DC
PUBLIC
CHARTER
SCHOOL
BOARD

December 21, 2020

Anthony Lewis, Board Chair
KIPP DC Arts and Technology Academy Public Charter School
5300 Blaine Street NE
Washington, DC 20019

Dear Mr. Lewis:

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 because its eligible for its 20-year charter review during school year (SY) 2020 – 21.

Qualitative Site Review Report
A QSR team conducted a virtual site review of KIPP DC Arts and Technology Public Charter School from October 19 – 30, 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 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 21, 2020

Campus Information
Campus Name: KIPP DC Arts and Technology Public Charter School (KIPP DC Arts and Tech PCS)
Ward: 7
Grade Levels: Pre-kindergarten 3 through Kindergarten

Qualitative Site Review Information
Reason for Visit: School eligible for 20-year charter review during school year (SY) 2020-21
Two-week Window: October 19 – 30, 2020
QSR Team Members: One DC PCSB staff member and two consultants, including one special education (SPED) specialist
Number of Observations: Nine unscored observations
Total Enrollment: 324[1]
Students with Disabilities Enrollment: 17
English Learners Enrollment: 1
In-seat Attendance on Observation Days: [2]
Visit 1: October 19, 2020 – 89.1%
Visit 2: October 20, 2020 – 89.5%
Visit 3: October 22, 2020 – 90.9%

Summary
According to the school's mission,

> KIPP DC is a non-profit network of high-performing, college-preparatory public charter schools in Washington, D.C. All KIPP DC schools are tuition-free, open enrollment schools, and actively recruit and serve students in the city's most educationally underserved communities. At KIPP DC, there are no shortcuts. Highly skilled teachers and leaders, more time in school, a rigorous college

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[1] This enrollment figure is based on preliminary, unvalidated data as of November 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 80.0% 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.

preparatory-curriculum, and a strong culture of high expectations and support help our students make significant academic gains and continue to excel in high school and college.

The Qualitative Site Review (QSR) team observed some evidence that the school is meeting its mission. Observers noted positive interactions between teachers and students and among students. Teachers had established classroom routines and held high expectations for student behavior and participation. Overall, students participated freely in classroom discussions when prompted by the teacher. However, in some classrooms, students completed low level tasks and had limited opportunities to think critically.

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 KIPP DC Arts and Tech PCS is meeting its mission, based on specific examples of evidence the team observed during remote visits.

In the Classroom Environment domain, observers noted that teachers greeted students warmly upon entering the virtual classroom. One teacher said, "Hey, girl!" and "I love that haircut." Teachers across all observations showed concern for students' emotional well-being asking questions like, "How is everyone feeling today?" Teachers consistently made appropriate use of instructional time by using digital timers to countdown between activities. In the Instruction domain, observers noted teachers consistently held high expectations for student participation. Teachers used a mix of open-ended and recall questions to elicit student responses. Students remained intellectually engaged throughout most lessons, although at times participation was limited to rote tasks that required minimal critical thinking.

Governance
Anthony Lewis chairs the KIPP DC 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, KIPP DC Arts and Tech PCS completed a questionnaire about how it serves its students with disabilities. The QSR team looked for evidence of the school's articulated program. According to the school, it has created a robust system of supports across the network including a broad continuum of placements designed to support each student's individual needs. The school said that its general education teachers co-plan with special education teachers and use the special education teachers as resources to help with modification and adaptation of the general education content in order to ensure student access. The school notes that it "uses research-based intervention to promote data driven instruction, to individualize learning experiences and to effectively integrate resources which would positively impact students' educational programs." The school also named that observers should see a workshop style instructional program that focuses on targeted Individual Education Program (IEP) goals and objectives. Overall, the school implemented its stated program with fidelity as evidenced by small group instruction, as well as the implementation of specific strategies that support the accommodations described in the questionnaire. Key trends from the SPED observations are summarized below.

- To demonstrate that students are taught to use compensatory strategies and study/organizational techniques. Teachers presented on grade level content with scaffolds and support, including sentence starters, teacher modeling, and orally processing with students. In one observation, the teacher said, "I should see your mouth move like this, let's go." The teacher pointed to their mouth and said, "A sound /a/ apple." The teacher later reminded students by saying, "Students we read from left to right, right?"

- To demonstrate that teachers individualize learning experiences and effectively integrate academic and behavioral resources in small group sessions, the school stated that students would be able to choose their own learning materials and rewards. In one observation, the teacher allowed students to choose between two read-alouds. In another observation, the teacher referred to an incentive to encourage students to complete an activity. The teacher said, "We have 50 more points to go as a class to earn our Family Talent Show."

THE CLASSROOM ENVIRONMENT[3]

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 all observations, talk between teachers and students was uniformly respectful. In one observation, the teacher greeted each student by name as they entered the virtual classroom. In another observation, the teacher had students use a thumbs up or thumbs down sign to describe how they felt. In these observations, teachers showed concern for students lives outside of school. In one observation, the teacher said, "It was someone's birthday yesterday." Students and teachers celebrated the student with a cheer.
Establishing a Culture for Learning	In all observations, teachers insisted on precise use of language from students. In one observation, the teacher said, "Make sure you're saying the right number," as students practiced recalling numbers on a calendar. In these observations, teachers communicated the importance of the content and conviction that all students could master the content. Teachers often encouraged students by saying things like, "Let's send them some shine," and "Pat yourself on the back." Students across all classrooms expended good effort to complete high-quality work. Students raised their hands, listened attentively as their peers spoke, and encouraged their peers when they responded correctly.
Managing Classroom Procedures	In all observations, classroom routines functioned smoothly. In one observation, as students entered the virtual classroom, the teacher reminded them of the "Zoom expectations." Students followed the expectations the teacher set resulting in no loss of instructional time. Across each observation, teachers used reminders like digital timers and transition songs to ensure the appropriate lesson pacing and minimize loss of instruction time. Students in these observations arrived in the virtual classrooms with all of the necessary materials (when applicable) and remained engaged throughout each lesson.
Managing Student Behavior	In most observations, student behavior was appropriate. In these observations' students participated freely with little redirection from the teachers. In some observations, teachers had to redirect minor instances of student misbehavior. In some observations, students slept or called out answers out of turn. In one observation, the teacher reminded a student of the expectations by saying, "Thank you for raising your hand, but right now I'm listening to [Student X]."

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

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 stated clearly at some point what students would be learning. In one observation, the teacher said, "Today's topic is ways families spend time together." The teacher allowed multiple students to respond. Across all observations, teachers used clear vocabulary that was aligned to the lesson. In one observation, the teacher said, "We have to get your meteorologists goggles on because meteorologists check the weather." Students engaged with the learning tasks and gave responses that indicated that they knew what to do. In one observation, while the lesson's purpose was unclear, students engaged with their teachers as they moved through a series of learning tasks.
Using Questioning/ Prompts and Discussion Techniques	In most observations, teachers used open-ended questions that allowed students to think. In one observation, the teacher asked students, "Who can tell me what this picture shows?" In another observation the teacher exclusively asked low-level questions like, "What day is it going to be tomorrow?" and "What day is it today?" Across all observations multiple students had the opportunity to respond to the teacher's questions, although students had limited opportunities to respond directly to their peers or build on their peers' responses.
Engaging Students in Learning	In most observations, students intellectually engaged with the learning tasks. In one observation, the teacher used songs and chants to engage students in a morning meeting lesson. Across all classrooms, teachers used appropriate materials like calendars, weather charts, and manipulatives to keep students engaged. Teachers in these observations paced lessons appropriately to promote intellectual engagement. During one observation, teachers waited patiently as students sorted shapes. All students completed the task within the allotted time.
Using Assessment in Instruction	In most observations, feedback to students was vague and not focused on future improvement. In one observation, the teacher asked students as a whole group to describe different elements of the weather. The teacher did not provide any specific feedback. In another observation, the teacher asked students to recite letter sounds and sound out short words to check for understanding. When one student responded incorrectly, the teacher pushed the student by asking the class, "What do we do now?" to which the classroom responded, "Sound it out." Due to the remote nature of the observations, it was difficult to observe the use of assessment across several classrooms.

<u>Work Sample Review</u>[4]

As an added accountability measure, during SY 2020 – 21, DC PCSB collected student work samples in addition to classroom observations in grades kindergarten – 12. Work samples were not reviewed for this campus.

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[4] Due to the unique makeup of the campus, with more than 50.0% of the students enrolled in Pre-kindergarten, the work sample tool is not applicable. The review tool is based on The New Teacher Project's Report: *The Opportunity Myth*. See here for more information: https://opportunitymyth.tntp.org/.

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.