary for the Instructional Delivery domain.

Instructional Delivery	Evidence Observed	School Wide Rating	
Communicating with Students	Observers rated 75% of observations as proficient or exemplary in "Communicating with Students". This was the highest rated element within this domain. Teachers clearly explained content and explanations were generally free of errors. Many teachers used particularly expressive language and encouraged students to do the same. Teachers clearly referred to what students would be learning such as, "We're learning how to use subject pronouns so that we can vary our writing," and, "We're going to try to think of words that begin with our letter friends." Teachers asked students to participate in the explanations of content by asking them to share how they arrived at a particular solution to a math problem and by asking students to tell the class the shape, number of sides, and number of vertices of a shape about which the class would be learning.

In the remaining 25% of the classrooms confusing directions and assignments prevented the successful accomplishment of the learning objective in some observations. In one observation the teacher had a list of word endings on the board along with word beginnings and asked students to match them up; the teacher had missed a couple of word beginnings, preventing students from successfully completing the learning task, and failed to clarify. Students remained passive throughout most of this lesson. In another classroom the task was a rounding drill; the teacher handed out a worksheet of numbers to round to the nearest hundred or ten and it was not until many students expressed confusion that the teacher reviewed the rules for rounding. | Limited | 8% |
		Satisfactory	17%
		Proficient	67%
		Exemplary	8%

Instructional Delivery	Evidence Observed	School Wide Rating	
Using Questioning and Discussion Techniques	The QSR team rated half of all observations as proficient or exemplary. Teachers in some observations challenged students to demonstrate deeper understanding by asking students for a "clearer explanation." Teachers asked students to make predictions, for example in a math classroom where students were learning about shape transformations; the teacher asked students to predict where the shape would end up after four reflections. When students got answers incorrect, many teachers persisted in working with the students toward the correct answer. However, in many observations, teachers gave students no opportunities to collaborate or discuss content with other students, with interactions consisting mainly of student-to-teacher talk. In one observation, students attempted to engage in discussion about the content, debating the number of corners of a pyramid and the teacher interrupted them to focus the attention back on the teacher's content presentation. In many observations, teachers asked questions in rapid-fire fashion, leading them through a single path of inquiry with one correct answer. Observers heard limited higher order thinking, open-ended questions.	Limited	4%
		Satisfactory	46%
		Proficient	46%
		Exemplary	4%
Engaging Students in Learning	Reviewers rated 58% of observations as proficient in "Engaging Students in Learning". Students in some observations had choice in how they completed tasks, such as in a class where students worked in small groups to create compound words using laminated single-words or in another class where students worked on writing creative stories from the viewpoint of a holiday character. Teachers generally aligned activities with the goals of a lesson, such as in PK classes where students had to think of words that began with students' "letter friends," letters about which students had been learning. Pacing in some classes was appropriate, with students seamlessly moving from activities to help the students focus (such as singing songs in PK classes) to academic presentations. Observers saw at least two PK observations where instructors had allocated time for learning centers,	Limited	13%
		Satisfactory	29%

Instructional Delivery	Evidence Observed	School Wide Rating	
	though one of these classrooms was more effective at meeting the learning objective than the other. One reviewer also saw the use of small groups in a fourth grade literacy class. Students in some observations had little choice in how they completed assignments with no differentiation in process or product, as in one observation where students worked on a drill activity about rounding numbers and in another classroom where students answered questions about parts of speech. Pacing was ineffective in some observations, with students on the carpet for the duration of a half hour observation, either watching a video or listening to the teacher read a story. In another classroom, the teacher sent students from the carpet to their desks after they answered a question, but students had no task to complete at desks, and they remained idle for at least ten minutes.	Proficient	58%
		Exemplary	0%
Using Assessment in Instruction	The review team rated 62% of observations as proficient or exemplary in "Using Assessment in Instruction". Teachers and aides in some classrooms circulated throughout classrooms, giving feedback to students as students worked on individual work. Feedback was often geared toward improvement for future work, such as in a PK classroom where the teacher and aide helped students write letters correctly, and in a math class where the teacher and aide looked through the student's work to help determine where the misstep was. In some classrooms, students understood how teachers would evaluate their work as teachers had modelled a similar problem on the board. Teachers in some observations used targeted small group work to gauge understanding, as in one observation where the teacher first presented the difference between vowel sounds and then asked each student in the group to provide examples. Teachers in some classes asked for only global indications of understanding	Limited	4%
		Satisfactory	33%
		Proficient	58%

Instructional Delivery	Evidence Observed	School Wide Rating	
	making no attempt to ensure that all students understood the lesson; in a lesson where students watched a phonics video for the entire time, teachers would ask the entire class to respond at the same time with the sound that a particular letter made. In other observations, teachers relied only on student volunteers to answer questions, preventing them from giving constructive feedback to students who did not understand.	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.

The following table summarizes

    a) Meridian PCS's intervention and support strategies for its Hispanic subgroup, as detailed in its web-based tool; and

    b) the evidence that the PCSB staff members observed of the school implementing the strategies between December 2, 2013 and December 13, 2013 for the purposes of the 2012 ESEA Flexibility Waiver.

Schools that have been identified as Focus schools in August 2013 are in the beginning stages of their implementation; as such, PCSB uses only the two-week observation window to gather evidence as to the school's initial implementation, as opposed to the two-week observation window plus a scheduled day of strategies. As such, it may not be possible to observe certain strategies chosen by the school. PCSB will attempt to observe these strategies in the next monitoring visit in Spring 2014.

In cases where PCSB did not have the opportunity to observe the strategy, we will use the standard language of 'While this strategy may be in place, PCSB neither looked for nor observed any evidence related to this strategy.' Different language will be used to indicate poor implementation of a given strategy.

Please note that much of the evidence for the implementation of intervention and support strategies was seen through classroom observation, and was aligned to the *Framework for Teaching.* As such, PCSB noted the specific classroom observation elements that speak to these strategies, where appropriate, in order to avoid repetition.

Strategy Described in Intervention Plan	School's Description of Strategy on the Ground	Evidence
1. Use of common assessments (ANet) with measurable learning targets using Hess matrix	-Data Cycle: Analysis, Action Planning and Adjusting Practice. Addressed through A-Net support, training and support from Instructional Coaches and PLCs. -Three step data cycle process seen in classroom, PLC and grade level planning.	Throughout classrooms and the school building, observers noticed evidence of the use of ANet assessments. Posters on the main floor and on the second floor showed results of ANet assessments for Meridian PCS students compared to DCPS students. Classrooms displayed data related to ANet

Strategy Described in Intervention Plan	School's Description of Strategy on the Ground	Evidence
		assessments. Teachers in many classes discussed ANet with students; in one particular class, the teacher asked students to practice writing their name and date at the top of their test and shade in bubbles.

While the three-step data cycle process, PLCs, and grade level planning may be in place, PCSB neither looked for nor observed any evidence related to these strategies. |
| 2. Common planning time | -Schedule allows for grade levels to meet during a common time. | While grade level planning may be in place, PCSB neither looked for nor observed any evidence related to this strategy. |
| 3. RTI | Response to Intervention and the fidelity to it take a several year approach to build institutionally. Year 1 (2013-14) will center around Tier 1 interventions in the classroom. Our Tier 1 academic program is built around identifying targeted student needs and addressing the targeted area both by improving weak academic areas and supporting IEP goals. Differentiation within our classroom allows the teacher to respond to student need through continuous assessment and flexible grouping. Continuous assessment includes checks for understanding, entry/exit slips, do nows, common assessments and student interviews. Flexible grouping allows students to benefit from differentiated content (what), process | The presence of continuous assessment, including frequent checks for understanding, entry/exit slips, Do Nows, and student interviews was inconsistent throughout classrooms. One observer saw no evidence of this, while other observers noted that the predominant continuous assessment used by teachers was whole-group questioning, relying upon students to volunteer answers. Observers also saw many examples of teachers requesting global indications of understanding. In |

Strategy Described in Intervention Plan	School's Description of Strategy on the Ground	Evidence
	(how) and/or result (product). Tier 2 is addressed through Day 6: Saturday Academy and Rise Academy for after school tutoring.	some classroom observations, teachers did check for understanding from each student (whether or not the student volunteered). In an early childhood classroom, for example, the teacher reviewed the letter "D" and then asked each student to give an example of a word that begins with D, and then asked the student if the word should be capitalized, and why or why not. Please see the *Framework for Teaching* Instructional Delivery element of Using Assessment in Instruction for additional information. With regard to behavior interventions, observers noted that Managing Student Behavior within the *Framework for Teaching* domain of Classroom Environment was the highest rated element, with 81% of observations rated as proficient or above. Teachers quickly and efficiently dealt with behavior issues, praised positive behavior, and kept track of negative behavior. Standards of conduct helped to maintain structure and order in most classrooms, limiting the loss of instructional time due to behavior management issues. Please see the *Framework for Teaching* Classroom Environment element of Managing Student Behavior for additional

Strategy Described in Intervention Plan	School's Description of Strategy on the Ground	Evidence
		information.
4. Marzano model of teacher evaluation and support	The evaluative process should be a collaborative process between the administrator and the evaluatee- evaluations should be used to inform instruction and improve the instruction of the teachers to impact student achievement. The reflective practice is in alignment with Marzano's framework of becoming a reflective teacher. The Evaluation Process Step-1 Professional Responsibilities Form Step 2- Goal Setting Conference, Goal Setting Form, and Pre-Conference a. collect lesson plan and assessment b. plan date and time for evaluation Step 3- Evaluation Step 4- Post Conference- within 5 days unless there is a concern- (24 hours) Step 5- Summative Conference or Plan Step 6- Adhere to all timelines- see evaluation calendar and dates Teacher evaluation folder contains the following: all forms mentioned above for the year	With regard to observation and evaluation practices, PCSB collected documentation as part of the 2012 ESEA Waiver's requirements for Title I schools. Documents may be found in the LiveBinder for Principle 3, password: monitoring http://www.livebinders.com/play/play/8835 51
5. Hiring of specific personnel to support populations of students: ELL Coordinator, special education coordinator	1 new SPED faculty hired and interviewing currently to put a SPED/ELL faculty member at the 3rd grade where we see heavy needs.	While the school may have hired additional personnel for special education students and English Language learners, PCSB neither looked for nor observed any evidence related to this strategy.
6. Increased instructional time	-Saturday School (6th day) After-School Tutoring (RISE Academy), Intervention Time added to classroom schedule	While the school may have Saturday School in place, PCSB neither looked for nor

Strategy Described in Intervention Plan	School's Description of Strategy on the Ground	Evidence
		observed any evidence related to this strategy. PCSB collected some evidence of students working in pull-out settings and working in small groups. In two PK classroom observations, adults brought students into the classroom during instruction; students had jackets off and did not appear to be just arriving to school, thus observers concluded that they were receiving additional services. Observers saw at least two examples of adults working one-on-one with different students. Observers saw at least two PK observations where instructors had allocated time for learning centers, though one of these classrooms was more effective at meeting the learning objective than the other. One reviewer also saw the use of small groups in a fourth grade literacy class.
7. Differentiated, tiered instruction based on assessment data	-Computer based assessment/diagnostic reading test for ELL and special education students. Sub-groups created in benchmark testing data base to review individual, class, sub-group and teacher results.,-Co-teaching, Small group instruction,	While the school may have this strategy in place, PCSB neither looked for nor observed any evidence related to computer-based assessment or diagnostic reading tests for ELL and special education students. PCSB gathered evidence around differentiated instruction. Multiple adults

Strategy Described in Intervention Plan	School's Description of Strategy on the Ground	Evidence
		were present in many classrooms, with some co-teaching, The co-teaching model looked different across observations. In one classroom, the aide assisted the classroom teacher, repeating back what the teacher said to ensure students knew the directions; aides also asked students additional questions about the content. In some observations, the additional adult engaged in activity separate from students, such as in one classroom where the aide worked with students on morning meeting as the teacher wrote on the board and prepared for the next part of the lesson; similarly, in another classroom, one adult graded papers as the other adult taught. In a few classrooms, observers saw multiple adults in classrooms working with small groups, either simultaneously or as one teacher taught most of the students. As referred to in Strategy #7, observers saw at least two PK observations where instructors had allocated time for learning centers, though one of these classrooms was more effective at meeting the learning objective than the other. One reviewer also saw the use of small groups in a fourth grade literacy class.
8. Reteach time in scheduled to review areas where students	There is a two week reteach window.	While the school may have this strategy in place, PCSB neither looked for nor

Strategy Described in Intervention Plan	School's Description of Strategy on the Ground	Evidence
struggled		observed any evidence related to the two-week reteach window.
9. Professional development around SIOP model for second language learners	SIOP is a researched based lesson delivery model that links Content Objectives to Language Objectives. There are 8 components to SIOP along with 30 SIOP features. The 8 components of the SIOP lesson protocol are similar to a lesson plan format you may have learned in college education courses but keep in mind the varying levels of English Language Proficiency levels of the ELL students (English Language Learners). The components are as follows: **1. Lesson Preparation**- Lesson Preparation is basically gathering the necessary parts of the lesson before implementing the lesson. Therefore we need to do the following: Identify and display content and language objectives which are reviewed with the learners. Language objectives can be as simple as key vocabulary to grammar and language structures, functions, or skills. Identify Content Concepts that are appropriate for the student's age, background, and readiness levels. Provide supplementary materials- EX: hands on manipulative, realia (real life objects), pictures, visuals, multimedia, demonstrations, related literature, varying levels of reading materials about the same content, and adapted text. Adapt text so that all levels of ELLs have access to the same information and not a watered down version of the same thing. Ex: graphic organizers, outlines, study guides, highlighted text, taped text, adapted text, jigsaw, marginal notes, and native language texts. Meaningful activities that allow for practice using language in the content areas either through, reading, writing, listening, and speaking.	PCSB observed limited examples of the SIOP model in classrooms. PCSB did not see supplementary materials, such as additional picture supports or varying levels of reading material about the same content, as most classrooms used the same set of materials for all students during whole-group instruction. One observer saw a classroom where a student was working on an entirely separate activity; as the rest of the class worked on sequencing using sentence strips, one student used a computer program that read out loud to her, pointed to the words as it read, and showed supporting pictures (though it was unclear if this student was an ELL). Observers saw limited examples of teachers' use of the four language domains (reading, writing, speaking, and listening) in one class. The primary mode of instruction was whole-group, teacher-directed; teachers often asked questions throughout presentations of content and asked students to volunteer answers, though not every student had the opportunity to share in most classrooms. In at least a couple of classrooms, students worked on their individual writing pieces.

Strategy Described in Intervention Plan	School's Description of Strategy on the Ground	Evidence
	Preferably teachers should use all 4 domains during each class period/lesson. 2. **Building Background-** teachers must teach concepts linked to student's background. They must discuss links between previously learned and new concepts. Teachers must ensure that key vocabulary is clearly emphasized and repeated throughout the learning of the content. 3. **Comprehensible input** is the use of teaching techniques that ensure each student, regardless of English Language Proficiency Level, will understand each part of the lesson. This means using speech appropriate for the levels of the students, clear explanations of tasks, and techniques to make the lessons clear. 4. **Strategies-** Teachers use learning strategies that are best practice for ELLs and allow ELLs to have enough time to use them. Teachers use scaffolding techniques to assist the ELLs in their learning and vary questions so that ELLs can use higher order and critical thinking skills. 5. **Interaction-** We learned through our SIOP training that the best way for ELLs to learn is through constant oral participation. If they can say something and explain it, they have learned it. Therefore, students need to be given in class time to talk about their learning. This can be done through grouping strategies, wait time for thinking, and time to clarify key concepts. 6. **Practice and Application**	With regard to building background and the emphasis of key vocabulary, observes saw a few examples of teachers connecting language to background knowledge and previously learned concepts on a whole-class basis. In one classroom, the teacher asked students about words that began with "D", and connected the word "dinosaur" to a unit on Giants of the Earth. In an ECE classroom, the teacher reviewed key vocabulary by asking a student to act out the word and use it in a sentence. In another classroom, the teacher had asked students to write sentences about their experience in the snow, and then used student-generated examples with the entire class to teach parts of speech. In another classroom where the teacher was instructing on word roots, she asked students to generate examples of words they knew that included a particular root. The teacher in another observation tasked students with using key vocabulary to form sentences. With regard to assessing student understanding and interaction, as described in additional detail in the Strategy #3 of this section (RTI), teachers mainly assessed

Strategy Described in Intervention Plan	School's Description of Strategy on the Ground	Evidence
		student understanding through whole-group questioning. Interactions in most classrooms were between the teacher and the students, with few classrooms demonstrating student-to-student interaction. For information about higher-order thinking and discussion techniques, please see the *Framework for Teaching* Instructional Delivery element of Using Questioning and Discussion Techniques.
10. Increased student engagement as a result of cooperative learning strategies		As described throughout this report, observers saw little to no examples of cooperative learning strategies, as instruction was mainly teacher-directed, with interaction occurring for the most part between the teacher and students.
11.Increase home-school connection	Parent engagement support specialist assists with this.	PCSB attempted to attend a parent event. The school had sent the QSR team lead a schedule, and informed the lead that the events take place between 8:30 and 9:30 am on the days specified on the schedule. The observer arrived on one of the days indicated, and the parent event coordinator explained that the days on the schedule were incorrect. Observers noticed family information zones

Strategy Described in Intervention Plan	School's Description of Strategy on the Ground	Evidence
		in hallways. The middle school hallway displayed information about upcoming high school fairs at Meridian PCS and area public and charter high schools. In another classroom observation, the teacher had posted pictures of students and families. (Please note this information may also be found in the Goals section of this report, Goal #10.)
12. Minimize the impact of non-academic factors impacting student achievement	-Character education: Each morning the Head of School describes a vignette of character building from Project Wisdom curriculum over the speaker to the student body signed off by, "Make it a good day or not, the choice is yours" Also, the ISS rooms has students review their behavior and make plans to adjust their personal responsibility in the future	The QSR team neither looked for nor observed any evidence related to this strategy, though it may be in place.