SchoolWorks
School Quality Review
Report

Louisa May Alcott School
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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 2: Targeted 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 3: Established**
5. *The school's culture reflects a safe, supportive learning environment that reflects high expectations.*	**Level 3: Established**
Domain 3: Educators' Opportunities to Learn	
6. *The school designs professional development and collaborative support systems 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 3: Established**
Domain 4: Governance and Leadership	
8. *School leaders guide and participate with instructional staff in the central processes of improving teaching and learning.*	**Level 1: Intensive Support Required**
9. *School leaders effectively orchestrate the school's operations.*	**Level 3: Established**

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Domain 1: Instruction

1. *Classroom interactions and organization ensure a classroom climate conducive to learning.*	**Level 2: Targeted Support Required**

Behavioral Expectations			
Ineffective	Partially Effective		Effective[1]
1	2	3	4
0%	0%	25%	75%

- **Behavioral expectations are clear and understood by students.** The site visit team observed effective implementation of behavioral expectations in 75% of classrooms (n=12). In these classrooms, site visit team members observed students consistently behaving appropriately and demonstrating an understanding of classroom rules and routines. Students were quiet, respectful, attentive, and responded to minor redirections (e.g., clap once, clap twice; all eyes on me) that did not interrupt the learning process. The site visit team also observed students working collaboratively in small groups, quietly completing independent work, sitting on the floor in close proximity to each other without disruption, and raising their hands with questions. In 25% of classrooms, the site visit team observed partially effective implementation of behavioral expectations. During these lessons, most students behaved appropriately throughout the lesson. However, several students were off-task (e.g., chatting with other students), which created minor disruptions during the lesson. The site visit team did not observe ineffective implementation of behavioral expectations in any classrooms. In focus groups, teachers explained that expectations for student behavior are engrained in the culture of the school and "everyone knows." They further explained that staff are responsible for establishing their own classroom rules and system of rewards and consequences (e.g., ClassDojo; red, yellow, green chart; treasure chest; stars). Across Alcott classrooms, the site visit team observed respectful interactions between teachers and students and praise for positive student behaviors. The site visit team met with students who indicated behavior was not a problem at the school and their peers rarely disrupt learning.

Structured Learning Environment			
Ineffective	Partially Effective		Effective
1	2	3	4
8%	25%	50%	17%

- **The learning environment is structured; however, learning time is not always maximized.** In 17% of classrooms, the site visit team observed effective implementation of a structured learning environment. In these classrooms, the learning activities were clearly explained, materials were prepared for students, and instructional time was maximized. For example, students were provided packets of learning materials that included an aligned rubric so students knew what they were expected to do and learn. Instructions were clearly stated in writing, and materials (e.g., lap tops, manipulatives) were readily available, ensuring learning time was maximized for students. A partially effective learning environment was observed in 75% of classrooms. In these classrooms, it was evident the teacher had prepared for the lesson and students had materials necessary to complete the learning activity. However, in some classrooms, an agenda or description of class activities was not

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

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always posted or communicated to students to clarify expectations for the lesson or day. In other classrooms, instructional time was not maximized for all students. For example, students completed the lesson activity and were not provided with another learning task (i.e., students sat quietly at their desks, talked with their peers). In other classrooms, instructional time was limited as the teacher prepared for the next lesson activity (e.g., moving students one location to the next).

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
25%	50%	17%	8%

- **Use of clear learning goals and focused, purposeful instruction are limited.** In focus groups, the principal and teachers reported it was a district expectation that "I can" statements are posted. They also indicated working with the Achievement Network (ANet) to strengthen the use and quality of learning objectives. Across classrooms, the site visit team noted inconsistent use of learning objectives. In some classrooms, the lesson objective was stated but it only applied to part of the lesson. In other classrooms, the learning objective was posted, but not verbally communicated, and the posted I can statement did not align to the lesson. In other classrooms, the learning objective was neither posted nor communicated. In 67% of classrooms, the site visit team observed partially effective implementation of focused instruction. In these classrooms, a learning objective was posted or communicated, but it did not drive lesson activities (i.e., not fully aligned to the learning task). In these classrooms, teachers demonstrated high expectations for learning during part of the lesson. For example, students were held accountable for achieving learning goals (e.g., cold-call to check student understanding, use of rubrics that establish learning outcomes) and asked to explain how lesson content can be applied to real-life (e.g., determine location of Cleveland Cavaliers opponents, history of familiar toys). In 25% of classrooms, the site visit team observed ineffective use of focused instruction. In these classrooms, a learning objective was not posted or stated to identify the learning outcome and delivery of lesson content was limited (e.g., students only completed one, single step task; academic instruction was not observed).

Higher-order Thinking			
Ineffective	Partially Effective		Effective
1	2	3	4
58%	17%	0%	25%

- **Instruction requires few students to use and develop higher-order thinking skills.** The site visit team noted instruction that effectively incorporated higher-order thinking questions and activities in 25% of observed classes. In these classes, students were engaged in rigorous and challenging tasks that required students to use skills, such as analysis and evaluation. For example, in one classroom, students were asked to use a graphic organizer to relate events and cite text evidence. In another classroom, students used hands-on materials to investigate and analyze information as part of a research project. In other classes, students engaged in metacognition (e.g., teacher makes an intentional mistake and students are asked to correct it, explaining what they think is correct,

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incorrect, and justifying their answer). In 17% of classrooms visited, the site visit team noted partially effective use of higher-order thinking questions. In these classrooms, students were asked questions that engaged them in higher-order thinking for a small part of the lesson (e.g., Why do you think…? Why haven't you been able to…?). In the majority of classrooms (58%), higher-order thinking tasks and questions were either not observed or learning activities asked students to complete single-step tasks only. For example, students were asked to fill in missing numbers and words, cut and paste, repeat what they heard, rewrite, copy information, or complete a worksheet – all lower-level thinking questions and tasks that rely primarily on recall. In other classrooms, questions focused on the activity directions (e.g., How do you plan on completing this?) and not academic content and, as a result, students were not asked to challenge their thinking.

3. *Teachers regularly formatively 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
25%	50%	17%	8%

- **In-class assessment strategies are not consistently used to reveal students' thinking about learning goals.** In 67% of observed classrooms, the site visit team observed partially effective use of in-class assessment strategies that revealed students' understanding of the lesson. In these classrooms, teachers used assessment strategies that provided a general, but not precise, sense of student understanding. For example, the teacher/s circulated the classroom to check some, but not all, students' understanding. In a few classrooms, teachers used questioning (e.g., "What letter does this start with?" "Who can tell me an important fact? "How many?") to check students' understanding, but only some students offered to answer the question (e.g., raised their hands) and only one student responded, which provided a general – but not precise – sense of students' understanding. In a few classrooms, a rubric was used so students could self-assess their understanding of content and/or progress toward the learning objective. In 25% of classrooms, the site visit team observed ineffective implementation of in-class assessment strategies. In most of these classrooms, students were not asked questions related to academic content or teachers checked for understanding of only a minor lesson detail. For example, students were asked to dictate what they had already written on the paper, which did not provide information on students' overall understanding of the lesson content.

Feedback			
Ineffective	Partially Effective		Effective
1	2	3	4
50%	25%	25%	0%

- **Feedback to inform the learning process is limited during classroom instruction.** Because in-class assessments were observed in some classrooms only, there were occasional opportunities for students to receive feedback during the learning process. The site visit team observed partially effective use of specific feedback in 50% of classes, which was characterized by some students in the classroom receiving feedback, and/or the feedback provided did not clarify misunderstandings for the majority of students. For example, teachers circulated the classroom to check student work, but only

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some students received feedback. And frequently, that feedback only informed students whether their answer was correct or incorrect (e.g., “Very good!” “That’s fantastic.” “You could write that…”) and did not clarify misunderstandings. In other classrooms, the teacher sat with a few students individually and provided feedback as the student progressed through the assignment, but other students worked independently during the lesson and did not receive feedback. As described above, in a few classrooms, a rubric was used so students could self-assess; however, errors and strategies for improvement were discussed with a few students only. In 50% of classrooms, the site visit team did not observe students receiving feedback specific to the learning objective or lesson. In a few instances, students received some feedback, but it was used to redirect student behavior (e.g., “Please cite properly.”) or to focus student attention on procedures or task directions (e.g., “Can you write your name first.”). In other instances, students did not receive feedback on skills they were practicing even when errors occurred (e.g., mistakes on worksheets students were completing).

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Domain 2: Students' Opportunities to Learn

4. The school identifies and supports special education students, gifted, English language learners, and students who are struggling or at risk.	**Level 3: Established**

- **The school has a process for identifying students who are struggling; student progress is monitored individually.** In focus groups, teachers described various data sources that are used to identify students who are struggling that include: Northwest Evaluation Association Measures of Academic Progress (NWEA MAP), STAR assessments, Achievement Network (ANet) interim and mini assessments, and student work samples. School staff reported (and a review of school documents confirmed) that for students who continue to struggle, the school uses a student support team (SST) process to address concerns with academics, behavior, social skills, and attendance. Referral to the SST is initiated via parent or teacher request, and staff reported using the district's standard referral form. The principal and teachers indicated (and a review of school calendars and weekly bulletins confirmed) that the SST meets every Thursday and typically includes regular education teacher(s), special education teacher, parent, school psychologist, and other related service providers (e.g., speech-language pathologist, occupational therapist) as applicable. Further, stakeholders described the SST process, stating it begins with an initial meeting to discuss concerns, review data, and develop a short-term intervention plan. A follow-up meeting is scheduled approximately six weeks later and interventions are either adjusted or the student is referred for a special education evaluation. In focus groups, staff reported that teachers are responsible for keeping track of the data and monitoring student progress. They also indicated all teachers keep data binders with individual student information. While the school has a process for identifying students who are struggling, teachers use their own systems to track and monitor data.
- **The school implements appropriate supports for struggling and special education students.** In focus groups, teachers described a range of supports used to support struggling students that are incorporated into daily instruction – for example, small group instruction, leveled readers, additional reading blocks, ReadWork resources, and ANet passages. Staff also reported using additional programs (e.g., Accelerated Reader 360, Kahn Academy, ThinkCentral, Learning A-Z and MobyMax) to target specific content and skills with which students are struggling. At the primary grades levels (i.e., K-2) Reading Mastery Direct Instruction is implemented daily to teach students at their current reading levels. Many of these practices/programs (e.g., Accelerated Reader 360, ThinkCentral, Direct Instruction, small group instruction) are also cited in the school's Academic Achievement Plan (AAP), which also states providing a "personalized education for individual students" is a strategic practice for this school year. Staff and students reported that teachers are available to provide tutoring support before and after school, as well as during lunch periods. Further, the school has two special education teachers who serve as intervention specialists. The principal and teachers reported intervention specialists provide support to struggling students in addition to the caseload of students with Individualized Education Programs (IEPs). Teachers indicated services are provided to students with IEPs through both a push-in model (via whole group and small group instruction) and pull-out model. Finally, the school maintains two classrooms that provide instruction and supports to students with more significant disabilities – a full time Bellefaire counselor to support students social-emotional well-being, and a gifted program for eligible students.

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5. *The school's culture reflects a safe, supportive learning environment that reflects high expectations.*	**Level 3: Established**

- **Most stakeholders hold high expectations for academic learning.** Many staff stated they hold high expectations for student learning and described how these expectations are demonstrated in the classroom – for example: multi-step problem solving; project-based learning; differentiation; individualization; high quality work; high level vocabulary; and asking questions that make students think. Parents indicated that the school held high expectations for students, citing academic content, the music program, and how their students' performance is higher than students in other districts as examples. A few stakeholders also reported the school principles recited at morning assembly are used to focus students and adults on academic learning and expectations. However, a few staff indicated that some students are expected to perform at their grade level, but are coming to the school less ready and, in some cases, it is important to accept that students are doing their best. In a focus group, the site visit team polled students on the rigor of their coursework (i.e., easy, medium, challenging) across four subject areas (math, science, social studies, English language arts). Students indicated coursework was easy in 39% of the time, medium 36% of the time, and that classes were challenging only 25% of the time. One student explained an easy class was copying notes from the board instead of assimilating information. When asked how you achieve a grade of A at the school, students reported it depends on the teacher. In some classes, you can get an A for paying attention and trying your best. In other classes, you need to meet your goals and you receive a B if you meet the expectation and receive an A for going above the expectation.
- **The school engages families in support of students' learning.** The principal, teachers, and parents described (and a review of the school's parent binder confirmed) that families are invited to participate in activities at the school (e.g., Father's Walk, Muffins with Mom, Donuts with Dad, music programs); they are well-attended. They also reported there are opportunities for families to learn about the school program, as well as practices to support student learning at home. These include, for example: The Back to School Meet and Greet provided parents an overview of building expectations and culture; the school Open House offered information on what students will be learning that school year; and at Family Math Make-N-Take Evening, families created simple math games to play at home with their scholar. Further, parents indicated the school has a school parent organization (SPO) that assists with parent/community engagement programs and runs annual events, such as the school book fair. Teachers, parents, and the principal described parent volunteers who are in the building regularly to work with students and/or to support the school in other ways (e.g., making copies, putting up chairs). The site visit team observed parents reading to students in classrooms and in attendance at the morning assembly. Teachers and parents also reported ongoing communications between home and school through email, Class Dojo, grade level/classroom newsletters, and in person at drop-off or pick-up. In addition, parents described homework folders that are sent home daily and sometimes require a signature to ensure they have reviewed student work and are aware of classroom information. Finally, parents reported regular communication with the principal about their children.

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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 1: Intensive Support Required**

- **Educators are provided an opportunity to collaborate; however, it is not sufficiently structured or focused to drive improvements to instruction and students' progress.** Teachers and the principal reported (and review of weekly bulletins confirmed) that teacher-based teams (TBTs) are scheduled to meet weekly on Wednesdays, providing a regular time for general education teachers to collaborate. Teachers explained they meet in grade-level bands (i.e., K-1, 2-5) and focus on a standard in either mathematics or English language arts. They also described the process of unpacking the standards and analyzing results following pre-tests, which are teacher-created using the ANet test bank. In focus groups, teachers indicated TBTs are helpful in dissecting a specific standard, but also acknowledged there are many other standards students need to know and the timeline of the cycle does not always work (i.e., the instructional focus has moved to a different standard). Both teachers and administration reported that the principal attends TBT meetings intermittently. There was no evidence to indicate TBTs had completed a full cycle of inquiry yet this school year or that the building leadership team (BLT) had provided feedback. While TBT meetings provide structured time for some teachers (i.e., special education and encore teachers do not consistently participate) to discuss teaching and learning, it is not clear that the process is consistently being implemented as intended or focused on areas of practice that require improvement. Teachers described having a planning period each day that is used for informal planning with colleagues, comparing lessons, and discussing student work. This period is common among grade-level peers in most instances; however, school staff indicated that, due to the small size of the school, this is sometimes difficult to accomplish. While it is clear that staff work together (see key question 7), most of these collaborations are unstructured (i.e., not guided by an agenda or expectations), do not occur regularly (i.e., varies by grade level, subject area / discipline as well as number of days per week), and, at times, are interrupted if other school-based activities arise (e.g., review of the AAP, internal business). Opportunities to collaborate during the school day exist; however, they are not consistently and fully utilized to impact instructional practices and student achievement schoolwide.
- **Professional development (PD) is not designed to address school priorities, school improvement goals, and/or identified areas of need.** When asked about PD opportunities at the school, staff cited the 200 minutes of mandated PD that occurs weekly, work with the ANet, and/or training opportunities external to the school. In focus groups, the principal and teachers described the school's 200-minute allocation as follows: 100 minutes of teacher-directed time, used primarily for lesson planning; informal collaboration with colleagues, and communications with families; and 100 minutes dedicated to the principal's agenda, which typically includes 40 minutes for TBTs and 60 minutes for staff meetings. Administration and teachers also described trainings conducted by ANet staff this Fall (and a review of PD day agendas confirmed) on the following topics: navigating ANet resources, and developing a deeper understanding of the aspects of rigor. Other teachers listed opportunities provided by the district (e.g., AIMSweb, Houghton Mifflin, special education department, Blue Institute) and/or other opportunities they had sought out on their own (e.g., courses through John Carroll University and the Education Services Center). The site visit team reviewed the school's AAP, which lists numerous PD activities: Accelerated Reader 360; STMath; Journeys; ThinkCentral, writing strategies; and centers/rotations to ensure teachers focus on developing essential questions. While

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the AAP lists a range of PD activities, there is no evidence to indicate the majority of these training opportunities have occurred or that there is a plan for them to occur. At the time of the site visit, there were no opportunities for staff to engage in an active and sustained PD to specifically address school-wide priorities, improve instructional practice, or make progress toward achievement goals.

7. The school's culture indicates high levels of collective responsibility, trust, and efficacy.	**Level 3: Established**

- **Educators' hold a shared commitment to student learning.** In focus groups, school staff spoke of their collective commitment to students' well-being and learning school-wide, regardless of the grade level that they teach. For example, many teachers described tutoring or providing other individualized support during their free periods or outside of school hours. At the lower grade levels, a number of staff come together to engage small student groups for Reading Mastery Direct Instruction. Parents and students stated that teachers and administrators are always available to provide support to students. During classroom visits, the site visit team observed students asking teachers for help, as well as numerous kind and supportive interactions between teachers and students (e.g., "I can tell you tried hard;" "Let's share a compliment;" "Good job – keep going!"). School leaders, teachers, and parents described how the daily morning assembly provides an opportunity to bring the entire school community together, to address upcoming events, and celebrate students' successes (e.g., spotlight student of the week). To reinforce the school's commitment to learning, students, staff, and families recite the school principles – "I am a scholar; I am a champion; I am a dreamer; I am a leader; I am a peacemaker; and, I am loved" – every morning at assembly.
- **The school reflects a safe and trustworthy professional climate.** Across focus groups, stakeholders (principal, teachers, parents) described the school's culture as positive, caring, and cohesive – an environment in which they can take risks and also work out conflicts when they arise. The principal and teachers reported that much of the school's small staff has been at the school for 10-to-20 years, which is recognized as contributing to the open and collaborative relationships that exist throughout the building. For example, one teacher stated, "This is a small building and many of us have known each other a long time... We are here as a team and not as an I." Another said, "We are a family and always have been." And yet another teacher stated, "Everyone works well together and gets along." In addition, teachers indicated the principal has established a culture that is supportive, stating "She is there to build teachers up and not bring them down;" and "She is there to help you, not judge you." Teachers and parent also described the principal as highly visible in the building – from the front door at the beginning of the day, during morning assembly, and in the hallways and classrooms throughout the day. The principal described the school's staff as collaborative and committed to the school, citing teacher's flexibility (e.g., utilizing locations across the building to work with small groups of students, physical education in the cafeteria) and willingness to volunteer their time in support of student learning and building activities (e.g., tutoring, leadership teams, family events). Teachers uniformly reported that they work with, and rely on, each other and often go to their colleagues to seek feedback, review lesson plans, and/or discuss student concerns. Finally, parents reported that adults at the school work well together and have created a culture in which kids love to come to school.

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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 1: Intensive Support Required**

- **The principal has not presented a clear vision or goals for continuous academic improvement at the school.** While the school has written mission and vision statements and goals that are outlined on school documents, they are neither clearly or consistently stated by stakeholders nor used to drive school improvement. When asked about the school's goals, teachers provided a variety of responses – for example: for students to become proficient; to improve test scores; to prepare students for success later in life; to promote a positive atmosphere. Parents cited education, respect, and community as goals of the school. The principal cited the top priority as personalization of education. A few stakeholders mentioned the AAP and use of data provided by the ANet to establish student performance targets, but did not state specific goals. The principal described shifting State targets and a tension between identifying a goal that was rigorous versus achievable (e.g., 80 percent proficient versus 60 percent proficient). The site visit team reviewed the school's AAP, which cites a range of strategies to improve student performance at the school – for example: use of ANet resources and data to personalize and strengthen areas of student need; build individual action plans for students in the top 20% and bottom 20%; increase student inquiry, use of small group instruction and blended learning; upgrade and increase use of technology for more hands-on experience using keyboards. However, in focus groups, stakeholders did not identify these strategies as approaches to improving student achievement at the school. When asked explicitly about strategies in the AAP, staff revealed at least some strategies were not being implemented (i.e., only some technology was purchased, blended learning is not being used). At the time of the site visit, the school lacked a guiding and living strategic plan that creates a vision for how all stakeholders will work together to drive continuous improvement efforts and increases in student achievement.
- **The principal does not ensure that teachers deliver high-quality instruction.** When asked about feedback, the principal and teachers described classroom observations as part of the district-based Teacher Development Evaluation system (TDES). The principal reported having conducted observations this Fall, and teachers who require observations this Fall confirmed having received observations. In addition, teachers reported the principal pops in and out of classrooms on a regular basis. They also indicated quick feedback is sometimes provided verbally during the lesson or informally during conversation later in the day. Teachers also reported feeling comfortable asking for feedback or assistance; in those cases, the principal responds quickly. The principal indicated it is her responsibility to promote, encourage, and support staff, as opposed to providing critical feedback. While the principal is visible in the building and in classrooms, there is not a structure for providing regular and meaningful feedback to teachers to improve instructional practices. In focus groups, neither the principal nor teachers presented examples of how feedback provided has changed teaching or student learning activities. Finally, there was no evidence that high-quality models have been provided for teachers to observe in order to ensure they understand what good instruction looks like, so they can build on current practices – for example, a targeted feedback loop (i.e., training on an instructional practice, allowing teachers to implement, and deliver feedback to refine and improve the practice).

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9. School leaders effectively orchestrate the school's operations.	**Level 3: Established**

- **The principal ensures regular communication among stakeholders and involves staff in decision making at the school.** The principal and teachers reported there are frequent and open communications among all staff and that communications across the school are respectful and supportive. Because of the small size of the school, stakeholders reported, and one staff member stated, that "everyone does, and is, involved in everything." For example, meetings to organize school events such as open house, "get your read on week", often occur with the whole staff. Teachers also described several structured communications that keep them well-informed (e.g., weekly bulletins, daily morning, staff meetings). Teachers and parents also cited multiple methods of communication between the school and home (e.g., email, Class Dojo, homework folders, newsletters, in-person conversations). The principal and teachers also described several teams and meeting structures that are used to provide leadership and, in some instances, support decision making. These include, for example: a team who led the completion of the AAP; use of TBTs to review data and plan standards-based instruction; a core group of staff who regularly participate in SST meetings; and weekly staff meetings that are used to discuss internal business and complete district-mandated activities. Teachers reported having input into policies but also acknowledged that the principal is ultimately the final decision maker (that is, they bring an idea or a proposal and the principal approves it).
- **The principal manages school operations to ensure a safe and productive learning environment.** Across focus groups, teachers, parents, and students all reported the school is safe and the principal cultivates an environment that is conducive to learning. Teachers reported (and a review of school documents confirmed) the school uses the Promoting Alternative Teaching Strategies (PATHS) program to support students' social and emotional (SEL) development, Not on our Watch (NOW) – an anti-bullying program – and Winning Against Violent Environments (WAVE) – a peer mediation program, to support a nurturing learning environment. In addition, the school has a full time Bellefaire counselor and a full-time nurse to support students' mental and physical health. As previously reported, the principal is highly visible in the building and is regularly in classrooms. In a focus group, parents reported one of the most impressive aspects of the school is the principal's presence throughout the building. "She is always out and about talking to teachers and parents. She embraces and leads the community aspect of the school." The site visit team noted a clean and welcoming elementary school building with student work posted throughout the building. In focus groups, teachers indicated that, in general, they have the materials and resources needed to support teaching and learning; however, improved technology continues to be a need at the school. Finally, the principal has maintained a staff who provide opportunities for students with diverse learning needs and interests (e.g., gifted program, autism program, music program). Also, the school employs student teachers, which reduces student-to-staff ratios in many classrooms, while also providing additional adult resources to support student learning.

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Prioritization Process

The site visit team met with the Louisa May Alcott 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: a shared commitment to student learning and regular communication and inclusive decision-making. The site visit team also noted the following areas for growth: in-class assessment & adjustment and higher-order thinking skills.

The group identified instruction as the area for growth to prioritize. 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: higher-order thinking skills. The team then developed the following goal, success measure, and action plan:

Goal: Teachers will develop a fuller understanding of higher-order thinking skills and implement daily.

Success Measure: Increase staff understanding and use of higher-order thinking skills via pre- and post-assessments.

Actions	Target Dates	Champions
Establish a Study Group to research and define higher-order thinking skills.	11/18/2016	Teacher Study Group
Conduct a pre-assessment to determine understanding of higher-order thinking strategies.	12/5/2016	All Staff
Create a universal definition of what higher-order thinking looks like at Alcott.	12/5/2016	All Staff
Share the definition of higher-order thinking with all staff.	12/5/2016	Teacher Study Group
Set up a series of 10 minute discussions (professional development) to review what higher-order thinking looks like at each grade level. Use examples such as articles, lists and student work samples. Include an exit ticket / survey to receive feedback.	12/12/2016 12/19/2016 1/9/2017 1/23/2017	Teacher Study Group
Provide opportunities to practice use of higher-order thinking strategies.	Ongoing	All Staff
Consider use of informal walkthroughs to provide feedback on use of higher-order thinking strategies in the classroom.	After 1/23/2017	Principal
Conduct a post-assessment to determine understanding of higher-order thinking strategies.	2/6/2017	All Staff
Share results of the pre-post assessment with all staff	2/13/2017	All Staff

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Appendix A: Site Visit Team Members

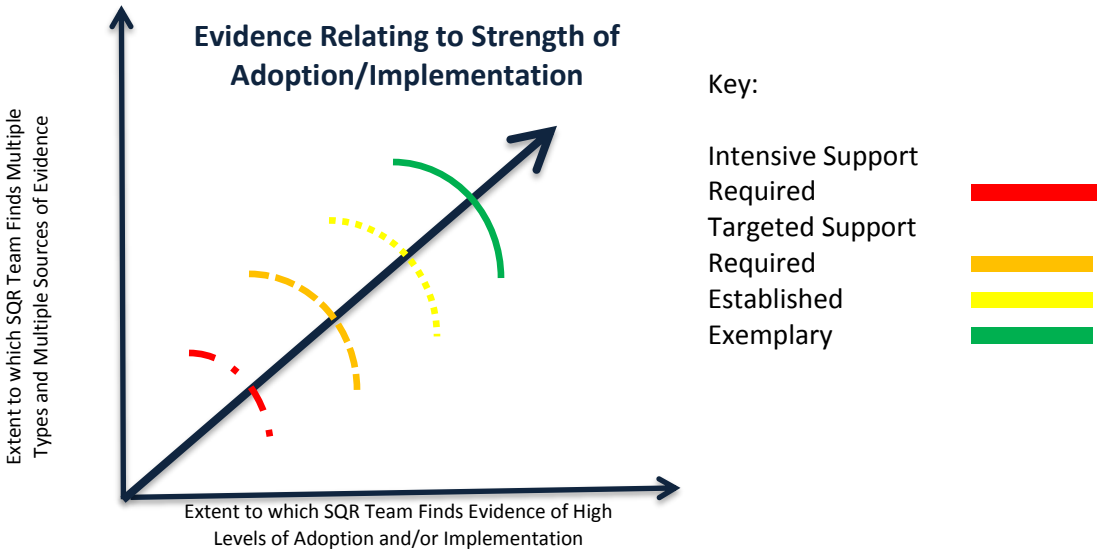
The SQR to Louisa May Alcott School was conducted on November 16-18, 2016 by a team of educators from the Cleveland Metropolitan School District and SchoolWorks, LLC.

Robin Coyne Hull, Team Leader	SchoolWorks, LLC
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Jill Cabe, Team Member	Cleveland Metropolitan School District

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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 12 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 = 8	62%	13%	13%	13%
	1b. Common Core Math Alignment (for math classes only) Alignment to content standards Alignment to instructional shifts Alignment to standards for mathematical practice N = 4	75%	0%	25%	0%
Classroom Climate	**2. Behavioral Expectations** Student behavior Clear expectations Consistent rewards and/or consequences Anticipation and redirection of misbehavior	0%	0%	25%	75%
	3. Structured Learning Environment Teacher preparation Clear agenda Learning time maximized	8%	25%	50%	17%
	4. Supportive Learning Environment Caring relationships Teacher responsiveness to students' needs	0%	8%	33%	58%
Purposeful Teaching	**5. Focused Instruction** Learning objectives High expectations Effective communication of academic content	25%	50%	17%	8%
	6. Instructional Strategies Multi-sensory modalities and materials Varied groupings Student choice and leadership	8%	58%	8%	25%
	7. Cognitive Engagement Active student participation Perseverance	17%	42%	8%	33%
	8. Higher-order Thinking Challenging tasks Application to new problems and situations Student questions Metacognition	58%	17%	0%	25%
In-Class Assessment & Adjustment	**9. Assessment Strategies** Use of formative assessments	25%	50%	17%	8%
	10. Adjustments to Instruction Adjustment of instructional Strategies Adjustment of content Adjustment of organization of students	75%	17%	8%	0%
	11. Feedback Feedback to students Student use of feedback	50%	25%	25%	0%

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