School Quality Review Report
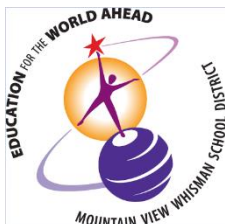## Mountain View Whisman School District

Theuerkauf Elementary School

October, 2015

School Quality Review Report

Client Name:	Mountain View Whisman School District
School Name:	Theuerkauf ES
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Review Date(s):	October 1-2, 2015
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Issue and revision record

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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

Theuerkauf Elementary School is a Title I school located in Mountain View, CA. Although the school sits within a wealthy community, the school has only a 50% rate of neighborhood participation. Those families that do enroll their children in Theuerkauf remain for years. The school population consists of numerous multigenerational families. The student body is multi-cultural with 54% identified as English Language Learner (ELL) with over 19 languages spoken by the students and their families. Seventy-four percent of the students enrolled receive free and reduced lunch. The staff is established with very few new teachers.

A new principal was appointed for the 2015-2016 school year. Other school leaders include the instructional coach and leadership team. Parents have an opportunity to share their input through various school and district committees. Volunteer organizations like the Jewish Coalition for Literacy, Aviendas Tutors, and Gideon Hausner Tutors provide additional support for students and staff. However, the school identifies several significant barriers to raising achievement and progress: the lack of curriculum alignment to the new state standards; insufficient training on instructing ELL and socioeconomically disadvantaged students; not enough time for teachers to analyze data and collaborate on practices to support student learning; limited professional development on the new standards, English Language Arts (ELA) and math instructional shifts, Depth of Knowledge (DOK) levels, Mathematical Practices, and the new California Assessment of Student Performance and Progress (CAASPP) assessments; and the need for a stronger literacy program, and a Response to Intervention program.

1.3   School demographic and performance data

	Academic Year 2013-14	Academic Year 2014-15
Grades:	TK-5	TK-5
Number of students enrolled:	471	416
Number of general education students:	426/90%	370/89%
Percentage of special education students:	10%	11%
Percentage of English language learner students:	55%	54%
In school suspensions:	0	0
Out of school suspensions:	1	0
Percentage of students that are Title 1 eligible:		74%
Latest attendance percentage:	95.67%	97.36%
Ethnic make- up of the students (percentages):	Hispanic – 64.2%; Asian 15.15; Black/African American 1.9%; Nat Hawaiian/other Pacific Islander – 2.4%; White – 9.9%; Multiple – 6%; Declined to state – 0.5%	

CAASPP Test Results 2014-2015 – ELA

	Standard Not Met	Standard Nearly Met	Standard Met	Standard Exceeded
All	46	25	19	10
EO	34	31	19	15
EL	72	18	10	0
SED	51	26	17	5
Non- SEDs	31	22	22	24
SWD	80	7	13	0
White	31	15	15	38
Hispanic/Latino	54	23	19	4

CAASPP Test Results 2014-2015 – Math

	Standard Not Met	Standard Nearly Met	Standard Met	Standard Exceeded
All	38	38	16	8
EO	28	48	15	9
EL	59	33	7	1
SED	44	37	13	6
Non- SEDs	18	42	27	13
SWD	84	13	0	3
White	40	27	13	20
Hispanic/Latino	44	36	15	5

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. Both classroom and school-wide positive behavior management systems significantly support students' likelihood of achieving academically and socially. Classroom environments are conducive to learning because student behavior is very good.

   ii. All stakeholder groups report that the school provides multiple opportunities for academic support. In math classes, teachers are attempting to present information in a variety of ways and to incorporate manipulatives into their lessons to enable students to be successful with the new curriculum.

   iii. School leaders promote a culture that enables students and staff to believe that they can succeed. The principal encourages staff input and is open to delegation to increase collaboration and buy-in for new initiatives.

   iv. The school provides a safe and welcoming learning environment for all children and community members. Students report that they have meaningful connections with multiple adults on campus. Some parents voluntarily serve on leadership committees such as the school-based English Language Advisory Council (ELAC) and District English Language Advisory Council (DELAC) to advocate for Theuerkauf students. Both the school and district support the development of parent leaders and parent education programs to improve the quality of students' lives at home and school.

2.2   Factors that limit effective student learning:

   i. The school does not have a systematic structure for monitoring student data. In addition, most teachers do not use formative assessment data to guide daily instruction. The work is not always at the right level for students to take the next steps in their learning.

   ii. Students do not receive sufficient and specific feedback to improve upon their work and further their learning. In most classes, students receive a numerical grade on their work with occasional comments such as "good job" or "great" which does not provide students with information to know what steps to take to improve their work.

   iii. There is inconsistent evidence of use of data and ongoing assessments aligned to the standards, which limits the school's ability to improve student achievement. Many individual teachers and grade level teams do not make it a practice to create formative assessments and to frequently analyze student formative and summative data to adjust instruction and to plan for targeted small group learning that occurs in the classroom.

2.3   Recommendations:

i.   Develop standards-based learning targets and closure activities like exit tickets for each lesson to assess student mastery levels before, during, and after each lesson.

ii. Create collaborative structures for teachers to analyze student work samples using research-based practices. Ensure that teachers align tasks to the standards so that, when grading students' work, the students receive feedback that accelerates their growth.

iii. Use data analysis protocols during leadership team and grade level team meetings. Support teachers to gather and analyze student data from the computer-based programs and other formative assessments as mechanisms for monitoring student progress and differentiating classroom instruction for all students.

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. Teachers and school leaders implement a variety of strategies to support students' social and emotional learning. Students and parents report strategies and initiatives like Junior Coaches, Six Pillars of Character, Cool Cats, Just For Kids talks at lunch, and the Community Health Awareness Council (CHAC) develop students' social and emotional skills and enable teachers to maximize learning time.

ii. All stakeholder groups report that the school provides multiple opportunities for academic support. In math classes, teachers are attempting to present information in a variety of ways and to incorporate manipulatives into their lessons to enable students to achieve success with the new curriculum.

Factors that limit effective student learning:

i. Teachers do not regularly use individual student assessment data to implement strategies to support diverse learners. The use of rubrics to promote student self-assessment is inconsistently utilized throughout the school.

ii. In most classes, lessons were not clearly aligned to state standards. Learning targets are not consistently posted, articulated throughout the lesson, and assessed at the end of the lesson. Most students comply with their teacher's directions but they exhibited only minimal commitment to the learning. Most lessons do not allow for student collaboration and genuine discussions to increase cognitive engagement.

iii. Although students frequently use computer-based learning programs, most teachers do not consistently utilize the student reports to plan instruction, nor do they closely monitor learning while students are on the computer. As a result, most teachers are unsure if the technology resources are advancing student learning.

iv. In most classrooms, the quality of questioning and genuine discussions is minimal. Students are unable to engage in authentic discussions about the concepts or tasks due to the format of the lesson or too much teacher talk. When teachers pose questions, most questions are one-word answers or a literal response, which does not promote deeper understanding of concepts and the ability to think critically.

Recommendations:

i. Provide professional development to include protocols to enable teachers to routinely analyze student data and student work. This should be regular practice in all teacher collaborative teams so that teachers can effectively plan lessons and assessment tasks. Ensure teams access student mastery reports to develop a true blended-learning model.

ii. Ensure a systematic process for displaying and measuring student progress towards achieving learning targets.

iii. Implement collaborative learning strategies to increase student voice in the classroom, active participation in learning, and promote problem-solving skills.

3.2   Domain 2: Curriculum & Assessment

Curriculum & Assessment Requires Support in Targeted Areas

Factors that support effective student learning:
i. The variety of extended day activities is having a positive impact on student learning. These activities provide a full range of interesting and relevant learning experiences. Some students are provided remediation and enrichment opportunities and homework assistance.

ii. The newly adopted Math curriculum has motivated some staff to work collaboratively to scaffold lessons to meet the needs of their students. Students report that the new math curriculum is challenging and fun. It promotes critical thinking and problem-solving skills.

Factors that limit effective student learning:
i. The school leaders and teachers have not implemented procedures for monitoring the curriculum through focused observations, specific feedback, and efficient professional learning communities (PLCs) processes for every grade level. As a result, inconsistencies exist in the quality and depth of the delivered curriculum.

ii. The district has not yet adopted an English Language Arts (ELA) curriculum. Instructional practices and resources are inconsistent across the grade levels, which inhibits horizontal and vertical alignment. Students ELA learning experiences and the level of rigor vary within and across grade levels.

iii. The school makes limited use of assessment results to identify and address students' learning needs. The Leadership Team (LT) has not embraced a formal process for delving deep into all available student data. At present, the LT reviews state assessment and district benchmark assessment results, as well as some student work samples, but this is not sufficiently deep enough to make well informed decisions.

Recommendations:
i. Work with the instructional leaders to develop an observation schedule and conduct instructional rounds to monitor curriculum implementation. Provide teacher leaders with protocols for curriculum review and data analysis.

ii. Share curriculum development practices used by the 5th grade team to assist other teams to implement rigorous California State Standards-aligned units.

iii. Establish schedules and procedures for the leadership and grade level teams to review assessment data, report trends, and develop individualized learning plans for advanced and struggling students.

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 new principal's collaborative leadership style and the instructional changes made thus far, including implementing collaborative time, are being received well by the staff. The principal is visible in classrooms and throughout the school, which demonstrates his commitment to improving learning and teaching.

ii. The school leader promotes a positive school culture. The staff said the principal has a "contagious enthusiasm" that creates "momentum" for change, and they believe "we can make a difference." The majority of students enjoy school and believe that they can succeed, and are committed to working towards meeting expectations, which contributes to the consistently good attendance rates.

iii. The school leaders implement a rigorous teacher selection process to ensure that students receive quality instruction on a daily basis. The panel of interviewers requires potential candidates to collaboratively analyze student data and conduct demonstration lessons with students to hire the best staff.

iv. The principal models high expectations for staff and students. Teachers report that his observation feedback has enabled them to improve their practices. If unsatisfactory performance is observed, he conferences with staff and follows up to support their development. In some grade teams, teacher relationships are such that they support and challenge each other to continuously improve.

v. The principal is developing a core group of teacher leaders through their work on the leadership team. In addition, other staff members take an active role leading and managing programs with minimal required support from the principal.

Factors that limit effective student learning:

i. The school leaders have not yet revised the 5 year old school plan or developed a new vision for the school. As a result, the staff is unclear about the direction of the school. They are not clear about their roles and responsibilities in the plan. However, they are optimistically awaiting positive changes and a team spirit is emerging.

ii. School leaders have not created structures and processes to frequently monitor the quality of teaching and learning. The leaders have a general overview of the school's needs but they have not delved deep enough to strategically plan for student and staff success.

iii. With the exception of the formal teacher evaluation system, staff expectations and accountability for academic and social achievement of all students is implied. There is a need for monitoring and measuring implementation of initiatives and student learning to hold staff accountable for improving teaching and learning.

iv. The school does not have a systematic process for planning professional development that is differentiated for teachers and addresses school-wide challenges. Several teachers are not confident in

their understanding and implementation of the new standards to adequately prepare students for the state assessment and future learning.

v. The school leaders are in the emerging stage of creating a formal process to collect and analyze a wide range of student data. There is no clear methodology to ensure that intervention and enrichment plans are created and monitored to improve student outcomes.

Recommendations:

i. Seek input from stakeholders and review school-wide data to collaboratively develop a vision for the school. The new vision should be articulated to the broader community to garner support for new initiatives.

ii. Meet with the LT to analyze school data and set school-wide goals, evaluation, and monitoring processes to achieve school-wide goals.

iii. Create a daily or weekly observation and feedback cycle to monitor and measure implementation of new initiatives. Design a tiering system to determine the impact that these initiatives are having on student growth, academically and socially.

iv. Use available staff and student data, including classroom observation and teacher survey results, to develop a school-wide professional development plan.

v. Continue work towards creating a formal process for collecting and analyzing a wide range of student data. Use the available data sources such as the computer-based instructional programs, benchmark assessments, attendance, and discipline data to determine next steps to increase student growth.

3.4   Domain 4: The Culture of Learning

The Culture of Learning is Established.

Factors that support effective student learning:

i. The principal and staff ensure students and families feel welcomed and valued at the school. Teachers and parents express mutual appreciation. Students feel safe and cared for at the school.

ii. Students are respectful of their peers and teachers, which creates a positive environment conducive for learning. When given the opportunity, students work well in collaborative groups. The Junior Coaches program builds students' leadership skills but it also promotes good citizenship, conflict resolution, and care for fellow community members.

iii. The Cool Cats program motivates students to do their best academically and socially and has a positive effect on student growth and development.

Factors that limit effective student learning:

i. Although families with children enrolled in the school recognize the positive benefits the school offers, the school has a negative reputation in the community, which affects enrollment numbers and limits academic diversity. Many neighborhood families choose select enrollment or specialized schools.

Recommendations:

i. In collaboration with the School Community Engagement Facilitator, the school leaders should create more opportunities to invite potential new parents and neighborhood families to the school. Create a comprehensive public relations plan that broadly publicizes accomplishments, new initiatives, and student progress.

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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. Parents report that they frequently receive informal and formal communication about their children's academic and social progress. Written communication is provided in English and Spanish to ensure there are no language barriers to communicating student progress. Parents state that the learning environment is positive and that their children are getting a good education. Parents believe the staff truly cares about their children, as modeled by the school leader.

ii. Students receive support from an array of service providers to overcome academic and social concerns and to enrich their learning. In particular, parent focus group members stated that "students with Individualized Educational Plans (IEPs) get help. The process is good. All supports were ready on day one."

iii. Some parents attend parent engagement and leadership classes offered at Foothill College, receiving certification as parent leaders. These parents voluntarily serve on leadership committees such as the school-based English Language Advisory Council (ELAC) and District English Language Advisory Council (DELAC) to advocate for Theuerkauf students.

Factors that limit effective student learning:

i. Although the school has supportive families, there are only a few parents that regularly volunteer in the school or serve on committees. Few parents participate in the shared decision-making process.

ii. Some parents understand the requirements of the new curriculum, while others are very unsure about what it entails and how they can support their children at home.

Recommendations:

i. In collaboration with the School Community Engagement Facilitator, the school leaders should continue their work to increase communication and school family events to recruit new parent volunteers and leaders. Survey parents to determine their interests, needs, and possible areas of support.

ii. Share the California State Standards instructional shifts and sample assessment items during family nights, post information on the website, and in the school newsletter to ensure parents understand the new curriculum and how to support their children at home.