SchoolWorks
School Quality Review
Report

Whitney Young School
December 12-14, 2016

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

Table of Contents

About the SchoolWorks School Quality Review Process 1

Domains and Key Questions 2

Domain 1: Instruction 3

Domain 2: Students' Opportunities to Learn 7

Domain 3: Educators' Opportunities to Learn 9

Domain 4: Governance and Leadership 11

Prioritization Process 13

Appendix A: Site Visit Team Members 14

Appendix B: Implementation Rubric 15

Appendix C: Summary of Classroom Observation Data 16

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.

© 2017 SchoolWorks, LLC. All rights reserved.

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, gifted, 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 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 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 1: Intensive Support Required**
9. *School leaders effectively orchestrate the school's operations.*	**Level 3: Established**

© 2017 SchoolWorks, LLC. All rights reserved.

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
5%	5%	55%	35%

- **In most classrooms, behavioral expectations are clear and understood by students.** The site visit team observed effective implementation of behavioral expectations in 35% of classrooms (n=20). In these classrooms, site visit team members observed students attending to the teacher, quietly completing independent work, and consistently behaving appropriately throughout the lesson. In several classrooms, students transitioned into the classroom and immediately engaged in classroom activities, demonstrating an understanding of classroom rules and routines. In 60% of classrooms, the site visit team observed partially effective implementation of behavioral expectations. In some of these classrooms, minor student misbehaviors persisted throughout the lesson, but caused only minimal disruption. For example, students were looking at their phones or constant social chatter continued throughout the lesson (i.e., students talked with their peers about topics unrelated to the learning activity). In other classrooms, student behavior was excellent for part of the lesson, but was disruptive at other times. For example, students were attentive during learning activities (e.g., peer presentations, independent work) but as the learning activity finished (i.e., presentation ended, worksheet completed), off-task behavior (primarily social chatter) increased. During some lessons, the site visit team observed teachers effectively redirecting student behavior (e.g., references to voice volume, "Are we listening or are we talking?"); however, in other instances, efforts to redirect student behavior were not effective. For example, students did not move seats when asked and there were no consequences. In focus groups, teachers reported classroom rules are developed individually by each teacher and indicated that in general, students are well-behaved at the school. Students indicated there are instances of students causing disruption (e.g., arguing) that it is addressed in some classrooms, but it keeps occurring in other classrooms.

Structured Learning Environment			
Ineffective	Partially Effective		Effective
1	2	3	4
35%	25%	25%	15%

- **The learning environment is structured in some classrooms; however, learning time is rarely maximized.** In 15% of classrooms, the site visit team observed effective implementation of a structured learning environment. In these classrooms, lesson materials were prepared, learning activities followed a clear agenda, and instructional time was maximized. For example, various materials were available and actively used for students at different learning levels; warm-up activities began as soon as students entered the classroom; and teaching and learning occurred for the entire observation. A partially effective learning environment was observed in 50% of classrooms. In these classrooms, the site visit team observed teachers who were generally prepared for the lesson, students with the resources necessary to complete the learning activity (e.g., bins with materials,

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

© 2017 SchoolWorks, LLC. All rights reserved.

worksheets, textbooks), and in some instances, an agenda was posted to clarify expectations. However, instructional time was not maximized for the duration of the observation. For example, students completed the lesson activity, were not provided another task and, as a result, learning did not continue (i.e., students talked with peers, put their head down on the desk). In other instances, transitions took away from student learning time (e.g., moving from one lesson activity to another took extensive time, students were released from class prior to the bell). In 35% of classrooms, the site visit team noted ineffective implementation of a structured learning environment. In these classrooms, there was limited evidence of teacher preparation and instructional time was not maximized. For example, learning time was spent making procedural decisions (i.e., voting on a lesson activity) and/or lesson activities occurred with little-to-no modeling or instruction (e.g., students were reviewing websites or completing worksheets). Little instruction facilitated student learning.

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
35%	40%	25%	0%

- **Teachers do not provide students with clear learning goals and focused, purposeful instruction.** In 65% of classrooms, the site visit team observed partially effective implementation of focused instruction. In these classrooms, a learning objective that connected to lesson activities was evident. In some classrooms, the posted objective aligned to a standard. In other classrooms, it was displayed as an "I can" statement. In some instances, the teacher verbally communicated the learning objective. However, high expectations for student learning were not consistently demonstrated in these classrooms. In a few classrooms, a grade-level appropriate learning objective existed, but the learning task was not rigorous (e.g., describe what you hear, choose a short story). In other instances, only some students engaged with academic content, while other students sat quietly. The site visit team also observed students being allowed to finish assignments the following day, as opposed to holding them accountable for finishing the learning task. Finally, in a few classrooms, communication of academic content was unclear during part of the lesson (e.g., the teacher did not clearly model the process for solving the problem). In 35% of classrooms, the site visit team observed ineffective use of focused instruction. In these classrooms, the learning objective was not posted or communicated, or multiple objectives were posted, making it difficult to connect the learning goals to the lesson activities. Further, most of these classrooms lacked high expectations, which was marked by limited delivery of academic content. For example, students were asked to complete independent work or computer-based tasks; only some students were engaged in these activities. In a few classrooms, the site visit team observed academic content that was incorrect (e.g., misspellings on the board or errors in student work that were not corrected).

© 2017 SchoolWorks, LLC. All rights reserved.

Higher-order Thinking			
Ineffective	Partially Effective		Effective
1	2	3	4
60%	30%	10%	0%

- **Instruction does not require students to use and develop higher-order thinking skills.** The site visit team noted that instruction requiring higher-order thinking was partially effective in 40% of observed classrooms. In these classrooms, learning activities asked students to apply skills or to solve problems with a moderate, but not high, level of rigor. For example, students were asked to find and analyze the congruence between triangles in one classroom and prepared a presentation on linear equations in another classroom. In other instances, some, but not all, students were engaged in higher-order thinking (e.g., some students were asked to cite textual evidence to support their conclusions, whereas other students were not engaged in an academic task). In 60% of classrooms visited, higher-order thinking tasks and questions were not observed. Learning activities asked students to complete single-step assignments only. For example, students were asked to describe what they heard, copy notes to a worksheet, color a worksheet, or complete a chart – all lower-level thinking tasks. In other classrooms, questions were not asked for the duration of the observation, limiting opportunities for students to extend or challenge their thinking. Key Question 7 provides additional information regarding inconsistent use of rigorous instruction in Whitney Young classrooms.

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
70%	10%	15%	5%

- **In-class assessment strategies do not reveal students' thinking about learning goals.** In 25% of classrooms visited, the site visit team observed partially effective use of in-class assessment strategies that revealed students' understanding of the lesson. In some of these classrooms, the teacher used an assessment strategy to check the understanding of some, but not all, students. For example, the teacher circulated and conferenced, asking questions to further understanding, but this occurred for a few students only. In another classroom, the teacher checked responses on a warm-up activity for a group, but not all, students. The site visit team also observed use of assessment strategies that provided a general, but not precise, sense of student understanding. For example, thumbs-up, to the middle, or thumbs down to gauge students' general understanding of a lesson concept. In 70% of classrooms, the site visit team observed ineffective implementation of in-class assessment strategies. In many of these classrooms, students were not asked any questions for the duration of the observation. In several classrooms, teachers asked questions of students but the questions were unrelated to lesson material, or answers to the questions were provided without sufficient wait time. As a result, questions were not useful in gauging students' understanding of academic content. In a few classrooms, the teacher circulated but questions focused on students following directions (e.g., "Do you have enough words?").

© 2017 SchoolWorks, LLC. All rights reserved.

Feedback			
Ineffective	Partially Effective		Effective
1	2	3	4
65%	15%	15%	5%

- **Feedback is not provided throughout the learning process.** 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 30% of classes. In a few classrooms, students received feedback but it was framed as a reminder to the whole class and not designed to clarify specific misunderstandings (e.g., "The way you know that is…" "The facts are there. You don't need to assume…"). During another lesson, all students received feedback on how to solve a problem based on one students' incorrect response; however, it was not clear that all students needed this clarification. In other classrooms, only a few students received and used high-quality feedback. For example, the teacher conferenced with a few students regarding their responses on an exit ticket, did not accept the incorrect answer and push students to make corrections. In 65% of classrooms, the site visit team observed ineffective use of feedback. In most of these classrooms, the site visit team did not observe any students receiving any feedback. In a few instances, students received some feedback, but it was focused on following directions (e.g., "I asked you to get out the separate sheet of paper three minutes ago." "We need complete silence for 5 minutes.") or task procedures (e.g., "Sign your name with a pencil." "Put a date on the paper.") and not to clarify student misunderstandings about the academic content.

© 2017 SchoolWorks, LLC. All rights reserved.

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 2: Targeted Support Required**

- **The school reviews data to identify students who are struggling and advanced but does not systematically monitor progress.** When asked about data used to identify students' learning needs, the principal and teachers described various data sources: Northwest Evaluation Association Measures of Academic Progress (NWEA MAP), state tests, student work samples, report cards, and progress reports. They also reported using professional development (PD) time on Mondays to review and discuss student data. A review of agendas indicated use of assessments had been discussed during PD. Also, during the site visit, the principal and teachers reported reviewing data that week; NWEA results had just been received. In addition, the principal described reviewing individual student report cards/progress reports to identify students who were struggling and having individual conferences with teachers (and, in some cases, students) about how to address student needs. Some teachers also reported having individual conversations with the principal about students and, in some cases, proactively having conversations with the student because they knew the principal would be asking. The principal reported (and a review of school documents confirmed) that the school utilizes the district's student support team (SST) process on an as-needed basis (due to a very small number of referrals). Also, most of these referrals are to secure services of an outside agency for social-emotional supports or family needs. While school staff reported having meaningful conversations about student performance and a general understanding of which students are doing well and those who are not, review of data occurs on a student-by-student basis. As a result, there is no evidence of a transparent, schoolwide system for monitoring student progress toward, or beyond, mastery.
- **The school does not consistently utilize targeted supports for students who are struggling or advanced.** As described above, the school does not systematically identify students in need of support or advancement. Differentiated supports that do occur take place at the classroom level or as the need is identified for individual students. The Academic Achievement Plan (AAP) cites, and teachers described use of, Achieve3000 and Assessment and Learning in Knowledge Spaces (ALEKS) and adaptive computer-based programs to address students' varied learning needs. The principal and teachers explained that the school provides tutoring for students who request support either after school or during individually scheduled times. School staff also reported having individual conversations with students or making a phone call home to provide the push students need to "get back on track." Several teachers described using NWEA data to group students in the classroom – sometimes in homogeneous groups to address common learning needs and other times in heterogeneous groups so students who have mastered the material can provide support to their peers. Some teachers reported setting goals for individual students and groups of students and providing differentiated assignments. Other teachers reported struggling with how to provide differentiated supports for students, especially those whose students were more advanced. When asked how students were challenged that had mastered the material, a few teachers explained using enrichment activities to apply the mastered content in a different way; others defined extra credit activities as a method of extending student learning. When asked about the hallmarks of the school's gifted program, school staff were unable to present specific examples beyond receiving monthly support from the district's gifted department and some basic criteria that may be used to qualify students as gifted at varied grade levels.

© 2017 SchoolWorks, LLC. All rights reserved.

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

- **The school provides a safe environment to support most students.** In focus groups, students and staff reported feeling physically safe at the school. Students described how they pass through a metal detector on the way into the building; if it's broken, their bags are checked. Students also indicated they could not recall any instances of fighting or violence at the school. The site visit team observed the presence of security guards in the hallways and at the building entrance throughout the day. Several teachers explained one of the things they appreciate about the school is they can teach, as opposed to spending extensive time on student discipline. They also described how teachers establish their own classroom rules and indicated, in general, that this is working well. The principal described student behavior at the school as "excellent," indicating it is because their students like to come to school. She further indicated that the planning center is rarely used. While the school provides a physically safe environment, several students and staff reported that not all students feel emotionally safe and there is at least a little bullying that exists at the school. Students described "jabs and banter" over academic performance and relayed several instances in which students are excluded from activities because there is an appearance they do not fit in. In addition, the principal reported one of the school's priorities was to improve social emotional learning (SEL) and thus, increase the school's conditions for learning (CFL) survey results for SEL. Finally, a review of the school's AAP showed adult support for students (i.e., morning meetings, implementation of Promoting Alternative Teaching Strategies [PATHS] program, quarterly recognition activities) and social-emotional learning are priorities at the school. Teachers also acknowledged that SEL was a focus but did not consistently report activities that were being implemented to support students' SEL. Teachers were unsure if PATHS implementation was occurring at the elementary school.
- **The school provides opportunities for most students to form positive relationships with peers and adults in the school.** The principal reported (and a review of the AAP confirmed) that ensuring positive adult-student relationships has been a focus at the school (e.g., listening to listen, not just to respond). Several teachers described various activities that have been planned with the student experience in mind (e.g., talent show, spirit day). Students described a family atmosphere at the school and indicated that the small class sizes helped them to form relationships with peers and adults. They also described how they work with peers in class to support each other in their learning and reported having individual relationships with teachers, each indicating there is at least one adult to whom they could go if they had a question or concern. School staff and students described (and a review of the school's website confirmed) numerous athletic and extracurricular activities that provide additional opportunities for middle and high school students – for example, volleyball, basketball, track, band, choir, and chess club. Students also reported because the school is small, they can sign up (i.e., not try out) for activities in which they would like to participate. On the contrary, students and several teachers reported there are rarely opportunities for elementary, middle, and high school students to interact. Also, the composition of the school (i.e., grade levels 3-12) can limit opportunities other students have in a traditional middle school. Finally, the principal described a partnership with Murtis Taylor that is used to provide additional social-emotional supports and resources for students and their families.

© 2017 SchoolWorks, LLC. All rights reserved.

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**

- **Professional development (PD) is designed to address school priorities; however, it is not clear it is improving student achievement.** Teachers and the principal described the school's 200 minutes of allocated professional development time that occurs every Monday after school as the primary mechanism for PD at the school. They also reported (and a review of agendas confirmed) the 200 minutes is typically used for staff meetings, principal-driven PD, teacher-based teams (TBTs), and individual teacher planning. The principal and teachers indicated school-based PD has focused primarily on review of assessment data (e.g., NWEA, classroom assessments), followed by discussion of what worked, what did not work, and how this information can inform lesson planning, differentiation of instruction, and increased rigor in the classroom. A review of the school's AAP indicated that at least some PD provided at the school is aligned to priorities in the AAP (e.g., in-services on differentiation, discussion of NWEA data, and strategies for remediation and acceleration in TBTs). However, teachers reported varied perceptions of the usefulness of PD and TBTs. While some teachers stated school-based PD has helped them to reflect on their practice, others reported that while dialogue is occurring, strategies discussed do not make it back into the classroom and thus, are not impacting teaching and learning. Further, neither teachers nor the principal described mechanisms for feedback to ensure PD was changing practices at the school. The principal explained (and a review of the school's Ohio report card confirmed) that student test scores at the school have flat-lined or, in some cases, proficiency rates have decreased.
- **There are opportunities for educators to collaborate; however, they are not sufficiently structured to sustain a focus on improving instruction.** As described above, teachers gather for 200 minutes each Monday for PD, which includes time to collaborate as TBTs. The principal and teachers reported that TBT meetings usually occur in two teams – elementary/middle school (i.e., grades 3-8) and high school. They also explained TBTs are teacher-led (i.e., team leaders set the agenda), topics for discussion change each week, and agenda items are typically based on assessment results or Teacher Development Evaluation System (TDES) requirements. In focus groups, teachers expressed mixed feelings about the usefulness of TBTs. Several teachers reported that reviewing and discussing data with colleagues provides some opportunities for professional learning, but questioned whether practices were implemented when teachers returned to their classrooms. Other teachers indicated that TBTs are less useful than informal conversations that occur over lunch or in passing, which result in collaboration (e.g., work on a project together, methods for working with specific students). While TBT meetings provide some structured time for staff to focus on teaching and learning, there is no evidence to indicate meetings have a clear and persistent focus on improving student learning (i.e., discussion topics change weekly, some teachers question implementation of strategies in the classroom). Further, opportunities to collaborate during the school day exist and are not being fully utilized to impact instructional practices and student achievement. More specifically, teachers reported (and a review of daily schedules confirmed) that most teachers have more than one common planning period per day. While a few staff members suggested this time was used to connect with colleagues, others indicated they often stayed in their classrooms to complete preparatory work.

© 2017 SchoolWorks, LLC. All rights reserved.

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

- **Educators' mindsets and beliefs do not always reflect high expectations for student learning.** Both teachers and the principal described efforts to focus schoolwide discussions on increasing rigor in the classroom. Staff newsletters reviewed by the site visit team included articles on academic rigor and deeper learning competencies (e.g., think critically and solve complex problems), as well as a review of state report card data, highlighting grades that could be improved with increased academic rigor. However, the principal acknowledged that establishing a shared vision for rigor to ensure high expectations for all students has been a struggle. She further explained that in some classrooms, students are required to use practical application and analysis to think through problems, whereas in other classrooms, providing a difficult task that is at grade level is considered rigorous. When asked to describe rigor in focus groups, many of the tasks teachers described were low level, for example: responding to computer-based problems so students cannot copy the answer; or reading about abstract concepts. Further, not all staff conveyed a shared belief or commitment to the learning of all students in the school. For example, a few teachers cited using higher-level questions for some students as a method of maximizing students potential; others acknowledged there is more that could be done to tap into students' potential. Several staff explained how some students were not gifted, making it difficult to implement advanced programming in some instances. Others reported it is difficult to push students because they push back. Finally, a few teachers described a need for everyone to raise their standard at the school as there is always room for growth, also acknowledging there is not always follow through to hold everyone accountable. One individual stated, "We put blame on students (i.e., kids don't do this, and don't do that) without looking at ourselves. If the lesson isn't good, it will not help students grow."
- **The school generally reflects a safe and trustworthy professional climate.** As described in Key Question 6, teachers work together informally and meet in TBTs each Monday to discuss assessments and instructional practices. Teachers explained how sharing occurs with all staff, including elementary, middle, and high school teachers, and includes special education teachers. The principal and teachers reported that PD sessions will be teacher-led starting in January, so teachers have an opportunity to share their expertise and experience to enhance the work of their community of educators. Teachers described the staff as supportive, friendly, and compassionate, stating they are here for the children and recited a motto, "We teach kids the way we want our own children taught." Several teachers also described the staff as approachable, stating they could ask for help or go to anyone with questions. In addition, most teachers indicated the principal is supportive of their work in the classroom, as well as in personal situations. Most teachers reported that the energy at the school is increasing as the staff continues to get to know each other. Several staff also expressed a desire to have more social activities to build relationships further. Other teachers reported that they prefer to interact just on a professional level, focusing on conversations that pertain to teaching and learning. Several teachers also explained the small size of the school and its unique 3-12 grade level configuration can inhibit collaboration. Most teachers do not have grade-level counterparts and, at times, it can feel like "you're on your own island." Others reported that not all teachers feel equally supported, indicating that the same staff are often encouraged to spearhead various activities, for example.

© 2017 SchoolWorks, LLC. All rights reserved.

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**

- **There is not a clearly articulated vision or plan to drive continuous improvement at the school.** When asked about goals and priorities for the school, students and staff described a variety of focus areas at Whitney Young. For example, high school students cited a 100% graduation rate, improving American College Test (ACT) scores, and college preparation as goals at of the school; middle school students reported attendance, high achievement, and meeting NWEA targets. The principal cited improving SEL ratings on the CFL and continuing to focus on improving relationships between adults and students. Teachers indicated attendance, student SEL, preparing students for the next steps in education, and to be college-ready. When asked about academic goals, some teachers reported that students should not receive D or F letter grades. In general, staff did not discuss student proficiency or growth rates as goals of the school. There was no evidence that staff collectively understand the school's strengths and weaknesses, or that processes to facilitate improvement have changed instructional practices, increased expectations for student achievement, or improved student learning outcomes. For example, the principal and teachers identified rigor as a lever for instructional change. However, the school has yet to identify a common definition of rigor (see Key Question 7), and use of higher-order thinking in Whitney Young classrooms is limited (see Key Question 2). The principal and several teachers reported the development of the AAP is a teacher-driven and teacher-led process. They also indicated the AAP is developed by a team of teachers, who then present the plan to the staff and provide an opportunity for questions and feedback. At the time of the site visit, the school lacked a plan that creates a vision for how all stakeholders will work together to guide continuous improvement efforts, review progress toward goals, and make adjustments when the data show that strategies are not effective or that students are not learning.
- **Leadership does not ensure that teachers deliver high-quality instruction.** Outside of TDES, the principal described most feedback provided to teachers is informal and through conversation, often providing a suggestion for expanding on current practices (e.g., additional resources to supplement a lesson, another way to think about lesson development). She also reported making recommendations to teachers on how to improve feedback to students (i.e., "Good" does not provide students feedback on lesson content or clarify misunderstandings). In focus groups, teachers provided varied response when asked how they received feedback on classroom practices. For example, some teachers indicated the principal has an open-door policy and they can discuss questions at any time, explaining, "If you need it, it's there." Some teachers cited more specific feedback (e.g., This is what I saw; Can you come up with three solutions?), whereas others identified general scenarios in which they receive feedback (e.g., during meetings, comments on lesson plans, resource suggestions). Several teachers reported they received limited feedback on their classroom practices (beyond TDES requirements). There is no evidence of a transparent system for providing regular and meaningful feedback to teachers to improve instructional practices or to hold teachers accountable when suggestions are offered. For example, teachers did not present examples of feedback that has changed instruction or student learning activities. The principal cited a few examples of how classroom practices have not changed as a follow-up to feedback (e.g., continued lack of formative assessment, whole group lecture persisting while some students are not engaged). Finally, there was no evidence that high-quality models have been provided for teachers to observe to ensure that they understand what good

© 2017 SchoolWorks, LLC. All rights reserved.

instruction looks like, so they can build on current practices and continue to challenge students in their learning.

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

- **There are communication and inclusive decision-making processes at the school.** As reported previously, teachers reported communications among staff are supportive and professional. Most teachers indicated that the principal has an open-door policy and there are regular, informal communications between teachers and administration in person or via email, as needed. The site visit team reviewed weekly staff bulletins that include information pertinent to the school community (e.g., a weekly schedule of activities, upcoming schoolwide events). The principal and teachers indicated various communications with parents to ensure involvement in the school community (e.g., newsletters, phone calls, emails, text messages). The principal also described (and a review of school documents confirmed) activities the school hosts to engage families in the school community (e.g., Muffins for Mom, parent open house, parent-teacher conferences). Further, the principal reported seeking input and involves staff in planning and implementation of school activities and policies – for example: teacher-led professional development sessions; teacher-driven AAP process; and involvement in determining how quarterly assessments are administered. Both the principal and teachers also reported teams are assembled to provide leadership for activities when the need arises.
- **The principal allocates resources to ensure a safe and productive learning environment.** The site visit team observed an inviting and safe school building. Students are greeted in the morning by security guards, can take breakfast from a table set up close to the front door, and follow routines that have been established for the start of the school day and during transition times. Students described quarterly awards ceremonies in which students are recognized for perfect attendance, citizenship, and good grades. The principal explained (and the site visit team also observed) how the building has been organized so students at upper and lower grade levels reside on different floors for most of their courses. In focus groups, teachers indicated that, in general, they have the materials and resources needed to support teaching and learning (e.g., supplies, textbooks, computer labs). The principal described how she provides teachers a stipend to purchase educational materials, which several teachers affirmed, explaining that the principal is great about asking what is needed and purchasing materials. A review of staff rosters showed that the school also has human resources to support its educational program, including an intervention specialist, a counselor, and staff who offer courses in art, music, physical education, health, and Spanish. The site visit team noted low student-to-staff ratios, less than 18:1 in general education classrooms, and far lower in classrooms that provide specialized services to students with disabilities, which provides increased opportunities for students to receive individualized instruction and attention.

© 2017 SchoolWorks, LLC. All rights reserved.

Prioritization Process

The site visit team met with the Whitney Young 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 culture, behavioral expectations, and organizational leadership. The site visit team also noted the following areas for growth: focused instruction and higher-order thinking.

The group identified purposeful teaching 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: focused instruction.

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

Goal: Teachers consistently provide clear learning goals to execute focused and purposeful bell-to-bell instruction for all students.

Success Measure: During walkthroughs, 80% of lessons meet template / checklist criteria by spring break 2017.

Actions	Target Dates	Champions
Develop the Whitney Young School definition of focused and clear instruction (i.e., what it looks like, sounds like, feels like)	12/14/2016	Leadership Team
Develop a template/checklist that reflects the Whitney Young School definition of focused and clear instruction	By 12/20/2016	Leadership Team
Introduce and provide professional development on the definition of focused and clear instruction	12/20/2016 & 12/21/2016	Leadership Team
Provide models (e.g., videos) of focused and clear instruction	TBD	TBD
Conduct a lesson plan study to learn about how colleagues are implementing focused and clear instruction	TBD	TBD
Consider classroom visits to learn from colleagues	TBD	TBD
Utilize the template/checklist to provide feedback on implementation of focused and clear instruction	TBD	TBD

© 2017 SchoolWorks, LLC. All rights reserved.

Appendix A: Site Visit Team Members

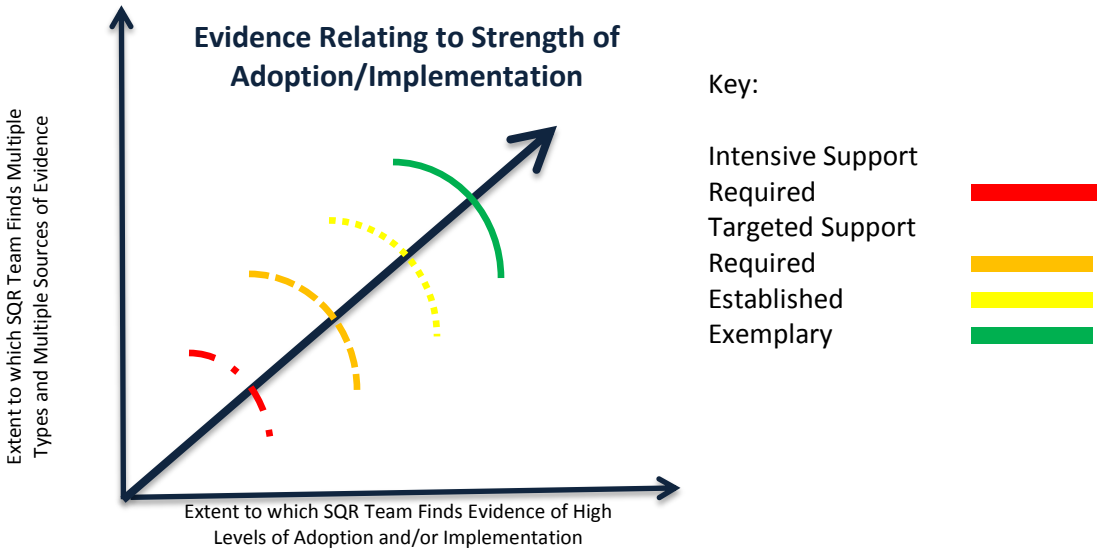
The SQR to Whitney Young School was conducted on December 12-14, 2016 by a team of educators from the Cleveland Metropolitan School District and SchoolWorks, LLC.

Debon Lewis, Team Leader	SchoolWorks, LLC
Megan Tupa, Team Writer	SchoolWorks, LLC
Jill Cabe, Team Member	Cleveland Metropolitan School District

© 2017 SchoolWorks, LLC. All rights reserved.

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.

© 2017 SchoolWorks, LLC. All rights reserved.

Appendix C: Summary of Classroom Observation Data

During the site visit, the team conducted 20 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 = 17	65%	29%	6%	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	33%	0%	67%	0%
Classroom Climate	**2. Behavioral Expectations** Student behavior Clear expectations Consistent rewards and/or consequences Anticipation and redirection of misbehavior	5%	5%	55%	35%
	3. Structured Learning Environment Teacher preparation Clear agenda Learning time maximized	35%	25%	25%	15%
	4. Supportive Learning Environment Caring relationships Teacher responsiveness to students' needs	5%	25%	35%	35%
Purposeful Teaching	**5. Focused Instruction** Learning objectives High expectations Effective communication of academic content	35%	40%	25%	0%
	6. Instructional Strategies Multi-sensory modalities and materials Varied groupings Student choice and leadership	45%	40%	10%	5%
	7. Cognitive Engagement Active student participation Perseverance	5%	15%	40%	40%
	8. Higher-order Thinking Challenging tasks Application to new problems and situations Student questions Metacognition	60%	30%	10%	0%
In-Class Assessment & Adjustment	**9. Assessment Strategies** Use of formative assessments	70%	10%	15%	5%
	10. Adjustments to Instruction Adjustment of instructional Strategies Adjustment of content Adjustment of organization of students	70%	30%	0%	0%
	11. Feedback Feedback to students Student use of feedback	65%	15%	15%	5%

© 2017 SchoolWorks, LLC. All rights reserved.