DC
PUBLIC
CHARTER
SCHOOL
BOARD

December 21, 2020

Tycely Williams, Board Chair
Monument Academy Public Charter School
500 19th Street NE
Washington, DC 20002

Dear Ms. Williams:

The DC Public Charter School Board (DC PCSB) conducts Qualitative Site Review (QSR) visits to gather and document evidence to support school oversight. According to the School Reform Act § 38-1802.11, DC PCSB shall monitor the progress of each school in meeting the goals and student academic achievement expectations specified in the school's charter. Your school was selected to undergo a QSR to satisfy a condition of its five-year charter review during school year (SY) 2019 – 20.

Qualitative Site Review Report
A QSR team conducted a virtual site review of Monument Academy Public Charter School from October 19 – 30, 2020.

The COVID-19 pandemic resulted in all DC public charter schools physically closing in March 2020 through the end of school year 2019 – 20. As a result, the observations in this report took place remotely. The disruption in traditional school programming due to COVID-19 has had an untold impact on classroom environment and instruction, the primary areas of focus in this report. Observers considered these factors while visiting classrooms. Enclosed is the team's report.

Sincerely,

Rashida Young
Chief School Performance Officer

Qualitative Site Review Report

Date: December 21, 2020

Campus Information
Campus Name: Monument Academy Public Charter School (Monument PCS)
Ward: 6
Grade levels: Fifth through Eighth

Qualitative Site Review Information
Reason for Visit: Condition of the five-year charter review
Two-week Window: October 19 – 30, 2020
QSR Team Members: Two consultants, including one special education (SPED) specialist
Number of Observations: Six unscored observations
Total Enrollment: 90[1]
Students with Disabilities Enrollment: 41
English Learners Enrollment: 0
In-seat Attendance on Observation Days: [2]
Visit 1: October 20, 2020 – 78.7%
Visit 2: October 21, 2020 – 79.8%
Visit 3: October 29, 2020 – 80.9%

Summary
Monument PCS's mission is:

> to empower students, particularly those who have experienced significant adversity, including involvement or risk of involvement in child welfare and/or other social service systems, with the requisite academic, social, emotional and life skills to be successful in college, career and community. In addition, we aim to create an outstanding school that attracts, supports, and retains exceptional and caring people.

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[1] This enrollment figure is based on preliminary, unvalidated data as of October 5, 2020.
[2] During school year 2020 – 21, educational services are being provided both in-person and via distance learning. While during normal operations there is a consistent city-wide definition of what constitutes "present" (a student must be physically present for at least 80% of the instructional day), there is significantly more variation in what constitutes "present" during distance learning. In-seat attendance as presented here represents all students receiving educational services, whether in-person or remote. This rate is fundamentally different than in-seat attendance during a typical year, and caution should be taken when comparing schools to each other or to historic rates.

The Qualitative Site Review (QSR) team observed strong evidence that the school is meeting its mission. Students worked on high-quality content as they learned about landforms, actively read, and applied knowledge of math concepts. Teachers taught life skills as they required all students to participate in academic discussions and complete high-quality work. Teachers required students to think critically as they made predictions about a story and related content to their own lives. Teachers used sophisticated, grade-appropriate vocabulary around rates and proportions, and volcanoes and mountain formations.

During the two-week observation window, the team used a modified version of Charlotte Danielson's *Framework for Teachin*g to examine classroom environment and instruction (see Appendices I and II). After careful consideration regarding the uniqueness of virtual instruction, DC PCSB elected to summarize the overall findings from the observations using specific examples that apply to each indicator of the rubric, rather than assess individual scores and percentages for each domain. Therefore, the review team did not score any of the observations. Instead, observers used Charlotte Danielson's *Framework for Teaching* tool to make determinations about how well Monument PCS is meeting its mission, based on specific examples of evidence the team observed during remote visits.

In the Classroom Environment domain, observers noted warm, positive relationships between teachers and students. Classroom interactions supported learning and encouraged hard work as teachers demanded participation from all students and called out positive academic behaviors, like citing textual evidence. In the Instruction domain, teachers walked students through examples of problems and modeled learning tasks like making connections in a story. Student engagement was high as they justified their responses to the class, played a game related to unit rates on Kahoot, and made predictions about what would happen next in a story. However, questioning and discussion generally led students along a single path of inquiry.

Governance
Tycely Williams chairs the Monument PCS Board of Trustees. The School Reform Act requires each DC public charter school to have a majority of DC residents and two parents on its board, which the school has been compliant with for the past five years.

Specialized Instruction for Students with Disabilities
Prior to the two-week observation window, Monument PCS completed a questionnaire about how it serves its students with disabilities. Reviewers looked for evidence of the school's articulated program. Overall, the school program partially

implemented its stated program with fidelity, as evidenced by its co-taught and self-contained special education model. Key trends from the SPED observations are summarized below.

- To demonstrate that co-planning occurred, the school explained that the QSR team would observe co-teaching lessons in the form of parallel teaching and One Teach, One Assist. The school also stated that the assignments would address the lesson with appropriate accommodations/modifications. In one of the two observations, the teaching team used graphic organizers and appropriate wait time. The school stated that co-teachers would demonstrate co-planning by engaging with students simultaneously in station rotation and flexible grouping. The SPED specialist observed evidence of co-planning in one of two observations; the teacher created three different break-out rooms for students who struggled to log into MobyMax.[3] In the other observation, the class followed One-Teach, One-Assist model as one teacher instructed while the other teacher encouraged students in the chat and distributed Dojo points.

- To support the learning of students with disabilities, the school reported that it offers resources such as a certified SPED co-teacher in the classroom. The SPED specialist observed SPED co-teachers in both observations. The school also stated that students with significant disabilities would have a dedicated aide for support. The SPED specialist observed a dedicated aide in one of two observations. Four adults were present in the other observation though their roles were unclear.

- In accordance with the school-stated accommodations in students' individualized education program (IEP), the QSR team observed the teachers' use of graphic organizers, review of directions, and modeling for their students. Overall, the students in one observation remained engaged and on-task with the learning tasks. Engagement lacked in the other observation, as only three out of the six students responded to the teacher's instructions and completed the task. The teacher eventually offered the remaining three students an additional incentive to redo the task. Only two students responded to the incentive while the other refused

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[3] MobyMax is an online learning system designed to close learning gaps by offering differentiated assignments. For more information, see here: https://www.mobymax.com/

THE CLASSROOM ENVIRONMENT[4]

This table summarizes the evidence collected on the Classroom Environment domain of the rubric during the unannounced virtual observations. Please see Appendix III for a breakdown of each subdomain.

The Classroom Environment	Evidence
Creating an Environment of Respect and Rapport	In most observations, teachers and students had friendly interactions and demonstrated general care and respect for one another. Teachers welcomed students by name as they joined sessions, and students greeted each other and the teacher in the chat box. Teachers made general connections with individual students, asking, "Now how are you doing?" and "How's your brother?" In all observations, teachers and students demonstrated mutual respect for each other. Teachers gave individual support when needed, either in the whole group setting or breakout rooms. In one observation, the teacher told a student, "We'll figure out how to get you what you need." The net result of interactions in a couple of observations was neutral.
Establishing a Culture for Learning	In half of the observations, the classroom culture was cognitively busy. Teachers expected student effort, saying, "We need eight students working diligently," and called students by name that needed to hand in work. In one observation, the teacher told students, "Be ready to be called on. I expect to hear from just about everybody." Teachers praised student effort, saying, "Go, [Student X]! Go, [Student Y]!"; "Excellent!"; and "I'm seeing some good predictions in your Do Nows." Students demonstrated pride in their work, saying, "I finally got one right! Let's go!" and, "You like what you see? You know I always try to give my best." Teachers consistently encouraged students to keep trying, saying things like, "This is where our persistence comes into play," and, "Come on [Student X] and [Student Y]!" In the other half of the observations, teachers' energy for the work was neutral as they focused on task completion rather than lesson quality. Teachers in these observations reminded students to complete work, because it was the end of the quarter. Teachers said things like, "You need to get this in for your grade," and, "I need you to get through this." At times, students' commitment to task completion was inconsistent. Teachers often had to remind students repeatedly to log in and start working and to show their work. In one observation, a student still had not begun the assignment 25 minutes into the observation.

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

The Classroom Environment	Evidence
Managing Classroom Procedures	In most observations, classroom routines functioned smoothly. As students logged into Google Classroom, teachers had their presentations ready to begin immediately. Teachers managed time by giving students warnings about transitions, putting timers on the screen, and asking a student to be the timekeeper. Students transitioned seamlessly between learning platforms, while teachers managed other adults successfully, asking them to help individual students log in. Students worked productively and independently with gentle reminders from teachers. In some observations, teachers lost instructional time when students had trouble logging in, sharing screens, or joining breakout rooms. In one observation, this resulted in an additional 12 minutes spent on transitions.
Managing Student Behavior	In all observations, student behavior was generally appropriate. Students complied with directions, muting when they were not talking, promptly returning from breaks, and turning on their cameras when requested. Students generally stayed on task, answering questions, and submitting assignments as required. Teachers rewarded students for good behavior with dojo points.

INSTRUCTION

This table summarizes the evidence collected on the Instruction domain of the rubric during the unannounced virtual observations. Please see Appendix III for a breakdown of each subdomain.

Instruction	Evidence
Communicating with Students	In most observations, teachers clearly communicated the instructional purpose. Students wrote summaries based on text, described main characters using textual evidence, made predictions about the next chapter in a class novel, and reviewed the constant of proportionality. Teachers explained content clearly as they told students, "Our constant of proportionality asked you to find the unit rate," and, "Remember a prediction is an inference based on what you already know, what you've seen happen, what the characters have experienced." Teachers invited student participation in explanations of content, as evidenced by students explaining answers about the unit rate, sharing sentences using essential vocabulary related to volcanoes and working together to complete a chart based on a text. Teachers modeled tasks as necessary, talking through problem solutions and making connections to stories before asking students to do so. In some observations, the instructional purpose was unclear. In these observations, teachers attempted to model how to complete the learning task, though students continued to ask questions and required assistance throughout the observation.
Using Questioning/ Prompts and Discussion Techniques	In most observations, teachers' questions generally led students along a single path of inquiry. Teachers asked students what time it was in different time zones, how volcanoes form, and to recall basic math terms. Though questions had single correct answers, some teachers asked students to explain their rationale and problem-solving method. In some observations, teachers framed questions designed to promote student thinking such as, "What did [the character] want?" and, "How do you think he felt? Why?" They asked students to predict what would happen next in a class novel and to make connections between their own lives and the story.

Instruction	Evidence
Engaging Students in Learning	In most observations, students intellectually engaged in the learning tasks. Students completed graphic organizers based on a reading, read news articles and responded to multiple-choice questions, and explained their rationale as they solved math problems and played a game related to unit rates. Learning tasks were a mix of those requiring recall and critical thinking as students made predictions about their class novel and made connections to their own lives. Teachers asked students to evaluate, predict, and question as they read. Materials and resources supported learning objectives as students used various learning platforms like Newsela and Kahoot, and watched videos related to volcano formation before writing their summaries. In some observations, only a few students intellectually engaged. In these observations, students struggled to log in to the learning platform; or logged in but did not complete the assignment.
Using Assessment in Instruction	In half of the observations, teachers regularly assessed student understanding. Teachers examined individual student work and asked students to justify their answers. Teachers indicated characteristics of high-quality work, telling students, "Make sure you explain why. Make sure you give evidence from the text before submitting." In one observation, a teacher asked students to describe the characteristics of high-quality work, saying, "What are some other things that you should include in your summary?" Teachers adjusted instruction to enhance understanding, recalling notes from earlier classes, walking through additional examples of problems, recapping events from a novel, and modeling how to make connections to a story. In half of the observations, teachers did not provide feedback that was specific or focused. They elicited evidence of student understanding globally, asking, "Does everyone understand? Any questions? "and asking for "thumbs up" or "thumbs down." Students focused on task completion in some observations, finishing work for end-of-quarter grades with no indication from the teacher of attributes of high-quality work. Teachers adjusted instruction to clarify procedures for completing learning tasks.

Work Sample Review

As an added accountability measure to account for the limits of virtual observations, during SY 2020 – 21, DC PCSB reviewed ten student work samples in addition to classroom observations. Monument PCS submitted five English language arts (ELA) samples and five math samples covering a range of grade levels and assignment types. The QSR team evaluated the work samples based on grade-level alignment to college and career ready standards, including Common Core.[5] Each work sample

[5]See here for more information on the shifts in the college and career ready standards here: https://achievethecore.org/category/419/the-shifts

was reviewed in the areas of content, practice, and relevance.[6] The review tools are based on The New Teacher Project's report: *The Opportunity Myth*.[7]

The goal of the review is to answer three essential questions:

1. Does this assignment align with the expectations defined by grade-level standards, including a high-quality text and text-based questions?
2. Does the assignment provide meaningful practice opportunities for this content area and grade- level?
3. Overall, does the assignment give students an authentic opportunity to connect academic standards to real world issues and/or context?

DC PCSB used the criteria below to assign an overall rating to each assignment.[8]

	Content	Practice	Relevance
Sufficient	The assignment is based on a high quality, grade appropriate text and contains questions that reach the depth of the grade level standards.	The assignment both integrates standards and requires students to use what they learned from the text.	The assignment builds grade appropriate knowledge, gives students a chance to use their voice and/or connects to real world issues.
Minimal	The assignment is based on a high quality, grade appropriate text but does not contain questions that reach the depth of the standard.	Either the assignment does not integrate standards, or it does not require students to use what they learn from the text.	The assignment builds grade appropriate knowledge but does not give students a chance to use their voice and does not connect to real world issues.
No Opportunity	The assignment is not based on a high quality, grade appropriate text.	The assignment does not integrate standards and does not require students to use what they learn from the text.	The assignment does not build grade appropriate knowledge, does not give students a chance to use their voice and does not connect to real world issues.

Of the five ELA samples submitted, one assignment received an overall rating of sufficient. On this work sample, students were required to integrate multiple standards and use what they learned from a high-quality grade appropriate text to answer prompts. Two assignments received an overall rating of minimal. On these work samples, students had minimal opportunity to use their voice and/or connect to real world issues. One assignment received an overall rating of no opportunity. On this work sample, students had no opportunity to answer questions that reached the depth of grade-level standards. Some evidence is captured below:

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[6] Reviewers used this tool for ELA work samples: https://dcpcsb.egnyte.com/dl/Ss1Ffy9Ab7. Reviewers used this tool for Math work samples: https://dcpcsb.egnyte.com/dl/Ca2F7lNXld.
[7] See here for more information: https://opportunitymyth.tntp.org/
[8] The overall assignment rating scale can be found here: https://dcpcsb.egnyte.com/dl/bzuOyBrYzK

- Seventh grade students compared and contrasted a text to its film version and summarized key events in a grade-appropriate text.

- Seventh grade students used the RACE (re-state, answer, cite, explain) method to answer text-dependent questions about *The Giver*. While the assignment required close reading, questions focused on recalling information with one correct answer, as opposed to open-ended questions that allowed students to think critically and generate multiple correct answers.

Of the five math samples submitted, two assignments received an overall rating of sufficient. On these work samples, students answered problems that reach the depth of the targeted grade-level standards. One assignment received an overall rating of minimal. On this work sample, students had minimal opportunity to connect academic content to real world experiences. Two assignments received an overall rating of no opportunity. On these work samples, students had no opportunity to engage in critical mathematical practices while working on grade-level content. Some evidence is captured below:

- Eighth grade students created and applied a function, generating a series of inputs and outputs. The task required only rote computation without engaging any critical math reasoning. Despite relevance to grade level standards, this task did not give students an opportunity to apply skills to real-world situations.

- Eighth grade students plugged the same inputs into two different functions to compare outputs. Functions represented pricing plans for a fictional streaming service. Students engaged in a discussion about conditions under which each plan would be better, requiring conceptual understanding and real-world application.

APPENDIX I: THE CLASSROOM ENVIRONMENT OBSERVATION RUBRIC

The Classroom Environment	Unsatisfactory	Basic	Proficient	Distinguished
Creating an Environment of Respect and Rapport	Classroom interactions, both between the teacher and students and among students, are negative or inappropriate and characterized by sarcasm, putdowns, or conflict.	Classroom interactions are generally appropriate and free from conflict but may be characterized by occasional displays of insensitivity.	Classroom interactions reflect general warmth and caring and are respectful of the cultural and developmental differences among groups of students.	Classroom interactions are highly respectful, reflecting genuine warmth and caring toward individuals. Students themselves ensure maintenance of high levels of civility among member of the class.
Establishing a Culture for Learning	The classroom does not represent a culture for learning and is characterized by low teacher commitment to the subject, low expectations for student achievement, and little student pride in work.	The classroom environment reflects only a minimal culture for learning, with only modest or inconsistent expectations for student achievement, little teacher commitment to the subject, and little student pride in work. Both teacher and students are performing at the minimal level to "get by."	The classroom environment represents a genuine culture for learning, with commitment to the subject on the part of both teacher and students, high expectations for student achievement, and student pride in work.	Students assumes much of the responsibility for establishing a culture for learning in the classroom by taking pride in their work, initiating improvements to their products, and holding the work to the highest standard. Teacher demonstrates as passionate commitment to the subject.
Managing Classroom Procedures	Classroom routines and procedures are either nonexistent or inefficient, resulting in the loss of much instruction time.	Classroom routines and procedures have been established but function unevenly or inconsistently, with some loss of instruction time.	Classroom routines and procedures have been established and function smoothly for the most part, with little loss of instruction time.	Classroom routines and procedures are seamless in their operation, and students assume considerable responsibility for their smooth functioning.
Managing Student Behavior	Student behavior is poor, with no clear expectations, no monitoring of student behavior, and inappropriate response to student misbehavior.	Teacher makes an effort to establish standards of conduct for students, monitor student behavior, and respond to student misbehavior, but these efforts are not always successful.	Teacher is aware of student behavior, has established clear standards of conduct, and responds to student misbehavior in ways that are appropriate and respectful of the students.	Student behavior is entirely appropriate, with evidence of student participation in setting expectations and monitoring behavior. Teacher's monitoring of student behavior is subtle and preventive, and teachers' response to student misbehavior is sensitive to individual student needs.

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.
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.