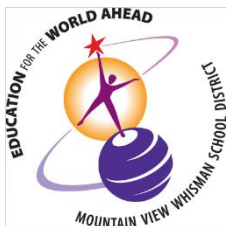


School Quality Review Report

Mountain View Whisman School District

Monta Loma Elementary School

October, 2015



School Quality Review 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

Monta Loma Elementary School serves approximately 480 students in grades K-5. Around 25% of students are from the nearby military base and, as a result, there is a regular turnover of students.

The principal has been in post for four years, having been principal of another Mountain View Whisman Elementary School for two years and a teacher at Monta Loma for fourteen years.

The school cites the proximity of major companies such as Google as an aid to student learning because they support the school with additional funding, along with the instructional coaching and variety of online resources. The school identifies teacher turnover (caused by the high cost of rental properties in the area), having a whole new team in the SPED classes, inconsistency in small group instruction, and the lack of an ELA curriculum as barriers to effective learning.

1.3 School demographic and performance data

	Academic Year 2013-14	Academic Year 2014-15
Grades:	K-5	K-5
Number of students enrolled:	485	472
Percentage of general education students:	426	424
Percentage of special education students:	12% (59)	11.8% (56)
Percentage of English language learner students:	40% (196)	35% (166)
In school suspensions:	2	3
Out of school suspensions:	2	0
Percentage of students that are Title 1 eligible:	266	229
Latest attendance percentage:	96.06%	95.95%
Ethnic make- up of the students (percentages):	Hispanic – 51.34% Asian – 9.69% Black – 3/3% Native Hawaiian 2.06% White – 27.42% Multiple 5.77% Missing 0.41%	Hispanic – 48.94% Asian - 9.53% Black – 3.39% Native Hawaiian - 0.85% White - 29.24% Multiple – 7.42% Missing - .0.64%

CAASPP Test Results 2014-2015 - ELA

	Standard Not Met	Standard Nearly Met	Standard Met	Standard Exceeded
All	27	25	21	27
EO	20	20	19	41
EL	48	36	13	2
SED	38	29	20	12
Non- SEDs	15	20	22	43
SWD	73	17	4	6
White	11	17	15	58
Asian	31	15	31	23
Hispanic/Latino	34	32	22	12

CAASPP Test Results 2014-2015 – Math

	Standard Not Met	Standard Nearly Met	Standard Met	Standard Exceeded
All	29	26	24	21
EO	20	22	26	32
EL	52	34	12	1
SED	41	29	23	8
Non- SEDs	16	23	25	36
SWD	73	19	0	8
White	12	16	25	47
Asian	27	20	27	27
Hispanic/Latino	40	30	23	7

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. Students, staff and parents all value the high levels of trust, respect and care that are evident in relationships throughout the school. As a result, the level of commitment to the school and the well-being of the students are high.
- ii. The principal is visible around the school, visiting classrooms, promoting the core values and modeling expectations of conduct. She meets regularly with all groups and provides opportunities for participation in the decision-making processes of the school. She has created strong relationships with families and the extended community.
- iii. Parents feel welcomed into the school and appreciate the varied methods of communication designed to meet each family's needs. Communications consist of using digital media such as 'Simply Circle', email, and paper flyers in both English and Spanish.
- iv. The Instructional coaches provide teachers with high quality support in order to help them to develop their teaching skills.
- v. There are examples of effective and highly effective practices in a few classrooms. In some grade level teams, for example grade 2, collaboration is strong and data is used to group students according to their needs.

2.2 Factors that limit effective student learning:

- i. The school does not have a clearly defined vision of effective learning and teaching, a shared understanding of expected practices and procedures, such as behavior management, or a systematic approach to communicating instructional norms, resulting in wide variations across the school.
- ii. Many teachers lack an understanding of the requirements of CCSS, especially in ELA, and so they are unable to plan units and lessons that provide all students with the necessary depth, rigor and challenge to achieve at the expected levels.
- iii. While the principal is frequently in classrooms, most teachers do not receive enough regular feedback on the quality and effectiveness of their day to day teaching and so do not know how to improve their practice.

2.3 Recommendations:

- i. Promote consistency throughout the school by establishing a clear vision of effective teaching and learning in Monta Loma, setting out the values and beliefs that guide the school's work. Support the vision with explicit guidance for teachers and monitor implementation regularly. Improve "onboarding"

procedures for teachers new to the school in order to maintain consistency and momentum in school improvement.

- ii. Provide additional professional development for all teachers in planning units and lessons using the CCSS, including a focus on:
 - learning objectives and success criteria
 - checking for understanding and developing formative assessments that align with the standards
 - asking better questions and asking questions better to promote meaningful discussions and collaboration
 - developing students' problem-solving and critical thinking skills
- iii. Create clear systems and protocols for monitoring lesson plans and providing constructive feedback to teachers following walkthroughs and classroom visits by school administrators, so that all teachers know how well they are doing and what they need to do to ensure that their lessons are fully aligned to CCSS, and support and challenge all students in their learning.

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. The newly adopted mathematics program, Eureka Math, provides students with a firm foundation in math skills related to students' real world experiences. As a result, most teachers have a growing understanding of the instructional shifts required in math and work in grade level teams and with the instructional coach to implement them.
- ii. Teachers in the younger grade levels make effective use of formative assessment data to group students for English Language Development lessons. Groupings are flexible and regularly reviewed to ensure that students are grouped with peers with similar skills and experience. For example, one Kindergarten class discussed opinions while another group was learning how to introduce a friend.
- iii. The instructional coaches work effectively with grade level teams to support teachers in understanding student achievement data and planning lessons to meet students' identified learning needs. Some teachers use small group instruction well to address gaps in learning.
- iv. Most grade levels implemented Project Based Learning (PBL) in the previous academic year and have started projects or have plans in place for the current school year. Students benefit from the collaboration, discussion and problem solving approach.

Factors that limit effective student learning:

- i. While most classes have some form of learning objective on display, many are unrelated to State standards, merely state the topic, do not align with the lesson or are not presented in student friendly language. Few teachers refer to the lesson objective or the expected outcomes, or explain why students need to learn the content or skill, and so students do not have a clear idea of what is expected of them and why.
- ii. Too many lessons are dominated by teacher talk and, when students do have the chance to work independently, they often complete repetitive worksheets that rarely allow them to apply their new skills effectively or explain their reasoning.
- iii. Most classes provide frequent opportunities for students to "turn and talk" but too often the level of conversation is limited to repetition or recall and does not give students enough openings to engage in higher order thinking or discussions. The level of teacher questioning does not challenge students to develop deeper understanding of content and concepts.
- iv. There is no current agreed whole school behavior management approach and so some elements of students' disruptive behavior are not effectively addressed. As a result, students and teachers state that

learning time is regularly lost. Most teachers address social-emotional skills but not all use the expected Morning Meeting regularly.

- v. In the classrooms visited there were no examples of rubrics, student exemplar work or expectations for student work. As a result students do not know what high quality work looks like or how to improve their work. Only a few classes incorporate individual goal setting for students to monitor and track their progress.
- vi. The school does not have the benefit of up-to-date digital technology in every classroom and depends on shared mobile carts of chrome books or iPads, which are not always functioning. These are mainly used for students to practice basic skills during ELA or math time. Students have few opportunities to develop technology skills.

Recommendations:

- i. Provide all teachers with the professional development needed to enable them to plan effective lessons driven by well written learning objectives and success criteria, supported by rubrics and exemplars of high quality student work. Monitor lessons regularly to ensure that students know what they are learning, why and how it fits in with previous and future learning, and how they will know that they have been successful and set individual goals for improvement.
- ii. Support teachers in their planning by revisiting expectations for lesson design, including differentiation for students of different abilities and with different learning styles, incorporating more and varied ways for students to show and practice their learning, incorporating Explicit Direct Instruction strategies, and asking better questions.
- iii. Provide a short term and rapid solution to the immediate issue of inconsistency in behavior management and development of social-emotional skills by all teachers returning to the previously agreed strategies. Create a committee to research possible alternatives for teachers to consider and agree. Create an action plan to show the steps to be followed to implement an agreed way forward.
- iv. Incorporate more opportunities for students to use digital media to research and record their work and develop their technology skills.

3.2 Domain 2: Curriculum & Assessment

Curriculum & Assessment Requires Support in Targeted Areas

Factors that support effective student learning:

- i. The school works hard to address the need for a varied curriculum. They have adopted PBL to provide cross-curricular links and opportunities for students to collaborate in meaningful ways about real world issues, and make good use of the Living Classroom, FOSS Science kits and Science is Elementary to motivate student interest in science. Eureka Math aligns with CCSS.
- ii. Teachers, parents and volunteers provide a small range of after school activities. The addition of Lego robotics is proving a great success, and currently has a waiting list for places. An external group provides extended day support for eligible students, helping with homework and providing computer time and physical activity.
- iii. A few classes encourage students to have high expectations in relation to college and career readiness. They discuss students' thoughts and aspirations and display photographs of each student holding boards proclaiming the students name and "Future Marine Biologist" or "Future Doctor" for example.

Factors that limit effective student learning:

- i. The district has not yet provided an agreed ELA curriculum that aligns with CCSS. Teachers attempt to adapt and supplement the outdated curriculum and have no way of tracking which standards are being addressed or ensuring that they provide the depth and rigor required. The reading block is not always used effectively to develop students' skills in reading.
- ii. With the support and guidance of the instructional coaches, grade level teams are just beginning to use data to guide instructional decisions. Common assessments are in the early stages of development and most teachers rely on results from the computer-based programs such as ST math and AR to guide their planning. As a result, student work is not always matched closely to their needs and is either too easy or too challenging.
- iii. In several grade levels, planning meetings do not always follow protocols when administration or instructional coaches are not present. The principal monitors meeting minutes and provides support when needed. There is no monitoring of lesson plans to see how well lessons address the standards, and feedback from classroom visits beyond statutory observations is minimal.

Recommendations:

- i. Provide teachers with professional development so that they can plan ELA lessons more effectively using the CCSS. Support is required to guide teachers in identifying priorities, develop independent and group activities that address the standards, creating common assessments and using the data from assessments to inform next steps in planning.
- ii. Provide more opportunities for students to develop technological skills in curricular areas.
- iii. Revisit protocols for grade-level meetings to ensure that all teachers understand expectations. Monitor minutes and lesson plans and provide teachers with constructive feedback on how well they are aligning their lessons with CCSS.

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 and school leaders consistently model their expectations of professional conduct and commitment and this is evident in the high level of dedication that staff and teachers have to the school and the success of their students.
- ii. Leadership is shared with teacher leaders. The teacher leadership team consists of the instructional coach, SPED representative and one teacher from each grade level team. Experience ranges from long standing teachers to those new to teaching and to the school. The team contributes to decisions about key areas of school life and is encouraged to take on leadership roles in their teams.
- iii. The instructional coaches provide teachers with high quality support and feedback during their coaching cycle. The K-3 coach has developed a structured approach to maximize her effectiveness.
- iv. The community liaison actively contacts families to respond to student absences and tardiness, and attendance is close to the state average.

Factors that limit effective student learning:

- i. The school site plan is out of date, awaiting the outcomes of the school quality review. The current format does little to communicate the overall goals of the school in relation to school improvement. Action plans merely list strategies rather than including interim benchmarks to monitor progress toward stated goals. The staff is unsure of the strategic direction of the school or how they contribute to the school's overall vision.
- ii. Focused monitoring of the quality of learning and teaching through lesson plan review, student work sampling and lesson observations is limited to the formal statutory requirements, resulting in some teachers only being observed every two years. Therefore, school leaders do not have a clear picture of what is working well, where improvement is needed and any trends or patterns across the school.
- iii. Teachers hold themselves accountable for the social and academic success of their students but there are no formal or informal systems whereby school leaders hold teachers accountable for students' academic achievements.
- iv. Staff changes and limited communications about policies, procedures, resources and events lead to a lack of consistency and short notice of upcoming requirements of teachers.

Recommendations:

- i. Develop a clear vision statement supported by a detailed school improvement plan that sets out the school's goals and the actions that the school will take to achieve them. Action plans should define steps and strategies and include responsibilities and interim checkpoints, so that the school can communicate to all stakeholders the school's progress at key points during the school year.
- ii. Delegate responsibility for the on-boarding of teachers new to the school so that policies and procedures are maintained and teachers know which resources and programs are used by the school. Provide all

teachers with longer notice of upcoming events, such as Fall Festival and parent conferences, so that teachers have time to plan ahead.

- iii. Hold teachers accountable for the social and academic development of the students in their care by:
 - Extending lesson observations beyond the statutory minimum to monitor the quality of teaching and the rigor of lessons, providing teachers with meaningful feedback to bring about improvement in student learning and providing support and PD to address teacher needs
 - Ensuring that grade level teams implement the data analysis protocols with fidelity
 - Holding data chats with teachers about student performance
 - Regularly sampling student work to monitor progress
 - Following up with teachers to ensure that agreed procedures, protocols and strategies are implemented and sustained.

3.4 Domain 4: The Culture of Learning

The Culture of Learning is Established

Factors that support effective student learning:

- i. School leaders, staff, students and parents all value the strong trusting relationships in the school. Parents from the military families from the nearby base who move schools frequently report that the school is welcoming, attentive to their needs and they feel that their children are safe.
- ii. The vast majority of students, parents, teachers and support staff in the focus groups were adamant that there was nothing about the school that they wished to change and that, in most classes, students developed confidence and a positive attitude to learning.

Factors that limit effective student learning:

- i. The lessons observed did not challenge students, as expectations for student achievement are not high enough and too often focus on completion of activities rather than quality of work.

Recommendations:

- i. Ensure that all students are given the opportunity to achieve to their highest potential by raising expectations and increasing the rigor of lessons.

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 regularly communicates with parents about school events. They have actively sought parents' views on the most effective forms of communication and are piloting the use of Simply Circle, an app that sends reminders to registered phones. Communications are always available in both English and Spanish. Parents say that they are always aware of what is happening at the school and communications are helpful.
- ii. The principal hosts a monthly workshop for parents, during which she provides information about current issues such as CCSS and Smarter Balanced Assessments and also goes to the military base twice a year to enable parents there to be informed and ask questions about the school. The recently appointed community liaison is effective in ensuring that parents from Spanish speaking families understand the school system and the available supports.
- iii. Parents report that teachers respond promptly when they contact them with any questions and concerns, and work hard to resolve any problems. Individual teachers or grade level teams send out newsletters and flyers about what is being taught and items of class news.
- iv. School leaders and teachers actively seek partnerships with the local community. The neighborhood association communicates school information to the community. Local businesses such as Google provide matched funding for parental fundraising while others provide food and supplies for the major annual events of Fall Festival and Walk-a-thon.
- v. The school celebrates student successes at the weekly Leopard launch assembly. Students who meet and exemplify the core values of respect, responsibility, hard work, courage and compassion are honored each month.

Factors that limit effective student learning:

- i. Communications and the quality of information provided about student progress and achievement varies between teachers from highly detailed and regular to solely letter grades on report cards. A few teachers make use of technology such as Class Dojo to keep parents informed of their children's achievements and behavior each day.

Recommendations:

- i. Agree to minimum expectations for teacher communications with parents about student progress and monitor implementation and effectiveness.