School Quality Review Report
Mountain View Whisman School District

Crittenden Middle School

October, 2015

Cambridge Education
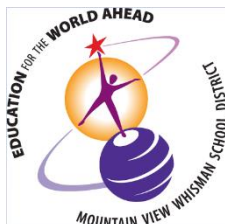
School Quality Review Report

Client Name:	Mountain View Whisman School District
School Name:	Crittenden MS
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Address:	1701 Rock St. Mt View, CA 94043
Review Date(s):	October 15-16, 2015
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Issue and revision record

Revision	Date	Originator	Checker	Approver	Description	Standard
0	09/09/2015	Doug Heineke			Report Template	
1	10/19/2015	Beverly Parkinson	Doug Heineke		Draft 1	
2	10/27/2015		Doug Heineke	Trevor Yates	QAR1	
3	10/27/2015	Beverly Parkinson	Doug Heineke		Draft 2	
4	10/29/2015		Doug Heineke	Melissa Lara	QAR2	
5	10/30/2015			Doug Heineke	Fact Check	
6	11/3/2015	Beverly Parkinson	Geoffrey Chang (MV)	Doug Heineke	Final Report	

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1 The School Context

1.1 Introduction

On July 1st 2015 Dr. Ayinde Rudolph officially began his post as Mountain View Whisman School District's Superintendent. As part of his 100-day superintendent plan for MVWSD, Dr. Rudolph requested that Cambridge Education deliver a district-wide, comprehensive Quality Review (QR) program that will set a benchmark for improvement. The QR program includes the following:

- a School Quality Review (SQR) orientation for principals
- SQR training for up to 20 district personnel
- a two-day SQR for each school in the district (8 elementary and 2 middle schools)
- a meta-analysis report of the school findings
- focused improvement planning for all 10 schools
- a District Quality Review (DQR)

The SQR was completed over two days by a team of two Cambridge Education Reviewers at each school. The resultant report contained herein was prepared by the Lead Reviewer based on the evidence collected and the assessment made by both reviewers. Evidence was collected via classroom observations; interviews with the administration; and focus groups with students, teachers, parents and other stakeholders.

1.2 Background information about the School

Crittenden Middle School serves 632 students in grades 6-8 in the Mountain View Whisman School District. The school is well supported by local companies, such as Google, leading to a high level of technology provision as well as support for classroom and out-of-school activities.

The school received the Gold Ribbon Award for its work in project-based learning in the 2014-2015 school year.

The principal and assistant principal are both in their fourth year as administrators at the school. This year the school faces a particular challenge in that 14 of the 30 teachers are new to the school and 8 of the teachers are new to the teaching profession. The school cites rising rents as a significant factor in the unusually high staff turnover this year.

1.3   School demographic and performance data

	2013-2014	2014-2015
Grades:	6-8	6-8
Number of students enrolled:	596	603
Percentage of general education students:	515	527
Percentage of special education students:	13.6%	12.6%
Percentage of English language learner students:	27.5%	22%
In school suspensions:	27	0
Out of school suspensions:	42	50
Percentage of students that are Title 1 eligible:		
Latest attendance percentage:	96.5%	96.27%
Ethnic make- up of the students (percentages):	Hispanic 60%; Asian 12%; Black/African American 2%; Hawaiian/other Pacific Islander 1%; White 19%; Multiple 4%; American Indian .17%; Missing 1.16%	

CAASPP Test Results 2014-2015 - ELA

	Standard Not Met	Standard Nearly Met	Standard Met	Standard Exceeded
All	18	28	38	17
EO	10	19	43	28
EL	52	42	6	0
SED	25	35	36	5
Non- SEDs	7	18	41	34
SWD	67	25	8	0
White	4	15	38	42
Asian	10	14	28	48
Hispanic/Latino	25	34	36	4

CAASPP Test Results 2014-2015 – Math

	Standard Not Met	Standard Nearly Met	Standard Met	Standard Exceeded
All	27	31	19	22
EO	21	24	22	33
EL	57	34	7	2
SED	36	38	17	9
Non- SEDs	15	22	22	41
SWD	84	9	6	0
White	9	19	25	47
Asian	23	19	3	55
Hispanic/Latino	37	36	19	9

2 Main Findings

In this section of the report, the SQR team has identified the factors that are most significantly supporting and limiting effective student learning. *Recommendations* **to address these high impact areas are included below.**

2.1 Factors that support effective student learning:

i. The Crittenden School community is cohesive and shows a high level of commitment and dedication to the school and, as a result, the climate is respectful, caring and student-focused. Any discipline issues are dealt with sensitively and all adults focus on meeting student needs.

ii. The school has a recently created, succinct and easily remembered vision statement that permeates the school's work. Most students and teachers are able to explain its content and one member of staff summarized it effectively as, "We want our students to be successful, motivated and proud".

iii. School leaders promote high expectations of students and staff by modeling professional behaviors and maintaining a high level of visibility around the school site, generating high levels of respect.

iv. The principal gives a high priority to monitoring the quality of learning and teaching for teachers that are new to the school. Feedback on how the teachers can develop their craft and provide students with better learning experiences is constructive and frequent. Leadership works hard to build capacity of future leaders.

v. The out-of-school curriculum provides many opportunities for students to extend their experiences beyond the core curriculum, some provided by school personnel such as art and robotics, and others by outside groups such as Peninsula Bridge. There is a good balance of sports, academics and arts to meet all students' interests.

vi. Relationships with parents are a strength of the school. From the front office to the classrooms, parents receive a warm welcome and any questions or concerns they may have are promptly addressed. The school provides many opportunities for parents to involve themselves in the life of the school and to participate in decision-making processes.

vii. The school benefits from a wealth of community and business partnerships designed to enhance students' experiences and support the school's goals. For example, one company provides 1:1 tutoring in math for a group of students who are not achieving at grade level while others contribute funding and resources.

2.2 Factors that limit effective student learning:

i. Administrators and school leaders do not have a deep enough understanding of how to analyze different types of data, such as conducting a detailed analysis of student work, to support and monitor school improvement and guide instructional decision-making.

ii. Most teachers do not understand how to use the data from formative assessments to guide the next steps in learning for individuals or groups of students.

iii. Due to the high number of new teachers this year, the school's induction system for new teachers has not been fully effective in providing all teachers with clear guidance as to the expectations and agreed practices for high quality teaching and learning at Crittenden, while also providing support for returning teachers. As a result, there are wide inconsistencies in practices and levels of support provided.

2.3 Recommendations:

i. The school leaders should seek out support for administrators, department chairs and grade level leaders in how to use different types of data (e.g., achievement, attendance, parent participation) to provide information about how the school is progressing toward stated goals, and plan next steps. Create systematic protocols for data review at administrator, school leadership team and grade/content area levels.

ii. Support teachers in making better use of formative assessment data to group students and design differentiated instruction and activities to better meet their needs.

iii. Provide guidance and differentiated professional development for teachers in developing lessons that motivate, engage and challenge all students so that implementation of key strategies, such as Explicit Direct Instruction (EDI), writing meaningful learning objectives and strategies to support English learners in general education classes, are consistently and effectively implemented. Create a more robust system of induction to promote consistency in future years.

3   Individual Domains

In the sections below, each domain received a rating based on the evidence collected during the SQR. The judgments have been broken down into *Factors that Support Effective Student Learning* and *Factors that Limit Effective Student Learning*. *Recommendations* are included to address those areas of need.

3.1   Domain 1: Quality of Learning & Teaching

The Quality of Learning and teaching Requires Support in Targeted Areas

Factors that support effective student learning:

i.   The new math program, Eureka Math is providing math teachers with a systematic approach to addressing the California State Standards and timely formative assessments to support teacher understanding of when students have achieved mastery of new skills and concepts. As a result, lessons can be adjusted to respond to student learning needs.

ii. Students in some classes, for example the Leadership elective and the advanced math groups, have frequent opportunities to work collaboratively on problem-solving activities to discuss and explain their reasoning, leading to high levels of engagement and motivation.

iii. Student behavior is well managed and learning is not often disrupted because of negative behaviors. Teachers are supported well by the "at risk coordinator" and the assistant principal in dealing sensitively with issues that require support. Teachers make a determined effort to incorporate Social Emotional Learning (SEL) across the curriculum.

iv. A small group of teachers consistently incorporates agreed high-effect strategies into their daily teaching and, in these lessons, students make good progress.

v.   Students have good opportunities to use technology for research, presentation of work and for skills practice in many lessons. In some classes students are able to use their own devices to support their learning, leading to good levels of engagement.

Factors that limit effective student learning:

i.   Teachers do not yet make effective use of assessment data to guide their lesson planning, group students to provide intervention or address the needs of Students with Disabilities (SWD) or English Language Learner (ELL) students in general education classes.

ii. While learning objectives are posted in the majority of classrooms, their presentation and/or wording does not support student understanding about the purpose of the lesson, the reason for the learning or include how and what students will be assessed on and the criteria for success.

iii. With a few notable exceptions, such as the Leadership elective, most lessons do not provide the students with time to engage in meaningful discussion and collaboration. Too often questions are low level, and topics for discussion are factual and do not engage students in higher level thinking.

iv. Few teachers provide students with clear rubrics or examples of exemplary work so that students know what high quality work looks like. Students are rarely involved in setting goals for improvement and in most lessons they do not know what steps to take to improve their work because teacher feedback on their work is limited to a grade or generic comment, and does not always indicate specifically what they need to do.

v. A minority of teachers incorporates checks for understanding during the course of the lesson, and so most do not know which students are making progress in their learning and which students need additional support.

Recommendations:

i. Provide clearer guidance for teachers in how to systematically review data, including samples of student work, as part of the lesson planning process. Support teachers in developing ways to meet the needs of the different levels of understanding in their lessons.

ii. Teachers should plan for and provide more opportunities for students to be active participants in the learning process by ensuring that students understand the learning objective and success criteria for the lesson, providing rubrics so that students know how their work will be graded, providing effective feedback on student work, and involving students in setting goals for improvement.

iii. Teachers should include specific higher order questions and structured collaboration opportunities in their lesson plans to ensure that all students have the opportunity to engage in meaningful discussions.

iv. Support teachers in incorporating different methods of checking for understanding during lessons, for example, using technology such as kahoot.it or individual whiteboards and adjusting instruction based on student responses.

3.2   Domain 2: Curriculum & Assessment

Curriculum & Assessment Requires Support in Targeted Areas

Factors that support effective student learning:

i. The district-adopted math program, Eureka Math, is aligned to California State Standards and incorporates high-effect strategies, problem solving and opportunities for students to explain their reasoning. Regular formative assessments support teachers in monitoring student progress.

ii. For those students able to access all options, the curriculum offers wide-ranging, rigorous and high quality alternatives including leadership, PE, music and art, advanced math for higher level students, tutoring for struggling students, and after school activities such as robotics.

iii. The school works closely with the high school to align experiences with those of students from other middle schools and to prepare students for the next steps in their education.

iv. Beyond the school day the school offers many opportunities for students to extend their experiences outside the core curriculum, such as art and robotics provided by school personnel and others such as Peninsula Bridge by outside groups. There is a good balance of sports, academics and arts to meet all students' interests.

Factors that limit effective student learning:

i. The ELA curriculum and current assessments do not align with the California State Standards, as teachers wait for a district and teacher team to make a decision about a future core program.

ii. The structure for PLCs, planning and data team meetings is not supporting teachers in developing effective lessons because protocols have lapsed or are not explained to new teachers. Meeting minutes are not monitored rigorously enough to ensure that they lead to high quality lesson planning that is differentiated to meet the varying levels of student need.

iii. Students who qualify for RTI classes do not have access to an elective class because of the double math block. Despite efforts to find a creative solution to this through an optional eighth period, few of this significant group of students are able to experience subjects that interest them.

iv. Although the school received an award for their work in Project Based Learning (PBL) in the last academic year, there was little evidence that it was a significant feature of the school during the school quality review. As a result, students are missing opportunities to work in depth on extended real world relevant projects that could enhance their learning.

Recommendations:

i. School leaders should work with the district to find a more equitable solution to the range of curriculum opportunities available for different groups of students, so that all students may have access to interesting electives.

ii. The leadership team should establish clear protocols and monitor their implementation so that all levels of meetings are able to achieve their purpose.

iii. Instructional coaches should support ELA teachers in establishing a plan for the rest of the school year to ensure that the curriculum meets the California State Standards, and in planning lessons that provide the depth required for students to be successful.

iv. Work with each content area/grade level team to develop a sustainable program for integrating Project Based Learning into the school's learning map.

3.3   Domain 3: Leadership, Management and Accountability

Leadership, Management and Accountability Requires Support in Targeted Areas

Factors that support effective student learning:

i.   The school has a clear statement of mission, which was created collaboratively involving a wide range of stakeholders. In most classes the mission statement has been "unpacked" to ensure that students understand how it relates to what happens in the classroom. Many teachers and students see the statement as a guiding principle.

ii. School leaders are highly visible around the school, continually promoting high expectations for all. Staff work hard and show a high level of commitment to meeting expected standards and providing the best opportunities for students.

iii. The principal has concentrated lesson observations and giving feedback on teachers new to the school and to the teaching profession. Feedback is of high quality and constructive with clear goals for improvement, and is enabling teachers to make progress in developing their skills.

iv. Although there is no formal process, teachers feel a high level of accountability for the academic and social development of the students in their care.

v.   The school has a calm, orderly, student-focused climate, which leads to high levels of respect and a positive learning environment in most classrooms. The small number of behavior infractions are dealt with effectively by teachers or passed to the "at risk" specialist, and so little instructional time is lost.

vi. School leaders have a rigorous process to appoint effective teachers, and the grade level and subject lead roles provide opportunities for teachers to take on leadership roles. Administrators actively encourage teachers who wish to pursue career opportunities such as instructional coaching or administration.

Factors that limit effective student learning:

i.   The school does not yet have a clear plan in place to show how they will meet the outcomes of the vision statement. As a result, stakeholders do not know what action needs to be taken, by whom and what success looks like.

ii. For some more experienced teachers, lesson observations and feedback occur only as part of the bi-annual teacher evaluation cycle. School leaders rarely monitor lesson plans or review student work samples. As a result, administrators do not have a clear picture of the quality of teaching and learning in every classroom.

iii. School leaders monitor a limited range of student performance data and so are unable to track the progress of sub groups of students. Although there is a high level of focus on the achievements of English Learners, there is no system for ensuring that they are making gains and closing the achievement gap with their peers.

Recommendations:

i. Incorporating all available data, the leadership team should complete the school site plan detailing how the school will meet its goals and aspirations. Include clear measureable goals, specific actions, the individuals responsible, and how and when progress will be monitored.

ii. School leaders should expand the current provision for lesson observations and feedback to create a tiered system, based on teacher need, that ensures that all teachers receive regular, informal feedback of the same quality provided by the principal to new teachers.

iii. Review available data to ascertain the best sources of information for monitoring student progress, including sub groups, at leadership level.

3.4   Domain 4: The Culture of Learning

The Culture of Learning is Exemplary

Factors that support effective student learning:

i. All members of the school community met during the review were emphatic in their praise for the welcoming atmosphere of the school. All staff members are committed to ensuring that they do their best to meet the needs of all families. Students feel safe in school and say there are a number of adults they would approach if they had a problem or concern.

ii. The school has a multitude of mechanisms in place to support the needs of all students, including ESE and English learners and high levels of respect are shown to all. The school supports the development of social and emotional skills so that students can develop independence and responsibility.

Factors that limit effective student learning:

i. There are no factors that limit effective student learning in this domain.

Recommendations:

i. To minimize the impact of staff turnover, ensure that procedures are in place to maintain and sustain the current high quality relationships.

3.5   Domain 5: Partnerships with Families and the Community

Partnerships with Families and the Community are Established

.**Factors that support effective student learning:**

i. The school frequently communicates with parents and families to keep them informed about student activities and successes, using email, social media and PowerSchool. All documents are available in both English and Spanish. The parents who attended the focus group during the review gave many examples of the ways in which administrators and teachers keep in contact with parents and encourage them to be partners in their students' learning.

ii. Although the school favors the use of electronic communication, they are sensitive to the fact that not all families have immediate access and provide hard copies of all materials available from the school office. Staff supports parents in gaining access to all the services they need.

iii. The school has a number of partnerships with local businesses. Google supports the school through matching any fund raising results, Khan Academy works with the school developing curriculum materials, and another local business provides one-to-one math tutoring for struggling students to support their research and development.

iv. The school holds student-led parent conferences. Parents say these are effective and that they are able to discuss progress and the next steps in learning with their children's teachers. Some teachers email parents to alert them to any changes in behavior or areas where they are finding difficulty. Parents receive prompt responses to their communications with teachers.

v. The school has a number of routes through which parents and families can contribute to the decision-making processes in the school. These include ELAC and the Site Council to which parents are elected.

Factors that limit effective student learning:

i. While the school promotes equity there are few opportunities for the school to celebrate the different cultures and traditions among the school community.

Recommendations:

i. Provide opportunities for different groups in the school community to celebrate their customs and traditions to increase understanding of diversity.