

SchoolWorks School Quality Review Report

**Newton D. Baker School of Arts
March 25-27, 2015**



100 Cummings Center, Suite 236C, Beverly, MA 01915
(978) 921-1674 www.schoolworks.org



Table of Contents

About the SchoolWorks School Quality Review Process	1
Domains and Key Questions	2
Domain 1: Instruction.....	3
Domain 2: Students’ Opportunities to Learn	5
Domain 3: Educators’ Opportunities to Learn	7
Domain 4: Leadership	9
Prioritization Process	11
Appendix A: Site Visit Team Members	12

About the SchoolWorks School Quality Review Process

The Cleveland Metropolitan School District (CMSD) envisions 21st Century Schools of Choice in which students will be challenged with a rigorous curriculum that considers the individual learning styles, program preferences, and academic capabilities of each student, while engaging the highest quality professional educators, administrators, and support staff available. As part of Cleveland's Plan for Transforming Schools, CMSD has adopted a portfolio district strategy that includes: growing the number of high quality district and charter schools, and closing or replacing failing schools; focusing the district's central office on its role in school support and governance, while transferring authority and resources to schools; investing and phasing in high leverage school reforms across all levels; and increased accountability for all schools in the district through the creation of the Cleveland Transformation Alliance (CTA). CMSD has partnered with stakeholders to create a school performance framework that will be used to provide a comprehensive assessment of the quality of each school in the district. The comprehensive assessment will be an evidence-based process that includes data and information gathered on academic programs and performance, school climate, finance, operations, governance, and stakeholder satisfaction, among other sources.

CMSD has engaged SchoolWorks as a partner in implementing a school quality review (SQR) process aligned to CMSD initiatives and the school performance framework. The SQRs are used as one component of a comprehensive assessment of the quality of each school in the district; they are used to provide formative feedback to schools. Reviews include an action planning process in which the team and the school work together to identify prioritized areas for improvement.

The SQR protocol and review process provides a third-party perspective on current school quality for all students. The report documents the team's ratings for key questions in each of the four domains identified within the SQR protocol – Instruction, Students' Opportunities to Learn, Educators' Opportunities to Learn, and Leadership. While on site, evidence collection takes place through document reviews, classroom visits, and interviews with key school stakeholders. After collecting evidence, the team meets to confirm, refute, and modify its hypotheses about school performance. The site visit team uses evidence collected through these events to determine ratings in relation to the protocol's criteria and indicators. The outcome of the action planning process is a prioritized plan of next steps, including strategies, resources, and timelines to accomplish goals. This report presents the ratings, evidence, and action plan developed on site for the school.

Domains and Key Questions

Based on trends found in the collected evidence, the site visit team assigns a rating to each key question.

Domains	Rating			
	Level 4: Exemplary	Level 3: Established	Level 2: Targeted support Required	Level 1: Intensive support Required

Domain 1: Instruction	
1. <i>Classroom interactions and organization ensure a supportive, highly structured learning climate.</i>	Level 2: Targeted support Required
2. <i>Classroom instruction is intentional, engaging, and challenging for all students.</i>	Level 1: Intensive support Required
3. <i>The school has created a performance-driven culture, where teachers, and staff effectively use data to make decisions about instruction and the organization of students.</i>	Level 1: Intensive support Required
Domain 2: Students' Opportunities to Learn	
4. <i>The school identifies and supports special education students, English language learners, and students who are struggling or at risk.</i>	Level 2: Targeted support Required
5. <i>The school's culture reflects high levels of both academic expectation and support.</i>	Level 2: Targeted support Required
Domain 3: Educators' Opportunities to Learn	
6. <i>The school designs professional development and collaborative supports to sustain a focus on instructional improvement.</i>	Level 1: Intensive support Required
7. <i>The school's culture indicates high levels of collective responsibility, trust, and efficacy.</i>	Level 2: Targeted support Required
Domain 4: Leadership	
8. <i>School leaders guide instructional staff in the central processes of improving teaching and learning.</i>	Level 1: Intensive support Required
9. <i>The principal effectively orchestrates the school's operations.</i>	Level 3: Established

Domain 1: Instruction

1. Classroom interactions and organization ensure a supportive, highly structured learning climate.	Level 2: Targeted support Required
---	---

- Behavioral expectations are clear and understood by most students.** In 62% (n=13) of the classrooms observed by the site visit team, behavioral expectations were evident. In the majority of classrooms, students followed directions. Specifically, students physically transitioned around and completed activities at learning centers according to communicated expectations. In addition, in most observed classes, students retrieved and distributed papers and raised their hands to ask and answer questions according to teachers’ directives. However, in some classes, students called out answers rather than raising their hands. Site visit team members also noted that many teachers did not attempt to, or successfully redirect, misbehavior. For instance, in some observed classes, teachers clapped or gestured to address off-task behavior, but many students ignored their cues. In observed classes, teachers did not hold students accountable when they did not respond to redirection. Further, students reported that misbehavior consistently interrupts their learning.
- The learning environment lacks consistent structure, and learning time is not maximized.** In 31% of observed classrooms, structured environments were evident. In a few visited classrooms, lesson materials were prepared and readily available. Specifically, site visit team members noted that learning centers were arranged and equipped with written directions and supplies (e.g., flashcards, blocks) prior to the start of class. However, in most visited classrooms, insufficient planning and ineffective procedures resulted in lost learning time. For example, prior to the start of lessons, teachers did not have PowerPoints cued, questions written in advance, and texts selected. Further, site visit team members noted that many teachers did not give students learning tasks at the beginning of the period. Rather, teachers went over directions, passed out papers, directed students to sharpen their pencils, and allowed students to idly sit at their desks for up to 20 minutes. In addition, in many observed classes, teachers facilitated unscheduled class restroom breaks during instructional time.

2. Classroom instruction is intentional, engaging, and challenging for all students.	Level 1: Intensive support Required
--	--

- Teachers do not typically provide students with clear learning goals.** In 11% of the classrooms visited, students were provided with learning goals. While the principal reported that teachers outline learning goals in lesson plans, review of plans indicated otherwise. The site visit team’s review of some plans indicated that they detailed the standard(s) covered; however, the majority of plans did not include learning goals. In addition, some teachers stated that they believe that posting and communicating learning goals to students wastes class time. In only one visited classroom did the teacher post a learning goal for students. Moreover, in the majority of observed classes, teachers did not provide students with clear directions about learning tasks. Site visit team members noted that many students did not understand when or how to complete tasks. For example, some observed teachers wrote multiple tasks on the board but did not clearly inform students about which task they were expected to complete and did not tell students when they were expected to begin working.
- Teachers do not typically employ a variety of instructional strategies and materials to support students’ diverse needs.** Teachers used a range of instructional strategies and materials in 22% of

classrooms visited. In two observed classrooms, teachers reviewed content with learning centers that used various strategies (e.g., modeling, peer learning, kinesthetic learning) and materials (e.g., toy cars, number blocks, plastic eggs). However, in most visited classrooms, teachers relied on direct instruction and independent learning tasks (e.g., answering questions, copying information) to deliver content. In addition, most teachers employed whole group questioning techniques only. Moreover, in many observed classes, teachers used very little wait time and answered their own questions; this further prevented students from engaging in lessons. While the principal and teachers indicated (and review of the school’s strategic plan verified) that the school prioritizes differentiated instruction, site visit team members observed only one instance of differentiation. In most observed classes, students were learning the same content, at the same pace, in the same way. Furthermore, peer learning was observed in just 23% of the classrooms visited. Site visit team members noted that many classrooms were physically arranged to promote peer learning. For instance, desks were grouped together, rather than arranged in rows. However, most teachers did not employ cooperative strategies (e.g., turn-and-talks and think-pair-shares).

<p>3. The school has created a performance-driven culture, where teachers and staff effectively use data to make decisions about instruction and the organization of students.</p>	<p>Level 1: Intensive support Required</p>
--	---

- Assessment strategies are rarely used to reveal students’ thinking.** The principal reported that teachers employ informal formative assessments through dialogue, questioning, and checks-for-understanding (CFU). However, assessments that revealed students’ thinking were utilized in just 33% of the classrooms visited. While in one class, a teacher assessed students by requiring them to verbally explain their thinking using specific examples and referents from the lesson, most teachers did not engage students in content-related discussions. Also, in the majority of visited classrooms, teachers did not pose questions that gauged students’ conceptual understanding. Rather, teachers asked recall questions (e.g., What do we call this?) and only called on students who raised their hands. Further, site visit team members did not observe CFUs in any of the classrooms visited. Students also reported that teachers do not employ strategies such as the use of exit tickets.
- Specific feedback is not provided throughout the learning process to inform improvement efforts.** Teachers delivered feedback to students in only 11% of the classrooms visited. While the principal and teachers reported that teachers refer to rubrics throughout instruction to supply feedback, rubrics were not used during any observed lessons. While some teachers provided procedural (e.g., You have to use the book for evidence) and non-specific (e.g., Good job) feedback, content-related feedback was evident in only one of the classrooms visited. Review of student work also showed a lack of content-related feedback. Examples of feedback included: “I think you can exceed standards,” or “Good job!”

Domain 2: Students' Opportunities to Learn

4. The school identifies and supports special education students, English language learners, and students who are struggling or at risk.	Level 2: Targeted support Required
--	---

- The school has a process for implementing academic and/or behavioral interventions and supports for struggling students and at-risk students; however, intervention strategies are limited.** The principal and teachers reported that teachers refer struggling and/or at-risk students to the student support team (SST). Both stakeholder groups explained that the SST convenes, analyzes referral data (e.g., SchoolNet scores, Standardized Testing and Reporting [STAR] test results, number of absences and tardies), and crafts intervention plans for teachers to implement in their classrooms. In addition, the principal and teachers reported that students with low Northwest Evaluation Association Measures of Academic Progress (NWEA MAP) test scores are flagged by the school district. Specifically, both stakeholders stated that the district provides the principal and teachers with a list of students who scored below proficient and requires these students to go on Reading Improvement Plans (RIMP). Teachers explained (and review of a RIMP verified) that RIMPs identify students' specific skill deficiencies (e.g., phonemic awareness) and outline interventions (e.g., pull-out with reading interventionists) that will be implemented to support students. The principal and teachers stated that students on RIMPs are progress monitored bi-weekly through Academic Improvement Measurement System Web (AIMSweb) testing. However, when asked, the principal and teachers struggled to describe interventions that are employed outside of pull-out sessions with interventionists and RIMPs. Further, teachers could not describe specific, targeted interventions utilized during pull-out support. Site visit team members observed that human capital (e.g., resource teachers, paraprofessionals, interventionists) - rather than software and research-based interventions - account for most of the support received by students.
- The school provides opportunities for students to form positive relationships with peers and adults in the school.** All stakeholders – the principal, teachers, students, and parents – indicated that the school ensures opportunities for students to engage in positive social group activities. Specifically, all stakeholders reported (and review of club artifacts verified) that the school offers extracurricular clubs, including art, music, theater, and media. All stakeholders also explained that the school offers students the opportunity to play basketball and participate in cheerleading. In addition, all stakeholders stated that the school holds in-school activities for students such as choir, band, yoga, and school assemblies (e.g., pep rallies, bullying prevention). The principal, teachers, and students further reported that the school takes students on field trips throughout the year. Students explained that they have visited the zoo, an art museum, the botanical gardens, and the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame. Furthermore, the principal, teachers, and students reported (and site visit team members observed) that students participated in, and won, an annual district-wide chess competition during the SQR. On the January 2015 CMSD Conditions for Learning report, 91% of students surveyed responded that the level of support from a teacher or other adult was adequate to excellent

5. The school's culture reflects high levels of both academic expectation and support.	Level 2: Targeted support Required
--	---

- The school lacks high expectations for academic learning.** While the principal and teachers expressed (and review of the Conditions for Learning survey indicated) that the school holds high academic expectations, students reported otherwise. Students consistently stated that their classes are not

rigorous. Students further explained that they are learning low-level content; for example, students stated that they are not challenged by the concepts they are learning in mathematics. Students further stated (and review of student writing verified) that they are required to write three-to-ten sentences only when drafting essays for their middle school English language arts (ELA) classes. Teachers also reported that they have minimal writing expectations (e.g., one topic sentence and two supporting sentences). Review of student work further revealed the absence of critical feedback from teachers. Rather, reviewed work either completely lacked comments or offered feedback that lacked clear direction (e.g., I think you can exceed expectations). Furthermore, students reported (and site visit team members observed) that instruction consists primarily of reading textbooks, watching videotapes, listening to teachers, and going over work at the end of the period or day. Students indicated (and site visit team members noted) that instruction does not require students to use higher-order thinking skills.

- **The school engages families in support of students' learning.** The principal reported that teachers' contracts require them to produce quarterly interim reports only, provide quarterly report cards, and hold a parent-teacher conference each semester. However, the principal stated that teachers engage with families beyond that mandate. Specifically, the principal, teachers, and parents explained (and review of folders verified) that elementary school teachers send home weekly folders that contain behavior reports, upcoming assignments, and graded work. All three stakeholder groups also reported that elementary school teachers distribute weekly newsletters to families. Review of newsletters indicated that teachers provide parents with information about important dates, upcoming events, homework, and current classroom projects. The principal further reported (and review of web sites confirmed) that teachers maintain web pages where families can access current class information and submit questions. In addition, all stakeholders - the principal, teachers, students, and parents - stated that the school further engages families by hosting school activities. For example, all stakeholders reported (and review of artifacts confirmed) that the school recently hosted a reading night. The principal explained that families learned about grade-appropriate reading strategies to employ at home, received books and prizes, and ate dinner during the event.

Domain 3: Educators' Opportunities to Learn

6. The school designs professional development and collaborative supports to sustain a focus on instructional improvement.	Level 1: Intensive support Required
--	--

- School improvement goals do not drive professional development.** Review of the school’s strategic plan indicated that the school’s goals are to create and support a culture of rigor in classroom instruction, increase student and staff attendance, and improve the reading and mathematics proficiency of students who have Individualized Education Programs (IEP). The principal and teachers reported that the school holds three all-day professional development sessions throughout the school year. In addition, the principal stated that she has monthly 55-minute staff meetings. While the principal and teachers indicated (and review of an August 2014 professional development agenda confirmed) that the principal dedicated one of the three professional development days to rigorous instruction, both stakeholder groups stated (and review of professional development agendas verified) that supplemental professional development and implementation support around rigor has not been provided. In addition, when asked, teachers could not describe how the professional development on rigor has improved their instructional practice. Moreover, the principal and teachers stated (and review of surveys verified) that the professional development topic (i.e., teambuilding) for the second all-day session was determined by the results of staff surveys, rather than school goals. Further, the principal reported that she does not regularly use staff meetings to provide professional development. The principal explained that she provides some professional development during this time, but could not explain how it ties to or supports school goals.
- Educators have the opportunity to meet regularly; however, expectations around collaboration are not established.** The principal and teachers consistently reported (and review of the 2014 opening bulletin to teachers verified) that teachers are provided with time to meet in their teams every Tuesday. The principal stated that teams consist of teachers who teach the same grade or the same subject. The principal further explained that teachers who teach encore classes (e.g., music, art) and special education are assigned to teams with general education teachers in order to ensure communication across disciplines. The principal and teachers indicated that during these meetings, they create lesson plans and discuss interventions to employ to support struggling students. However, when asked, the principal and teachers could not present specific expectations that guide the use of weekly team time. For example, both stakeholder groups indicated that teams do not use protocols to guide lesson planning or data analysis. Review of agendas indicated that team time is used to discuss upcoming events and important dates, rather than to collaborate about instruction and interventions.

7. The school’s culture indicates high levels of collective responsibility, trust, and efficacy.	Level 2: Targeted support Required
--	---

- Educators do not hold shared commitments and mutual responsibility.** The principal and teachers reported that teachers have autonomy when making instructional decisions and setting classroom rules. Both stakeholder groups indicated that a school-wide shared vision about instruction and discipline has yet to be established. In addition, teachers expressed the belief that students’ home and/or personal situations prevent them from being academically successful at school. For instance, teachers explained that many students read below grade level because they do not receive literacy

support at home. Site visit team members also observed that teachers allowed students to opt-out of participating in lessons. For example, when a student expressed confusion about the content being covered, the teacher was heard telling the student that he did not really need to understand the concept. The observed teacher moved on to the next component of the lesson without clarifying the misunderstanding. Furthermore, teachers reported that they would rather teach subjects that are not assessed by value-added tests (i.e., standardized state tests) because they would not then be evaluated according to their students' test scores. Teachers further indicated that value-added tests create an unfair disparity among the teaching staff.

- **The school is developing a safe and trustworthy climate.** The principal reported that building positive relationships with staff is both a strength and priority. Teachers consistently complimented the principal for having an open-door policy and stated that they feel comfortable approaching her with professional and personal issues. Teachers further characterized the principal as transparent, explaining that she openly and frequently disseminates district and school information. Yet, the principal and teachers indicated that a cultural divide exists among the teaching staff. Specifically, both stakeholder groups reported that much of the staff consists of teachers who have taught at the school for more than ten years, but many teachers are recent hires and there is a division between veteran and new teachers. However, the principal reported that teachers requested professional development on teambuilding in order to address the cultural divide. The principal and teachers explained that this professional development allowed teachers to learn about one another and learn how to better work together.

Domain 4: Leadership

8. School leaders guide instructional staff in the central processes of improving teaching and learning.	Level 1: Intensive support Required
--	--

- The principal helps create a shared vision for the school; however, clear goals to ensure continuous progress are not understood by stakeholders.** The principal reported that the vision for the school revolves around infusing the arts into all aspects of instruction. Review of the school’s strategic plan confirmed this vision. Specifically, the plan outlined how targeting school culture and leveraging resources will realize the vision of art-infused education across all areas of instruction. Examples of school culture and resource goals included: “Infusion of Academics and Arts Units displayed throughout the building,” “Shared Expectations Focus on Academic Model = Integrated Arts Model,” “PD on Specially Designed Instruction...[and on] continuous Integration of Arts,” and “Allocating an arts consultant to fill the arts void.” In addition, teachers and parents reported that arts-infused education stands as the crux of the school’s identity and vision. However, when asked, teachers could not describe the arts goals outlined in the school’s strategic plan. They indicated that the arts are not currently infused across all classrooms, stating that encore teachers (e.g., art, music, drama) are mainly responsible for providing arts-infused education.
- School leaders do not ensure that teachers deliver high quality instruction.** The principal and teachers reported that teachers are required to write lesson plans. However, teachers indicated the principal has yet to set specific expectations around lesson planning. For instance, the principal and teachers stated that teachers can use any template or format when crafting lessons and reported that teachers are not required to include specific lesson components. Review of lesson plans verified the lack of common planning expectations. Some lesson plans included objectives, procedures, and questions, while others listed topics and titles to be covered. Most plans reflected an agenda with bullet points. While the principal asks that teachers place their lesson plans on their desks for reference during observations, the principal does not formally review lesson plans or provide feedback on the plans. In addition, while the principal and teachers stated that the principal observes teachers in accordance to the requirements outlined by the Teacher Development and Evaluation System, teachers could not provide examples of instructional feedback they have received. Review of evaluation artifacts showed that the principal captured what was seen and heard during lessons but did not provide critical feedback about her observations. Examples included: “Students came back to the table to finish table activity with some coaxing;” “Teacher tells other carpet group they are doing great;” or “Teacher also has roles already established for the group norms.”
- While school leaders provide some conditions to support a school-wide data culture, it has not yet been established.** The principal and teachers reported that the school administers multiple assessments, including NWEA MAP, AIMSweb, STAR, Partnership for Assessment of Readiness for College and Careers (PARCC), and Ohio Achievement Assessments tests. The principal and teachers also stated that they have access to assessment results. Review of the school’s strategic plan confirmed that the principal possesses a working knowledge of assessment data; test scores, and goals based on the scores are outlined in the document. The principal and teachers reported (and review of the 2014 opening bulletin to teachers confirmed) that teachers are provided with time to analyze data during their 200 minutes of weekly uninterrupted planning time. However, when asked, most teachers could not describe how they analyze or use data to inform their instruction. Further, some teachers stated that assessment data are not valuable because data do not correlate to the

Common Core State Standards (CCSS). Also, when asked, many teachers could not state the grade level performance of their students.

9. The principal effectively orchestrates the school’s operations.	Level 3: Established
--	---------------------------------

- **The principal allocates resources and manages school operations in order to ensure a safe learning environment.** All stakeholders - the principal, teachers, students, and parents - reported that students feel physically and emotionally safe at school. Site visit team members observed that the principal has allocated resources to ensure a safe environment for students. Specifically, they noted that the principal employs a full-time safety officer and has installed metal detectors at the main entrance of the school. In addition, the principal reported (and review of the handbook verified) that all doors are locked after students’ morning arrival. The principal further explained that she oversees breakfast and lunch to ensure students arrive, eat, and leave in an orderly and safe manner. In addition, students and parents reported that the school staff are kind, explaining that teachers often purchase clothing and food for students in need. Parents further stated they commute to the school because the staff provides such a caring environment for students.
- **The principal engages community members in the educational process and creates an environment in which community resources support learning.** The principal and teachers reported (and review of the school’s website confirmed) that the principal has established numerous community partnerships, including partnerships with the Eaton Corporation, Red Seal Electric, Kamm’s Corners Development Corporation, and the Center for Arts-Inspired Learning. Both stakeholder groups further stated that the principal has leveraged these partnerships to improve student learning. Specifically, they explained that the principal applied for grants from the Eaton Corporation. The principal reported that monies awarded from the Eaton Corporation financed a part-time dance teacher and paid for classroom technology (e.g., computers, SmartBoards). Additionally, the principal indicated that the Eaton Corporation sends volunteers to assist teachers in their classrooms. The principal and teachers reported that Red Seal Electric also provides volunteers who tutor students. Both stakeholder groups also stated that Red Seal Electric runs a photography program at the school and sponsors multiple field trips. The principal further explained that Kamm’s Corner Development Corporation publishes a quarterly magazine that features students’ academic and artistic accomplishments. Finally, the principal and teachers stated (and review of the proposal and school’s strategic plan verified) that the principal approached the Center for Arts-Inspired Learning about implementing an artist-in-residence program at the school. The principal explained that multiple artists who practice different disciplines (e.g., music, drama) will provide instruction in their areas of expertise.

Prioritization Process

The site visit team met with the Newton D. Baker School of Art’s leadership team to review its findings, discuss the school’s areas of strengths and areas for improvement, prioritize areas for improvement, and discuss ways to address the identified areas for improvement.

School leaders and the site visit team were in agreement that there are significant strengths present in the school. Areas of strength the team discussed included Organizational Leadership. The site visit team also noted the following areas for growth: Supportive Classroom Culture, Purposeful Teaching, Assessment and Adjustment, Students’ Learning Supports, Students’ Learning Culture, Educators’ Learning Supports, Educators’ Learning Culture, and Instructional Leadership.

Within Purposeful Teaching, the group identified intentional, engaging, and challenging classroom instruction for all students as the area to prioritize for growth. The group identified the following priority within this key question as having the most potential impact on the success of the school as a whole: Teachers provide students with clear learning goals and focused direct instruction.

The team then developed the following goal, success measure, and action plan:

Goal: Learning goals provide classroom instruction that is intentional, engaging, and challenging for all students.

Success Measure: Fifty-percent of teachers will communicate learning objectives.

Actions	Target Dates	Champions
Ask for champions to provide professional development on learning goals.	March 27, 2015	Principal
Principal allocates time and creates schedules for walk-throughs.	April 7, 2015	Principal
Principal conducts walkthroughs.	April 7-24, 2015	Principal
Teachers meet prior to 4/9.	April 8, 2015	Teachers
Deliver targeted professional development on learning objectives.	April 9, 2015	Teachers

Appendix A: Site Visit Team Members

The SQR to Newton D. Baker School of Arts was conducted on March 25-27, 2015 by a team of educators from the Cleveland Metropolitan School District and SchoolWorks, LLC.

Robin Coyne-Hull	Team Leader	SchoolWorks, LLC
Kathryn Cobb	Team Writer	SchoolWorks, LLC
Nicholas D'Amico	Team Member	Cleveland Metropolitan School District