

August 18, 2022

Donald Hense, Board Chair Friendship Public Charter School – Southeast Academy Middle 645 Milwaukee Place SE Washington, DC 20032

Dear Mr. Hense:

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 it is eligible for its 25-year charter review during school year 2022 – 23.

Qualitative Site Review Report

A QSR team conducted on-site reviews of Friendship Public Charter School – Southeast Academy Middle from March 28 – April 8, 2022. The team's report is enclosed. You will find that it focuses primarily on classroom environment and instruction, as defined in the Charlotte Danielson *Framework for Teaching*. The report also includes our evaluation of the sample English language arts and math assignments we collected to assess grade-level alignment to college and career ready standards.

We appreciate the assistance your staff gave the monitoring team in conducting the QSR at Friendship Public Charter School – Southeast Academy Middle.

Sincerely,

Rashida Young Chief School Performance Officer

Qualitative Site Review Report

Date: August 18, 2022

Campus Information

Campus Name: Friendship Public Charter School (PCS) – Southeast Academy Middle (Southeast Middle)
Ward: 5
Grade levels: Fourth through eighth

Qualitative Site Review Information

Reason for Visit: School eligible for 25-year charter review during school year 2022 – 23 Two-week Window: March 28 – April 8, 2022 QSR Team Members: One DC PCSB staff member and two consultants, including one special education (SPED) specialist Number of Observations: 11 Total Enrollment: 348 Students with Disabilities Enrollment: 67 English Learners Enrollment: 0 In-seat Attendance on Observation Days: Visit 1: April 5, 2022 – 90.7% Visit 2: April 7, 2022 – 81.3%

<u>Summary</u>

Friendship PCS's mission is to:

Provide a world-class education that motivates students to achieve high academic standards, enjoy learning, and develop as ethical, literate, wellrounded and self-sufficient citizens who contribute actively to their communities.

The Qualitative Site Review (QSR) team observed evidence that Friendship PCS – Southeast Middle is achieving the school's mission. Teachers engaged students in rigorous academic content as they read and analyzed text, utilized graphic organizers, and engaged in critical conversations with their peers. Most students engaged respectfully with their peers and followed established routines and procedures. Teachers often used subtle redirections in response to minor instances of student misbehavior. In some observations, teachers' attempts at redirecting student behavior were unsuccessful, and some used harsh reprimands.

During the two-week observation window, the team used the Charlotte Danielson *Framework for Teaching* to examine classroom environment and instruction (see

Appendices I and II). The QSR team scored 80% of observations as distinguished or proficient in the <u>Classroom Environment</u> domain. The highest-performing component in this domain was 2b, "Establishing a Culture for Learning" with 100% of observations rated as distinguished or proficient. Most teachers held high standards for student engagement and participation. Most teachers encouraged students to participate, explain their thinking, and use academic vocabulary. The QSR team scored 82% of observations as distinguished or proficient in the <u>Instruction</u> domain. The highest-performing component in this domain was 3a, "Communicating with Students" with 100% of observations rated as "proficient." Teachers stated clearly what students would be learning and often modeled activities to ensure students understood. A breakdown of the scores by component can be found below.¹

Percent	2a	2b	2c	2d	3 a	3b	3с	3d
Unsatisfactory	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
Basic	30%	0%	20%	30%	0%	33%	20%	20%
Proficient	40%	90%	80%	30%	100%	67%	80%	80%
Distinguished	30%	10%	0%	40%	0%	0%	0%	0%
Subdomain Average	3.00	3.10	2.80	3.10	3.00	2.67	2.80	2.80

	Domain 2	Domain 3
% Proficient or above	80%	82%
Domain Averages	3.00	2.82

Specialized Instruction for Students with Disabilities

Prior to the two-week observation window, Friendship PCS – Southeast Middle completed a questionnaire about how it serves its students with disabilities. Reviewers looked for evidence of the school's articulated program. The school stated, "Special Education teachers are content specialists and provide instruction in Math or Reading for up to 2 – 3 different grade levels." The school also noted that general education teachers and special education teachers work collaboratively to ensure best practices of instruction are readily available for all learners. DC PCSB observed specialized instruction within the general education setting (inclusion) during three

¹ Each component score is out of four. A breakdown of the critical attributes for each component can be found in Appendices I and II.

different blocks. DC PCSB also observed one math class outside of the general education classroom, in a resource room. DC PCSB found the school implemented its stated SPED program with fidelity. Key trends from the SPED observations are summarized below:

- <u>General Education (Inclusion)</u>: DC PCSB observed three inclusion classrooms. DC PCSB observed the One Teach, One Assist co-teaching model in two of the inclusion classrooms. Under this model, one teacher takes primary responsibility for delivering whole-class instruction while the other assists. In both observations, the general education teacher facilitated guided instruction, while the special education teacher circulated the classroom monitoring student progress and providing individualized assistance and support to students as needed. DC PCSB observed the following accommodations, modifications, and supports: repetition and clarity of instruction, redirection, reteaching of concepts, modeling of instructional tasks, use of small, individual white boards, scribing and highlighting, and supporting groups with an extended time testing accommodation.
- Outside of General Education (Resource): DC PCSB observed one resource math class. The SPED specialist saw the following strategies, accommodations, modifications and supports: repetition and clarity of instruction and directions, redirection, reteaching of concepts, modeling of instructional tasks, extended time, visual aids for steps for tasks, drawing representation for response to questions, use of small, individual white boards and modified instruction in which foundational math skills were targeted.

CLASSROOM ENVIRONMENT²

This table summarizes the school's performance on the <u>Classroom Environment</u> 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 80% of classrooms as "distinguished" or "proficient" for the <u>Classroom Environment</u> domain. Please see Appendix I for a breakdown of each subdomain score.

Classroom Environment	Evidence	School Wide R	ating
Creating an Environment of Respect and Rapport	The QSR team rated 70% of observations as distinguished or proficient in this component. In the distinguished observations, classroom interactions between teachers and students and among students were highly respectful, reflecting genuine warmth and care. In one observation, the teacher invited a student to the hallway to talk after noticing they were upset. The teacher said, "OK, let's step out here. I want	Distinguished	30%
	to check in with you in the hallway." In another observation the teacher thanked students for their participation saying, "Thanks for being great listeners."		
	In the proficient observations, interactions between teachers and students and among students were uniformly respectful. In one observation, the teacher greeted each student individually as they entered the room. The teacher referred to each student as "Buddy" or "Friend." In another observation, the teacher complimented a student's effort by saying, "That was a great attempt." Across classrooms, students often cheered for their peers who participated or answered problems correctly.	Proficient	40%
	The QSR team scored 30% of observations as basic in this component. In the basic observations, the teacher attempted to redirect student behavior with uneven results. In one observation, one student referred to a peer with an insult. The teacher did not address this behavior. In another observation, a small group of students engaged in off-task behavior for more than half of the observation period. While the teacher attempted to redirect students by telling them to sit down, the attempts were unsuccessful.	Basic	30%
	The QSR team rated none of the observations as unsatisfactory in this component.	Unsatisfactory	0%

² Teachers may be observed more than once by different review team members.

Classroom Environment	Evidence	School Wide R	ating
Establishing a Culture for Learning	The QSR team rated 100% of observations as distinguished or proficient in this component. In the distinguished observation, the classroom was cognitively busy and characterized by a shared belief in learning. In this observation, the teacher said, "Now I know you are a mathematician, but how would I know?" The teacher encouraged the student to show their work. Students in this observation independently referenced charts, graphs, and other materials to enhance their work without being prompted by the teacher. In the proficient observations, teachers held high expectations for all students. In one observation, the teacher said, "I'm not just telling you to do this because I think you can do it—I have seen you do this	Distinguished	10%
	before." In another observation, the teacher led students in a variety of cheers when they answered questions correctly. Across classrooms, teachers insisted that students use precise academic language. In one observation, the teacher told a student to "Try again," when they responded without using a complete sentence.	Proficient	90%
	The QSR team rated none of the observations as basic in this component.	Basic	0%
	The QSR team rated none of the observations as unsatisfactory in this component.	Unsatisfactory	0%
Managing	The QSR team rated 80% of observations as proficient in this component and none as distinguished. In the	Distinguished	0%
Classroom Procedures	proficient observations, efficient routines and procedures led to no loss of instructional time. In one observation, students seamlessly exchanged materials as they switched groups. In another observation, the teacher led students through a multi-step process to complete a turn-and-talk. The teacher started with "Step 1," and all students responded by clapping. All students followed the remaining steps and engaged in discussion with their peers until they were prompted to stop. Across classrooms, teachers used various visual timers and verbal countdowns to maintain student attention and transition between activities.	Proficient	80%

Classroom Environment	Evidence	School Wide R	ating
	The QSR team rated 20% of observations as basic in this component. In the basic observations, instructional time was lost due to inconsistent routines and procedures. In one observation, a transition between groups took several minutes as the teacher repeated the directions and asked students to stop talking. Many students continued to talk. In another observation, students not working directly with the teacher engaged in off-task behavior and off-topic conversations. The students only reengaged occasionally upon the teacher's redirection.	Basic	20%
	The QSR team rated none of the observations as unsatisfactory in this component.	Unsatisfactory	0%
Managing Student Behavior	The QSR team rated 70% of observations as distinguished or proficient in this component. In the distinguished observations, student behavior was entirely appropriate. Students followed established rules and did not require any redirection from the	Distinguished	40%
	teacher. Students listened as their peers shared, took turns in small groups, and raised their hands to participate. In the proficient observations, student behavior was generally appropriate, and any minor instances of student misbehavior were quickly resolved. In one observation, a student engaged in off-task behavior to which the teacher whispered, "First warning." The student immediately got back on task. In another observation, the teacher used an all-class chant, "Back to me in 3,2,1," to redirect students after a transition. Students immediately complied and got back on track.	Proficient	30%
	The QSR team rated 30% of observations as basic in this component. In the basic observations, teacher attempts to redirect student misbehavior were unsuccessful. In one observation, the teacher mentioned they would, "Pull up Class Dojo before I forget," although some students had been engaged in off-task behavior for several minutes already. In another observation, one student used disrespectful language with a teacher. The teacher attempted to redirect the student before asking another adult to remove them from the classroom.	Basic	30%
	The QSR team rated none of the observations as unsatisfactory in this component.	Unsatisfactory	0%

INSTRUCTION

This table summarizes the school's performance on the <u>Instruction</u> 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 82% of classrooms as "distinguished" or "proficient" for the <u>Instruction</u> domain. Please see Appendix II for a breakdown of each subdomain score.

Instruction	Evidence	School Wide R	ating
Communicating	The QSR team rated 100% of observations as proficient and none as distinguished in this	Distinguished	0%
with Students	component. In the proficient observations, teachers clearly communicated what students would be learning. In one observation, the teacher cold called students to repeat the lesson objective before working independently. In another observation, the teacher modeled how to complete a task and explained each step within the process. Across observations, teachers either explicitly modeled or asked students to model for their peers. During the initial lesson introduction, some teachers linked the current task to previously completed assignments and asked students to describe how they were connected.	Proficient	100%
	The QSR team rated none of the observations as basic in this component.	Basic	0%
	The QSR team rated none of the observations as unsatisfactory in this component.	Unsatisfactory	0%
	The QSR team rated 67% of observations proficient	Distinguished	0%
Using Questioning/ Prompts and Discussion Techniques	and none as distinguished in this component. In the proficient observations, teachers used a mix of open-ended questions and prompts designed to promote student thinking. In one observation, the teacher used a turn-and-talk to encourage conversation about the effects of social media. The teacher said, "Turn and talk to your partner," and "How does that make you feel when someone likes your picture?" In another observation, the teacher prompted students to explain their thinking and asked, "What if I asked you to create a tape diagram?" and "What would you do?" Across observations, teachers used a variety of student groupings, including small groups and one-on-one pairs to facilitate academic discussions.	Proficient	67%

Instruction	Evidence	School Wide R	ating
	The QSR team rated 33% of observations as basic in this component. In the basic observations, teachers posed questions that required only recall or led students down a single path of inquiry. In one observation, the teacher exclusively asked rapid fire questions like, "If I add 7, then what?" Across observations, most of teachers' questions did not require students to think critically. For example, questions like, "How many do you see?" dominated the discussion.	Basic	33%
	The QSR team rated none of the observations as unsatisfactory in this component.	Unsatisfactory	0%
Engaging	The QSR team rated 80% of observations as proficient and none as distinguished in this	Distinguished	0%
Students in Learning	component. In the proficient observations, most students intellectually engaged with the lesson. Across classrooms, teachers encouraged students to complete higher order thinking tasks and attempt multiple approaches to solve a problem. In one observation, the teacher set up various literacy centers to support student engagement. Across classrooms, teachers used a variety of materials including white boards, manipulatives, anchor charts, and graphic organizers to maintain student engagement.	Proficient	80%
	The QSR team rated 20% of observations as basic in this component. In the basic observations, students were disengaged. For example, across observations, inconsistencies with lesson pacing led some students to engage in off tasks behavior or sit idle. In some observations, student intellectual engagement was limited, as students solely answered recall questions and completed tasks that were strictly procedural.	Basic	20%
	The QSR team rated none of the observations as unsatisfactory in this component.	Unsatisfactory	0%
Using	The QSR team rated 80% of observations as proficient and none as distinguished in this	Distinguished	0%
Assessment in Instruction	component. In the proficient observations, teachers checked for understanding using multiple methods. In one observation, the teacher circulated the room and gave individual feedback. The teacher said, "Where did this information come from?" and "Remember to cite which paragraph this came from."	Proficient	80%

Instruction	Evidence School Wide R		ating
	The QSR team rated 20% of observations as basic in this component. In the basic observations, teachers gathered evidence of student understanding using a single method. In one observation, the teacher polled the class as a whole and solely asked questions like, "Who is this?" In another observation, the teacher's feedback included simply repeating the directions to the student.	Basic	20%
	The QSR team rated none of the observations as unsatisfactory in this component.	Unsatisfactory	0%

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.

Work Sample Review

DC PCSB reviewed ten student work samples in addition to classroom observations. Friendship PCS – Southeast Middle 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.³ The team reviewed each work sample in the areas of content, practice, and relevance.⁴

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?

	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.

DC PCSB used the criteria below to assign an overall rating to each ELA assignment.⁵

³ See here for more information on the shifts in the college and career ready standards: <u>https://achievethecore.org/category/419/the-shifts.</u>

⁴ Reviewers used this tool for ELA work samples: <u>https://dcpcsb.egnyte.com/dl/Ss1Ffy9Ab7</u>. Reviewers used this tool for Math work samples: <u>https://dcpcsb.egnyte.com/dl/Ca2F7INXId</u>. The review tools are based on The New Teacher Project's report: *The Opportunity Myth, available here:* <u>https://opportunitymyth.tntp.org/</u>.

⁵ The overall assignment rating scale can be found here:

https://dcpcsb.egnyte.com/dl/NteqkVdqCQ/Overall_Assignment_Rating_Scale.pdf_

Of the five ELA samples submitted, four assignments received an overall rating of "sufficient." These assignments integrated speaking and listening standards, were based on a high-quality, grade-appropriate text, and required students to use evidence from the text in their response. One assignment received an overall rating of "minimal." This assignment was based on a high-quality text, but the task did not reach the full depth of the intended grade-level standard. Some evidence is captured below:

- Fourth grade students read an excerpt from a book to compare what was happening in historical context. This assignment was based on a grade-appropriate text, but it did not reach the full depth of the grade-level standard.
- Sixth grade students examined how the structure of a story functions and advances its plot. This assignment was based on a high-quality, grade-appropriate text and required students to use textual evidence in their response.

DC PCSB used the criteria below to assign an overall rating to each math
assignment.

	Content	Practice	Relevance
Sufficient	All the questions on the assignment reach the depth of the targeted grade-level standard(s).	The assignment includes an opportunity to engage with at least one mathematical practice at the appropriate level of depth.	The assignment connects academic content to real-world experiences and allows students to apply math to the real world in a meaningful way. It may also include novel problems.
Minimal	More than half (but not all) of the questions on the assignment reach the depth of the targeted grade-level standard(s).	The assignment includes an opportunity to engage with at least one critical math practice, but not at the level of depth required by the standard.	The assignment connects academic content to real-world experiences, but the problems do not allow students to apply math to the real world in a meaningful way.
No Opportunity	Less than half of the questions on the assignment reach the depth of the targeted grade- level standard.	The assignment provides no opportunity to engage with critical mathematical practices while working on grade-level content.	The assignment does not connect academic content to real-world experiences.

Of the five math samples submitted, two assignments received an overall rating of "sufficient." These assignments reached the appropriate depth of the grade-level standard and allowed student to apply math concepts in a meaningful way. One assignment received an overall rating of "minimal." This assignment did not fully align to the identified grade-level standard. Two assignments received an overall rating of "no opportunity." These assignments did not align with the expectations set by the grade-level standard. Some evidence is captured below:

- Fifth grade students applied their understanding of multi-digit whole numbers to understand that a digit in the ones place value represents ten times as much as the place value to its right and one-tenth as much as the place value to the left. Students used this understanding to solve for area problems. This assignment did not fully align to the identified grade-level standard.
- Sixth grade students had to use their knowledge of dividing fractions to solve a problem. This assignment was based on a real-world problem and reached the full depth of the grade-level standard.