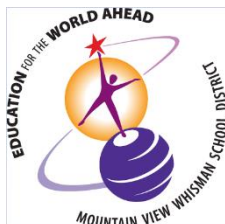# School Quality Review Report
Mountain View Whisman School District

Frank L. Huff Elementary School

October, 2015

Cambridge Education

School Quality Review Report

Client Name:	Mountain View Whisman School District
School Name:	Huff ES
Principal Name:	Heidi Smith
Address:	253 Martens Ave. Mountain View, CA 94040
Review Date(s):	October 1-2, 2015
Lead Reviewer:	Harold Lawson
Team Reviewer(s):	Miguel Casar

750-A San Pierre Way, Mountain View, CA 94043

Cambridge Education

Issue and revision record

Revision	Date	Originator	Checker	Approver	Description	Standard
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6	11/11/2015	Harold Lawson	Heidi Smith (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

Frank L. Huff Elementary is a K-5 elementary school serving 583 students. There is no majority ethnic group with over 30 countries of origin represented in the school. Slightly less than 20% of the students are English Language Learners (ELL), and a very small (less than 5%) portion has been identified as Students with Disabilities. The principal has been in place at Huff for less than three years, and the school faculty is a balanced blend of experienced and novice teachers. Based on its strong academic performance, the school has the distinction of being a national Blue Ribbon School.

Huff has a truly multicultural student population with approximately 37 languages other than English spoken in the homes of students. For the last three years, the K-5 program has included Enrichment clusters during the day that replaced the former GATE pull-out model of years past. The school has implemented a STEW (science, technology, engineering, and writing) program that integrates writing across the curriculum. The impetus behind the creation of the program was research that indicated ELL students learn best through science and technology courses, combined with the faculty's goal to improve all students' writing skills and their performance on state assessments.

There is a persistent gap in the achievement of special education and ELL students who consistently score below their peers. Data on the achievement of these students has been a focus of improvement planning and will continue to be a school priority. Fifth grade students have also had less than expected performance in math and language arts on state assessments. Improving their performance is also a priority area in the school improvement plan.

1.3 School demographic and performance data

	Academic Year 2013-14	Academic Year 2014-15
Grades:	K-5	K-5
Number of students enrolled:	579	583
Number of general education students:	551	557
Percentage of special education students:	4.8% (28 students)	4.5% (26 students)
Percentage of English language learner students:	21%--(121 students)	(19.2% 112 students)
In School suspensions:	2	6
Out of school suspensions:	0	4
Percentage of students that are Title 1 eligible:	N/A	N/A
Latest attendance percentage:	97.28	96.96
Ethnic make-up of the students (percentages):	Hispanic-11.22% Asian-32.12% African American-1.38% White-39.72% Mutl.-13.8% Hawaiian-.35% Missing--.69%	Hisp.—11.84% Asian—39.9% African American-1.2% White—39.79% Mult.—15.09% Missing-.7%

CAASPP Test Results 2014-2015 - ELA

	Standard Not Met	Standard Nearly Met	Standard Met	Standard Exceeded
All	5	7	26	62
EO	5	6	24	65
EL	25	18	32	25
SED	24	19	24	33
Non- SED	4	6	27	64
SWD	44	13	31	13
White	3	9	23	65
Asian	5	1	31	63
Hispanic/Latino	21	7	41	31

CAASPP Test Results 2014-2015 – Math

	Standard Not Met	Standard Nearly Met	Standard Met	Standard Exceeded
All	6	9	27	58
EO	5	9	29	57
EL	25	19	19	38
SED	36	5	50	9
Non- SED	3	9	25	63
SWD	56	13	6	25
White	3	10	27	60
Asian	4	8	20	69
Hispanic/Latino	27	10	37	27

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. Huff has developed a culture of high expectations for both academic and social-emotional development, and these expectations are consistently promoted for staff and students. The culture is characterized by a learning environment that is safe, respectful, challenging, and welcoming.

ii. The weekly collaboration time within grade level groups has built effective teams that work together to improve student learning. The added feature of quarterly vertical articulation meetings further enhances the team building for effective learning.

iii. The Eureka math curriculum is challenging students, teachers, and parents to more effectively develop a conceptual understanding of mathematics. All stakeholder groups have begun to recognize the difference in learning, and students are developing critical thinking and problem solving skills.

iv. The school leaders and staff place a high priority on building collaborative relationships with parents and families. This is reflected in the active presence, involvement, and creative work by parents, which effectively and comprehensively supports student learning at Huff.

v. Leadership at Huff is widely distributed and continuously encourages stakeholders to be leaders, share their knowledge, challenge themselves professionally and actively contribute to the learning community.

2.2   Factors that limit effective student learning:

i. Huff lacks a consistent approach to ensure that students know what they are learning and to identify when they have been successful in doing so. This lack of consistency results in students being able to share what they are doing, but not what they are learning, which hinders their ability to make effective connections across various units of study throughout the year.

ii. Teachers, students, and school leaders do not have sufficient access to relevant, timely assessment data in order to make informed decisions about teaching and learning, primarily in English Language Arts (ELA).

iii. The school's action plan is not sufficiently focused and specific, and does not include well-defined success criteria and regular interim benchmarks. Stakeholders are not well-informed of the plan and its objectives.

2.3   Recommendations:

i. Create rubrics to help students understand the levels of work quality and to assess their work against the rubric to determine its level of quality. Rubrics can be developed for daily class assignments as well as long-term and group assignments.

ii. Create a set of short assessments, aligned with the tested curriculum, that will provide just-in-time information on student progress that can be analyzed by school leaders, used by teachers to improve teaching and learning, and will guide the selection of appropriate remediation and re-teaching.

iii.   Revise the current school action plan, with a focus on 3-5 well-defined goals, along with a limited number of action steps that align with areas of strength in the school as well as areas in need of improvement. Having a focus on both areas will help to ensure that the school will continue to develop those practices that have been successful and can be built upon to achieve greater success.

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 is Established.

Factors that support effective student learning:

i. Teachers and administrators have established expectations for student behavior supported by processes and structures to reinforce these expectations. As a result, there are few disciplinary issues at the school. The daily routine of "morning meetings" is one process that allows students to share their feelings and provides teachers with valuable insights on how to best support positive behavior.

ii. The school has provided students with opportunities to set their own personal learning goals, which are posted around the classroom and serve as a daily reminder to students of expectations they have set for themselves regarding both their academics and behavior in school.

iii. The school provides a technology-enhanced classroom environment in which both teachers and students are actively using technology throughout the day. Teachers routinely employ the Smartboard interactive technology in daily lessons, and students are provided with laptops to complete daily assignments and conduct online research.

iv. Teachers plan lessons that are aligned to the state standards. Teachers use the newly adopted Eureka math program to bolster alignment with Common Core State Standards for math.

v. Most teachers clearly communicate the directions for learning activities, ensuring students understand how to complete their task. The learning environment is positive in most classes, and students know to ask for additional support in understanding the directions, if needed.

Factors that limit effective student learning:

i. There is insufficient discussion among teachers on assessment data and ways in which the data can be used to improve student performance. Although current assessments reflect strong achievement in all subjects, there are still performance gaps among Hispanic students that have not been closed.

ii. Students are not provided with sufficient opportunities to reflect on their own learning and discuss their performance on assignments and assessments in order to learn how they could improve their performance. Student work is regularly assessed by teachers, so students know what grade they made, but they often do not know why.

iii. Teachers inconsistently identify and share learning objectives and success criteria with students before and during lessons. As a result, not all students understand what they are expected to learn and how they are being measured in their work.

Recommendations:

i. Establish structured data discussions for the purpose of analyzing student performance and planning future instruction around the needs surfaced in the data meeting. Particular focus during the meetings should be on the performance of student gap groups, and planning to provide sufficient differentiation in instruction to reach students of all learning levels.

ii. Establish structured times to have individual and group discussions with students on their performance, with an emphasis on helping them clearly understand where and how their performance failed to meet the standards and how they can improve their performance on future work and/or assessments. These conversations should mature over time to the point where students can lead the discussion.

iii. Establish clear expectations of posting and communicating standards-based learning objectives and success criteria for each lesson. Monitor for implementation and provide support to teachers as needed.

3.2   Domain 2: Curriculum & Assessment

Curriculum & Assessment is Established.

Factors that support effective student learning:

i.   Students are provided with frequent opportunities to have meaningful collaboration during class, work on shared assignments or exchange ideas on their individual assignments. Observations and discussions with students revealed that this type of work is both enjoyable for students and enhances their retention of existing knowledge and build new learning.

ii. The STEW program has created a school-wide emphasis on improving students' writing skills. The improvements in writing have provided students with a fundamental skill that will continue to contribute to their academic success through high school and beyond.

iii. The school provides a curriculum that offers students a range of interesting and relevant learning experiences, including the arts and physical education classes. The curriculum is enhanced with extended learning opportunities after school.

Factors that limit effective student learning:

i.   Formative assessments are not being provided frequently enough to provide an effective means of monitoring student academic progress.

Recommendations:

i.   Provide training to assist teachers to develop short assessments (5-10 questions) to administer daily or weekly to assess student learning more frequently and determine what remediation and/or re-teaching may be necessary, based on student performance on the short assessments.

3.3   Domain 3: Leadership, Management and Accountability

Leadership, Management and Accountability is Established.

Factors that support effective student learning:

i. High expectations have been embedded into the culture of the school, and all staff members are regularly reminded of the actions and obligations to students that they are expected to meet each day. Having strong test scores is not seen as a reason to "rest on one's laurels" but serve as a challenge to continue to grow and ensure that all student subgroups are also achieving at these levels.

ii. Administrators conduct frequent classroom walkthroughs in order to inspect what they expect and to use their visibility as a means of supporting teachers and reinforcing the message of high expectations for all students every day.

iii. Administrators reinforce their high expectations by confronting and documenting teachers with less-than-satisfactory performance, specifically informing them how their performance is not meeting the standard and providing supports to help them reach acceptable performance levels if they are able and willing to do so.

Factors that limit effective student learning:

i. The range of assessment data is limited and does not provide school administrators with a sufficient amount of information to guide continuous improvements in teaching and learning throughout the year. The lack of informal assessment data hampers administrators' ability to ensure that all students are progressing adequately and that supports for learning are being provided by all teachers.

ii. The school improvement plan is not focused and specific enough to provide the necessary guidance needed to move the school forward so that all students are as successful as they can be.

Recommendations:

i. Create a set of commonly understood benchmarks for every subject and have teachers create measures to assess student attainment of the benchmarks. These common standards and assessments would not only create a common language around student performance, but would also empower teachers to provide appropriate strategies to reach all students.

ii. Revise the school improvement plan during the focused improvement planning professional development session to ensure it focuses on improving learning outcomes for all students. Ensure the plan includes: roles and responsibilities for all stakeholders; benchmarks for progress monitoring; and timelines for implementation. Clearly communicate the plan to all stakeholders.

3.4 Domain 4: The Culture of Learning

The Culture of Learning is Exemplary.

Factors that support effective student learning:

i. The school has established clear standards for student behavior and students are consistently courteous and well-mannered throughout the school. Students self-regulate their behavior and maintain acceptable standards of behavior throughout the school day.

ii. Relationships between and among students, faculty and the community are positive and respectful, and reflect a school culture in which everyone is valued. This generates a sense of belonging that promotes and supports the school's overall goals for student achievement.

Factors that limit effective student learning:

i. There were no limiting factors identified for this domain.

Recommendations:

i. Continue to build on the strength of the school's culture by explicitly celebrating the students' positive behavior and the overall sense of community in the school. These celebrations could take many forms, including recognition of specific positive actions by students, classes, or other individuals in 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.   Communication between the school and home is highly valued, and the school maintains contact with their children's families through a variety of print and electronic media. The school also has an online parent portal for parents to keep abreast of school events and help them support their children's academic success at home.

ii. The rich cultural diversity of Huff is a welcomed and celebrated aspect of the school. The school hosts a number of cultural celebrations throughout the year that showcase the foods, clothing, and cultural traditions of the different nationalities at the school.

iii. Parents participate in the English Language Advisory Council (ELAC), PTA Council and other groups, allowing them to be involved in some of the decision-making processes at the school.

iv. The positive school culture promotes an atmosphere of mutual respect; parents feel comfortable approaching teachers and the principal as they advocate for their children.

Factors that limit effective student learning:

i.   Less than 50% of Huff families are members of the PTA, and the current membership is not representative of the school's entire demographic population.

Recommendations:

i.   Work with the PTA on membership recruitment efforts as a means of having more parents actively involved in the school. The organization can serve as a valuable tool to engage parents who have not traditionally been a part of the school and help them better understand how to support their children at home.