DC PUBLIC CHARTER SCHOOL BOARD

January 5, 2024

Ms. Wendy Pugh, Board Chair
Mr. Justin Lessek, Executive Director
Sojourner Truth Montessori Public Charter School

Dear School Leaders:

The DC Public Charter School Board (DC PCSB) conducts Qualitative Site Reviews to gather and document evidence to support school oversight. DC PCSB identified Sojourner Truth Montessori Public Charter School for a Qualitative Site Review because the school is eligible for its five-year charter review during school year 2024 – 25.

A Qualitative Site Review team conducted on-site reviews of Sojourner Truth Montessori Public Charter School from October 2 – 13, 2023. The team observed 75.0% of the school's core content classes. Observers evaluated classroom environment and instruction, as defined in the Charlotte Danielson *Framework for Teaching*. Additionally, the team reviewed Sojourner Truth Montessori Public Charter School's sample English language arts and math assignments to determine whether the assignments align with grade-appropriate standards. See the team's findings in the enclosed Qualitative Site Review report.

DC PCSB conducted all classroom observations in accordance with the Qualitative Site Review Protocol. See page 7 of the protocol for information about disputing Qualitative Site Review findings.

Sincerely,

Melodi Sampson
Chief School Performance Officer

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Qualitative Site Review (QSR) Report

Sojourner Truth Montessori Public Charter School (Sojourner Truth PCS)			
Year Opened	2020 – 21	**Ward**	5
Grades Served	6 – 10	**Total Enrollment**	287[1]
Students with Disabilities Enrollment	52	**Emerging Multilingual Learners Enrollment**[2]	15

Mission Statement
The mission of the Sojourner Truth School is to empower students to transform the world. Students at Truth will graduate ready for success in college, career, and life. They will serve as active agents in the construction of peace. They will know who they are, what they want, and where they are going. They can walk into any space, find their place, and make a powerful contribution. Truth will achieve this through a Montessori education that fosters student-led classrooms through appropriate environmental structure, enables students to engage in meaningful work with real world applications, and offers a close-knit community where students pursue justice and practice stewardship.

Observation Window	In-Seat Attendance Rate on Observation Day(s)
10/02/23 through 10/13/23	Visit 1. 10/05/23: 72.9% Visit 2. 10/10/23: 75.4% Visit 3. 10/11/23: 71.1%

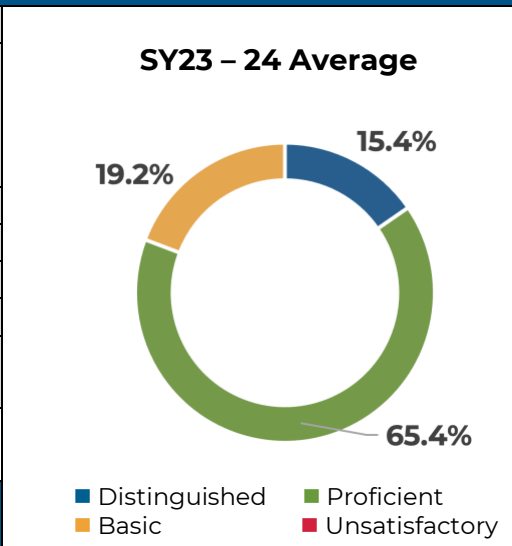
[1] This enrollment figure is based on preliminary, unvalidated data as of the QSR document submission date, September 15, 2023.
[2] DC PCSB updated its terminology referring to charter students learning a new language. Emerging Multilingual Learner (EML) replaces the term English Learner (EL). For more information, see the DC PCSB announcement linked here: https://bit.ly/44plsmb.

Observation Summary

During the two-week observation window, the QSR team used the Charlotte Danielson *Framework for Teaching* to examine classroom environment and instruction at Sojourner Truth PCS. The QSR team comprised five DC PCSB staff members and consultants, including one special education expert and one English learner expert.

In the Classroom Environment domain, the average was 2.96, indicating an overall rating just below proficient. The QSR team scored 80.8% of observations as distinguished or proficient in the classroom environment domain. The highest performing component in this domain was 2d, "Managing Student Behavior," with 92.4% of observations rated as distinguished or proficient. Across observations, student behavior was generally appropriate. Teachers also praised students' positive behavior. See below for a breakdown of scores by component:[3]

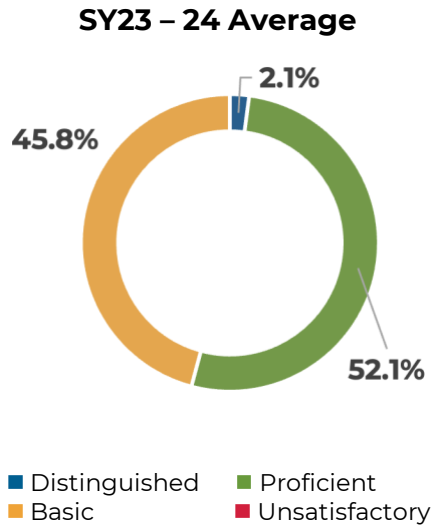
Domain	Classroom Environment				
Component	**2a** Creating an Environment of Respect and Rapport	**2b** Establishing a Culture for Learning	**2c** Managing Classroom Procedures	**2d** Managing Student Behavior	**2e**[4] Organizing Physical Space
Distinguished	7.7%	0%	7.7%	46.2%	0%
Proficient	76.9%	61.5%	76.9%	46.2%	84.6%
Basic	15.4%	38.5%	15.4%	7.7%	15.4%
Unsatisfactory	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
Component Average	**2.92**	**2.62**	**2.92**	**3.38**	**2.85**
Domain Average	**2.96**				
% Proficient or above	**80.8%**				



[3] Each component score is out of four. See Appendices I and II for a detailed description of each level of performance.
[4] Component 2e, "Organizing Physical Space" is not included in the "Domain Average," nor is it included in the "% Proficient or above" rate. While this component has been part of the 2013 edition of the Charlotte Danielson *Framework for Teaching*, SY 2023 – 24 is the first year in which DC PCSB pilots the evaluation of 2e. DC PCSB expects to evaluate component 2e beginning in SY 2024 – 25 officially.

In the Instruction domain, the average was 2.54, indicating an overall rating right between basic and proficient. The QSR team scored 54.2% of observations as distinguished or proficient in the instruction domain. The highest performing component in this domain was 3a, "Communicating with Students," with 84.6% of observations rated as distinguished or proficient. In most observations, teachers stated clearly what students would be learning. See below for a breakdown of scores by component:[5]

Domain	Instruction				
Component	**3a** Communicating with Students	**3b** Using Questioning and Discussion Techniques	**3c** Engaging Students in Learning	**3d** Using Assessment in Instruction	**3e**[6] Demonstrating Flexibility and Responsiveness
Distinguished	7.7%	0%	0%	0%	0%
Proficient	76.9%	22.2%	69.2%	30.8%	41.7%
Basic	15.4%	77.8%	30.8%	69.2%	58.3%
Unsatisfactory	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
Component Average	**2.92**	**2.22**	**2.69**	**2.31**	**2.42**
Domain Average	**2.54**				
% Proficient or above	**54.2%**				



[5] Each component score is out of four. See Appendices I and II for a detailed description of each level of performance.
[6] Component 3e, "Demonstrating Flexibility and Responsiveness," is not included in the "Domain Average," nor is it included in "% Proficient or above" rate. While this component has been part of the 2013 edition of the Charlotte Danielson *Framework for Teaching*, SY 2023 – 24 is the first year in which DC PCSB pilots the evaluation of 3e. DC PCSB expects to evaluate component 3e beginning in SY 2024 – 25 officially.

Specialized Instruction for Students with Disabilities

Before the two-week observation window, Sojourner Truth PCS completed a questionnaire about how it serves students with disabilities. According to the school, Sojourner Truth PCS tailors instruction to each student's developmental needs. In the questionnaire, the school emphasized use of 1:1 or small group lessons from either the general education teacher or special education teacher to provide specialized instruction. DC PCSB observed specialized instruction in both co-teaching and self-contained settings. Reviewers looked for evidence of the school's articulated program. Overall, DC PCSB found the school implements its stated special education program with fidelity.

In the Classroom Environment domain, the special education observations' average was 3.08, indicating an overall rating just above proficient. In the Instruction domain, the special education observations' average was 2.92, indicating an overall rating just below proficient. See below for a breakdown of scores by component:[7]

Domain	Classroom Environment					Instruction				
Component	**2a**	**2b**	**2c**	**2d**	**2e**	**3a**	**3b**	**3c**	**3d**	**3e**
Component Average	3.33	3.00	3.00	3.00	3.00	3.33	3.00	3.00	2.33	3.00
Domain Average	**3.08**					**2.92**				

Key trends from the special education observations are summarized below.

- **Co-teaching:** DC PCSB observed one math co-taught inclusion classroom. The teachers divided the classroom into two small groups with some students working independently on the periphery of the small groups. The two classroom teachers engaged 10 – 14 students per group in the work-cycle. The co-taught class used parallel teaching; each teacher taught a separate group a different lesson. In both small groups, each co-teacher facilitated content delivery and supported students throughout the learning block. In each small group, students used the teacher and their classmates as a resource. In one small group, a student stated, "Oh, now I understand. I'm going to change my answer." Afterward, a classmate explained their reason for choosing their answer to a question. DC PCSB observed the following accommodations: clarification/repetition of

[7] Each component score is out of four. See Appendices I and II for a detailed description of each level of performance.

directions, wait-time for students process verbal responses to questions, read-aloud by an adult reader, ongoing checks for understanding, and guided notes.

- **Self-contained:** DC PCSB observed two self-contained classrooms. The classrooms were both supported by two adults, including at least one special education teacher. In one observation, there were two adults and two students. The adults worked one-on-one with the students. In the other observation, there were two adults and one student. Both adults worked with the student, interacting and supporting the student as they engaged in the learning activities. DC PCSB observed the following accommodations: clarification/repetition of directions, wait-time for the student to process verbal responses, modeling, breaks, read-aloud by an adult reader, and ongoing checks for understanding. In one classroom, the teacher referred to a poster on the board with various examples of annotation codes (e.g., circle, underline, question mark). The student used this support as they selected an annotation to use while reading a passage. In another observation, the student reviewed a Venn diagram that compared and contrasted animal cells to plant cells. The student pretended to teach the lesson to the teachers, starting with, “What do you see?” In both observations, the teachers were familiar with the content and understood the needs of their students.

Specialized Instruction for Emerging Multilingual Learners

Before the two-week observation window, Sojourner Truth PCS completed a questionnaire about how it serves emerging multilingual learners (EMLs). According to the school, Sojourner Truth PCS teachers use clear English and scaffolding strategies to present students with skills and concepts that are equivalent to those taught in mainstream content courses. DC PCSB observed specialized instruction in the inclusion/push-in setting. Reviewers looked for evidence of the school's articulated program. Overall, DC PCSB found the school implements its stated EML program with fidelity.

In the Classroom Environment domain, the EML observations' average was 3.50, indicating an overall rating right between proficient and distinguished. In the Instruction domain, the EML observations' average was 3.00, indicating an overall rating of proficient. See below for a breakdown of scores by component:[8]

Domain	Classroom Environment					Instruction				
Component	**2a**	**2b**	**2c**	**2d**	**2e**	**3a**	**3b**[9]	**3c**	**3d**	**3e**
Component Average	3.00	3.00	4.00	4.00	3.00	3.00	—	3.00	3.00	—
Domain Average	**3.50**					**3.00**				

Key trends from the EML observations are summarized below.

- **Access to Grade-level Content:** During the observations, teachers ensured that emerging multilingual learners could access the same grade-level content their English-speaking peers were completing. The teacher included scaffolds such as translating content to Spanish and one-on-one work time with students. Students were also able to give their responses in Spanish and then the teacher and student would translate the response to English. Additionally, the teacher guided students to pre-selected sections of the text to guide student understanding. As a result, students were able to complete the grade-level task.

[8] Each component score is out of four. See Appendices I and II for a detailed description of each level of performance.
[9] The QSR team for Sojourner Truth PCS's EML program did not have sufficient evidence to rate components 3b, "Using Questioning and Discussion Techniques and 3e, "Demonstrating Flexibility and Responsiveness." This is noted by an em dash, "—".

Classroom Environment[10]

This table summarizes the school's performance in the Classroom Environment domain during the unannounced visits. The rating categories—"distinguished," "proficient," "basic," and "unsatisfactory"—come from the *Framework for Teaching*.[11] The QSR team scored 80.8% of classrooms as "distinguished" or "proficient" in the Classroom Environment domain.

CLASSROOM ENVIRONMENT COMPONENT	SCHOOL WIDE RATING AND EVIDENCE
2a. Creating an Environment of Respect and Rapport	The QSR team rated **7.7%** of observations as **distinguished** in this component. In the distinguished observation, the two co-teachers demonstrated knowledge and care about individual students' lives beyond the classroom. As the class reviewed a graphic organizer, a student asked to be recorded so they could show their mother what they learned. The student pretended to teach the content, saying, "Alright, make sure that you have your notebook out and write this down as I go over it." At the end of the lesson, the teachers praised the student: "You did such a good job. Your mom is going to be happy today. Keep it up."
	The QSR team rated **76.9%** of observations as **proficient** in this component. In the proficient observations, talk between teachers and students, and among students was uniformly respectful. In one observation, the teacher gave a student a fist bump and said, "It's good to see you." In the same observation, a student apologized for answering a question incorrectly. The teacher responded, "It's OK, even geniuses make mistakes." In another observation, a student briefly spoke over a classmate. Teacher stated, "I really want them [the other student] to respond." The interrupting student apologized, and the teacher responded, "That's OK, baby." Teachers made general connections with individual students. In one observation, the teacher connected with a student saying, "[Student name], you're a techie. You know all the gadgets." In another observation, the teacher announced, "Raise your hand if you're playing volleyball." When one student responded, the teacher said, "I'll be there to support you."

[10] The QSR team may observe teachers more than once by different review team members.
[11] For details, see the framework's "Classroom Environment Observation Rubric," available in Appendix I.

CLASSROOM ENVIRONMENT COMPONENT	SCHOOL WIDE RATING AND EVIDENCE
	The QSR team rated **15.4%** of observations as **basic** in this component. In the basic observations, the quality of interactions between teacher and students and among students was uneven with occasional disrespect or insensitivity. In one observation, one teacher pulled a student to the side and yelled, "I have had enough. I am an adult, and you are a child." The same teacher later told the student, "I don't know who the adult is in your house, but children don't talk to me like that." In another observation, one student loudly told another to "Shut up," which caused a brief argument among students. In the same observation, the same student repeatedly interrupted, taunted, and teased classmates.
	The QSR team rated **none** of the observations as **unsatisfactory** in this component.
2b. Establishing a Culture for Learning	The QSR team rated **none** of the observations as **distinguished** in this component.
	The QSR team rated **61.5%** of observations as **proficient** in this component. In the proficient observations, the teacher demonstrated a high regard for students' abilities. In one observation, the teacher called on all students to answer questions about the text's theme. When one student initially stumbled on an answer, the teacher said, "I'm going to come back to you." In another observation, when a student's response lacked evidence, the teacher said, "You need to go back and reread the text to see if you can find evidence to defend your topic." The student then went revisited the text. Across proficient observations, teachers insisted on students' precise use of language.
	The QSR team rated **38.5%** of observations as **basic** in this component. In the basic observations, the teacher conveyed high expectations for only some students. In one observation, the teacher provided one-on-one support to a student who asked for help. However, other students sat idle without any support from the teacher. In another observation, the teacher only required a few students to participate while others sat idle. During the lesson, one student solved a problem on the board while other students sat with their backs turned or engaged in non-academic conversations.
	The QSR team rated **none** of the observations as **unsatisfactory** in this component.

CLASSROOM ENVIRONMENT COMPONENT	SCHOOL WIDE RATING AND EVIDENCE
2c. Managing Classroom Procedures	The QSR team rated **7.7%** of observations as **distinguished** in this component. In the distinguished observation, with minimal prompting by the teacher, students ensured that their time was used productively. In one observation, students were on task for the entirety of the observation. The projection displayed a timer with instructions and students relied on one another to stay on task. Students also took initiative in distributing and collecting materials effectively. In one observation, a classroom helper periodically gave the class time-checks and gave directions for how to clean up materials. All students respected the student helper, paying close attention when the helper spoke.
	The QSR team rated **76.9%** of observations as **proficient** in this component. In the proficient observations, students were productively engaged during small-group or independent work. In one observation, students independently set up their notebooks and wrote purposes and procedures for a lab. In another observation, students worked in pairs or individually on Chrome books without ongoing support from the teacher. Classroom routines functioned smoothly. In one observation, students followed the rotation schedule posted on the classroom screen. In another observation, the teacher had a process for quickly and efficiently transitioning students to small groups. The teacher called students by name, and within a few minutes, they were seated with their books and engaged in an academic conversation. Across classrooms, teachers successfully used different chime signals (e.g., ringing once, ringing three times) to get students' attention or transition them between activities.
	The QSR team rated **15.4%** of observations as **basic** in this component. In the basic observations, classroom routines functioned unevenly. In one observation, the class lost significant instructional time due to inefficient and inconsistent routines. In this observation, both teachers were confused about which students should be in which groups and where they should be seated. One teacher asked another, "So, where is he supposed to be?" The other teacher responded, "I don't know." In the same observation, when a student sat with the incorrect group, one teacher asked, "Are you supposed to be here?" The student responded, "I don't know where I'm supposed to be." This continued for much of the observation. At one point, the teacher even left the room to gather students who were in the incorrect classroom.

CLASSROOM ENVIRONMENT COMPONENT	SCHOOL WIDE RATING AND EVIDENCE
	In another observation, the teacher provided coaching and feedback to some individual students. Other students who had finished the task were allowed to socialize and engage in casual conversation.
	The QSR team rated **none** of the observations as **unsatisfactory** in this component.
2d. Managing Student Behavior	The QSR team rated **46.2%** of observations as **distinguished** in this component. Across the distinguished observations, student behavior was entirely appropriate. In one observation, there were no instances of misbehavior. Further, the teacher silently and subtly monitored student behavior. As students worked, the teacher circulated the classroom, ensuring students were on task. In another observation, the assisting co-teacher frequently circulated the classroom, addressing questions and providing feedback. As a result, there was no space or time for students to engage in off-task behaviors.
	The QSR team rated **46.2%** of observations as **proficient** in this component. In the proficient observations, student behavior was generally appropriate. In one observation, a student spoke over a peer as they were talking. When corrected by the teacher, the student apologized to their classmate. In another observation, students listened respectfully as their peers shared in small groups and waited for their turn before sharing. Across proficient observations, standards of conduct appear to have been established and implemented successfully. In one observation, students raised their hands to be called on and followed established routines. Across classrooms, teachers praised students for their positive behavior. One teacher said, "I love how you are working," and "That was awesome."
	The QSR team rated **7.7%** of observations as **basic** in this component. This represents one observation. DC PCSB only reports qualitative evidence for a single observation when the performance is rated distinguished or proficient.
	The QSR team rated **none** of the observations as **unsatisfactory** in this component.
2e. Organizing Physical Space	The QSR team rated **none** of the observations as **distinguished** in this component.
	The QSR team rated **84.6%** of observations as **proficient** in this component. In the proficient observations, classrooms were arranged to support the instructional goals and learning

CLASSROOM ENVIRONMENT COMPONENT	SCHOOL WIDE RATING AND EVIDENCE
	activities. In one observation, students arranged the chairs in a circle for the Morning Meeting. In another observation, the teachers grouped furniture to accommodate content-based station rotations. Across classrooms, student desks were organized in a way that allowed for freedom of movement when working collaboratively and transitioning between activities. One classroom had lounge-style seating where students could read independently or work with their peers. In most classrooms, teachers had at least one designated area where students could comfortably work independently away from the group.
	The QSR team rated **15.4%** of observations as **basic** in this component. In the basic observations, the physical space did not impede learning, but it did not enhance it. In one observation, the classroom was separated by a small partition to create two distinct spaces where teachers taught simultaneously. Ongoing behavior issues on one side of the room distracted students on the other side of the room who disengaged from their lesson. Desks in this classroom were close together. Their proximity made one student's behavior more impactful to several students seated next to them. In another observation, student desks were arranged in a U-shaped discussion-style layout with most students seated in pairs. One co-teacher sat at a desk at the top of the U to deliver content. The other co-teacher circulated on the outside of the U answering clarifying questions and reinforcing student effort.
	The QSR team rated **none** of the observations as **unsatisfactory** in this component.

Instruction

This table summarizes the school's performance in the Instruction domain during the unannounced visits. The rating categories—"distinguished," "proficient," "basic," and "unsatisfactory"—come from the *Framework for Teaching*.[12] The QSR team scored 54.2% of classrooms as "distinguished" or "proficient" in the Instruction domain.

INSTRUCTION COMPONENT	SCHOOL WIDE RATING AND EVIDENCE
3a. Communicating with Students	The QSR team rated **7.7%** of observations as **distinguished** in this component. In the distinguished observation, the teacher pointed out possible areas for misunderstanding. The teacher stated, "So I see that a lot of you are doing this [draws on the board]. I want you to remember this [draws on the board]." After their explanation, seven out of 10 students began correcting their work on their papers. Further, the teacher invited students to explain the content to their classmates. A student stated, "The center of dilation is the reference of the distance between two points." The teacher emphasized, "So what did he say? How is he describing it?" Another student said, "Oh, so he is saying…"
	The QSR team rated **76.9%** of observations as **proficient** in this component. In the proficient observations, the teacher stated clearly what students would be learning. Teachers stated the following objectives for the day: • "Today's goal: Book one and questions on topics and themes." • "This week, we will work on solving systems of equations [which] may be review for some and new for others." • "Our lesson goal is to understand the power that different levels of government have." Students also engaged with the learning task, indicating that they understood what they were to do. During one observation, all students were on task for the duration of the observation. Students worked diligently with one another, making it clear that they understood the learning task.
	The QSR team rated **15.4%** of observations as **basic** in this component. In the basic observations, the teacher's explanations of content were purely procedural, with no indication

[12] For details, see the framework's "Instruction Observation Rubric," available in Appendix II.

INSTRUCTION COMPONENT	SCHOOL WIDE RATING AND EVIDENCE
	of how students can think strategically. In one observation, the teacher's content explanations were solely for the purpose of students setting up their notebooks. The teacher stated, "another student should be able to replicate your procedure and get the same results." However, the teacher did not ask students to explain what makes a laboratory procedure repeatable. In another observation, the teacher gave directions without background on any sequence of development. The teacher stated, "I need you to open up two tabs to be successful. Open Summit and open Cycle Power: Research." Later in the same observation, a student asked, "What are we supposed to be doing?" The teacher answered, "You are on your Google Doc. Hit [key stroke command] to delete the whole thing."
	The QSR team rated **none** of the observations as **unsatisfactory** in this component.
3b. Using Questioning and Discussion Techniques	The QSR team rated **none** of the observations as **distinguished** in this component.
	The QSR team rated **22.2%** of observations as **proficient** in this component. In the proficient observations, the teacher used open-ended questions, and invited students to think and offer multiple possible answers. In one observation, the teacher asked, "What has to be true? So, we are dilating what point? So, are we saying that 'a' could be the center, or 'b'? If you think that 'a' could be the center, explain why." Later, in the same lesson, the teacher stated, "In the beginning, I heard that someone thought 'c.' Why? Or why did you change your mind?" In another observation, the teacher led an academic discussion with a small group of students and allowed multiple students to participate. For example, the teacher asked, "So how does the character feel?" and "Does he feel more or less powerful?" In the same observation, with a different small group, the teacher asked, "What historically was happening to make them feel that way?"; "Have you heard of people leaving one place to another for a job?"; and, "What is that called; what have you heard?"
	The QSR team rated **77.8%** of observations as **basic** in this component. In the basic observations, the teacher framed some questions designed to promote student thinking, but many had a single correct answer. In one observation, the teacher asked strictly procedural questions and quickly modeled the task (answering their own questions) when students did

INSTRUCTION COMPONENT	SCHOOL WIDE RATING AND EVIDENCE
	not respond. In another observation, the teacher asked, “Who is in power for each branch in DC?” and “Can the local community make their own laws?” The teacher invited students to respond to teacher-led questioning but did not encourage students to respond directly to one another’s ideas. In one observation, the teacher asked, “Are we a state? Do we in Washington, DC have state powers?” Students answered, “No.” In another observation, the teacher asked, “What does this diagram show about power? The student answered, “Power can be different.” In both examples, the teacher continued with another question without discussion. Across the basic classrooms, students spent most of their time on digital platforms with limited teacher-to-student or student-to-student interaction.
	The QSR team rated **none** of the observations as **unsatisfactory** in this component.
3c. Engaging Students in Learning	The QSR team rated **none** of the observations as **distinguished** in this component.
	The QSR team rated **69.2%** of observations as **proficient** in this component. In the proficient observations, most students intellectually engaged in the lesson. In one observation, all students engaged with a computer program either independently or with a partner. As the teacher circulated to answer questions and model the task for student groups, they actively engaged with the teacher. In another observation, eight out of 10 students actively listened throughout the learning activity. The students worked on their worksheets while the teacher projected the problem statement on the white board. As the teacher and students discussed various answers, the students nodded, took notes, or verbally interjected, "That’s what I had. I think that it's 'a'." Across proficient observations, most learning tasks had multiple correct responses and approaches and encouraged higher-order thinking.
	The QSR team rated **30.8%** of observations as **basic** in this component. In the basic observations, some students were intellectually engaged in the lesson. In one observation, some students chatted while completing their work packet. When other students finished the assignment, they sat idle. The teacher permitted students to socialize and engage in personal conversations while others continued working. In the same observation, a student interrupted the teacher by asking another student an off-topic question. The interrupting student asked

INSTRUCTION COMPONENT	SCHOOL WIDE RATING AND EVIDENCE
	the teacher, “Can you take us to Sky Zone tomorrow?” In another observation, students working directly with the teacher engaged in the work, while others sat idle or held off-topic conversations. The teacher attempted to regain student engagement with mixed success.
	The QSR team rated **none** of the observations as **unsatisfactory** in this component.
3d. Using Assessment in Instruction	The QSR team rated **none** of the observations as **distinguished** in this component.
	The QSR team rated **30.8%** of observations as **proficient** in this component. In the proficient observations, the teacher elicited evidence of student understanding. In one observation, the teacher circulated the classroom, listening to student conversations as students completed their work. The teacher also posed some check-for-understanding questions such as, “Tell me what you think the topic is?” and “What evidence goes with this topic?” In another observation, the teacher assessed student progress by reviewing a checkpoint task, “[Student name] do you have all four links? Did you submit them?” In the same observation, the teacher prompted, “Give me an example of institutional racism.”
	The QSR team rated **69.2%** of observations as **basic** in this component. In the basic observations, teachers offered students vague feedback that did not focus on future improvement. In one observation, the teacher modeled the task, and students simply copied down the steps. In another observation, one student completed a problem for a small group of his peers. As the student walked through each step, the teacher remarked, “I don’t know what he’s doing. He’s going to have to explain this to us.” The teacher did not provide any feedback in the moment as the student completed the problem. Across the basic observations, there was little evidence that students understood how their work would be evaluated. In one observation, the teacher did not provide students any criteria for success. One student asked, “If I paraphrase, then will I get a better grade?" The teacher’s response did not address any criteria: “The goal is to prepare for the lab.”
	The QSR team rated **none** of the observations as **unsatisfactory** in this component.
	The QSR team rated **none** of the observations as **distinguished** in this component.

INSTRUCTION COMPONENT	SCHOOL WIDE RATING AND EVIDENCE
3e. Demonstrating Flexibility and Responsiveness	The QSR team rated **41.7%** of observations as **proficient** in this component. In the proficient observations, the teacher incorporated students' interests into the heart of the lesson. In one observation, the teacher connected student learning to their personal experiences by asking if students had ever experienced hunger like a character in the story. Some students responded initially while others built on their peers' responses. When improvising became necessary, the teacher adjusted the lesson. In one observation, the teacher readjusted the schedule to work on an annotation learning activity to include breaks for specific students. In another observation, the teacher moved the students to whole-group work instead of individual work. The teacher said, "I can see that some people are having trouble with this so let's discuss."
	The QSR team rated **58.3%** of observations as **basic** in this component. In the basic observations, teachers' attempts to adjust the lesson were partially successful. In one observation, the teacher attempted to model for students who did not understand. However, when students didn't respond, the teacher quickly resorted to giving students the answer. In another observation, the teacher asked a student to model a problem, but did not provide any direct feedback. During the modeling, many students disengaged (along with the teacher). Later, the teacher simply gave students the answer without connecting to the student model. The teacher conveyed to students a level of responsibility for their learning but also had uncertainty about how to assist them. In one observation, the teacher said, "Another student should be able to replicate your procedure and get the same results." However, the teacher did not provide any support about how students could achieve reproducible procedural writing. The teacher had an exemplar but did not display it or provide excerpts for the students. In another observation, the teacher worked one-on-one with a student who acknowledged, "I need help." However, the teacher did not offer strategies to support idle students.
	The QSR team rated **none** of the observations as **unsatisfactory** in this component.

Assignment Review

DC PCSB staff and The New Teacher Project (TNTP) consultants reviewed sample English language arts (ELA) and math assignments Sojourner Truth PCS students received. The campus submitted five ELA samples and five math samples covering a range of grade levels and assignment types. Evaluators used TNTP's *Assignment Review Protocol* to assess whether the assignments:

1. aligned with the expectations defined by grade-level standards,
2. provided students with meaningful practice opportunities, and
3. gave students an opportunity to connect academic standards to real-world issues.[13]

Upon review, evaluators rated each assignment as "sufficient," "minimal," or "no opportunity," describing the opportunity students had to meaningfully engage in worthwhile grade-level content.[14, 15]

Assignments are rated out of six total points across three domains (e.g., Content, Practice, and Relevance).[14] Each domain rating has a numerical value:

- Sufficient - 2 points
- Minimal - 1 point
- No Opportunity - 0 points

Then, the domain ratings are summed to get an overall score out of six points. Sufficient assignments require a minimum of four points.[15]

Of the five ELA samples submitted, four assignments received an overall rating of "sufficient." These assignments were aligned to a high-quality, grade-appropriate text, and reached the depth of the targeted standards. These assignments also allowed students an opportunity to use their personal voice. One assignment received an overall rating of "minimal." This assignment was also based on a high-quality, grade-appropriate text. However, the accompanying questions did not reach the full depth of the standard or students did not have an opportunity to use their personal voice. Evidence is captured below:

[13] See the ELA Assignment Review Protocol here: https://bit.ly/3eSEXQe. See the Math Assignment Review Protocol here: https://bit.ly/3UavzHI. These evaluation tools are based on TNTP's study, *The Opportunity Myth*, available here: https://bit.ly/2Dv7yId.
[14] For details, see a breakdown of each rating in Appendix III.
[15] For information about determining overall ratings, see the description and scale in Appendix IV.

Assignment	Grade Level	Task Description	Rating		Evidence
Sample 1	6	Students analyzed a character's perspective in *The Revolution of Evelyn Serrano*. They used text evidence to support their claims.	Sufficient	6 points	The assignment was based on a high-quality, grade-appropriate text and contained questions that reached the depth of the grade-level standards. The assignment both integrated standards and required students to use what they learn from the text in a grade-appropriate way. The assignment built grade-appropriate knowledge and gave students a chance to use their voice.
Sample 2	8	Students analyzed dialogue from *Watched* by Marina Budhos. Students developed a claim and used dialogue from the text to support that claim.	Sufficient	6 points	The assignment was based on a high-quality, grade-appropriate text and contained questions that reached the depth of the grade-level standards. The assignment both integrated standards and required students to use what they learn from the text in a grade-appropriate way. The assignment built grade-appropriate knowledge and gave students a chance to use their voice.
Sample 3	8	Students identified contrasting viewpoints of characters in *The Revolution of Evelyn Serrano*. Students explained the effect of those contrasting viewpoints.	Sufficient	5 points	The assignment was based on a high-quality, grade-appropriate text and contained questions that reached the depth of the grade-level standards. The assignment required students to use what they learn from the text in a grade-appropriate way. The assignment built grade-appropriate knowledge and gave students a chance to use their voice.

Assignment	Grade Level	Task Description	Rating		Evidence
Sample 4	9	Students identified themes in the Bible's Genesis 1 – 2:4. Students picked one theme to expand upon. They focused on how the theme was developed throughout the text.	Sufficient	6 points	The assignment was based on a high-quality, grade-appropriate text and contained questions that reached the depth of the grade-level standards. The assignment both integrated standards and required students to use what they learn from the text in a grade-appropriate way. The assignment built grade-appropriate knowledge and gave students a chance to use their voice.
Sample 5	7	Students read *The Revolution of Evelyn Serrano* and identified various aspects of the text in a graphic organizer (setting, characters, plot, etc.)	Minimal	2 points	The assignment was based on a high-quality, grade-appropriate text but did not contain questions that reached the depth of the grade-level standards. The assignment did not require students to use what they learned from the text in a grade-appropriate way. The assignment built grade-appropriate knowledge, but it did not give students a chance to use their voice.

Of the five math samples submitted, two assignments received an overall rating of "sufficient." These assignments aligned to a grade-level standard at the appropriate depth. These assignments also provided students the opportunity to engage with a critical mathematical practice. One of these assignments engaged students in real-world application problems. Three assignments received an overall rating of "no opportunity." Two assignments were topically aligned to grade-level standards, but they did not meet the full depth of the standard. One assignment was not aligned to a grade-level standard. Evidence is captured below:

Assignment	Grade Level	Task Description	Rating		Evidence
Sample 1	6	Students completed practice problems to show their understanding of parallelograms. Students identified properties and calculated area of parallelograms.	Sufficient	4 points	The assignment aligned to grade-level standards at the appropriate depth. Students had the opportunity to engage with a critical mathematical practice at the appropriate depth. The assignment did not include real-world application problems for students to apply their mathematical thinking in an appropriate way.
Sample 2	7	Students engaged with application problems to calculate the scale factor.	Sufficient	6 points	The assignment aligned to a grade-level standard at the appropriate depth. Students had the opportunity to engage with a critical mathematical practice at the appropriate depth. Students engaged with real-world application problems and were able to apply their mathematical thinking in a meaningful way.
Sample 3	8	Students completed a worksheet to identify translations on a coordinate plane.	No Opportunity	1 point	The assignment aligned topically to grade-level standards but did not meet the full depth of the grade-level standards. Students did not have the opportunity to engage with a critical mathematical practice or apply their mathematical thinking in a meaningful way.
Sample 4	8	Students completed a worksheet to identify translations on a coordinate plane.	No Opportunity	1 point	The assignment aligned topically to grade-level standards but did not meet the full depth of the grade-level standards. Students did not have the opportunity to engage with a critical mathematical practice or apply their mathematical thinking in a meaningful way.

Assignment	Grade Level	Task Description	Rating		Evidence
Sample 5	Algebra II	Students determined if the relations are functions and defined the domain and range.	No Opportunity	0 points	The assignment did not align to a course-level standard. Students did not have the opportunity to engage with a critical mathematical practice or apply their mathematical thinking in a meaningful way.

APPENDIX I: THE CLASSROOM ENVIRONMENT OBSERVATION RUBRIC[16]

Classroom Environment	Unsatisfactory	Basic	Proficient	Distinguished
2a. Creating an Environment of Respect and Rapport	Patterns of classroom interactions, both between teacher and students and among students, are mostly negative, inappropriate, or insensitive to students' ages, cultural backgrounds, and developmental levels. Student interactions are characterized by sarcasm, put-downs, or conflict. The teacher does not deal with disrespectful behavior.	Patterns of classroom interactions, both between teacher and students and among students, are generally appropriate but may reflect occasional inconsistencies, favoritism, and disregard for students' ages, cultures, and developmental levels. Students rarely demonstrate disrespect for one another. The teacher attempts to respond to disrespectful behavior, with uneven results. The net result of the interactions is neutral, conveying neither warmth nor conflict.	Teacher-student interactions are friendly and demonstrate general caring and respect. Such interactions are appropriate to the ages, cultures, and developmental levels of the students. Interactions among students are generally polite and respectful, and students exhibit respect for the teacher. The teacher responds successfully to disrespectful behavior among students. The net result of the interactions is polite, respectful, and business-like, though students may be somewhat cautious about taking risks.	Classroom interactions between the teacher and students and among students are highly respectful, reflecting genuine warmth, caring, and sensitivity to students as individuals. Students exhibit respect for the teacher and contribute to high levels of civility among all members of the class. The net result is an environment where all students feel valued are comfortable taking intellectual risks.
2b. Establishing a Culture for Learning	The classroom culture is characterized by a lack of teacher or student commitment to learning, and/or little or no investment of student energy in the task at hand. Hard work and the precise use of language are not expected or valued. Medium to low expectations for student achievement are the norm, with high expectations for learning reserved for only one or two students.	The classroom culture is characterized by little commitment to learning by the teacher or students. The teacher appears to be only "going through the motions," and students indicate that they are interested in the completion of a task rather than the quality of the work. The teacher conveys that student success is the result of natural ability rather than hard work, and refers only in passing to the precise use of language. High expectations for learning are reserved for those students thought to have a natural aptitude for the subject.	The classroom culture is a place where learning is valued by all; high expectations for both learning and hard work are the norm for most students. Students understand their role as learners and consistently expend effort to learn. Classroom interactions support learning, hard work, and the precise use of language.	The classroom culture is a cognitively busy place, characterized by a shared belief in the importance of learning. The teacher conveys high expectations for learning for all students and insists on hard work; students assume responsibility for high quality by initiating improvements, making revisions, adding detail, and/or assisting peers in their precise use of language.
2c. 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.

[16] Danielson, C. (2014). *The Framework for Teaching: Evaluation Instrument* (2013 ed.). The Danielson Group.

Classroom Environment	Unsatisfactory	Basic	Proficient	Distinguished
2d. 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.
2e. Organizing Physical Space	The classroom environment is unsafe, or learning is not accessible to many. There is poor alignment between the arrangement of furniture and resources, including computer technology, and the lesson activities.	The classroom is safe, and essential learning is accessible to most students. The teacher makes modest use of physical resources, including computer technology. The teacher attempts to adjust the classroom furniture for a lesson or, if necessary, to adjust the lesson to the furniture, but with limited effectiveness.	The classroom is safe, and students have equal access to learning activities; the teacher ensures that the furniture arrangement is appropriate to the learning activities and uses physical resources, including computer technology, effectively.	The classroom environment is safe, and learning is accessible to all students, including those with special needs. The teacher makes effective use of physical resources, including computer technology. The teacher ensures that the physical arrangement is appropriate to the learning activities. Students contribute to the use or adaptation of the physical environment to advance learning.

APPENDIX II: INSTRUCTION OBSERVATION RUBRIC[17]

Instruction	Unsatisfactory	Basic	Proficient	Distinguished
3a. Communicating with Students	The instructional purpose of the lesson is unclear to students, and the directions and procedures are confusing. The teacher's explanation of the content contains major errors and does not include any explanation of strategies students might use. The teacher's spoken or written language contains errors of grammar or syntax. The teacher's academic vocabulary is inappropriate, vague, or used incorrectly, leaving students confused.	The teacher's attempt to explain the instructional purpose has only limited success, and/or directions and procedures must be clarified after initial student confusion. The teacher's explanation of the content may contain minor errors; some portions are clear, others difficult to follow. The teacher's explanation does not invite students to engage intellectually or to understand strategies they might use when working independently. The teacher's spoken language is correct but uses vocabulary that is either limited or not fully appropriate to the students' ages or backgrounds. The teacher rarely takes opportunities to explain academic vocabulary.	The instructional purpose of the lesson is clearly communicated to students, including where it is situated within broader learning; directions and procedures are explained clearly and may be modeled. The teacher's explanation of content is scaffolded, clear, and accurate and connects with students' knowledge and experience. During the explanation of content, the teacher focuses, as appropriate, on strategies students can use when working independently and invites student intellectual engagement. The teacher's spoken and written language is clear and correct and is suitable to students' ages and interests. The teacher's use of academic vocabulary is precise and serves to extend student understanding.	The teacher links the instructional purpose of the lesson to the larger curriculum; the directions and procedures are clear and anticipate possible student misunderstanding. The teacher's explanation of content is thorough and clear, developing conceptual understanding through clear scaffolding and connecting with students' interests. Students contribute to extending the content by explaining concepts to their classmates and suggesting strategies that might be used. The teacher's spoken and written language is expressive, and the teacher finds opportunities to extend students' vocabularies, both within the discipline and for more general use. Students contribute to the correct use of academic vocabulary.
3b. Using Questioning and Discussion Techniques	The teacher's questions are of low cognitive challenge, with single correct responses, and are asked in rapid succession. Interaction between the teacher and students is predominantly recitation style, with the teacher mediating all questions and answers; the teacher accepts all contributions without asking students to explain their reasoning. Only a few students participate in the discussion.	The teacher's questions lead students through a single path of inquiry, with answers seemingly determined in advance. Alternatively, the teacher attempts to ask some questions designed to engage students in thinking, but only a few students are involved. The teacher attempts to engage all students in the discussion, to encourage them to respond to one another, and to explain their thinking, with uneven results.	While the teacher may use some low-level questions, he poses questions designed to promote student thinking and understanding. The teacher creates a genuine discussion among students, providing adequate time for students to respond and stepping aside when doing so is appropriate. The teacher challenges students to justify their thinking and successfully engages most students in the discussion, employing a range of strategies to ensure that most students are heard.	The teacher uses a variety or series of questions or prompts to challenge students cognitively, advance high-level thinking and discourse, and promote metacognition. Students formulate many questions, initiate topics, challenge one another's thinking, and make unsolicited contributions. Students themselves ensure that all voices are heard in the discussion.

[17] Danielson, C. (2014). *The Framework for Teaching: Evaluation Instrument* (2013 ed.). The Danielson Group.

Instruction	Unsatisfactory	Basic	Proficient	Distinguished
3c. Engaging Students in Learning	The learning tasks/activities, materials, and resources are poorly aligned with the instructional outcomes, or require only rote responses, with only one approach possible. The groupings of students are unsuitable to the activities. The lesson has no clearly defined structure, or the pace of the lesson is too slow or rushed.	The learning tasks and activities are partially aligned with the instructional outcomes but require only minimal thinking by students and little opportunity for them to explain their thinking, allowing most students to be passive or merely compliant. The groupings of students are moderately suitable to the activities. The lesson has a recognizable structure; however, the pacing of the lesson may not provide students the time needed to be intellectually engaged or may be so slow that many students have a considerable amount of "downtime."	The learning tasks and activities are fully aligned with the instructional outcomes and are designed to challenge student thinking, inviting students to make their thinking visible. This technique results in active intellectual engagement by most students with important and challenging content and with teacher scaffolding to support that engagement. The groupings of students are suitable to the activities. The lesson has a clearly defined structure, and the pacing of the lesson is appropriate, providing most students the time needed to be intellectually engaged.	Virtually all students are intellectually engaged in challenging content through well-designed learning tasks and activities that require complex thinking by students. The teacher provides suitable scaffolding and challenges students to explain their thinking. There is evidence of some student initiation of inquiry and student contributions to the exploration of important content; students may serve as resources for one another. The lesson has a clearly defined structure, and the pacing of the lesson provides students the time needed not only to intellectually engage with and reflect upon their learning but also to consolidate their understanding.
3d. Using Assessment in Instruction	Students do not appear to be aware of the assessment criteria, and there is little or no monitoring of student learning; feedback is absent or of poor quality. Students do not engage in self- or peer assessment.	Students appear to be only partially aware of the assessment criteria, and the teacher monitors student learning for the class as a whole. Questions and assessments are rarely used to diagnose evidence of learning. Feedback to students is general, and few students assess their own work.	Students appear to be aware of the assessment criteria, and the teacher monitors student learning for groups of students. Questions and assessments are regularly used to diagnose evidence of learning. Teacher feedback to groups of students is accurate and specific; some students engage in self-assessment.	Assessment is fully integrated into instruction, through extensive use of formative assessment. Students appear to be aware of, and there is some evidence that they have contributed to, the assessment criteria. Questions and assessments are used regularly to diagnose evidence of learning by individual students. A variety of forms of feedback, from both teacher and peers, is accurate and specific and advances learning. Students self-assess and monitor their own progress. The teacher successfully differentiates instruction to address individual students' misunderstandings.

Instruction	Unsatisfactory	Basic	Proficient	Distinguished
3e. Demonstrating Flexibility and Responsiveness	The teacher ignores students' questions; when students have difficulty learning, the teacher blames them or their home environment for their lack of success. The teacher makes no attempt to adjust the lesson even when students don't understand the content.	The teacher accepts responsibility for the success of all students but has only a limited repertoire of strategies to use. Adjustment of the lesson in response to assessment is minimal or ineffective.	The teacher successfully accommodates students' questions and interests. Drawing on a broad repertoire of strategies, the teacher persists in seeking approaches for students who have difficulty learning. If impromptu measures are needed, the teacher makes a minor adjustment to the lesson and does so smoothly.	The teacher seizes an opportunity to enhance learning, building on a spontaneous event or students' interests, or successfully adjusts and differentiates instruction to address individual student misunderstandings. Using an extensive repertoire of instructional strategies and soliciting additional resources from the school or community, the teacher persists in seeking effective approaches for students who need help.

APPENDIX III: ASSIGNMENT REVIEW CRITERIA[18]

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

ELA			
Rating	**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.

[18] These criteria are based on TNTP's (2018) *The Student Experience Toolkit*, available here: https://bit.ly/3YMPUFO.

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

Math			
Rating	**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.

APPENDIX IV: OVERALL ASSIGNMENT RATING SCALE

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

The overall assignment rating is used to reflect whether an assignment is considered grade-appropriate (*Sufficient*) or not grade-appropriate (*Minimal* or *No*), according to the TNTP assignment rating point scale.

There are three domains to the TNTP assignment tools: Content, Practices, and Relevance. Each domain is rated as 2 points (pts) – Sufficient, 1 point – Minimal, or 0 points – No Opportunity.

TNTP's definition of a grade-appropriate assignment is an assignment that receives:

- both possible points (e.g., 2 points) in the Content domain and
- at least 4 out of 6 points across the three domains of the rating scale

Content	Practice	Relevance	Overall Assignment Rating
Sufficient (2 pts)	Sufficient (2 pts)	Sufficient (2 pts)	**Sufficient (6 pts)**
Sufficient (2 pts)	Sufficient (2 pts)	Minimal (1 pt)	**Sufficient (5 pts)**
Sufficient (2 pts)	Sufficient (2 pts)	No (0 pts)	**Sufficient (4 pts)**
Sufficient (2 pts)	Minimal (1 pt)	Minimal (1 pt)	**Sufficient (4 pts)**
Sufficient (2 pts)	Minimal (1 pt)	No (0 pts)	**Minimal (3 pts)**
Minimal (1 pt)	Minimal (1 pt)	Minimal (1 pt)	**Minimal (3 pts)**
Minimal (1 pt)	Minimal (1 pt)	No (0 pts)	**Minimal (2 pts)**
Sufficient (2 pts)	No (0 pts)	No (0 pts)	**Minimal (2 pts)**
Minimal (1 pt)	No (0 pts)	No (0 pts)	**No (1 pt)**
No (0 pts)	No (0 pts)	No (0 pts)	**No (0 pts)**