School Quality Review Report
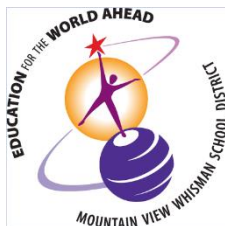## Mountain View Whisman School District

Mariano Castro Elementary School

October, 2015

Cambridge Education

School Quality Review Report

Client Name:	Mountain View Whisman School District
School Name:	Mariano Castro ES
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Review Date(s):	October 6-7, 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

Mariano Castro Elementary serves 300 students in grades TK to 5. The school's student population is high poverty (85% qualify for free or reduced lunch) and 75% non-native English speakers. Castro is a true neighborhood school as no students are bussed in. Prior to July 1, 2015 Castro contained a district-wide dual immersion choice program and a neighborhood traditional English-only program. In an effort to address the low achievement in the traditional neighborhood school, it was decided to have each program be their own school to enable and empower each program to focus on the unique needs of their students and families.

The school is scheduled to be modernized and occupied by Gabriela Mistral Elementary School in August 2017, while Mariano Castro will move to a new school which is being built on the east side of campus.

1.3   School demographic and performance data

	Academic Year 2013-14 (*numbers estimated)	Academic Year 2014-15
Grades:	TK-5	TK-5
Number of students enrolled:	330	300
Number of general education students:	310	272
Percentage of special education students:	7%	9%
Percentage of English language learner students:	75	75
In School suspensions:	24	25
Out of school suspensions:	2	0
Percentage of students that are Title 1 eligible:	85%	85%
Latest attendance percentage:	96%	97%
Ethnic make-up of the students (percentages):	95% Hispanic, 5% Other (White, Chinese, African-American, Indian)	

CAASPP Test Results 2014-2015 - ELA

	Standard Not Met	Standard Nearly Met	Standard Met	Standard Exceeded
All	50	31	15	4
EO	9	14	30	47
EL	69	26	5	0
SED	52	31	13	4
Non- SEDs	18	36	36	9
SWD	92	8	0	0
Hispanic/Latino	42	45	11	2

CAASPP Test Results 2014-2015 – Math

	Standard Not Met	Standard Nearly Met	Standard Met	Standard Exceeded
All	40	44	12	4
EO	10	60	10	20
EL	52	41	6	1
SED	43	44	11	2
Non- SEDs	8	50	17	25
SWD	69	27	0	4
Hispanic/Latino	42	45	11	2

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 culture at Castro Elementary School is characterized by professionalism and respect. Parents and school personnel are supportive of each other and students. These characteristics permeate the student body in such a way that a majority of the students are respectful and kind to each other.

ii. Student discipline issues are rare and there are few behavioral problems at Castro. The school has developed routines and procedures that are followed by students, and there has not been an out-of-school suspension in over a year.

iii. The parent support at Castro is extremely strong. Parents support the school in areas such as classroom volunteers and after-school programs. Additionally, parents provide financial support to the school through fundraising activities.

iv. The school provides opportunities for parents and community stakeholders to have a voice in making school-wide decisions. This provision for stakeholder voice strengthens the home-school relationship and contributes to the effective running of the school.

2.2 Factors that limit effective student learning:

i. The differentiation of instruction is not consistently implemented across the school, and does not facilitate academic growth at a rate that aligns with the ability of the students.

ii. Rigor in instruction is not consistent in all grades and classrooms as a result of an inconsistent understanding of what constitutes rigor among teachers across the school. Teachers are not developing lessons that will continuously challenge or motivate students.

iii. There is an insufficient amount of data to accurately determine students' academic levels. This lack of data does not give teachers the tools necessary to make informed decisions about instruction or instructional planning.

2.3 Recommendations:

i. Provide teachers with professional development on rigor and strategies for its incorporation in daily lessons. The training should be differentiated by grade level and teachers' current knowledge and application level of rigor in the classroom.

ii. Provide PD for teachers on effective differentiation of instruction. Use a multi-tiered training model that helps teachers develop differentiated lesson plans, deliver instruction that addresses multiple learning modalities, and use formative assessments that will provide differentiated feedback on student performance.

iii. Form an instructional data team at the school charged with the responsibility of developing interim formative assessments at the end of defined units of study in each of the core content areas. The assessments should be administered to students periodically throughout the school year to monitor academic progress.

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. Student behavior is very well managed and discipline issues are a rarity. Teachers respond quickly to off-task behavior and re-direct students appropriately. Students are kind and courteous to each other, which also contributes to the orderliness on campus.

ii. Teachers routinely provide students with opportunities to talk with their peers and discuss class assignments or problems posed during lessons. These "turn and talk" activities provide students not only with opportunities to reflect on their thinking, but also to improve their skills in speaking and listening.

iii. Teachers have access to significant resources to promote learning in the classroom. Supports are provided from parent volunteers and instructional assistants in classrooms, along with a wide range of curricular materials and technology.

Factors that limit effective student learning:

i. There is no established process for collecting student performance data and using that data to drive improvements in teaching and learning. This lack of systematic review and discussion of data hampers teachers' ability to know if their instructional practices are as effective as they could be, and make the modifications necessary if students are not performing up to standard with the current practices.

ii. Teachers' questioning during lessons is at a low cognitive level and does not challenge students to think deeply or critically. Teachers provide students with opportunities to reflect on their thinking through "turn and talk" sessions with their peers; however, there is little to no follow-up questioning to push or challenge students to think differently or to provide them with feedback on the quality of their thinking.

iii. The content and delivery of most lessons lacks sufficient differentiation to ensure that students' individual learning needs are met and that they will progress academically at a rate that matches their ability. In most classes, all students are working on the same assignments, regardless of their ability or learning modality, and thus a true picture of what constitutes students' best work is unattainable.

Recommendations:

i. Develop data teams at the school for the purpose of disaggregating student assessment data and analyzing it into usable information to inform teaching and learning. The data should be reviewed by

individual student to determine their levels of progress throughout the year and to guide plans for differentiation of instruction to meet the needs revealed through the data analysis process.

ii.   Provide professional development (PD) on asking better questions to improve teachers questioning techniques. The PD should be differentiated to allow teachers with varying levels of skill in this area to receive training that is appropriate to their learning needs. Follow-up to the PD should be done by school administration to monitor the implementation of the new strategies in the classroom.

iii. Provide PD designed to help teachers gain a solid understanding of rigor and how to differentiate instruction in order to ensure that it is a standard component of all taught lessons. As teachers strengthen this area of their performance, students will experience similar gains in their knowledge levels and performance on state assessments.

3.2 Domain 2: Curriculum & Assessment

Curriculum & Assessment Requires Support in Targeted Areas.

Factors that support effective student learning:

i. Extended time for reading and math has been provided in the master schedule to provide struggling students with the opportunity to strengthen their skills in these subjects. The focus of the extended learning block is not just to catch students up academically, but also to accelerate their learning.

ii. The school has implemented a Writing Across the Curriculum (WAC) program designed to strengthen the writing skills of ELL students and provide them with a lifelong skill that will support their learning throughout their school years and beyond.

Factors that limit effective student learning:

i. The district does not yet have an adopted ELA curriculum that aligns with state standards. Instructional decisions in reading vary from teacher to teacher and grade to grade. This inconsistency prevents students and parents from getting a clear understanding of the learning expectations and inhibits the construction of a unified skill sequence across grade levels.

ii. The school does not have an effective way of administering formative assessments to gauge students' academic progress throughout the year. While teachers do administer exit tickets or other informal assessments, this is not sufficient to producing data that can be used to monitor student progress throughout the year.

Recommendations:

i. Identify the discrete reading skills taught at every grade level and sequence the CCSS ELA skills across the school. After the skill sequencing, have teachers representing each grade collaborate on developing lesson plans and assessments that are aligned with the skills sequence. Create a draft curriculum to circulate among all teachers for feedback and modification.

ii. Assist teachers in the development of formative assessments in each core content area to provide a means of accurately determining student progress throughout the year. Care should be taken to ensure that assessments are aligned with delivered instruction so students are not tested on content that has not been taught.

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 principal holds teachers accountable for their students' academic and behavioral progress. Teacher team meeting minutes are collected and reviewed by the school principal, who provides feedback on the actions outlined in the notes. Improvements in student performance are celebrated, and teachers must provide the "why" behind any lack of progress.

ii. The principal has constructed a schedule at the school that facilitates learning during the building renovation and new construction. Castro is currently sharing space with another school in common areas such as the library, cafeteria, and playground. Attention has been paid to developing timetables that prevent overcrowding or conflicts with facility use that could lead to disruptive student behavior.

iii. The school has a high rate of daily attendance (97%) that the school supports through its close working relationships with parents, and emphasizing the importance of students arriving on time to school every day.

Factors that limit effective student learning:

i.   The principal does not have access to timely and useful data on student performance and, without this, the administration and teachers are not able to effectively remediate skills and rapidly improve student achievement.

ii. Administrative feedback provided to teachers is not affecting positive changes in teacher performance in a timely manner. The principal monitors classroom instruction and has established expectations for changes that will enhance student achievement; however, there is not a sufficient sense of urgency to make the changes necessary to effect this outcome.

Recommendations:

i.   Work with teachers on developing formative assessments, aligned with the year-end assessments, that will provide meaningful data on student progress throughout the school year. The assessments will provide a much-needed barometer of student growth and a means of making higher quality decisions around the delivery of instruction.

ii. Establish a firmer timeline for improvements in student achievement, coupled with additional supports for teachers in the form of professional development, and more frequent feedback from the academic coach on lesson planning and delivery.

3.4   Domain 4: The Culture of Learning

The Culture of Learning is Exemplary.

Factors that support effective student learning:

i.   Castro Elementary School's culture is supportive, warm, and respectful. Parents are seen as a part of the school; parents and school personnel are mutually supportive of each other. Students are also valued at the school and are generally supportive and kind towards each other.

ii.   Student behavior at Castro is well managed and there are very few discipline issues. The school has established routines and procedures that are known and understood by students, and there has not been an out-of-school suspension in over a year.

Factors that limit effective student learning:

i.   There are no factors that limit effective student learning.

Recommendations:

i.   Continue the practices that have created the positive culture at Castro. Make the practices explicit by including them in the school handbook so that the "Castro way" becomes known by those who are new to the school.

3.5   Domain 5: Partnerships with Families and the Community

Partnerships with Families and the Community Requires Support in Targeted Areas

Factors that support effective student learning:

i.   Castro Elementary strongly encourages parental involvement and views parents as a vital component of the school's success and ongoing improvement efforts. Parents volunteer hundreds of hours to the school each year and serve as the school's best ambassadors to families new to the school. The parents' and school's shared values around student behavior contribute to the positive environment.

ii. The school has re-established its Parent Teacher Association (PTA) within the past year and the organization has actively pursued partnerships in the community that have raised over $100,000 to support teaching and learning at Castro.

Factors that limit effective student learning:

i.   There are limited translation services available at Castro, which hampers communication between the school and its non-English-speaking parents. Seventy-five percent of the school's student population is classified as English Language Learners (ELL) and in order for these students to excel, their parents must be well informed of their children's academic progress and how they can support them.

Recommendations:

i.   Work with the school division and seek out community partners who would be able to take on translation services as a project for the school. The services should include both translation of school documents such as newsletters, announcements, and flyers, as well as oral translation to assist parents during student registration, parent conferences, and other school events.