

QUALITATIVE SITE REVIEW REPORT

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

KIPP DC – Promise Academy PCS (KIPP DC – Promise PCS) serves 400 students in grades one through four in Ward 7. This campus opened in 2009 and is part of the Benning facility. The DC Public Charter School Board (PCSB) conducted a Qualitative Site Review (QSR) in December 2014 because KIPP DC is eligible to petition for 15-year Charter Renewal during the 2015-16 school year.

The QSR team conducted observations over the course of a two-week window, from December through December 12, 2014. A team of two PCSB staff members, a Special Education Consultant and one QSR consultant conducted 11 observations. A PCSB staff member also attended a Board of Trustees meeting on September 17, 2014. The QSR team used Charlotte Danielson’s *Framework for Teaching* Rubric throughout the observations and observed classrooms in mornings and afternoons. In some instances, a QSR team may have observed a teacher twice. The QSR team also collected evidence regarding the school’s stated mission and goals.

The QSR team scored a remarkable 98% of the observations as distinguished or proficient in the Classroom Environment domain with two components: Creating an Environment of Respect and Rapport and Establishing a Culture for Learning receiving the highest scores. Teachers and students spoke to each other in appropriate ways. Students also treated each other with kindness and gently reminded each other to be quiet when entering the classroom when instruction was in progress. Teachers expressed the importance of the content and shared personal interest in the language arts and math topics.

The QSR team scored 84% of the observations as distinguished or proficient in the Instruction domain with Communication with Students and Using Assessment in Instruction receiving the highest scores. Teachers explained directions, expectations, and content in an accessible way to the students. Teachers checked for understanding throughout whole group lessons and monitored the progress of small group activities in the distinguished and proficient observations.

As stated in the special education questionnaires submitted by the schools, KIPP DC believes in a holistic approach when providing case management and special education services for students with disabilities throughout the Benning facility. This was evident during the QSR observations. In many observations both a general education teacher and a special education teacher worked together in the classroom to instruct and serve all students. Additionally students with disabilities had access to related services such as speech, occupational therapy, etc., which were also observed. In all three schools at the Benning facility, the QSR team observed quality instruction and inclusion for students with disabilities. The teachers incorporated manipulatives, small group learning activities, and other supports to engage their students and to ensure that students were learning. The QSR team also observed the genuine excitement and eagerness that many of the students with disabilities expressed, particularly in the resource room and one-on-one settings.

CHARTER MISSION, GOALS, AND ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENT EXPECTATIONS

This table summarizes KIPP DC – Promise Academy PCS’s goals and academic achievement expectations as detailed in its charter and subsequent Accountability Plans, and the evidence that the Qualitative Site Review (QSR) team observed during the Qualitative Site Visit.

Mission and Goals	Evidence
<p>Mission:</p> <p>KIPP DC’s mission is to create and sustain the highest quality school system for the most underserved communities in Washington, DC. KIPP DC students will develop the knowledge, skills, and character necessary to become thoughtful, influential, and successful citizens in the competitive world.</p>	<p>The evidence gathered during this qualitative site review shows that KIPP DC – Promise Academy PCS (KIPP DC – Promise PCS) is working to meet the KIPP DC mission.</p> <p><i>Create and sustain the highest quality school system</i></p> <p>KIPP DC – Promise PCS is part of the Benning facility. This campus serves grades one through four. Many students come from the KIPP DC – LEAP PCS, which serves grades PK3 – Kindergarten. After attending KIPP DC – Promise PCS, students will transition to KIPP DC – Key PCS, which serves grades five through eight. These three schools are located in the same building. The rising 9th graders are eligible to go to KIPP DC – College Prep PCS.</p> <p><i>Develop knowledge, skills, and character</i></p> <p>Teachers emphasized the importance of the lessons and encouraged students to keep trying. Teachers taught skills in all lessons using hands-on and abstract tasks to promote critical thinking and reasoning. Teachers also modeled appropriate social interactions and reminded students to be kind and respectful to each other. Teachers made a point to recognize and reward positive behavior. In one observation the teacher gave groups of students points for working hard, completing their assignment, and following procedures such as lining up at the door quietly.</p>

Mission and Goals	Evidence
	<p><i>Students become thoughtful, influential, and successful in the competitive world</i></p> <p>The QSR team saw teachers who were committed to both high quality instruction and social skill development. Teachers gave students important tasks to carry out in the classroom such as checking other students' work and distributing and collecting materials. Students were empowered to participate in discussions, ask questions, and try new activities. Teachers throughout the school encouraged students and affirmed their beliefs in the students' abilities to be academically successful.</p>
Goals	
<p>Students will demonstrate academic proficiency at a performance level that makes students competitive for outstanding public or private secondary schools of their choice.</p>	<p>While the QSR team did not observe evidence related to secondary schools, students were actively engaged in classroom discussions. Students demonstrated mastery through class work, discussions, and exit tickets. Using the Danielson Framework the QSR team noted that 82% of the teachers successfully used probing questions to inspire higher-order thinking in students. This is one of the highest percentages proficient teachers at any school observed to date.</p>
<p>Students promoted from KIPP DC elementary schools are prepared to succeed in KIPP DC middle and high schools, as well as other competitive schools of their choice.</p>	<p>Teachers provided instructional content that was challenging and engaging. Teachers motivated students to complete their work and provided support when needed. The learning tasks in many observations required high-level student thinking. Most students exhibited interest in the content and strategies. Teachers monitored students and adjusted the pacing of the lesson when needed usually by meeting with an individual or small group to review material.</p>

Mission and Goals	Evidence
Students will have high attendance rates (the school will maintain daily attendance of 93% or greater).	While the QSR team neither looked for nor observed any evidence related to attendance rate, most classrooms had very few empty seats.
Students will benefit from enrichment activities.	The QSR team saw evidence that students at Promise Academy have opportunities to participate in a variety of enrichment activities. Information in the hallway was present for basketball tournaments, running club (Fleet Feet), and after school tutoring.
Principals will create an educational program and foster a school environment that facilitates student academic and social improvement.	The QSR team did not look for or observe any explicit evidence related to this goal however the team saw effective push-in and pullout support being offered to students in all grade levels and content areas.
The Principal will ensure the fiscal and physical sustainability of the school.	The QSR team neither looked for nor observed any evidence related to this goal.
The Board will provide sufficient and effective support to school leaders.	The QSR team neither looked for nor observed any evidence related to this goal.
The school leader will create a culture among staff that facilitates professional growth.	The QSR team neither looked for nor observed any evidence related to this goal.
The school will create an environment in which parents will support and participate in their child's education.	The QSR team neither looked for nor observed any evidence related to this goal. There is a KIPP Parent Organization, but the team did not see any evidence of the impact of the group.

Mission and Goals	Evidence
The school will create a safe environment in which to learn.	The school has a safe and friendly environment. Security guards greeted each visitor at the main door, maintained a visitor log and monitored hallways. The school was welcoming with students and staff maintaining quiet and orderly hallways. Expectations for student behavior were posted in the classrooms.
Governance:	A PCSB staff member attended the KIPP DC Board of Trustees meeting on September 17, 2014. A quorum was present. The attendees included members of the KIPP DC Board of Trustees and a representative from Bain Consulting who would be working with the school on strategic planning. KIPP representatives gave presentations on various aspects of the school's performance. The presentations focused on a discipline report, a finance committee report, a management report, a school performance report, and a real estate update.

THE CLASSROOM ENVIRONMENT¹

This table summarizes the school’s performance on the Classroom Environments 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 98% of the observations as “distinguished” or “proficient” for the Classroom Environment domain.

The Classroom Environment	Evidence Observed	School Wide Rating	
Creating an Environment of Respect and Rapport	The QSR team scored 100% of the observations as distinguished or proficient. Teachers and students demonstrated respectful behavior towards each other. One teacher apologized to students for teaching a problem differently from the way it was asked on the worksheet, and the students quickly paid attention and listened to the teacher’s explanation for how to do the problem on the worksheet. Other teachers expressed caring about students’ lives outside of the classroom asking about weekend events. As teachers circulated to help individuals with academic work, students responded to teachers encouraging comments such as, “I believe in you” and “You can do this!”	Distinguished	18%
		Proficient	82%
	The QSR Team rated none of the observations as basic or unsatisfactory in this component.	Basic	0%
		Unsatisfactory	0%
Establishing a Culture for Learning	The QSR team scored 100% of the observations as distinguished or proficient. Teachers expressed excitement about the content and emphasized the importance of learning. One teacher enthusiastically modeled comparing and contrasting different versions of a fairy tale. The students were engaged in lessons and participated in fruitful discussions.	Distinguished	9%

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

The Classroom Environment	Evidence Observed	School Wide Rating	
	<p>Many teachers used incentive systems in their classrooms to recognize and reward students who were on task. In one classroom the teacher gave students points for working hard and following procedures. Another teacher gave each student a chart that she/he would sign when the student was demonstrating positive behavior and work ethic.</p>	Proficient	91%
	<p>The QSR Team rated none of the observations as basic or unsatisfactory in this component.</p>	Basic	0%
		Unsatisfactory	0%
<p>Managing Classroom Procedures</p>	<p>The QSR team scored 91% of the observations as distinguished or proficient. Routines were well established for transition activities, such as collecting and distributing materials; moving from the rug to desks; and entering the classroom. In the distinguished observations no instructional time was lost during transitions. Students were aware of classroom procedures and accomplished the transitions smoothly, as captured in one observation, where the observer witnessed a student come in the classroom, take off the hallway bib he is wearing, place it on a hook, flip the “Ask for bathroom sign” to green, pick up the whiteboard on his desk, and go to the carpet where other students were sitting, waited for instructions.</p>	Distinguished	27%
		Proficient	64%
	<p>The QSR Team rated less than 10% of the observations as basic and none as unsatisfactory.</p>	Basic	9%
		Unsatisfactory	0%

The Classroom Environment	Evidence Observed	School Wide Rating	
Managing Student Behavior	The QSR team scored 100% of the observations as proficient. Behavior was appropriate and easily corrected by teachers if needed. Teachers' responses to student misbehavior were consistent, respectful, and effective. In one observation the teacher moved to sit by students who were off task, effectively getting them back on track. Teachers used incentive systems to recognize and reward proper behavior in addition to calling out students and groups of students who were on task, working diligently, and following directions.	Distinguished	18%
		Proficient	82%
	The QSR Team rated none of the observations as basic or unsatisfactory.	Basic	0%
		Unsatisfactory	0%

INSTRUCTION

This table summarizes the school’s performance on the Instruction domain of the rubric during the unannounced visits. The label definitions for classroom observations of "distinguished," "proficient," "basic," and "unsatisfactory" are those from the Danielson framework. The QSR team scored 84% of the observations as “distinguished” or “proficient” for the Instruction domain.

Instruction	Evidence Observed	School Wide Rating	
Communicating with Students	<p>The QSR team scored 73% of the observations as distinguished or proficient. Teachers presented the purpose of the lessons in a clear manner. Many teachers stated what the students would be learning, provided clear explanations of the content, invited student participation, and shared strategies for how students could solve the problems on their own.</p>	Distinguished	18%
	<p>In one observation a teacher modeled how to convert fractions using different tools including a number line for decomposing fractions and finding equivalents and a measuring cup as a prop to help a student visualize on eighth. Another teacher introduced a class read aloud by explaining the title, doing a picture walk, and inviting students to make predications about the story.</p>	Proficient	55%
	<p>The QSR Team rated 27% of the observations as basic and none as unsatisfactory in this component. In one classroom, the teacher used very few instructions related to the content matter. The teacher distributed exit tickets without discussing the purpose or expectations. In another observation one teacher exhibited confusion about the science concepts in the lesson and the other teacher in the room did not correct or assist that teacher in clarifying the concepts for the students.</p>	Basic	27%
		Unsatisfactory	0%
Using Questioning/Prompts and Discussion Techniques	<p>The QSR team scored 82% of the observations as proficient and none as distinguished. Teachers probed students’ thinking through the use of open-ended questions when appropriate. Teachers called on many different students and allowed time for students to complete their thoughts and for other students to comment. In one observation the teacher facilitated an in-depth discussion about the morals of different versions of the same fairytale. The teacher asked students why they thought certain things and encouraged them to use examples from the text to support their opinions.</p>	Distinguished	0%
		Proficient	82%

Instruction	Evidence Observed	School Wide Rating	
	The QSR Team rated 18% of the observations as basic and none as unsatisfactory in this component. In these observations there were few discussions between teachers and students and few attempts to use open-ended questions to promote deeper understanding.	Basic	18%
		Unsatisfactory	0%
Engaging Students in Learning	The QSR team scored 91% of the observations as proficient and none as distinguished in this component. Teachers used learning tasks that aligned with the content and provided choices for the students to access the content. Teachers used big books, small books, charts, pointers, math manipulatives, interactive white boards, etc. in whole group and small group instruction. The learning tasks in many observations required high-level student thinking. Most students exhibited interest in the content and strategies. Teachers monitored students and adjusted the pacing of the lesson when needed usually by meeting with an individual or small group to review material.	Distinguished	0%
		Proficient	91%
	The QSR Team rated less than 10% of the observations as basic and none as unsatisfactory in this component.	Basic	9%
		Unsatisfactory	0%
Using Assessment in Instruction	The QSR team scored 91% of the observations as distinguished or proficient. Teachers demonstrated what high-quality work looks like to students and elicited student understanding by asking questions. Teachers also assessed student work that was completed in class and provided guidance to individuals. Feedback to student responses and questions was specific and timely.	Distinguished	36%

Instruction	Evidence Observed	School Wide Rating	
	<p>Teachers monitored student learning by circulating and providing assistance. Teacher used questions to determine conceptual knowledge. Many teachers also used exit tickets to determine mastery of the lesson.</p> <p>In a distinguished observation the teacher designated one student to be a captain while she worked with a small group on the rug. The captain and the other students worked on a Do Now. The captain had the key and was in charge of checking his work and the work of all of the other students before they joined the teacher on the rug. The student took his job very seriously and treated other students with respect as he showed them which problems were wrong. He also quietly congratulated students that completed the assignments and had no errors. Students who had errors returned to their desks to correct the problems before showing them to the captain again.</p>	Proficient	55%
	The QSR Team rated less than 10% of the observations as basic and none as unsatisfactory.	Basic	9%
		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.

The Classroom Environment	Unsatisfactory	Basic	Proficient	Distinguished
Managing Student Behavior	Student behavior is poor, with no clear expectations, no monitoring of student behavior, and inappropriate response to student misbehavior.	Teacher makes an effort to establish standards of conduct for students, monitor student behavior, and respond to student misbehavior, but these efforts are not always successful.	Teacher is aware of student behavior, has established clear standards of conduct, and responds to student misbehavior in ways that are appropriate and respectful of the students.	Student behavior is entirely appropriate, with evidence of student participation in setting expectations and monitoring behavior. Teacher's monitoring of student behavior is subtle and preventive, and teachers' response to student misbehavior is sensitive to individual student needs.

APPENDIX II: INSTRUCTION OBSERVATION RUBRIC

Instruction	Unsatisfactory	Basic	Proficient	Distinguished
Communicating with Students	Teacher’s oral and written communication contains errors or is unclear or inappropriate to students. Teacher’s purpose in a lesson or unit is unclear to students. Teacher’s explanation of the content is unclear or confusing or uses inappropriate language.	Teacher’s oral and written communication contains no errors, but may not be completely appropriate or may require further explanations to avoid confusion. Teacher attempts to explain the instructional purpose, with limited success. Teacher’s explanation of the content is uneven; some is done skillfully, but other portions are difficult to follow.	Teacher communicates clearly and accurately to students both orally and in writing. Teacher’s purpose for the lesson or unit is clear, including where it is situated within broader learning. Teacher’s explanation of content is appropriate and connects with students’ knowledge and experience.	Teacher’s oral and written communication is clear and expressive, anticipating possible student misconceptions. Makes the purpose of the lesson or unit clear, including where it is situated within broader learning, linking purpose to student interests. Explanation of content is imaginative, and connects with students’ knowledge and experience. Students contribute to explaining concepts to their peers.
Using Questioning and Discussion Techniques	Teacher makes poor use of questioning and discussion techniques, with low-level questions, limited student participation, and little true discussion.	Teacher’s use of questioning and discussion techniques is uneven with some high-level question; attempts at true discussion; moderate student participation.	Teacher’s use of questioning and discussion techniques reflects high-level questions, true discussion, and full participation by all students.	Students formulate many of the high-level questions and assume responsibility for the participation of all students in the discussion.
Engaging Students in Learning	Students are not at all intellectually engaged in significant learning, as a result of inappropriate activities or materials, poor representations of content, or lack of lesson structure.	Students are intellectually engaged only partially, resulting from activities or materials or uneven quality, inconsistent representation of content or uneven structure of pacing.	Students are intellectually engaged throughout the lesson, with appropriate activities and materials, instructive representations of content, and suitable structure and pacing of the lesson.	Students are highly engaged throughout the lesson and make material contribution to the representation of content, the activities, and the materials. The structure and pacing of the lesson allow for student reflection and closure.

Instruction	Unsatisfactory	Basic	Proficient	Distinguished
<p>Using Assessment in Instruction</p>	<p>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.</p>	<p>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.</p>	<p>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.</p>	<p>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.</p>