SchoolWorks
School Quality Review
Report

Almira Elementary School
December 14-16, 2016

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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 School Quality Review (SQR) protocol and review process provides a third-party perspective on current school quality for all students. The process will include two days of collecting evidence on site through interviews, classroom visits, and document review. While on site, the team meets to discuss, sort, and analyze evidence it is collecting. The site visit team uses evidence collected through these events to determine ratings in relation to the protocol's criteria and indicators. In addition, the review will include a half-day prioritization session on the third day to assist the school in identifying root causes of opportunities for improvement and identifying which opportunities for improvement are of the highest priority and most likely to impact student achievement. The outcome of the action planning process is a prioritized plan of next steps, including strategies, resources, and timelines to accomplish goals.

The report documents the team's ratings for key questions within each of the four domains identified in the SQR protocol: *Instruction, Students' Opportunities to Learn, Educators' Opportunities to Learn,* and *Governance and Leadership* The final page of the report is used to record the discussion and action plan developed by the team and the school during the prioritization process.

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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 1: Intensive Support Required	Level 2: Targeted Support Required	Level 3: Established	Level 4: Exemplary

Domain 1: Instruction	
1. *Classroom interactions and organization ensure a classroom climate conducive to learning.*	**Level 1: Intensive Support Required**
2. *Classroom instruction is intentional, engaging, and challenging for all students.*	**Level 1: Intensive Support Required**
3. *Teachers regularly assess students' progress toward mastery of key skills and concepts, and use assessment data to make adjustments to instruction and to provide feedback to students during the lesson.*	**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 a safe, supportive learning environment that reflects high expectations.*	**Level 1: Intensive Support Required**
Domain 3: Educators' Opportunities to Learn	
6. *The school designs professional development and collaborative support systems to sustain a focus on instructional improvement.*	**Level 2: Targeted Support Required**
7. *The school's culture indicates high levels of collective responsibility, trust, and efficacy.*	**Level 2: Targeted Support Required**
Domain 4: Governance and Leadership	
8. *School leaders guide and participate with instructional staff in the central processes of improving teaching and learning.*	**Level 2: Targeted Support Required**
9. *School leaders effectively orchestrate the school's operations.*	**Level 2: Targeted Support Required**

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Domain 1: Instruction

1. *Classroom interactions and organization ensure a classroom climate conducive to learning.*	**Level 1: Intensive Support Required**

Behavioral Expectations			
Ineffective	Partially Effective		Effective[1]
1	2	3	4
14%	50%	21%	14%

- **In most classrooms, behavioral expectations are not clear and understood by students.** In 71% of classrooms visited (n=14), site visit team members observed the partially effective implementation of behavioral expectations. In some of these classrooms, site visit team members noted that most students behaved and teachers employed redirection strategies to refocus those who were misbehaving. For instance, teachers were heard using positive narration (e.g., I see __ is __) to refocus students who were not following directions. In addition, some teachers were seen awarding points to students who demonstrated positive behaviors as an incentive for those who were misbehaving to self-correct. While many teachers' redirection efforts were eventually successful, some teachers had to stop instruction multiple times to address misbehavior. In addition, site visit team members noted that minor misbehaviors sometimes persisted despite halting lessons and attempting to redirect numerous times. Site visit team members observed the ineffective implementation of behavioral expectations in 14% of classrooms visited. In these classrooms, most students misbehaved and teachers unsuccessfully tried to redirect behavior. For example, in one classroom, numerous students were seen fidgeting and not following directions. Site visit team members noted that the teacher instructed three students to remove their clips from the behavior chart; however, students did not respond to this consequence and continued to misbehave.

Structured Learning Environment			
Ineffective	Partially Effective		Effective
1	2	3	4
36%	50%	14%	0%

- **The learning environment is not highly structured nor is learning time maximized through effective planning and guidance.** In 64% of classrooms visited, site visit team members observed the partially effective implementation of a structured learning environment. In these classrooms, most teachers were prepared; however, learning time was not maximized. For instance, site visit team members observed that teachers had technology cued and materials, such as handouts and worksheets, ready in advance. Yet, site visit team members noted that many teachers devoted excessive time to transitions and/or learning tasks. For example, in one classroom, the transition from students' desks to the class carpet took two full minutes. In other classrooms, learning tasks (e.g., do now) spanned over 15 minutes, and some teachers kept extending the time allotted for activities. Further, in most of these classrooms, teachers did not post or refer to agendas and did not employ timers so students could gauge how much time remained for them to complete tasks. Site visit team members observed the ineffective implementation of a structured learning environment in 36% of classrooms visited. In these classrooms, teachers were unprepared to teach. For instance, site visit team members noted

[1] Due to rounding, the percentages for a particular indicator may not appear to total to 100%.

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that agendas were not posted for, or articulated to, students. Site visit team members also observed that most of these teachers did not have materials, such as technology and handouts, ready in advance and learning time was used to prepare, gather, and/or distribute them. Further, in these classrooms, learning time was not maximized. For example, in one classroom, four students read aloud while the remainder of the class passively listened over the course of the 20-minute observation.

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

Focused Instruction			
Ineffective	Partially Effective		Effective
1	2	3	4
71%	29%	0%	0%

- **Teachers do not provide students with clear learning goals or focused, purposeful instruction.** Site visit team members observed the partially effective provision of clear learning goals and focused instruction in 29% of visited classrooms. In these classrooms, some teachers provided students with learning goals but lesson activities did not fully align to stated goals. For instance, in one classroom, five "I can" statements were posted on the board and lesson activities partially, not fully, pertained to one of the five statements. Specifically, the relevant statement revolved around reading words; however, site visit team members noted that students were completing a task that required them to count, color, and write numbers, as well as engage with words. In 71% of classrooms, site visit team members observed the ineffective provision of learning goals and focused instruction. In these classrooms, objectives and/or instruction were not evident. For instance, in one classroom, a learning goal was not posted or stated, and the teacher did not provide clear directions. Site visit team members noted that s/he had to repeat them to six students but, despite widespread confusion, did not modify his/her delivery or model the task for students. In another classroom, site visit team members noted that the teacher posted multiple "I can" statements; yet the instructional activity did not align to any of them. In an additional classroom, an objective was not in evidence and no academic content was delivered during core instructional time; rather, site visit team members observed that students listened to an audio book and practiced skills unrelated to the class.

Higher-order Thinking			
Ineffective	Partially Effective		Effective
1	2	3	4
71%	21%	7%	0%

- **Instruction does not require students to use and develop higher-order thinking skills.** Site visit team members observed the partially effective development of higher-order thinking skills in 28% of classrooms visited. In these classrooms, teachers asked higher-order questions or engaged students in rigorous tasks, but site visit team members noted: only a few students answered questions; teachers asked only one-or-two challenging questions; and/or difficult tasks comprised only a very small portion of lessons. For example, in one classroom, the teacher asked students to compare and contrast ideas and prompted students to engage in one instance of metacognition, but the majority of questions revolved around lower-order thinking skills. Examples included: "What does ___?" and

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"Have we picked out ___?" Further, the development of higher-order thinking skills was ineffective in 71% of classrooms visited. In most of these classrooms, higher-order thinking was not evident. For instance, in one classroom, the teacher did not ask any questions and learning activities revolved around students mimicking what the teacher said, and a few students reading aloud as others passively listened. In another classroom, the extent of instruction consisted of the teacher asking students one recall question. In an additional classroom, the teacher posed multiple recall and comprehension questions but only two students supplied answers. Examples of questions included: "Your ___ has what?" and "What do we call that?"

3	*Teachers regularly assess students' progress toward mastery of key skills and concepts, and use assessment data to make adjustments to instruction and to provide feedback to students during the lesson.*	**Level 1: Intensive Support Required**

Assessment Strategies			
Ineffective	Partially Effective		Effective
1	2	3	4
79%	14%	7%	0%

- **In-class assessment strategies do not reveal students' thinking about learning goals.** Site visit team members observed the partially effective use of in-class assessment strategies to reveal students' thinking about learning in 21% of classrooms. In these classrooms, site visit team members observed that some teachers employed assessment strategies but noted that only some students' understanding was evaluated. For instance, some teachers asked comprehension questions but only required a few students to answer. Further, the use of assessment strategies was ineffective in 79% of classrooms visited. In most of these classrooms, assessment was not evident. For example, in multiple classrooms, site visit team members noted that teachers did not employ any strategies to measure students' understanding, such as cold calling, circulation, exit tickets, or thumb tools. However, in a few classrooms, assessments gauged completion rather than understanding of content. Specifically, one teacher was seen circulating to students to ensure they were on-task.

Feedback			
Ineffective	Partially Effective		Effective
1	2	3	4
93%	7%	0%	0%

- **Timely, frequent, specific feedback is not provided throughout the learning process to inform improvement efforts.** Feedback was ineffectively supplied to students in 93% of the classrooms visited. In most of these classrooms, feedback was not evident. For example, in one classroom, a student was heard telling the teacher s/he did not know how to complete the task. In response, the teacher told the student, "Yes, you do." In another classroom, site visit team members noted that students did not know the meaning of, or how to pronounce, numerous words as they were reading a passage aloud. However, the teacher did not provide any clarification. In other classrooms, site visit team members observed that students provided incorrect answers but noted that teachers ignored students' misunderstanding and moved on to the next question. However, in one classroom, the teacher was heard giving clarifying feedback, but site visit team members noted that such feedback was provided to one student only.

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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 identifying struggling and at-risk students and is working to systematically monitor student progress and program effectiveness.** School leaders and teachers consistently reported the student support team (SST) process for identifying struggling and at-risk students, stating that a referral detailing the area of concern (e.g., attendance, behavior, academics) with supporting evidence (e.g., number of absences/tardies, behavioral history, assessment scores) is completed. Both stakeholder groups indicated (and review of intervention plans verified) that the SST team convenes, analyzes the referral, and creates an intervention plan for teachers to implement over the course of six weeks. Teachers stated that the team then reconvenes to determine if the plan was successful, explaining that the student usually undergoes another six weeks of intervention if s/he has not demonstrated progress. Teachers also reported that they administer Academic Improvement Measurement System (AIMSweb) assessments every week to monitor the effectiveness of SST intervention plans and students' progress. However, teachers indicated that the AIMSweb program was recently implemented and stated that they often encounter technical difficulties (e.g., log-in problems, technology issues) that prevent them from progress monitoring with fidelity. Further, some teachers expressed concern about the SST program's effectiveness, stating that the length of time in which some students engage in the SST process is inappropriate. For instance, teachers indicated that some students have received SST interventions for multiple years without demonstrating progress. Some teachers also stated that students who have acted violently toward other students must undergo six weeks of behavioral intervention before the school will consider placing them in another learning environment that is more appropriate; they stated that such students should be eligible for immediate removal without first receiving interventions. Finally, some teachers reported that the SST process is impeded because parents must consent to intervention plans before they can be implemented, explaining that securing parental permission is often a challenge.
- **The school implements some supports for struggling and at-risk students.** While school leaders did not describe academic supports for struggling and at-risk students, teachers reported that they differentiate classroom instruction to meet the needs of their struggling and at-risk students. Teachers explained that they employ the Leveled Literacy Intervention (LLI) system to inform guided reading and center groupings. Teachers indicated that they vary center activities according to students' learning needs and abilities. For example, teachers explained that struggling students may read paragraphs as opposed to full articles and/or complete writing assignments with fewer requirements. Teachers also indicated that they use the intervention program, Think Through Math, in their classrooms. In addition, teachers reported that interventionists provide pull-out support around reading. Further, teachers stated that they often complete behavior charts for students struggling with behavior, explaining that they create behavioral contracts with students and track their adherence to these agreements. Teachers indicated that they fill out charts daily and send them home for parents to sign and return. Teachers stated that students who fulfill their contracts usually receive rewards as an incentive to continue exhibiting positive behaviors. Teachers also indicated that the school employs a dean of engagement who provides extra behavioral support to students, such as facilitating timeouts and conducting check-ins throughout the school day. School leaders and teachers further reported that students struggling with attendance also receive support. School leaders

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indicated that they track attendance, send truancy letters home, provide attendance incentives (e.g., ice cream), and meet with parents to form support plans.

5. *The school's culture reflects a safe, supportive learning environment that reflects high expectations.*	**Level 1: Intensive Support Required**

- **The school does not ensure a safe environment to support students' learning.** School leaders and parents reported that students are safe at school. School leaders explained that they ensure students' safety by establishing clear routines for arrival, transitions, lunch, and dismissal and being visible in hallways and the cafeteria. School leaders also indicated that numerous cameras throughout the school contribute to a safe environment. Parents further reported that the security guard, metal detectors, and lock-down procedures ensure safety at the school. Parents also explained that the custodial staff promptly cleans spills in common areas that could potentially cause students to fall. However, teachers and students indicated otherwise. Teachers consistently reported that students are not safe; some stated they would not send their child(ren) to the school. Teachers explained that stairwells are often unsupervised and frequently have slipping hazards (e.g., spilled liquids and smashed food). Teachers also stated that the lunchroom is chaotic and bathrooms are routinely dirty. Also, while some students reported that they feel safe in classrooms and in hallways, they all stated they do not feel safe in stairwells and on the playground. Other students indicated that they do not feel safe in the school. Teachers and students explained that violence is a common occurrence, stating that fights happen daily. Both stakeholder groups also reported that students physically and verbally assault teachers; teachers stated that, as a result, they often do not feel safe at school. Further, teachers and students indicated that gang activity is prevalent, stating that the police gang unit is often called to the school. Some students also reported that bullying commonly occurs. However, school leaders, students, and parents stated that the school has implemented anti-bullying programs, such as Not On My Watch, and has a designated anti-bullying coach to help combat the problem.
- **The school provides some opportunities for students to form positive relationships with peers and adults in the school.** Students and parents reported that the school provides opportunities for students to engage in positive social group activities – choir, band, basketball, and cheerleading. In addition, school leaders, teachers, students, and parents stated that the school implemented a peer mediation program – Winning Against Violent Environments (WAVE). All stakeholder groups indicated that students in conflict with each other either request, or are referred to, the WAVE program. Students explained that a trained WAVE peer mediator then facilitates a conflict resolution session to resolve the problem peacefully. School leaders further reported that all students begin the school day by participating in an advisory period. School leaders explained that teachers of lower grades employ Promoting Alternative Thinking Strategies (PATHS); teachers in upper grades employ Second Step curricula during this time to develop students' social and emotional awareness skills. However, when asked, students indicated that they do not engage in social-emotional learning during advisory, stating that they discuss the day's agenda. Further, site visit team members observed that many students were still in the cafeteria during the time designated for advisory. In addition, school leaders, teachers, and students reported that a few teachers have created lunch bunch groups, explaining that these teachers invite students in need of support to eat with them regularly. School leaders and parents also stated that the school implemented a formal mentoring program that pairs staff members with students in need of emotional, behavioral, and/or academic support. However, review of mentorship documents indicated that the program most recently served only 27 students.

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Domain 3: Educators' Opportunities to Learn

6. *The school designs professional development and collaborative support systems to sustain a focus on instructional improvement.*	**Level 2: Targeted Support Required**

- **While professional development is active, it is not intensive and sustained.** School leaders and teachers reported that school-wide professional development is held on Monday and some Wednesday mornings. Both stakeholder groups indicated that these times are used to conduct staff meetings, as well as to engage in professional development sessions. School leaders and teachers also stated that the school offers full professional development days once a month. Both stakeholder groups indicated that numerous topics are covered during both weekly and monthly professional development – differentiated instruction, curriculum mapping, formative assessments, technology-based programs (e.g., Google docs, Kickboard, Planbook), and Northwest Evaluation Association Measures of Academic Progress (NWEA MAP) and Achievement Network (ANet) assessment overviews. School leaders and teachers also stated that they analyze NWEA MAP and/or ANet data once a quarter during full-day professional development meetings. However, teachers reported that professional development is not always helpful, explaining that some topics are relevant to specific grade-levels and/or content areas only, rather than to all teachers in attendance. Teachers also indicated that new instructional strategies and/or programs are introduced but not always revisited in subsequent sessions. Teachers reported that many programs recently rolled out during professional development have already been replaced with new initiatives, stating, "We start something and then its bumped to something else." Further, teachers indicated that they spend ample time analyzing data during professional development but do not receive enough time to design instructional plans.
- **Educators collaborate regularly to learn about effective instruction and students' progress.** School leaders and teachers reported that all teachers meet in teacher-based teams (TBT) once a week. School leaders and teachers explained that TBTs are organized by grade-level bands, rather than content areas. School leaders indicated (and review of TBT protocols verified) that they administer a common grade-level assessment prior to meeting in their TBTs. School leaders and teachers explained that teachers then analyze the assessment results and identify students' strengths and weaknesses and collaboratively create instructional plans to target the standards that students did not master. Both stakeholder groups indicated that after re-teach plans have been executed, teachers administer another common assessment to re-assess for student proficiency. Review of TBT protocols further revealed that teachers follow five specific steps that guide this process: 1) Collect and chart assessment data aligned to the standards; 2) Analyze student work specific to the data; 3) Establish shared expectations; 4) Implementation; and 5) Collect, chart, and analyze post-data. Review of information detailed in step three also revealed that teachers collaboratively determine what instructional strategies and learning activities will be employed to ensure students master the standard(s) being re-taught. Examples included: "Students will receive a graphic organizer and the teacher will model how to use it through focused instruction;" "Peer editing will be used and students will go through all stages of the writing process;" and "The teacher will model peer editing (possibly show videos of good peer editing). The students who are ready to advance will peer tutor classmates."

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7. *The school's culture indicates high levels of collective responsibility, trust, and efficacy.*	**Level 2: Targeted Support Required**

- **Most educators' mindsets and beliefs reflect shared commitments to students' learning.** School leadership and teachers consistently reported that they are committed to the learning of students at the school. Specifically, school leaders stated that they demonstrate this commitment by analyzing end-of-year data to inform the placement of students for the upcoming school year, explaining that, when scheduling students, they consider academic achievement, personality type, and behavioral history (e.g., triggers for misbehavior). School leaders and teachers also indicated that teachers informally convene to exchange pertinent information about students who have been, or will be, enrolled in their classes. In addition, school leaders and teachers reported that teachers convey commitment to students by creating lesson plans, utilizing the school's resources such as web-based programs, establishing and consistently implementing common rules, participating in TBT meetings, sharing resources (e.g., data binders and trackers) with each other, and working before and after school and during lunch. Teachers also indicated that they are willing to help struggling students and stated that they are here to teach and for the betterment of students. However, some teachers indicated that some students' behavior impedes the learning of all students, explaining that one challenging student can disrupt instruction for the entire class. In addition, some teachers stated that student behavior is causing "good" students to enroll in other schools. Further, site visit team members observed that many teachers allowed students to opt-out of lessons and noted that only some teachers tried to re-engage students who were not participating in learning activities.
- **The school does not fully reflect a safe, trustworthy, and growth-oriented professional climate.** School leaders and teachers reported that teachers share respectful, collegial relationships, explaining that they often lend personal and professional support to each other. While teachers stated that they tend to have stronger relationships with the teachers who are on their grade-level teams and/or share their floor of the building, they indicated that this is a product of proximity rather than staff cliques. Further, teachers described themselves as a family. In addition, school leaders reported that they strive to create an inclusive culture that is free from hierarchy, stating that there are no "little roles or big roles." School leaders also indicated that they have an open-door policy. However, when asked about the culture between school leaders and teachers, most teachers indicated otherwise. Most teachers explained that they do not feel comfortable bringing concerns, questions, and/or suggestions to school leaders. Teachers also reported that when they do approach school leaders, they often decipher school leaders' moods before deciding if, and when, to initiate conversations. Further, when asked, teachers stated that school leaders have not created a blame-free environment in which teachers can solicit assistance, explaining that school leaders often inquire about what teachers have done or state that teachers should know what to do rather than providing the requested help. Teachers expressed frustration about inconsistently receiving support when they ask for it, stating that if they request it, they genuinely need it.

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Domain 4: Governance and Leadership

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

- **School leaders help create clear goals for their school and are beginning to ensure continuous progress toward achieving the goals.** School leaders and teachers consistently reported that the school has established the following goals: increase reading and math NWEA MAP scores by 10%; achieve a 95% student attendance rate; and increase the score on the district's conditions for learning survey around student safety. School leaders explained that in an effort to meet NWEA MAP goals, they have designed data reports that detail grade-level NWEA MAP assessments results. School leaders indicated that teachers who teach math and/or reading receive these reports so that they have access to proficiency levels across their grade-bands. Review of reports showed that they provide an assessment summary that includes cut scores, Rausch Unit (RIT) scores, and number of students who met/did not meet cut scores. The reports further revealed that an analysis of skill areas (e.g., vocabulary use and functions, language, and writing) on which students performed poorly is outlined for teachers. Reports indicated that teachers then create high-level implementation plans to address these skill deficiencies. Reviewed examples included using small groups, learning centers, and web-based computer programs as remediation strategies. In addition, to support the school's attendance goal, school leaders and teachers stated that students who are chronically absent and/or tardy are referred to the SST team and receive interventions around attendance (e.g., family attendance plan).
- **School leaders are working to ensure that teachers deliver high-quality instruction.** School leaders and teachers reported that the school has two designated instructional coaches. Teachers indicated that the frequency in which they engage with their coach varies, explaining that teachers new to the profession generally receive more coaching than veteran teachers. School leaders and teachers reported that coaches and teachers engage in a cycle that includes a pre-conference, classroom visit with real-time coaching, and a post-conference. Teachers indicated that the focus of their coaching is either employing instructional strategies (e.g., anchor charts, think-pair-share, exit tickets, do now) and/or executing No-Nonsense Nurturing. Teacher explained that the effectiveness of coaching cycles depends on the coach, explaining that one coach is more supportive and positive than the other. In addition, teachers reported that they receive five Teacher Development and Evaluation System (TDES) evaluations, explaining that their evaluator conducts a walkthrough, formal evaluation, unannounced informal evaluation, final walkthrough, and composite meeting over the course of the school year. However, teachers stated that evaluators are not normed and sometimes do not use the common evaluation rubric. For instance, teachers explained that some evaluators observe instruction during the initial walkthrough, while others look at the classroom environment. Further, teachers indicated that walkthrough observation times vary from evaluator to evaluator, stating that some observe for five minutes, while others stay 50 minutes. Teachers additionally reported that a few teachers' instructional coach also acts as their evaluator, and stated that they view the dual roles as a conflict of interest.

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9. School leaders effectively orchestrate the school's operations.	**Level 2: Targeted Support Required**

- **School leaders do not ensure effective communication, and while included in decision-making structures, stakeholders do not feel that all decisions are transparent.** Teachers reported that school leaders communicate with them through staff meetings, weekly newsletters, and emails. However, teachers stated that communication is an area of growth, explaining that a lack of communication and miscommunication are common occurrences. For instance, teachers indicated that they often learn of due dates for required paperwork after deadlines have passed. Teachers also reported that they frequently are informed about events and/or timelines or changes to them at the last minute. Teachers further indicated that many assignments have concurrent deadlines but explained that they are often unaware of this in advance. Teachers stated that they frequently reach out to each other via text message and/or email to seek clarity around upcoming due dates and events. In addition, school leaders reported (and review committee minutes and agendas confirmed) that all teachers serve on a school committee (e.g., Academic Progress Team, Student Support Team) and indicated that participation on committees provide teachers with the opportunity to make and/or provide input about school decisions. While teachers indicated that they are members of school committees, they indicated that their service is not meaningful. Specifically, when asked, teachers reported that their input is rarely solicited and, when offered, is often rejected. For instance, teachers explained that a teacher proposed amending procedures for when students are in common areas and indicated that this suggestion was not well-received and ultimately dismissed without discussion.
- **School leaders are working to engage parents and community members in the educational process and creates an environment in which community resources support learning.** Teachers and parents reported that teachers frequently communicate with parents through weekly newsletters, emails, text messages, phone calls, and in-person conversations during drop-off and pick-up times. Both stakeholder groups also stated (and review of newsletters and fliers confirmed) that the school communicates with parents through monthly newsletters, event fliers, robocalls, and social media. In addition, school leaders, teachers, students, and parents reported that school holds multiple functions for families, including parent/teacher conferences and quarterly events. For example, all four stakeholder groups explained that the school recently invited families to participate in a literacy night, explaining that school staff read *The Polar Express* aloud and parents and students engaged in activities related to the text, such as writing letters to Santa and completing winter-themed crossword puzzles. School leaders and parents further reported that the school has a parent-led Parent Advisory Committee (PAC) that tries to meet monthly. However, school leaders and teachers reported that parent engagement is an area of opportunity and indicated that they are working to bolster attendance at functions and PAC meetings. School leaders and parents further stated (and review of partnership documents verified) that the school has established multiple community partnerships, including the Cleveland Play House, Greater Cleveland Food Bank, Coats for Kids, and Cleveland Housing Network. School leaders stated that these partnerships expose students to the arts, provide food and clothes to families in need, and assist families with securing housing.

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Prioritization Process

The site visit team met with the Almira Elementary 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 agreed that there are significant strengths present in the school. Areas of strength the team discussed included Students' Learning Supports, Educators' Learning Supports, and Instructional Leadership. The site visit team also noted the following areas for growth: Assessment and Adjustment, Purposeful Teaching, and Classroom Climate.

The group identified Purposeful Teaching as the area for growth to prioritize. The group identified the following priority in this Key Question as having the most potential impact on the success of the school as a whole: focused and purposeful instruction

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

Goal: Teachers provide students with clear learning goals or focused, purposeful instruction.

Success Measure: 90% of teachers are effectively (rated 4 on classroom tool) providing students with focused purposeful instruction by Oct 1, 2017.

Actions	Target Dates	Champions
1. Research models of focused, purposeful instruction • Determine what the actions look, sounds and feels like • Determine how engagement works with this key action	2/8	Coach
2. Plan survey to assess staff/teachers' familiarity, perceptions, misconceptions of focused, purposeful	2/8	APT/Teacher A
3. Determine Almira focused, purposeful framework • Determine what teachers/students' habits should be reduced and emphasized in the framework.	3/15	APT/Teacher B
4. Plan for staff buy-in throughout the effort • Determine strategies to improve belief and trust among staff	4/5	Principal APT/Teacher C Coach
5. Develop professional development sessions for lesson planning, include co-planning component to sessions	4/26	APT/Teacher D
6. Redefine coaching structure to incorporate peer coaching	5/3	APT/Teacher E
7. Monitoring the practice • Set benchmark • Plan for re-evaluation and adjustment periods	5/10	APT/Teacher F

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Appendix A: Site Visit Team Members

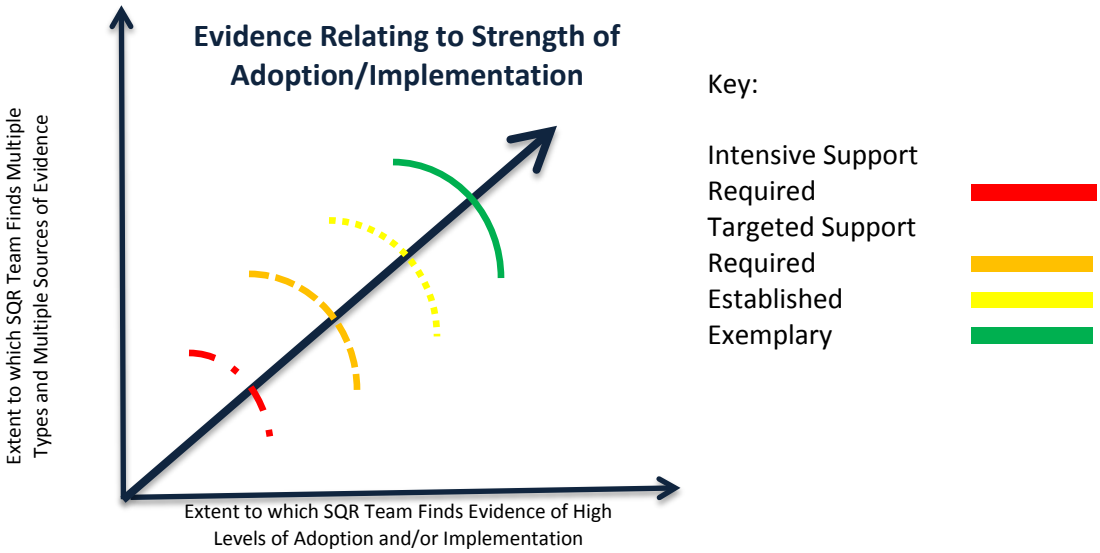
The SQR to Almira Elementary School was conducted on December 14-16, 2016 by a team of educators from the Cleveland Metropolitan School District and SchoolWorks, LLC.

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Appendix B: Implementation Rubric

The site visit team will use the following guidance to select a performance level for each key question. Note that the quality standard for each implementation level is based on the extent to which the site visit team finds multiple types[2] and multiple sources[3] of evidence related to the adoption and/or implementation of a practice or system and the extent to which the site visit team finds evidence of high levels of adoption and/or implementation of a practice or system.



Rating	Implementation Level	Quality Standard
1	**Intensive Support Required**	Evidence indicates that the key question is not a practice or system that has been adopted and/or implemented at the school, or that the level of adoption/implementation does not improve the school's effectiveness.
2	**Targeted Support Required**	Evidence indicates that the key question is a practice or system that is developing at the school, but that it has not yet been implemented at a level that has begun to improve the school's effectiveness, OR that the impact of the key action on the effectiveness of the school cannot yet be determined.
3	**Established**	Evidence indicates that the key question is a practice or system that has been adopted at the school, and is implemented at a level that has begun to improve the school's effectiveness.
4	**Exemplary**	Evidence indicates that the key question is a practice or system that has been fully adopted at the school, and is implemented at a level that has had a demonstrably positive impact on the school's effectiveness.

[2] "Multiple types of evidence" is defined as evidence collected from two or more of the following: document review, stakeholder focus groups and/or interviews; and classroom observations.

[3] "Multiple sources of evidence" is defined as evidence collected from three or more stakeholder focus groups and/or interviews; two or more documents; and/or evidence that a descriptor was documented in 75% or more of lessons observed at the time of the visit.

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Appendix C: Summary of Classroom Observation Data

During the site visit, the team conducted 14 observations, representing a range of grade levels and subject areas. The following table presents the compiled data from those observations. *Note: Due to rounding, the percentages for a particular indicator may not appear to total to 100%.*

	Indicator	Distribution of Scores (%)			
		Ineffective	*Partially Effective*		*Effective*
		1	**2**	**3**	**4**
Common Core Alignment	**1a. Common Core Literacy Alignment (for all classes other than math)** Alignment to content standards Alignment to instructional shifts N = 11	64	27	9	0
	1b. Common Core Math Alignment (for math classes only) Alignment to content standards Alignment to instructional shifts Alignment to standards for mathematical practice N = 3	0	67	33	0
Classroom Climate	**2. Behavioral Expectations** Student behavior Clear expectations Consistent rewards and/or consequences Anticipation and redirection of misbehavior	14	50	21	14
	3. Structured Learning Environment Teacher preparation Clear agenda Learning time maximized	36	50	14	0
	4. Supportive Learning Environment Caring relationships Teacher responsiveness to students' needs	14	79	7	0
Purposeful Teaching	**5. Focused Instruction** Learning objectives High expectations Effective communication of academic content	71	29	0	0
	6. Instructional Strategies Multi-sensory modalities and materials Varied groupings Student choice and leadership	57	36	7	0
	7. Cognitive Engagement Active student participation Perseverance	21	64	14	0
	8. Higher-order Thinking Challenging tasks Application to new problems and situations Student questions Metacognition	71	21	7	0
In-Class Assessment & Adjustment	**9. Assessment Strategies** Use of formative assessments	79	14	7	0
	10. Adjustments to Instruction Adjustment of instructional Strategies Adjustment of content Adjustment of organization of students	100	0	0	0
	11. Feedback Feedback to students Student use of feedback	93	7	0	0

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