



July 9, 2014

Terry Golden, Board Chair
KIPP DC – Promise Academy PCS
1003 K Street, NW Suite 700
Washington, DC 20001

Dear Mr. Golden:

The Public Charter School Board (PCSB) conducts Qualitative Site Reviews (QSR) to gather and document evidence to support school oversight. According to the 2014 Memorandum of Understanding that PCSB has with the Office of the State Superintendent of Education (OSSE) around implementation of the 2012 Waiver to the Elementary and Secondary Education Act, PCSB must “Ensure that public charter schools identified as Focus or Priority are providing interventions and supports to students and their teachers consistent with that school’s Intervention and Support Plan” (p.5). Your school was selected to undergo a QSR during the 2013-14 school year for the following reason:

- School is designated as Focus by Office of the State Superintendent of Education because of the underperformance of its Focus subgroup: economically disadvantaged students.

Please see the following link for information about the requirements for exiting Focus status:

http://osse.dc.gov/sites/default/files/dc/sites/osse/release_content/attachments/OSSE_Revisions%20-%20Executive%20Summary%20-%20All%20Principles%20-%202017%2012%20FINAL.pdf

Qualitative Site Review Report

A QSR team conducted on-site review visits of KIPP DC – Promise Academy PCS between May 12 and May 23, 2014 and a scheduled day on April 22, 2014. School leadership also asked the QSR team lead to attend the school on April 22, 2014 in order to observe how the school’s Focus intervention strategies are being implemented in classrooms.

The QSR team’s report is attached. We appreciate the assistance and hospitality that you and your staff gave the monitoring team in conducting the Qualitative Site Review at KIPP PCS – Promise. Thank you for your continued cooperation as PCSB makes every effort to ensure that KIPP PCS - Promise is in compliance with its charter.

Sincerely,

A black rectangular box redacting the signature of Naomi DeVaux.

Naomi DeVaux
Deputy Director

Enclosures
cc: School Leader

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

KIPP DC - Promise Academy PCS (KIPP PCS - Promise) is one of 12 KIPP DC PCS campuses in the District of Columbia. Located in Ward 7, KIPP PCS - Promise serves approximately 400 first through fourth grade students in a facility shared by KIPP LEAP (prekindergarten-3 through kindergarten) and KIPP KEY (fifth through eighth grades). KIPP Promise earned a score of 75% and a Tier 1 designation on the Public Charter School Board's (PCSB) 2013 Performance Management Framework (PMF). PCSB conducted a modified Qualitative Site Review (QSR) in April and May 2014 because the campus was designated "Focus" under the Office of the State Superintendent of Education's (OSSE) accountability system as designed in its Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) waiver due to the academic performance of its economically disadvantaged (ED) population.

PCSB conducted QSRs for ESEA monitoring requirements during the following periods: fall 2012, spring 2013, fall 2013 and spring 2014. KIPP PCS - Promise received a modified QSR as opposed to a full QSR in spring 2014 as a result of earning more than 50 % of the possible points on the 2013 PMF. A modified QSR contains one scheduled day, set by the school, and six unannounced classroom observations within a two-week window. PCSB staff conducted a scheduled visit on April 22, 2014 to observe classes the school felt would demonstrate the intervention and support strategies the school has implemented to support the academic achievement of ED students. PCSB collected evidence related to the school's Focus strategies, including: 1) formative assessment design and data analysis to improve and differentiate instruction; 2) parent-student connections; 3) high quality professional development, differentiated; 4) building number sense, fact fluency, strengthening students' geometry and measurement skills; and 5) extended learning time. Throughout the course of these visits, the QSR team visited approximately 15 classrooms. Observations from the *Framework for Teaching* rubric are used to support the school's implementation of the Focus strategies.

The majority of evidence collected focused on the school's implementation of strategies to differentiate instruction for ED students. While the QSR team did not specifically identify economically disadvantaged students, the evidence collected during the site visits indicated that KIPP PCS - Promise has implemented its Focus Intervention Strategies with fidelity in a way that will serve all its students, including ED students. The school has been particularly effective in using formative assessment data to drive differentiated instruction, as discussed below in Intervention Strategy #1 and #3.

SCHOOL INTERVENTION AND SUPPORT STRATEGIES

The following table summarizes KIPP DC PCS – Promise Academy’s intervention and support strategies as detailed in its web-based Intervention and Support Plan to improve the academic performance of its Focus subgroup, economically disadvantaged students; and, the evidence that the QSR team member observed of the school implementing those strategies during both the scheduled day on April 22, 2014 and the observation window from May 12 through May 23, 2014, 2014 for the Spring 2014 QSR for the purposes of the 2012 ESEA Flexibility Waiver.

PCSB leaves it to the discretion of school leadership to determine the best use of time during the scheduled day of observations for the purposes of Focus intervention strategies. Therefore it may not be possible to observe certain strategies chosen by the school. In cases where PCSB did not have the opportunity to observe the strategy, we use the following statement: “While this strategy may be in place, PCSB neither looked for nor observed any evidence related to this strategy.” Different language is used to indicate poor implementation of a given strategy.

Please note that much of the evidence for the implementation of intervention and support strategies were observed through classroom observation and was aligned to the Framework for Teaching. The QSR team noted the specific classroom observation elements that speak to these strategies, where appropriate, in order to avoid repetition.

Strategy Described In Intervention Plan	School’s Description of Strategy on the Ground	Evidence
<p>1. Use formative assessment design and data analysis to improve and differentiate instruction:</p> <p>-This year, our students will take the literacy STEP Assessment three times. Our last STEP window ended at the end of January. This was our second window of the school year, which will be followed by an end of the year assessment window. At the end of January, teachers at Promise Academy spent time with their teaching partners and/ or grade level</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Small group instruction -Student self-awareness of where they are as readers and mathematicians -School leadership supporting teachers with data analysis -Teachers provide immediate feedback to students within small groups -Teachers reference student goals, specific skills that they have mastered and skills that they need additional 	<p>In almost three-quarters of observations, teachers had arranged their classes for small group or individual instruction. Students were engaged in small literacy groups, individual art projects, table teams working through texts and answering questions, individual reading practice in books, worksheets, and computer programs. In several classes teaching residents or assistants worked closely with one student or a small group, providing additional assistance or extending students’ learning while some teachers were observed teaching to the whole group.</p> <p>Teachers often gave students clear, immediate feedback about their progress. For instance, one teacher said, “Have you been practicing [a specific word]? You did well with it this time but you were struggling last time.” Another teacher lead a small</p>

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<p>teams and school leaders analyzing STEP data. Teachers used this data to redistribute students into strategic guided reading groups. Teachers then use trends in STEP data to inform their daily guided reading instruction to ensure students are receiving daily, differentiated instruction.</p> <p>-Our students took the MAP Assessment at the end of December. Teachers have been using this data, along with benchmark (A-Net and KIPP DC) and in class assessment data to constantly inform whole and small group instruction. Every grade level team meets weekly for 45 minutes and monthly for three hours to revisit long term plans and revise unit plans based on data analysis.</p> <p>-School leaders and our instructional coach regularly meet with teachers to support the data analysis and planning process.</p> <p>-We continue to send home assessments with detailed data sheets, explaining to parents and students what specific skills students have mastered and which skills</p>	<p>help with</p>	<p>reading group through a quiz about what they had just read and had students help each other to remember and comprehend the text.</p> <p>At the end of a Leveled Literacy Intervention session, which the leadership team indicated was determined based on assessment results, the teacher gave students very specific feedback on what they had done well that earned them stickers. Another teacher had students hold up white boards to display their answers to the teacher's math questions. One teacher used the Class Dojo system to give students public points for good or bad behavior with mixed results, as the students wanted to talk more about their avatars than the lesson material.</p> <p>Every teacher observed using the <i>Framework for Teaching</i> rubric was rated proficient in Using Assessment in Instruction, which requires timely, consistent, and high quality feedback from teachers to students.</p> <p>The QSR team did not meet with students to discuss their self-awareness of where they were as readers and mathematicians. However, in several observations, students efficiently moved into differentiated activities; this may be a sign that students were aware of their abilities in reading and math.</p> <p>During the scheduled day, the QSR team visited two teacher planning meetings, one between the vice principal and a grade level chair and one between an instructional coach and the third grade math teachers. During both of these meetings, teachers appeared well prepared to use data to guide their instructional practices, discussing the benefits and shortcomings of specific assessments. School leaders provided both broad and deep</p>

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<p>students need more help with.</p> <p>-This year we have spent time reading and analyzing Jon Saphier's <u>Skillful Teacher</u> focusing specifically on clarity. Teachers use frequent checks for understanding to ensure that students have a solid understanding of the aim before beginning independent practice.</p>		<p>support in teachers using data analysis but ultimately gave teachers autonomy in the design and use of assessments. Further discussion of the observed teacher planning meetings is included below under Strategy #3.</p> <p>The QSR team did not observe teachers discussing goals or specific skills to master with students.</p>
<p>2. Parent-Student Connections</p> <p>-Data Night: We held a Parent Data Night in February where we gave our parents an overview of our school wide data. We then broke into small groups and provided parents an in depth opportunity to explore resources connected to where their students are (focusing on STEP and MAP data) and what they can do to support them moving forward.</p> <p>-Parent Conferences: Teachers go over in class assessments with parents in more detail at Conferences. Teachers also go over STEP, MAP, and Benchmark data with parents, helping them with what they can do with their children at home.</p>		<p>While this strategy may be in place, PCSB neither looked for nor observed any evidence related to this strategy.</p>

Strategy Described In Intervention Plan	School's Description of Strategy on the Ground	Evidence
<p>3. Provide High Quality professional development, differentiated.</p> <p>-Each member of the leadership team meets with each teacher every other week to provide planning support and regular feedback; Teachers receive support based on goals established at their mid-year evaluation, classroom observations and student data and progress</p> <p>-We spent the year focusing on two professional development goals:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We will use clarity to foster critical thinking. • We will use research-based techniques to make our community work for everyone. <p>We then designed our support accordingly through a long term Professional Development plan. Teachers appreciated the consistency and scaffolding. We also planned and delivered sessions based on the needs of our teachers and students (such as Giving Students Effective Feedback, Conferencing during</p>	<p>-Teachers visit each other's rooms to share best practices with one another.</p> <p>-Leadership team meeting with teachers regularly to provide support and feedback.</p> <p>-High quality instruction as a result of strong planning and professional development.</p>	<p>The QSR team observed a few cases of teachers visiting each other's classrooms.</p> <p>The QSR team visited two teacher planning meetings, one between the vice principal and a grade level chair and one between an instructional coach and the third grade math teachers. Teachers and school leaders were fluent in using data to drive instruction. The teachers discussed which assessment methods would be best to meet the two objectives of helping students understand their progress and of sharing data between teachers and the instructional coach. They weighed the relative value of mid-year data and new assessments, deciding that another assessment would take too much time, and planned differentiated interventions by the type of challenge specific students were facing (e.g., diphthongs and vowel pairs, doubling letters before adding -ed / -ing, etc.)</p> <p>The teachers spoke in depth about students' strengths and weaknesses, in terms of specific students and specific skills, and about the root causes of these strengths and weaknesses, such as students needing a strong basis in math facts to excel in division. School leaders supported teachers in helping each other, such as through in-depth presentations of upcoming lesson plans with collaborative discussions and clarifications. The instructional coach provided specific and broad feedback to teachers, including best practices developed at other KIPP DC campuses and how to break down problems (e.g. number bonds) into smaller pieces to help students.</p> <p>At the end of each meeting, the teachers and leaders discussed concrete next steps and recommendations from the discussion.</p>

Strategy Described In Intervention Plan	School's Description of Strategy on the Ground	Evidence
<p>Reader's Workshop, etc.). Individual teachers also volunteered to lead sessions based on identified strengths and needs.</p> <p>-STEP PD: STEP trainer provides PD and support; provides feedback during guided reading and small group instruction as well as during literacy lessons for the whole group.</p> <p>-This year, we structured our Department Meetings around development, rather than day to day logistics. Team members will be a part of the Literacy, Math, or General Knowledge teams. Our Literacy focus has been on vocabulary, our Math focus on fluency, and our General Knowledge focus on reading informational texts. Teachers have brought takeaways and next steps back to their teams to ensure all teachers and students are benefiting from the work being done.</p> <p>-Observation Challenge- We had one Observation Challenge this year where teachers observe one another for best practices and beneficial takeaways.</p>		

Strategy Described In Intervention Plan	School's Description of Strategy on the Ground	Evidence
<p>4. Building number sense, fact fluency, strengthening students' geometry and measurement skills so they are able to think rationally and critically about solving problems.</p>	<p>-Math class: Teachers pull small groups of students to provide more individualized instruction.</p> <p>-Assessment of students in real time in order to get immediate data on students and provide an opportunity for students to ask questions or ask for additional support.</p> <p>-Teachers model their thinking during the mini-lesson, when they are introducing material or skills to the students. Throughout guided practice and independent practice, students explain their thinking to one another and to their teacher.</p>	<p>As discussed above under Intervention Strategy #1, the QSR team noted significant use of small groups to provide individualized instruction and continuous student assessment with real-time feedback.</p> <p>Math teachers began the lesson with a whole group mini-lesson or "I do, we do, you do" model of the instructional task. One teacher began by guiding the class through a word problem as a whole group. Then the students transitioned to individual practice in worksheets while the teacher circulated throughout the classroom. One teacher, when teaching to the whole group, had students write answers on white boards to display, and then gave very specific feedback to each student with an incorrect response. One teacher was modeled how to explain one's thought process behind answering each question and asked students to explain their thought processes to each other and to the whole group (e.g., "Why is it 1,000? What is my division sentence?").</p> <p>In the teacher/coach and vice principal/teacher meetings observed, the teachers discussed number fluency and strengthening students' math skills extensively, as discussed above in Intervention Strategy #3.</p>
<p>5. Extended learning time</p>	<p>- Two teachers in each room during Guided Reading (M-Th) & Guided Math (Fri). In Guided Reading students are grouped homogenously so that teachers are able to meet them where they are.</p>	<p>The school offers an extended school year and school day, with class running from 8:00 am to 4:30 pm daily (except for Fridays, which have an early dismissal at 3:00 pm) and the school term running from early July to mid-June.</p> <p>The QSR team noted that most of the classrooms observed had more than one teacher in the room. In the Leveled Literacy Intervention period observed during the scheduled day, students were clearly grouped homogenously by reading level. In other</p>

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		<p>literacy classes it was also clear that students' activities were differentiated by academic progress, such as in leveled reading texts, semi/homogenous groupings, or in individualized computer programs.</p>