



December 4, 2020

Daniela Grigioni-Carozza, Board Chair
Briya Public Charter School
2333 Ontario Road, NW
Washington, DC 20009

Dear Dr. Grigioni-Carozza:

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 because it is eligible for its 15-year Charter Renewal during school year (SY) 2020-21.

Qualitative Site Review Report

A QSR team conducted a virtual site review of Briya Public Charter School from September 28, 2020 – October 9, 2020.

DC PCSB intended to conduct the QSR in the spring of SY 2019 – 20. However, the COVID-19 pandemic resulted in all DC public charter schools physically closing in March 2020 through the end of the school year. As a result, the observations in this report were postponed to SY 2020 – 21 and 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 4, 2020

Campus Information

Campus Name: Briya Public Charter School (Briya PCS)

Ward: 1

Grade Levels: Pre-kindergarten 3 – Pre-kindergarten 4 and Adult

Qualitative Site Review Information

Reason for Visit: School eligible for 15-year Charter Renewal during SY 2020-21

Two-week Window: September 28, 2020 – October 9, 2020

QSR Team Members: Three consultants, including one English learner (EL) specialist and one special education (SPED) specialist

Number of Observations: 18 unscored observations

Total Enrollment: 744¹

Students with Disabilities Enrollment: 15

English Learners Enrollment: 79

In-seat Attendance on Observation Days:²

Visit 1: September 29, 2020 – 74.9%

Visit 2: October 1, 2020 – 47.0%³

Visit 3: October 2, 2020 – 61.0%

Visit 4: October 6, 2020 – 72.3%

Visit 5: October 8, 2020 – 48.6%

Summary

Briya PCS's mission is "to strengthen families through culturally responsive two-generation education."

The QSR team observed strong evidence that the school is achieving its mission. Early childhood (EC) classes provided engaging, developmentally appropriate instruction, responding to students' background by using Spanish as necessary to achieve learning objectives. Learning activities included pretending to pick

¹ This enrollment figure is based on preliminary, unvalidated data as of October 5, 2020.

² During SY 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.

³ The QSR team observed one recorded lesson from October 1, 2020, in addition to synchronous instruction.

vegetables, listening to educational songs and dancing, and “feeding” a puppet to practice counting.

Adult education (AE) classes provided high-quality instruction to students. The child development classes exemplified the school’s mission of strengthening families through culturally responsive two-generation education. Adult students led a discussion on the differences between educational practices when they were in school and best practices they are learning about in the course. Students discussed the importance of their learned best practices for students’ emotional, developmental and academic achievement. They related their learnings to personal relationships with their own children, demonstrating the direct impact of the class on their lives. During the parenting class, students discussed screen time and children, telling classmates about beneficial screen time activities and non-screen time activities. Classmates discussed challenges with screen time, like how to follow through with limits. During the math class, students shared different ideas on how to think through math problems using both words and visuals.

AE English language acquisition classes provided ample opportunity for students to improve communication skills. Students interviewed and introduced each other, discussed short- and long-term goals, and brainstormed steps with classmates on how to achieve their goals. Students discussed the importance of learning English to be successful in their child development classes, to graduate from Briya PCS, and to get a job.

During the two-week observation window, the team used a modified version of Charlotte Danielson’s *Framework for Teaching* 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 Briya PCS is meeting its mission, based on specific examples of evidence the team observed during remote visits.

In the Classroom Environment, domain observers noted a warm and friendly atmosphere in classrooms. Teachers and students greeted each other with smiles. Teachers of adult students respected students as parents, saying hello to their children, and excusing students if they needed to tend to young children at home. Students across adult and early childhood classes demonstrated respect for teachers as they worked productively. Teachers managed technology seamlessly, sharing screens, showing students how to mute and unmute, and putting students into

breakout rooms. In the Instruction domain, teachers provided high quality instruction. Learning tasks aligned with instructional outcomes as students practiced English language skills, discussed educational practices, and reviewed letter sounds. Teachers engaged students using a variety of materials and resources, particularly in early childhood classes where teachers used student-created art to talk about emotions, letters with visual reminders of the letter sounds, and a puppet to practice counting by “feeding” him.

Governance

Daniela Grigioni-Carozza chairs the Briya 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 window, Briya PCS completed a questionnaire about how it serves its students with disabilities, and reviewers looked for evidence of the school’s articulated program. DC PCSB observed one general education early childhood classroom environment where a co-teaching model was utilized. Per the school’s SPED questionnaire, Briya PCS offers a family centered and collaborative model that is delivered in an inclusive setting. In general, the QSR team found the school implemented its stated special education program with fidelity as evidenced by co-planning and co-teaching by teachers in an inclusion and bilingual setting. Key trends from the SPED observations are summarized below.

- To support the learning of students with disabilities, as described in the questionnaire, Briya PCS provides a variety of resources to their students. Examples include individual sensory boxes; educational materials that can meet the needs of different developmental levels (such as cloth books, cardboard books, books with little to no words, loop scissors for pre-cutting skills, light/sound toys for cause-effect skills, large knob puzzles, floor puzzles with jumbo pieces, crayons of different sizes, open-ended materials); games that promote self-regulation; spaces that promote self-regulation, different seating options (cube chairs, back jack floor chairs, cushions), and more. In a co-teaching lesson, the teacher used real life visuals such as plants, plant roots, and a watering can. The teachers also encouraged students to share plants they had at home.
- To provide accommodations according to the individualized education program (IEP) of students with disabilities, Briya PCS stated that SPED teachers can be the general education teacher or the co-teacher in a co-teaching general education setting. SPED teachers can support with

technology by moving students into breakout rooms or coaching parents during a lesson via the platform's chat/text capabilities. During this observation, the observer saw the SPED teacher modeling, repeating directions in English or Spanish, and encouraging students.

- To provide modifications according to the IEP of students with disabilities, the school shared examples of how an activity might be modified such as reducing the difficulty of a task, using templates as a scaffold and encouraging creativity instead of opting for rigidity in student output. The observer did not see the modifications as described above; however, the observer did note that teachers provided students multiple opportunities to engage and arrive at the correct response. Teachers also supported parent-led scaffolding for the students to arrive at the correct answer. While the teachers modeled creativity in how a student might respond to a prompt, such as using your body to grow as a plant, the teachers did not model this strategy when students struggled to respond to teacher prompts.

Specialized Instruction for English Learners

Prior to the two-week observation window, Briya PCS completed a questionnaire about how it serves its English Learners (ELs). The QSR team looked for evidence of the school's articulated program. DC PCSB observed one EC literacy small group session, one EC math small group session, and one EC whole class morning circle time. According to the questionnaire, the school "employs a co-teaching model with one Spanish-speaking teacher and one English-speaking teacher." All three EC observations included a Spanish-speaking teacher and an English-speaking teacher. Overall, DC PCSB found that Briya PCS implemented the following aspects of its EL program with fidelity.

- **Picture Supports:** All EC classes used picture supports. During the literacy class, the teacher reminded students of letter sounds by showing them letters that looked like corresponding objects. For example, A looked like an apple; D looked like a doughnut; and M looked like a cup of milk. In math, the teacher represented numbers with her fingers, with the number itself, and by counting objects (like beans). In circle time, students represented feelings through art, making faces that corresponded to emotions like happiness and anger.
- **Clear instructions and gestures:** Teachers in EC classes consistently provided clear instructions, particularly with gestures. Teachers used visual clues, like touching their ears or showing the unmute button when they could not hear students speak. In the math small group session, the teacher introduced the

activity by using hand motions towards her mouth to model “feeding,” and tasked students with feeding her puppet a certain number of objects.

- **Allowing children to express themselves as they feel comfortable (home language, physical participation, etc.):** Children expressed themselves in a variety of ways throughout EC observations. In circle time, students used their home language to describe their emotions and discuss how their art projects represented them. Students participated physically as the co-teacher led them through an imaginative stretching exercise where they had to “pick” tomatoes of varying physical descriptions. Two of the three classes used songs and dancing. In literacy class, the teacher had students pretend to eat or drink objects starting with certain letters.
- **Frequent repetition and extension:** Teachers consistently used repetition and extension to solidify concepts. During literacy class, the teacher recapped the letters students had learned several times, showing students the letter and emphasizing the letter sound. The teacher counted slowly several times in math class as students found a certain number of objects to “feed” her puppet. During circle time, the teacher extended the discussion of emotions and student art by describing students’ projects using rich vocabulary about texture and color.

THE CLASSROOM ENVIRONMENT⁴

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 score.

Classroom Environment	Evidence
Creating an Environment of Respect and Rapport	Interactions between teachers and students were highly respectful and warm. Teachers smiled frequently and greeted students by name as they logged into classes, saying “Good morning!”, “Hi friends!” and “It’s so good to see you!” They blew kisses to EC students and expressed warmth by saying, “I love to see you smile.” Teachers demonstrated respect to adult students as parents, telling them to feel free to take a break to deal with children at home. Teachers made personal connections to students such as expressing pleasure at seeing an AE student’s baby and saying, “I know how much you love Peppa Pig!” to an EC student. EC students demonstrated respect for the teacher by staying focused during lessons and following directions the first time asked. AE students demonstrated respect for teachers by participating in discussions willingly and answering questions within a few seconds of teachers asking. Teachers across observations thanked students and praised their responses, saying “Excellent!” and “Very good!” AE students demonstrated comfort and trust with fellow classmates as they conversed freely in breakout sessions. They discussed future goals without interrupting each other. Teachers respectfully corrected students in language classes, repeating sentences back to them slowly and clearly. AE students encouraged each other, saying, “Don’t feel bad” and “You can do it!” as a classmate discussed challenges completing their portfolio. Teachers in AE classes joked with students good-naturedly. For example, a teacher said to a student, “You just got voluntold!” after the student’s group picked them to present.

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

Classroom Environment	Evidence
Establishing a Culture for Learning	<p>Classroom interactions consistently supported hard work. Teachers told students, “Don’t give up!” as students discussed a difficult project. A teacher posted a picture of Rosie the Riveter as they encouraged students, saying, “Don’t worry, it’s okay, it takes practice. We will practice. We can do it.” Teachers moved through learning tasks productively, calling on multiple students to answer questions and involving all students in discussions. They consistently praised students’ English language progress, saying “I heard the S with <i>has</i>—great job!”, “Nice job, everybody! I heard a lot of good simple present,” and “Nice use of the future.” AE students demonstrated persistence, struggling through conversations during English language acquisition classes. Teachers demonstrated a genuine passion for the subject, particularly in the Child Development class where a teacher told students, “I don’t ever want you to think, ‘I got my CDA so I don’t have to learn anymore.’ There are a lot of things I have to do on my end. I’m constantly researching, reading, and listening to podcasts.” Teachers in EC classrooms conveyed high energy and enthusiasm, asking students, “Are you ready to be a tree? I’m excited and can’t wait.” They used clear, happy voices as they practiced counting with a puppet, held up different letters with visual reminders of the letter sounds, and talked about different emotions represented by student art. Classroom interactions supported learning, like in one observation where the teacher reviewed the following class guidelines: use your words to help and encourage other parents; be open to learn and grow; and listen without interrupting. Students across observations understood their role as learners, working productively on correcting sentences, participating in discussions about children and screen time, counting individually, identifying letters and sounds, and identifying parts of a tree.</p>

Classroom Environment	Evidence
Managing Classroom Procedures	<p>There was little loss of instructional time due to effective classroom routines and procedures, particularly as teachers navigated technology in virtual classrooms. They shared screens, put students into breakout rooms, and reviewed procedures for video sharing and muting without losing instructional time. In EC classrooms, students raised their hands to share. Transitions to breakout sessions were smooth as teachers clearly explained learning tasks and checked in on small groups to ensure understanding. AE students remained engaged while working in breakout rooms without teachers. Most classrooms included two teachers, one to manage students and technology and one to lead instruction. In a couple of observations, teachers posted directions for procedures like muting and unmuting in different languages. EC students indicated readiness to move on to the next activity by signaling with “two thumbs up.” EC teachers used verbal directions and visual clues, like touching their ears or showing the unmute button when they could not hear students speak. Teachers across observations gave students ample warning before switching activities. In rare instances when EC students did not follow procedures, teachers gave gentle reminders, saying, “Turn your video on, I want to see your beautiful face!”</p>
Managing Student Behavior	<p>There was no evidence of misbehavior at any time during AE observations. Students stayed engaged, answered the teacher’s questions, interviewed classmates, worked productively in breakout sessions, and listened to each other attentively. In one instance where a student mistakenly interrupted a classmate, they quickly corrected themselves and asked the classmate to proceed. In another observation, a student apologized to the class, saying, “I’m sorry, that was my daughter,” when they had to take a phone call. Students complied without incident when teachers gently reminded them to mute or unmute.</p> <p>Student behavior in EC classrooms was generally appropriate. Students followed directions, responded to teachers’ questions, described their art projects, identified letters, and switched from class discussions to songs and dancing without incident. In one instance of a student acting silly (hiding with an orange box on their head), the teacher laughed, told classmates to help find [Student X]!” and moved on, effectively getting the student back on task. Another EC teacher responded effectively to a student who did not want to participate in the learning activity. They suggested that the student (sitting with a parent) complete the task with a parent later and email or text a picture.</p>

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 score.

Instruction	Evidence
Communicating with Students	Teachers clearly communicated content and directions across observations. They projected learning tasks on the board or stated them verbally, asking students to interview and introduce classmates, discuss future plans and goals using the appropriate verb tense, and ask classmates about their home countries. Teachers modeled learning tasks, interviewing a co-teacher, discussing future goals with a personal example, thinking aloud and showing work while solving a math problem, and reviewing appropriate responses to common questions. The content connected to students' daily lives as they compared their own educational experiences to best practices learned in their Child Development class, discussed screen time activities enjoyed by their children, and talked about their home countries. Explanations of content in EC classes were consistently scaffolded as teachers used Spanish and motions when students could not understand tasks. Teachers also gave students visual reminders of letter sounds.

Instruction	Evidence
Using Questioning/ Prompts and Discussion Techniques	<p>Teachers used a mix of high- and low-level questions to promote student thinking and understanding. They asked students to describe differences in plants, compare their educational experiences to best practices, describe their ideal classrooms, and discuss their children’s use of screens. Many students actively engaged in discussions across most observations.</p> <p>In English language acquisition classes, questioning generally led students on a single path of inquiry. However, this was appropriate for the instructional objectives as students practiced correct English in different scenarios. Teachers asked students comprehension questions about a dialogue, how to change a sentence into the future tense, to find mistakes in sentences posted on the screen, and to identify the “c” sound in words. Teachers created opportunities for students to speak directly to each other in breakout rooms where they discussed future goals, interviewed each other, and discussed whether people in pictures were friendly or unfriendly. Teachers asked most—if not all—English language acquisition students to participate, even those students who did not initially volunteer.</p> <p>Teachers across EC observations involved many students in discussions. They called on all students to count, share artwork and talk about emotions, and identify the letter beginning their names. Teachers used wait time effectively, giving students a chance to consider their responses. When necessary teachers provided more explanations about the questions, used Spanish, and used hand motions to help the students respond. Observers noted that EC students had limited opportunities for genuine discussion without mediation from teachers in the virtual environment.</p>

Instruction	Evidence
Engaging Students in Learning	<p>Students were highly engaged in learning tasks across all observations. Learning tasks were aligned with instructional outcomes as students played a game to listen for the “c” sound, changed present tense sentences to future tense, identified mistakes in the use of future tense, discussed educational practices, and interviewed and introduced each other. Teachers used visuals, like a picture of cotton to remind students of the “c” sound and photos of people with different expressions to discuss emotions. Teachers used a mix of groupings in breakout rooms to give students opportunities to practice and hear English and to share ideas without mediation from the teacher. The pacing of lessons provided for intellectual engagement as students gave teachers a “thumbs up” indicating they were ready to move on, and teachers came back to students later if they were not ready to share in the moment. Students in some English language acquisition classes did not have choice in learning tasks.</p> <p>Students across EC observations were highly engaged. Teachers scaffolded appropriately, as when students first counted together as a class, watching the teacher hold up fingers, then counted out objects to “feed” a puppet. Materials and resources supported learning goals and engagement as teachers used a puppet, artwork, songs, and letters that looked like corresponding objects. Learning tasks focused on colors, numbers and following directions. A teacher consolidated student learning several times throughout the lesson by showing students the letters they had already learned, making the letter’s sound, and identifying the object and student name associated with that letter.</p>
Using Assessment in Instruction	<p>Teachers regularly monitored student progress. They listened to students form questions, describe classmates using the simple present tense, change sentences to the future tense, count, and identify letter sounds. Teachers adjusted instruction as they clarified the use of <i>his</i> and <i>hers</i>, reviewed how to use <i>will</i> to indicate the future, and modeled correct responses. Students had the opportunity to assess their own work as they revised sentences with the correct verb form and reviewed their thought process in solving a math problem. Teachers elicited evidence of individual student understanding as they asked each student to introduce classmates, hold up fingers to show when they heard a letter sound, count, and show the class their written sentences from dictation.</p>

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 situated 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 many 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.