

January 30, 2020

Jonathan Stoel, Board Chair Thurgood Marshall Academy Public Charter School 2427 Martin Luther King Jr. Avenue Washington, DC 20020

Dear Mr. Stoel:

The DC Public Charter School Board (DC PCSB) conducts Qualitative Site Reviews (QSR) 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 during the 2019-20 school year for the following reason(s):

School eligible for 20-year Charter Review during 2020-21 school year

Qualitative Site Review Report

A QSR team conducted on-site reviews of Thurgood Marshall Academy Public Charter School (Thurgood Marshall Academy PCS) between November 11, 2019 to November 22, 2019. Enclosed is the team's report. You will find that the QSR Report focuses primarily on the following areas: classroom environment and instruction.

We appreciate the assistance and hospitality that you and your staff gave the monitoring team in conducting the QSR at Thurgood Marshall Academy PCS.

Sincerely,

Rashida Young Chief School Performance Officer

Enclosures cc: School Leader

Qualitative Site Review Report

Date: January 30, 2020

<u>Campus Information</u> Campus Name: Thurgood Marshall Academy Public Charter School (Thurgood Marshall Academy PCS) Ward: 8 Grade levels: Ninth through twelfth

Qualitative Site Review Information

Reason for Visit: School eligible for 20-year review during the 2020-2021 school year Two-week Window: November 11, 2019 - November 22, 2019 QSR Team Members: Four DC PCSB staff members including one special education (SPED) specialist Number of Observations: 20 including one unscored SPED pullout Total Enrollment: 383 Students with Disabilities Enrollment: 68 English Language Learners Enrollment: 0 In-seat Attendance on Observation Days: Visit 1: November 14, 2019 – 91.6% Visit 2: November 19, 2019 – 91.6% Visit 3: November 20, 2019 – 92.2% Visit 4: November 22, 2019 – 91.4%

Summary

The mission of Thurgood Marshall Academy PCS is to "prepare students to succeed in college and actively engage in our democratic society."

The Qualitative Site Review (QSR) team observed some evidence that Thurgood Marshall Academy PCS is meeting its mission. DC PCSB observers saw teachers challenging students to ask and answer their own questions and defend their ideas with evidence. Teachers facilitated discussions when appropriate but frequently encouraged students to independently write and edit their own work. In a few outlier observations, students did not actively engage in learning tasks. In these observations teachers either used harsh language when redirecting students or ignored instances of student misbehavior altogether.

During the QSR two-week window, the team used the Charlotte Danielson *Framework for Teaching* to examine classroom environment and instruction (see Appendix I and II). The QSR team scored 75% of observations as distinguished or proficient in the <u>Classroom Environment</u> domain. The highest-rated component was *Creating an Environment of Respect and Rapport (2a)* with 79% of observations scored as proficient or distinguished in this component. Talk between teachers and students was uniformly respectful. Observers noted that teachers used a mix of praise and non-verbal redirections to subtly and respectfully monitor student behavior. Teachers held high expectations for student engagement and insisted that students produce high-quality work.

The QSR team scored 67% of observations as distinguished or proficient in the <u>Instruction</u> domain. The highest-rated component in the Instruction domain was *Engaging Students in Learning (3c)*, with 73% of observations scored as proficient or distinguished in this component. Students engaged in rich discussions about current events and respectfully presented counterarguments during class wide debates. Teachers used technology and diverse learning activities to maintain student engagement throughout most observations. In a few observations, student engagement with the content was largely passive.

<u>Governance</u>

Jonathan Stoel chairs the Thurgood Marshall Academy PCS Board of Trustees. The School Reform Act requires all DC public charter schools to have a majority of DC residents and two parents, which the school has been compliant with for the past five years.

Specialized Instruction for Students with Disabilities

Prior to the two-week window, Thurgood Marshall Academy PCS completed a questionnaire about how it serves its students with disabilities (SWD). Reviewers looked for evidence of the school's articulated program. DC PCSB found that 65% of the SPED observations in the <u>Classroom Environment</u> domain scored proficient or distinguished, whereas 60% of SPED observations in the <u>Instruction</u> domain earned a similar rating. Overall, limited teacher scaffolding for SWD led to inconsistent levels of intellectual student engagement. Key trends from the SPED observations are summarized below.

Within the general education setting, the school supports SWD with a SPED co-teacher in core content areas. In two such classrooms, the co-teachers mostly used the "One Teach, One Assist" model and did not share classroom responsibilities evenly. While both teachers provided students with academic feedback, only the general education teacher led instruction and gave directions. Students all worked on the same assignment, which challenged students' thinking, but the SPED specialist did not observe any examples of small groups or differentiated work to support SWD. In one classroom, neither teacher responded effectively to student misbehavior, which resulted in

minimal levels of student engagement.

- Outside of the general education setting, the school supports SWD with selfcontained classrooms and resource rooms. In four such observations, teachers frequently checked for understanding by asking questions and reviewing the correct responses. In one classroom, the majority of the assignment consisted of multiple-choice comprehension questions with single correct responses. Only a few questions asked students to explain their thinking.
- Across all settings, teachers that successfully scaffolded content had higher levels of student intellectual engagement. In two observations, one co-taught and one self-contained, the teachers used the "I Do, We Do, You Do" model to increase engagement. After modeling how to solve a multi-step problem, the teachers asked for student input on how to solve a new problem. In these observations, students freely asked and answered questions, and the teachers consistently checked for understanding. Gradually, students completed higher-order thinking tasks independently.

THE CLASSROOM ENVIRONMENT¹

This table summarizes the school's performance on the Classroom Environment domain of the rubric during the unannounced visits. The label definitions for classroom observations of "distinguished," "proficient," "basic," and "unsatisfactory" are those from the Danielson framework. The QSR team scored 75% of classrooms as "distinguished" or "proficient" for the <u>Classroom Environment</u> domain. Please see Appendix III for a breakdown of each subdomain score.

The Classroom Environment	Evidence	School-Wid Rating ²	de
Creating an Environment of Respect and Rapport	The QSR team scored 79% of the observations as distinguished or proficient in this component. In the distinguished observations teachers respected and encouraged students' efforts. During an observation where students laughed when their peer mispronounced a word while reading, the teacher walked over to the student and said, "Hey don't be embarrassed, I have friends who are grown who	Distinguished	11%
	mispronounce that word all the time." The student smiled at the teacher and later volunteered to continue reading. In the proficient observations, talk between teachers and students was uniformly respectful. During one observation the teacher announced to the class that one of their peers published a book. All students cheered along with the teacher. Teachers in these observations gave high fives, individual praise, and responded to students courteously by saying things like, "Please" and "Thank you."		68%
	The QSR team scored 16% of the observations as basic in this component. In the basic observations teachers attempted to respond to disrespectful behavior among students with mixed success. Students used terms like "slow" to describe their peers to which the teacher did not respond. In one observation students talked over a classmate as they read. The teacher remarked, "Guys s/he's reading what the hell?" Several students continued to talk over the student.	Basic	16%

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

² DC PCSB does not report out qualitative evidence if less than 10% of observations in any given component earned a "basic" or "unsatisfactory" level of performance.

	The QSR team scored 11% of the observations as unsatisfactory in this component. In the unsatisfactory observations teachers did not address disrespectful behavior. In one observation a student used profanity when referring to a classmate and was asked to leave the room. As the student left, they used another expletive. In another observation the teacher used sarcasm to infer that a student would not complete an assignment. The teacher said, "For you? Let's be real," when the student asked a clarifying question regarding an assignment. Other students and the teacher laughed at the remark.	Unsatisfactory	11%
Establishing a Culture for Learning	The QSR team scored 74% of the observations as distinguished or proficient in this component. In the distinguished observations students assisted their classmates in understanding the work. In one observation students presented speeches they prepared on a variety of topics ranging from mental health to gun control. Following each presentation, students offered one another positive words of encouragement and suggestions for improvement. At the end of the class period students took the initiative to	Distinguished	11%
	reflect on ways that they could improve their work. For example, one student openly shared their desire to become a better public speaker. In the proficient observations teachers demonstrated a high regard for students' abilities. Teachers frequently reminded students of the expectations for completing their portfolios and other classroom assignments. During a partner activity the teacher stressed that they expected to see both partners contributing evenly. In response, each pair of students worked collaboratively to complete the assignment. Teachers in these observations encouraged students' persistence. For example, during a transition, students in the hallway peaked into the classroom and attempted to distract a student from working. The teacher replied, "[Student X] can't talk right now, they are busy saving the world." The student smiled and continued working.	Proficient	63%

	The QSR team scored 21% of observations as basic in this component. In the basic observations the teacher conveyed high expectations for only some students. During one observation some students complied with the teacher's expectations for using technology to complete their essays, while others did not. Some students watched music videos or placed their heads on the desk with no redirection from the teacher. In another observation, during a classroom discussion, the teacher repeatedly called on the same two students. In response, another student pointed it out to the teacher. While the teacher apologized and attempted to engage additional students, the attempt was unsuccessful.	Basic	21%
	The QSR team scored less than 10% of the observations as unsatisfactory in this component.	Unsatisfactory	5%
Managing Classroom Procedures	The QSR team scored 68% of the observations as proficient and none as distinguished in this component. In the proficient observations classrooms routines and procedures functioned smoothly. In one observation the teacher used a timer to manage independent work time. As time passed the teacher gave warnings to indicate to students that time was running out. In another observation as one student quickly passed out materials, the teacher simultaneously explained the	Distinguished	0%
	directions for the assignment. This resulted in no loss of instructional time as students began working immediately. Students in these observations assisted teachers in keeping track of time by quickly following established classroom procedures. In one observation, the teacher instructed students to create the "testing environment." With no additional prompting students quickly separated their desks and began working on the quiz.	Proficient	68%

	The QSR team scored 32% of the observations as basic in this component. In the basic observations classroom routines functioned unevenly. In one observation, the teacher worked with a group of students at the front of the room. Students who arrived tardy frequently interrupted the teacher who had to leave their group to reshare the instructions. Following a brief work period, the teacher attempted to rotate the entire class into different groups at the same time but was unsuccessful. Eventually the teacher had to stop and individually redirect students to their new groups. This resulted in some loss of instructional time.	Basic	32%
	The QSR team rated none of the observations as unsatisfactory in this component.	Unsatisfactory	0%
Managing Student Behavior	agingThe QSR team scored 79% of the observations as distinguished or proficient in this component. In the		37%
	argued over the answer to a math problem. The teacher quickly intervened and told students to stop and they both complied. In another observation one student attempted to engage in off-task behavior during student work time. Initially the teacher attempted to reengage the student before offering them a quiet place to work in another part of the room. After being moved the student got on task and was able to complete the activity.	Proficient	42%
	The QSR team scored 11% of the observations as basic in this component. In the basic observations teachers' response to student misbehavior was inconsistent. During one observation, the teacher separated students into different groups but was unable to effectively monitor student behavior between the tables. As a result, some students engaged in minor instances of misbehavior such as throwing paper or listening to music instead of working.	Basic	11%

	The QSR team rated 11% of the observations as unsatisfactory in this component. In the unsatisfactory observations teachers did not monitor student behavior. In one observation the teacher worked with a small group of students and completely disengaged from the rest of the class. Students not working with the teacher engaged in disruptive and at times unsafe behavior throughout the entire 30-minute observation. Instead of working on an assigned essay, students styled each other's hair, listened to music loudly, and watched non- content related videos. The teacher never responded or attempted to engage students and had their back to the class for much of the observation.	Unsatisfactory	11%	
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INSTRUCTION

This table summarizes the school's performance on the Instruction domain of the rubric during the unannounced visits. The label definitions for classroom observations of "distinguished," "proficient," "basic," and "unsatisfactory" are those from the Danielson framework. The QSR team scored 67% of classrooms as "distinguished" or "proficient" for the Instruction domain. Please see Appendix III for a breakdown of each subdomain score.

Instruction	Evidence	School Wide R	ating
Communicating with Students	The QSR team scored 68% of the observations as distinguished or proficient in this component. In the distinguished observation students took the lead on communicating the lesson purpose and demonstrating their understanding of the key strategies for effective public speaking. For example, after each speech, students took turns offering constructive feedback to their peers based on what they had previously learned about persuasive and impactful speaking. In the proficient observations teachers clearly communicated the purpose of the lesson. In one observation, the teacher explained that they wanted students to use their previously drafted	Distinguished	5%
	notes to work with a partner and complete a study guide. The teacher explained, "The reason you're doing this now is because it's going to be part of your lab." In response, students actively used their notes to determine the answers on the lab sheet. In another observation the teacher asked students to work in pairs to reenact scenes from a play that they read. The teacher told students to use the "no fear version" of the text that used richer vocabulary and more complex analogies. When one student showed hesitation, the teacher encouraged them by saying, "You are brilliant, you don't need the easy version of the text."	Proficient	63%

Instruction	Evidence	School Wide R	ating
	The QSR team scored 32% of the observations as basic in this component. In the basic observations, teachers' explanation of the content consisted of a monologue, with minimal participation or intellectual engagement by students. During one observation the teacher began by saying, "If you submitted your portfolio on time, you are turning your paper in to me. If you have not, sit over here." The teacher did not give any further explanation. Several students mentioned to the teacher that they did not have the materials needed to complete the assignment. The teacher responded by asking, "Unprepared?" After 15 minutes passed, the teacher allowed students to go to their lockers to gather the required materials, but upon returning some students engaged in the task while others continued to explain academic vocabulary but the explanation of the content did not call for deep student understanding.	Basic	32%
	The QSR team scored none of the observations as unsatisfactory in this component.	Unsatisfactory	0%
Using Questioning/ Prompts and Discussion Techniques	Using Questioning/ Prompts and Discussion The QSR team scored 55% of the observations as distinguished or proficient in this component. In the distinguished observations, teachers built on student responses in order to deepen student understanding.		11%
	the drawbacks?" The teacher later asked students to consider possible objections to their own proposals and allowed them to work with their peers to help strengthen their argument. In the proficient observations teachers used open-ended questions like, "Which piece or pieces of evidence shown on the board best support this claim? Why?" In these observations, teachers gave several students the opportunity to respond and build on each other's responses.	Proficient	44%

Instruction	Evidence	School Wide R	ating
	The QSR team scored 39% of observations as basic in this component. In the basic observations teachers framed some questions to promote student thinking but many questions had a single correct answer. During one observation students offered several correct responses that differed from the specific response the teacher was seeking. The teacher did not accept the students' correct responses or explain to them why one solution worked better than the other. Teachers in these observations often attempted to engage students in content related discussions but few students participated.		39%
	The QSR team rated less than 10% of observations as unsatisfactory in this component.	Unsatisfactory	6%
Engaging Students in Learning	EngagingThe QSR team scored 73% of the observations as distinguished or proficient. In the distinguished		5%
participation in partner work, whole-group discussion, and independent work time. In one observation, students had the choice to either work independently or with a partner as they actively used their notes to complete a task. In another observation, students primarily worked independently on quizzes and other make-up assignments. As students worked, they used laptops and headphones and remained engaged throughout the entire observation.		Proficient	68%

Instruction	Evidence	School Wide R	ating
	The QSR team scored 26% of the observations as basic in this component. In the basic observations, only some students engaged in the learning task. During one observation, several students arrived to class without the required text. One student asked, "So what you want me to do?" The teacher did not respond. Students who did not have the correct text sat idle for much of the class period, even after being allowed to gather materials from their lockers. In another observation the teacher attempted to engage in a class-wide discussion but several students either spoke over the teacher or engaged in side conversations with their peers. The teacher chastised students by saying, "For those of you talking you have got to learn to be quiet for more than ten seconds." Several students continued to talk. The teacher made one final attempt to engage students by asking if they had any questions. When no students responded the teacher simply said, "So that's a no?" In another example, the teacher worked closely with a small group of nine students. Students not working directly with the teacher made very limited attempts to engage students and often ignored very distracting behaviors. At one point during the observation, several students loudly played music on their headphones. The teacher attempted to shout over the music, asking them to turn it down but only a few students responded. In that same observation, the teacher initiated an off-topic conversation about a television show to which several students chimed in before a student attempted to settle the class by saying, "Let's get back on topic."	Basic	26%
	QSR team scored less than 10% of observations as unsatisfactory in this component.	Unsatisfactory	5%

Instruction	Evidence	School Wide R	ating
Using Assessment in Instruction	Assessment in distinguished or proficient in this component. In the		11%
			58%
			26%
	The QSR team scored less than 10% of observations as unsatisfactory in this component.	Unsatisfactory	5%

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 sometimes 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.

Percent of:	2a	2b	2c	2d	3a	3b	3с	3d
Unsatisfactory	11%	5%	0%	11%	5%	6%	5%	5%
Basic	11%	21%	32%	11%	26%	39%	21%	26%
Proficient	68%	63%	68%	42%	63%	44%	68%	58%
Distinguished	11%	11%	0%	37%	5%	11%	5%	11%
Subdomain Average	2.79	2.79	2.68	3.05	2.68	2.61	2.74	2.74

APPENDIX III: DOMAIN AVERAGES BY COMPONENT

	Domain 2	Domain 3
% of Proficient or above	75%	67%
Domain Averages	2.83	2.69