SchoolWorks
School Quality Review
Report

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CLEVELAND
METROPOLITAN
SCHOOL DISTRICT

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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. Classroom interactions and organization ensure a supportive, highly structured learning climate.	Level 2: Targeted support Required
2. Classroom instruction is intentional, engaging, and challenging for all students.	Level 1: Intensive support Required
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.	Level 1: Intensive support Required
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
5. The school's culture reflects high levels of both academic expectation and support.	Level 2: Targeted support Required
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
7. The school's culture indicates high levels of collective responsibility, trust, and efficacy.	Level 1: Intensive support Required
Domain 4: Leadership	
8. School leaders guide instructional staff in the central processes of improving teaching and learning.	Level 2: Targeted support Required
9. The principal effectively orchestrates the school's operations.	Level 2: Targeted support Required

Domain 1: Instruction

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

- **Behavioral expectations are often clear and understood by students.** Teachers and leaders were able to describe the specific systems that have been implemented to monitor student behavior. These systems were actively observed in 58% (n=19) of classes observed by the site visit team. The majority of classes posted rules and expectations and reinforced them throughout class time. For example, in lower grades, all classrooms used a uniform clip-up, clip-down system that included a seven-level scale, ranging from "Outstanding" to "Office Visit;" teachers were seen implementing the system in a similar fashion. Students were observed moving their clips and adjusting their behavior in response to teacher feedback. Teachers also reported that a point system was being implemented in grades four through eight by which students received points for negative behaviors, and three points resulted in a detention. Although there are school-wide practices to monitor student behavior, they are not always consistently implemented. In some classes, moving clips up or down had little impact on student behavior. In other classes, teachers spent time asking students to be quiet, giving multiple warnings, or rewarding positive behaviors but ignoring negative behaviors. Many teachers spent significant instructional time administering table points, asking students repeatedly to change their behavior, or making statements such as, "I like how ___ is on task." However, without clear consequences, many students continued to engage in off-task or distracting behaviors.

- **The learning environment is not highly structured and does not maximize learning time.** Thirty-one percent of observed classes were driven by organized learning activities and appropriate pacing. In these classes, students were observed transitioning through a variety of learning tasks, and teachers were moving throughout the room to offer feedback and guidance. For example, one class smoothly transitioned between four learning activities that included vocabulary building, pronunciation exercises, reading, and textual analysis to build to a common learning target. However, the majority of classes were characterized by learning activities that lasted longer than required, as well as few transitions and materials that were often not ready. For example, many teachers did not have pre-selected texts and questions, or they spent significant instructional time looking for, or distributing, materials. Other classes engaged in only one activity or employed only one learning strategy throughout the duration of the observation. For example, in a mathematics class, students reviewed problems in a packet; the teacher did the work at the board and students checked their work and copied answers; this was the only instructional activity observed. Other classes contained more learning tasks, but transitions were time-consuming and lacked clear teacher directions, resulting in limited understanding on the part of students.

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

- **Teachers do not provide students with clear learning goals or focused direct instruction.** In 16% of observed classes, learning objectives were shared with students and used to drive instruction. In these classes, learning targets were posted and were often presented as "I can" statements directly aligned to Common Core State Standards (CCSS). These classes were generally characterized by literacy-driven instruction, problem-solving, and students connecting class content to deeper understandings. Neither school leaders nor teachers were able to present school-wide norms for crafting student

learning objectives (SLO); instructional leaders identified SLOs as an area that varies greatly among teachers and a growth area for the school. In some classes, learning targets were not posted or evident in the classroom; other classes had posted SLO, but they did not align to the instruction observed by site visit team members. For example, in one class, the learning target asked students to conduct an analysis of certain content: students were observed building vocabulary but there was no direct link between the vocabulary and the learning target.

- **Instruction does not employ a variety of strategies or promote students' higher-order thinking.** In 21% of observed classes, teachers used a range of materials and strategies to engage and support students' learning. Five percent of observed classes required students to develop higher-order thinking skills. The majority of classes primarily employed worksheets, graphic organizers, and short nonfiction texts, but materials were not being used to engage students in rigorous learning. For example, one class used a content-rich nonfiction text, but the inquiry was teacher-driven and students were allowed to opt out. In another class, students were seated on the rug with books while the teacher read aloud; several students had their books closed or were distracted as the activity proceeded. In another part of the room, four students were engaged in non-academic activities and were not re-engaged in the lesson.

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.	**Level 1: Intensive support Required**

- **Assessment strategies do not reveal students' thinking about learning goals.** In 11% of observed classes, teachers monitored students' understanding through formal and informal assessments. In these classes, teachers engaged in purposeful circulation and gave students meaningful feedback on their learning. Teacher circulation was present in many classes, but the majority of feedback offered was procedural in nature or aimed at the goal of helping students complete work, rather than reveal their understanding about it. For example, in one class, students were learning new concepts and were brainstorming examples and non-examples. The teacher circulated to check for completion and asked questions such as, "Did you get one for this?" or "How far along are you?" but did not use rigorous inquiry to reveal knowledge or misconceptions. In another class, the teacher read aloud from a nonfiction text and stopped periodically to ask content-driven questions. When students were unable to answer, the teacher then provided the answers and moved on without checking for students' understanding. Another class also employed nonfiction reading and questioning, but students were cut off when they attempted to offer in-depth answers; instead, the discussion focused on short, factual responses.

- **Feedback is not provided throughout the learning process to inform improvement efforts.** Eleven percent of observed classes included specific, timely feedback aimed at student improvement. The majority of classes included feedback that was neither criteria-based nor descriptive. In some classes, for example, students had no opportunities for feedback. In other classes, teachers used questioning that helped students narrow their options in order to find one right answer rather than explore students' thinking. Few classes included rubrics, models, or exemplars as opportunities for students to give themselves and their peers criteria-based feedback. In many classes, teachers provided non-specific feedback (e.g., "Good job" or "Try again, I think you can do this"), but teachers rarely directed students to academic resources or self-guided inquiry to improve those efforts. Similarly, student work rarely included written feedback or corrections; some student work included generic comments such as, "Super" or "Don't forget punctuation."

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 does not yet have an effective process for implementing academic and/or behavioral interventions and supports for struggling students and at-risk students.** Teachers reported that few resources exist to support differentiation; additional training would be needed for teachers to implement this regularly. Likewise, school leaders reported that the school is not aligned on best practices for supporting struggling students. Both groups of stakeholders described a district-wide process to identify and monitor struggling students. However, teachers and school leaders identified elements in the system that lack efficiency and sustainability. According to school leaders and teachers, the district identifies at-risk students based on Northwest Evaluation Association (NWEA) scores. Teachers then create Reading Improvement Plans (RIMP) with individualized literacy supports and ongoing assessment. Teachers reported (and school leaders confirmed) that they are required to submit progress monitoring every two weeks, but reflected that, generally, this timeframe does not provide sufficient time to see student growth. They further reported that once RIMPs are submitted, they rarely receive feedback from school or district leaders regarding student progress. The site visit team observed interventionists picking up or dropping off students, but did not observe any interventionists working alongside general education teachers in the classroom.

- **The school provides opportunities for students to form positive relationships with peers and adults in the school.** Students reported feeling safe at school and confident that they could ask for help from any adult in the building. They also cited examples about stepping into the hallways to tell teachers how they were feeling, taking a break with the security guard, or going to the principal to talk through problems. Students further reported there is a peer mediation counsel that includes student mediators and a teacher facilitator. Teachers and school leaders reported the use of the Positive Alternative Thinking Strategies (PATHS) program; site visit team members observed its implementation in the classroom. For example, a teacher facilitated an activity in which students gave each other compliments, a teacher using a puppet to model empathy, and posters on the walls encouraging self-reflection and emotional intelligence. Additionally, the school's values were reflected in classroom and hallway interactions where students were observed asking teachers for social support and teachers were seen issuing reminders of respectful behavior and teamwork.

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

- **The school provides a safe environment for learning, but does not consistently hold high academic expectations.** Teachers and school leaders expressed that teachers believe in all students and that student achievement is the school's top priority. When asked what they do to promote high expectations for learning, school leaders discussed the goal of making students well-rounded learners and preparing students for college; however, they also stated that as a school, they are not currently aligned on how they communicate and ensure that high expectations are upheld. Teachers were unable to cite any consistent or ongoing school-wide practices for rewarding academic achievement in students or excellence in teaching. The site visit team observed a bulletin board dedicated to the teacher of the quarter for the first quarter, but there was no evidence that a teacher was selected for

the second or third quarter. Instructional leaders also identified student and teacher recognition as an area for growth. Students reported that their teachers believe in them and work hard to ensure their success. When asked how their teachers support and challenge them, students stated that teachers monitor their grades with regular progress reports and offer test retakes.

- **The school is beginning to engage families in support of students' learning.** According to teachers and instructional leaders, family engagement is a goal for the year; they have begun to see results. Similarly, parents stated that the school has begun to organize more events and improve outreach to families. For example, both parents and school staff discussed a parent book club that started this year. Although only one parent participated in the first book club, more recent efforts resulted in a meeting of nine parents and four school staff members. School leaders stated that their goal for the book club was to model literacy practices, hoping that parents would continue those discussions with their children. To encourage this practice, the school gave each parent a children's book to bring home. Teachers also recognized parents for their efforts in organizing a scholastic book fair, a raffle, and numerous bake sales throughout the year to build community and fundraise for the school.

Domain 3: Educators' Opportunities to Learn

<table>
<tr><td>6. The school designs professional development and collaborative supports to sustain a focus on instructional improvement.</td><td>Level 1:
Intensive support
Required</td></tr>
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- **Professional development (PD) is not consistent or aligned to the school's goals.** Teachers reported on frequent, focused PD throughout the first semester; they further stated that PD was helpful and aligned to teacher's needs. However, they also described a lack of consistent PD in the second semester. When asked why the frequency of PD changed, teachers and leaders said that time was needed for snow days and testing. Leaders also reported that – due to low NWEA scores – there was a shift in the focus of PD. In response to lower NWEA scores, the leadership began a partnership with the Achievement Network (ANet) and the training of teachers in the implementation of CCSS. When asked if the CCSS training was helpful, most teachers stated they already knew how to unpack the standards and felt the training was repetitious or would have been more helpful at the beginning of the school year. Teachers and school leaders also discussed that the goal of Teacher-Based Teams (TBT) is to share best practices for CCSS, identify student gaps in learning, and formulate plans to address gaps. Teachers reported meeting weekly when they first started TBTs, but reported that – due to the constraints of testing and school cancellations due to extreme weather – they have had few opportunities to meet for the past six weeks.

- **Educators do not collaborate regularly to learn about effective instruction and students' progress**. Teachers and school leaders reported that the level of collaboration varies largely among different grade-level teams. Although all teachers have 200 minutes per week for team planning, many instructors stated they do not necessarily use that time to work with peers on instruction or progress monitoring. Some teachers reported using this time to work within their TBT to unpack standards or discuss student needs. However, teachers also reported the time is sometimes used for individual planning or nonacademic discussion. When asked who created the agenda for TBT meetings, some said that the teacher leader did so; others reported the administration made an outline from which they worked. Leaders stated they do not regularly attend TBT meetings but do stop by and offer feedback or suggestions for agenda items; they also conveyed a belief that not all TBTs are highly effective. School leaders reported that at the beginning of the year, they identified a need for more training on how to facilitate teacher teams and received assistance through the district. Leaders further stated that their teachers' ability to institute data-driven instruction (DDI) was currently at a very basic level; further training would be required for teachers to collaborate effectively around instruction and progress monitoring.

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<tr><td>7. The school's culture indicates high levels of collective responsibility, trust, and efficacy.</td><td>Level 1:
Intensive support
Required</td></tr>
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- **Educators do not convey shared commitments and mutual responsibility for all students' learning.** Teachers and leaders expressed that, currently, there is no common academic vision or mission for the school. Leaders reported that they have built a team of teachers and leaders to address the mission and vision, and redefine the school's goals for the 2015-16 school year. Similarly, teachers and leaders conveyed that there are few shared instructional practices or cultural norms for student learning. There is some evidence of culture building, especially with behavior monitoring. However, in the majority of classes, students were allowed to opt out of problem solving, and few teachers

demonstrated strategies to ensure that all students were learning. Likewise, teachers recognized students' struggles but frequently identified scheduling constraints as the reason for why instruction was not successful. For example, teachers cited spending hours of preparation time on district-mandated RIMP reports. Likewise, teacher preparation and instructional time was reportedly often spent setting up computers and administering NWEA tests. Teachers further stated that they believed these assessments and reading plans do not result in student improvement.

- **The school does not reflect a trustworthy professional climate.** Teachers reported feeling overwhelmed by many of the common practices required by the school and district. All teachers reported having 50 minutes of planning time daily, but there were varied responses as to how that time was used; some said they did not collaborate. When asked how decisions were made regarding student learning, some teachers said they used the district's scope and sequence; others stated that they simply chose on the basis of their own preferences. Some teachers said they felt that the CCSS learning targets and scope and sequence were helpful and "just good practice." However, others stated they completed lesson plans and crafted "I can" statements because they were required to do so, but felt it had no real impact on student learning. Teachers described how they work together to provide support for struggling students and discussed the role of the interventionists, stating that depending on the teachers' preference, they provide either push-in or pull-out instruction. Some teachers and interventionists described planning together, while others stated that collaboration depended on the dynamic and preference of the teachers. When asked how they get support and feedback on their teaching, some teachers cited going to their grade-level teams or other experienced teachers for help. Teachers did not describe any peer observations; school leaders said they encouraged it, but it was logistically difficult with the constraints of the schedule. Teachers also described support from school leaders and primarily cited the Teacher Development and Evaluation System (TDES) as the tool for feedback and support from instructional leaders.

8. School leaders guide instructional staff in the central processes of improving teaching and learning.	**Level 2:** **Targeted support** **Required**

- **School leaders do not consistently ensure that teachers deliver high quality instruction.** Nearly all teachers described the TDES as the primary means through which they receive feedback from school leaders. Teachers and school leaders described the requirements of the system that include five observations – two formal (one announced, one unannounced), three informal, and written and verbal feedback from the principal with a chance for teachers to discuss and revisit findings. According to teachers (and confirmed by review of the TDES rubric), the system is based on Danielson's model and includes four domains – Planning and Preparation, Classroom Environment, Instruction, and Professional Responsibilities – with five or six subcategories within each of those domains. Instructional leaders acknowledged that many teachers view the evaluation system as more paperwork, and do not always see the link between the evaluation system and improved instruction. Some teachers reported that because the evaluation is tied to their salaries, the process has begun to feel intimidating and could be used to uncover teacher's weaknesses, rather than enhance strengths. Leaders further stated a need to provide PD to contextualize the evaluation and link it to best practice. When asked if the school leaders modelled instruction, the principal stated he had done so once for a teacher on an improvement plan, but that it was not a regular practice.

- **School leaders do not yet provide conditions that support a school-wide data culture.** According to teachers and instructional leaders, staff members have access to accurate and current student and instructional data. School leaders reported that they ensure that all teachers receive PD for data-driven instruction. They stated, however, that they are at a very basic level in data analysis and teachers need more training before they will be able to effectively implement DDI. Teachers further stated (and review of TBT protocol confirmed) they are provided time to collect and analyze student data and formulate a plan to act on results in their weekly TBT meetings. Teachers discussed the use of Accelerated Reader (AR) and Standardized Test for the Assessment of Reading (STAR) tests as two data points they employ regularly within that TBT protocol; they track student progress via their Reading Improvement Plan (RIMP). An examination of sample RIMPs indicated that teachers are using standardized assessments to aid improvement efforts. For example, one teacher's plan included, "teacher and student read aloud in unison or echo fashion...provided 4x per week by case manager....Assessment name is AIMSWeb." followed by a line graph where frequency and growth scores were recorded. Both teachers and school leaders attested to the regular use of RIMPs, but few teachers were able to describe how those assessment results are used to drive instruction. Similarly, a review of protocols and NWEA data analysis charts indicated that these analyses are done by hand and do not exist electronically. When asked if the school tracked student growth electronically, school leaders said they had tried to use Google docs but teachers were resistant and lacked the skill set; currently all analysis is done by hand and collected in hard copy format.

9. The principal effectively orchestrates the school's operations.	**Level 2:** **Targeted support** **Required**

- **The principal has not implemented a system to select, develop, or retain staff who can drive dramatic student gains.** School leaders reported hiring 17 new staff members in order to replace

teachers who had transferred, and to address the student population growth in the 2014-15 school year. Leaders also reported some strategic transfers of staff members at the school and district level, with the goal of creating the greatest level of support for teachers and stability for students. In looking toward the 2015-16 school year, instructional leaders reported they plan to renew all current staff for the following year and are planning intense interventions for some teachers. They also discussed plans to hire three new teachers and reported they are looking for external candidates who are open to growth. They reportedly plan to employ a values-driven hiring process focused on teachers who hold the belief that all students can learn. Instructional leaders further discussed ways in which they support and honor current teachers via a Teacher of the Quarter recognition; this teacher receives a letter or recognition from the principal. However, as mentioned earlier, many teachers were not able to describe specific ways in which school leaders recognize them. Some recalled a teacher winning an award, but were unsure if it was school- or district-wide, and could not describe the nature of the recognition.

- **The principal is working to engage parents and community members in the educational process.** Teachers and school leaders reported that the school has a positive reputation in the community; many of their students are from families who have been a part of the school community over many years. Stakeholders also asserted that the student population has changed over the years, and the programs and resources that the school has prioritized have changed in response. For example, parents and teachers reported that the school used to have a robust extracurricular program involving sports, dances, and clubs, but most of these programs no longer exist. Teachers and school leaders confirmed that many of those programs have been eliminated over the years, but that there has been a renewed focus on extracurricular programming, familial outreach, and community partner-building over the past year. Although these programs are in their nascent stages, teachers and parents reported there is now basketball available for seventh and eighth grade boys and chess club for middle school students, along with plans to offer – starting in the fall of 2015 – co-ed track, soccer, volleyball, and high steppers. As described in Domain two, a book club for parents is growing in popularity and the Student Parent Organization (SPO) has been more active this year in fundraising and encouraging parents to plan and attend school events. School leaders further discussed a variety of educational partners with whom they have been working to address students' academic needs and foster a renewed vision for the school. Specifically, the principal discussed key academic partnerships with Academic Network, EdFOCUS, and Expeditionary Learning that the instructional leaders are exploring, hoping to create a formal academic partnership by the spring of 2016.

Prioritization Process

The site visit team met with the William Cullen Bryant School'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 Opportunities for Students to Form Positive Relationships with Adults, and Family Engagement. The site visit team also noted the following areas for growth: Professional Development Focused on Instructional Improvement, Creating a Trustworthy Professional Climate, and Ensuring Classroom Instruction is Aligned to Learning Goals and Promotes Higher-order Thinking.

The group identified Classroom interactions and organization ensure a supportive, highly structured learning environment 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: Professional development and academic collaboration.

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

Goal: Consistent professional development will drive instruction to promote higher-order thinking skills aligned with clear student learning goals.

Success Measure: Professional develop schedule for 2015-16 developed in conjunction with instructional leaders, teachers, and the Academic Network focused on higher-order thinking and clear student learning goals.

Actions	Target Dates	Champions
SAR team meeting.	5/16/15	Principal
Staff meeting to communicate goal, action plan, and success measure. Professional development session on writing clear objectives for higher-order thinking.	5/26/15	Assistant Principal
Plan the format and schedule of the year's professional development	Summer 2015	Aspiring Principal and ANet

Appendix A: Site Visit Team Members

The SQR to William Cullen Bryant School was conducted on April 8-10, 2015 by a team of educators from the Cleveland Metropolitan School District and SchoolWorks, LLC.

Jamal Young	Team Leader	SchoolWorks, LLC
Amber Leage	Team Writer	SchoolWorks, LLC
Kate Wheeler	Team Member	SchoolWorks, LLC
Matthew Linick	Team Member	Cleveland Metropolitan School District