School Quality Review Report
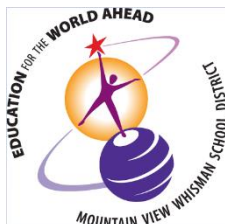## Mountain View Whisman School District

Edith Landels Elementary School

October, 2015

Cambridge Education

School Quality Review Report

Client Name:	Mountain View Whisman School District
School Name:	Landels ES
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Review Date(s):	October 1-2, 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	10/8/2015	Hayden Lyons	Doug Heineke		Draft 1	
2	10/10/2015		Doug Heineke	Trevor Yates	QAR1	
3	10/11/2015	Hayden Lyons	Doug Heineke		Draft 2	
4	10/12/2015		Doug Heineke	Melissa Lara	QAR2	
5	10/20/2015			Doug Heineke	Fact Check	
6	11/02015	Hayden Lyons	S. Chesley (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

Landels Elementary School serves students in kindergarten to fifth grade, but also serves a small number of students in a transition to kindergarten (TK) class. These students' birthdays fall after the cut-off date for admission and are therefore too young to be admitted to the kindergarten class. The current principal has been in office for less than two months, having been assigned to the school at the beginning of this school year. He is still observing and gathering data about the various systems and operations of the school and has not yet made any major programmatic and systematic changes. He has not yet formulated a vision for the school that is articulated and embraced by all constituents, but teachers and parents alike express confidence in his ability to lead the school. Parents especially appreciate his transparency and the positive relationships he has already cultivated with them and with students.

The school implemented the California Common Core State Standards (CCSS) for math last school year and is implementing the standards for English Language Arts this year. Teachers are developing understanding of the standards and the instructional shifts necessary for their effective implementation, but there is still some work to do in this regard.

Involvement of parents remains a challenge for the school, but a core group remains committed and significantly involved in the daily routines of the school. Some parents volunteer on a daily basis and can be seen in classrooms supporting classroom routines and other tasks, as well as effectively leading the Project Cornerstone initiative to build the social skills of students. Members of this core group of parents are also involved in the School Site Council (SSC) and are able to articulate their concerns and ideas, and also contribute to the decision-making process at the school.

The school has been successful in engaging many community organizations and some parents to support many of its activities. Many occur in the after school program, but some happen within the school day. The result is that the students benefit from an enriched curriculum that exposes them to music, chorus, soccer, chess, coding, and many more experiences.

The school has identified deficiencies in professional development, and training and support for teachers, as well as an outdated English Language Development (ELD) curriculum and system as the most significant barriers to raising achievement and progress at Landels Elementary School. Factors that limit effective student learning have been identified as: a lack of parental involvement, attendance and tardiness, behavioral issues, and lack of support at home.

1.3   School demographic and performance data

	Academic Year 2013-14	Academic Year 2014-15
Grades:	K-5th	TK-5th
Number of students enrolled:	527	538
Percentage of general education students:	463	476
Percentage of special education students:	12.14	11.52
Percentage of English language learner students:	45.54	40.52
In school suspensions:	1	1
Out of school suspensions:	3	9
Percentage of students that are Title 1 eligible:	0	0
Latest attendance percentage:	96.78	96.18
Ethnic make- up of the students (percentages):	Hispanic - 41.5%; Am Indian/Alskn Nat - 0.2%; Asian - 16.7%; Black/African Am - 1.9%; Nat Hwiin/Othr Pac Islndr - 0.7%; White - 28.8%; Multiple - 10.2%	

CAASPP Test Results 2014-2015 - ELA

	Standard Not Met	Standard Nearly Met	Standard Met	Standard Exceeded
All	25	20	26	30
EO	12	13	30	45
EL	55	29	15	0
SED	43	28	21	8
Non- SEDs	10	13	29	48
SWD	68	15	9	9
White	6	13	23	58
Asian	16	3	39	42
Hispanic/Latino	43	28	18	10

CAASPP Test Results 2014-2015 – Math

	Standard Not Met	Standard Nearly Met	Standard Met	Standard Exceeded
All	22	25	27	26
EO	10	23	30	37
EL	47	26	23	4
SED	39	30	23	8
Non- SEDs	9	21	30	40
SWD	71	15	6	9
White	9	11	32	48
Asian	11	20	29	40
Hispanic/Latino	37	29	26	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 tone of the school is well established and discipline issues are rare. There is evidence of mutual respect among adults, among students, and between adults and students. This creates a positive environment that is conducive to learning.

ii. Teachers have structured times for collaboration within grades. This allows for sharing of ideas, collaborative identification and solving of challenges, and opportunities for mutual support.

iii. The school climate encourages parental input in its everyday routines. Involvement is strong for a core group of parents who volunteer on a regular basis and support and initiate school activities.

iv. Students and parents describe the school as being safe. Students express that teachers care about them and are committed to their success.

v. The school has been successful in soliciting the services of many community organizations that support the school during the day and during after school hours. The work of these agencies is well organized and coordinated, and supports students' academic and social development.

2.2   Factors that limit effective student learning:

i. Teachers are not currently planning lessons that address the needs of individual students. There is little evidence of differentiation across the school.

ii. The school does not yet have an instructional focus that is well articulated and effectively embraced by instructional staff.

iii. The quality of questioning within lessons is not yet consistently of a quality that allows students to engage in critical thinking, build their problem solving skills, and develop habits of mind that would predispose them to success in higher grades and college.

2.3   Recommendations:

i. Ensure that teachers consistently plan lessons that:
   - take into account the differential needs of students
   - sufficiently challenge students to develop critical thinking and problem solving skills

ii. Support teachers in developing assessment strategies to effectively check for students' understanding during lessons and at the end of lessons. Additionally, ensure that teachers develop a system for developing common formative assessments to monitor students' progress, and utilize the data to make instructional decisions.

iii. Engage the staff in the reformulation of a vision for the school and an instructional focus that is clearly understood and embraced by all constituents of the school.

iv. Build teachers' capacity to ask questions in ways that engage students in critical thinking and deep consideration of concepts. Teachers' questions should raise the challenge for students and support them in meeting that challenge.

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 & Teaching Requires Support in Targeted Areas

Factors that support effective student learning:

i.   There are pockets of good practice in some classrooms, especially in science classes, where students are engaged in critical thinking and deep consideration of concepts. In these classrooms students are challenged to build understanding as opposed to being given information.

ii. Teachers meet in grade teams every Thursday for the second half of the day to discuss matters related to their practice. This provides opportunities for mutual support, and collaborative strategizing about solutions to challenges they encounter with their students.

Factors that limit effective student learning:

i.   Learning objectives are not consistently written in child-friendly language, nor are they communicated in ways that allow all students to understand what they are learning, why it's important, and how it connects to past and future learning. Additionally, the objectives are not revisited during and at the end of lessons.

ii. Lessons observed do not adequately take into account the differential needs of students. Very little differentiation was observed and all students, regardless of their levels of understanding, are exposed to the same instruction and tasks. This can serve to frustrate less abled students and not challenge more advanced ones.

iii. Students do not yet benefit from collaborative learning. Many learning activities require students to work alone, except on occasions when they have to turn and talk with an elbow partner about ideas. This situation would not allow students to adequately learn from each other and cultivate the dispositions for cooperation and collaboration needed for success at higher grades and college.

iv. Teachers' planning is not yet of a quality that demonstrates adequate use of assessment data, deep understanding of and alignment to the CCSS, and knowledge of the needs of individual and groups of students. As a result, not all students are able to make the progress that they can. Some parents indicate that their children are not adequately challenged beyond their current level of performance.

v.   Teacher collaboration is not yet at a level where they intently focus on the instructional core – students, content, and the teacher (knowledge and skills). Planning does not yet reflect the collaborative design of lessons and assessments, analysis of data, discussions about the success and failure of instructional

strategies and interventions, and opportunities for lesson studies. The result is that teachers are not building best practices around effectively supporting their students.

vi. The opportunities for students to build ownership of their learning are not adequately embedded in classroom experiences. Students do not discuss what they are learning, use rubrics to assess their work and that of their peers, or engage in discussion and debate about each other's ideas.

Recommendations:

School leaders need to support teachers in:

i. Writing and communicating learning objectives in child-friendly language, which contain clearly defined success criteria that would allow students to understand what they are learning and how that learning would be assessed.

ii. Designing learning experiences for their students that encourage them to work in groups, utilize exemplars and rubrics to guide their work, and use the rubrics to assess their work and that of their peers. This will serve to build ownership of learning and help them to appreciate what high quality work looks like.

iii. Designing and implementing lessons that contain differentiated strategies to meet the needs of different students. This will help all students to remain cognitively engaged during lessons and make adequate progress.

iv. Using planning time to build teachers' capacity to: understand the CCSS well; design lessons to build students' deep understanding of concepts, critical thinking and problem solving skills; and build formative assessments to determine students' progress along the way.

3.2 Domain 2: Curriculum & Assessment

Curriculum & Assessment Requires Support in Targeted Areas

Factors that support effective student learning:

i. The curriculum is broad and varied and provides students with a wide range of interesting and relevant learning experiences. Apart from the core subjects, students engage in music, choral production, coding, sports and other activities. Students can very easily find an activity that aligns with their interests.

Factors that limit effective student learning:

i. The principal is still settling into his leadership position at the school and does not yet provide the level of supervision needed to ensure that the implemented curriculum closely reflects the requirements of the state and district standards. Lessons do not always reflect the rigor of the CCSS and many students are not adequately challenged.

ii. Apart from the district-mandated benchmark assessments, teachers do not currently design formative assessments to determine students' progress and use the data to make instructional decisions in a systematic way. The result is that the needs of all students are not effectively met in targeted ways.

iii. Opportunities for students to work on projects, solve complex problems and develop a range of skills for analysis, and think critically about issues is not an enduring feature of the school. Students are mainly engaged in basic learning tasks that do not adequately allow them to develop these essential skills.

iv. Homework is not used in a way to effectively extend classroom learning. Parents lament the fact that homework is not graded, and students are not given any feedback on their work. As a result, parents indicate that students are beginning to not take homework seriously.

Recommendations:

i. School leaders need to ensure that teachers use the state and district standards to design and utilize curriculum that reflects the rigor of the CCSS and engages students in learning experiences that allow them to develop the skills that will predispose them to success in higher grades and college.

ii. Teachers need to design formative assessments to determine student progress towards mastery and use the data in meaningful ways to make instructional decisions that meet the varied needs of their students.

iii. Teachers need to design learning experiences for students that engage them in finding the solutions to complex problems, creating conjectures and testing them, and thinking critically about concepts. This will allow them to develop higher order thinking skills.

iv. Ensure that the assignment of homework becomes a meaningful activity for both students and parents by attaching importance to the activity, and by grading the work and providing feedback.

3.3 Domain 3: Leadership, Management and Accountability

Leadership, Management and Accountability Requires Support in Targeted Areas

Factors that support effective student learning:

i. School leaders have been successful in implementing policies and practices that have resulted in the smooth operation of the school. The expectation for conduct on the part of students and staff alike is understood and the result is that the school climate is conducive to learning.

ii. School leaders have implemented effective measures to promote good attendance and reduce truancy. The average daily attendance is approximately 97 percent, which is an indication that students like being at school – a sentiment expressed by students in a focus group.

iii. Distributed leadership is established across the school. Staff are encouraged to develop leadership and management skills and to take on varied leadership responsibilities such as grade-level leaders, and membership on the SSC.

Factors that limit effective student learning:

i. Being new to the school, the principal has not yet engaged the staff and other constituents in the formulation of a strategic vision for the school. He has also not yet articulated an instructional focus that is clearly understood and embraced by all staff. The principal express that this is an upcoming activity.

ii. The principal speaks of high expectations for all staff, and expresses a commitment to quality and effective practice. However, he has not yet implemented the systems that will ensure that all staff are optimally effective through communication of those expectations, supporting them to meet the expectations, and addressing poor performance and non-compliance.

iii. The principal and the instructional coach have begun to visit classrooms on a regular basis, but have not yet begun to give teachers the kind of effective feedback that will allow them to reflect on and hone their instructional practices. Teachers are therefore not yet benefiting from that level of feedback.

iv. Lesson planning, the quality of collaboration, instructional routines, assessment design and checking for understanding are not yet of a quality that reflects effective professional practice. This is largely due to the absence of effective systems for monitoring the performance of staff and engaging them in the setting of performance goals. The principal is aware of this and has identified this as an activity to be undertaken in the near future.

v. School leaders are not yet collecting and analyzing a wide range of data to determine the effectiveness of the school's instructional systems on student outcomes. As a result, the necessary actions for ensuring that all students make adequate progress have not yet been implemented.

Recommendations:

i. School leaders need to engage constituents of the school in the formulation of a strategic vision and instructional focus to guide the work of the school in meeting its mandate for students, the parents and the community.

ii. Develop systems of accountability to ensure that all staff are engaging in effective practice, and that they are held accountable for their professional practice.

iii. Ensure that teachers get timely and effective feedback on their practice to support them in reflecting on, and improving, their practices.

iv. Engage staff in the setting of performance goals with measurable benchmarks and provide the supervision and support to assist them in meeting those goals.

v. Develop a system for collecting and analyzing diverse data to determine the success of the instructional systems of the school in meeting the needs of its students and advancing their academic and social growth.

3.4 Domain 4: The Culture of Learning

The Culture of Learning is Established

Factors that support effective student learning:

i. School leaders and staff have been successful in creating a learning environment that is safe, welcoming, and respectful, and that is conducive to learning.

ii. Interactions between adults and students are mutually respectful and as a result the classrooms are very calm and support student learning. Most teachers display a tone of high expectations for students.

iii. The school environment is mutually supportive and all members of the school community treat each other with respect, equity and dignity. Parents feel equally respected and welcomed at the school.

iv. The school makes concerted attempts to recognize and celebrate its diversity. A major event in this regard is an international carnival that is held every year. Various aspects of the different cultures get showcased and students experience feelings of inclusion.

v. The school has good attendance. The average daily attendance is consistently approximately 97 percent. This is a reflection of an effective attendance policy that results in students being in school very regularly to benefit from classroom learning experiences.

Factors that limit effective student learning:

i. The school lacks a comprehensive discipline system posited on positive behavior elements. A tiered system for managing behavior has not yet been developed and the result is that students get sent out of classes and referred to the office for various reasons, including those for which teachers can manage without referrals.

Recommendations:

i. The principal needs to convene a committee that includes leadership, teachers, and parents to create a whole school tiered discipline policy and positive behavior management system that will be implemented with fidelity across the school.

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 and its students benefit from positive relationships with several community partners that provide supports for students' academic and social development both during and after school. Beyond the Bell, Project Cornerstone, Community School of Music and Arts (CSMA), Rhythm & Moves, Living Classroom, and the YMCA all partner with the school to provide diverse programming for students.

ii. The School and Community Engagement Facilitator (SCEF) works assiduously on outreach initiatives to engage parents. A core group of parents serve as volunteers throughout the day, including in the after-school program. Their help supports the work of teachers and extends the learning opportunities for students.

iii. The school works to create programs that celebrate cultural diversity in the community as well as the achievements of students.

iv. Parents in a focus group express satisfaction with the new principal's visibility around the school, his welcoming tone, and his willingness to solicit and embrace their suggestions. They are willing to support him and the development of the school.

v.   The school has a strong Parent Teacher Association (PTA), which works to build partnerships with community organizations and serve as a voice of the parent population in many school meetings. Parents sit on the SSC and are invited to work with administration in creating the Local Control Accountability Plan (LCAP), which outlines goals for the school year.

Factors that limit effective student learning:

i.   Although the school makes attempts to communicate the academic progress of students to parents, many feel that the level of information provided is too little and too far between – occurring only during conferences and at the end of each trimester. Parents would like ongoing dialogue in regard to the progress of their children so that they can address areas of concern.

ii. Despite the varied efforts of the school to foster participation by as many parents as possible, only a small core group of parents remain consistently engaged. The SCEF has identified the multiple jobs that many parents hold as a barrier to their involvement and is exploring ways to meet the needs of those parents.

Recommendations:

i.   School leaders need to work on a plan to increase communication between the school and home about students' academic progress to keep parents regularly informed about their children's progress. Explore the possibility of progress reports and use of PowerTeacher and the grade book for teachers to input weekly academic data about students, which parents can access through the parent portal of PowerSchool. This may involve providing training for parents as well.

ii. Engage all stakeholders in the exploration of ideas and the formulation of a plan to engage the large percentage of parents who remain uninvolved in their children's education and in the operations of the school.