CAMBRIDGE EDUCATION

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School name	McDaniel ES
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Review date(s)	October 24-25, 2016
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School Quality Review Report
School District of Philadelphia

McDaniel Elementary School

October-November 2016

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1. The School Context

1.1 Introduction

In September 2016 Cambridge Education was awarded a contract against RFP-499 to provide School Quality Reviews (SQRs) to eleven School District of Philadelphia (SDP) schools. The scope of these Reviews is greater than a standard SQR, in that each SQR has a "Community Engagement and Feedback Focus", which involves collecting input from as many school community stakeholders as possible. The SQR program includes the following:

- a School Quality Review (SQR) orientation for principals
- a two-day SQR for each school (5 elementary; 1 middle; 5 high)
- The equivalent of a third day, during which an SQR team member collects additional stakeholder feedback via small group meetings, one-on-one interviews; phone calls, etc.
- Three community "town hall style" focus groups
- A Community Stakeholder Survey
- A meta-analysis report of the school findings

The SQR report contained herein was prepared by the Lead Reviewer based on the evidence collected and the assessment made by the full SQR team (Lead Reviewer, Team Member Reviewer; Canvasing Lead). Evidence was collected via classroom observations; interviews with the administration; and focus groups with students, teachers, parents and other stakeholders.

1.2 Background information about the School

McDaniel School is part of Neighborhood Network 1 in the School District of Philadelphia. It serves approximately 730 students in grades K-8. The school is physically separated into two campuses located four blocks apart. The main campus houses grades 4-8 and the primary building houses students K-3. Although the school is divided into two very distinct campuses, they share one budget and resources normally provided to a single site campus. The principal is beginning her fourth year at the school. The assistant principal joined the leadership team two years ago. They split their time between the two campuses.

Each classroom has either a SMART board or Promethean board. Every grade has a laptop cart, iPads, or Chrome books. Last year the school received a new computer lab. The school is in the beginning phases of implementing the new math and reading programs adopted by the district.

1.3   School demographic and performance data

McDaniel ES

	Academic Year (e.g. 2014-15) Previous Year	**Academic Year (e.g. 2015-16)** Most updated data before QR
Grades:	K-8	K-8
Number of students enrolled:	722	738
Percentage of general education students:	87.7%	87.6%
Percentage of special education students:	12.3%	12.4%
Percentage of English language learner students:		1.2
In school suspensions:		
Out of school suspensions:	135	
Percentage of students that are Title 1 eligible:	100%	100%
Latest attendance percentage:	93.4	

Ethnic make- up of the students (percentages):	African American	90.1
	White	1.1
	Asian	1.5
	Latino	2.3
	Pacific Islander	0
	American Indian	0.1
	Other	4.9

State Test Results - Percentage of students at or above proficient (grade 3-8)

Subject Area	School 2012	School 2013	School 2014	School 2015	District 2015	State 2015
English Language Arts	33	24	23	12	32	60
Math	33	26	20	3	17	39.6
Science	19	13	16	15	37	67.7
Social Studies						
Others						

*The Pennsylvania System of School Assessment (PSSA) is an annual assessment administered in commonwealth classrooms in grades 3 through 8, and in English Language Arts and Mathematics. Science scores are usually from grade 4 and 8 for Elementary and Middle school.

Only grade 11 scores are included for High school (school, district, and state)

The Keystone Exams are one component of Pennsylvania's new system of high school graduation requirements. (data available for grade 11 in Algebra I, Literature, and Biology)

2. SQR Main Findings

In this section of the report, the SQR team has identified the factors that are most significantly supporting and limiting effective student learning.

2.1 Factors that support effective student learning:

i. Most students have a positive feeling about McDaniel and like going to the school.
ii. Teachers provide a network of support for each other by planning together, and sharing materials and strategies.
iii. A small group of parents are working in collaboration with the principal to improve communication between families, community, and the school through social media. Parents are developing a Facebook page for the school, which many parents are very excited to hear about.
iv. Over the last two years the administration has been strategic in acquiring computers, smartboards, laptop carts and other pieces of technology so that students and teachers have quick and easy access to technology.
v. The principal and assistant principal work well together. They agree upon, support and promote the same expectations and messages in both buildings, creating a unified school administration.

2.2 Factors that limit effective student learning:

i. The division of resources among two campuses located four blocks apart is having a negative impact on the quality of services and support provided to the students. For example, the schools share a nurse, a counselor, a school police officer, and the administrators. Due to the division of resources, administrators are dispensing medication to students, those in need of immediate and frequent counseling must wait, and assistance with severely disruptive students and adults must wait for the officer to reach the campus. Administrators are not able to focus as much attention as needed on instructional leadership because they are frequently dealing with issues that are aligned to the work of missing supports. Materials and supplies (from trash bags to textbooks) are often sent to the wrong location, which creates barriers with the primary school having basic resources.
ii. Although the school has implemented Positive Behavior Intervention Strategies (PBIS) and many stakeholders acknowledge progress over the last two years related to improving the school climate, student behavior remains a significant barrier to learning and teaching. As a result, there is an immense amount of lost instructional time, some students don't feel safe, and all stakeholders feel very frustrated with the lack of support to improve the situation.
iii. The quality of learning and teaching is not as effective as it could be because:
    iv. Students are not challenged through higher order questions, activities that require higher order thinking, critical thinking and problem solving, resulting in low expectations and lack of rigor.
    v. Data is not consistently used to differentiate instruction to meet the different levels and learning styles of students.
    vi. Most lessons are teacher focused rather than adopting highly engaging strategies that motivate and interest students in learning.

3. Individual Domains

In the sections below, each domain received a rating based on the evidence collected during the SQR. The judgments have been broken down into *Factors that Support Effective Student Learning* and *Factors that Limit Effective Student Learning*.

3.1 Domain 1: Quality of Learning & Teaching

The Quality of Learning & Teaching requires support in targeted areas

Factors that support effective student learning:

i.   Posted lesson objectives are aligned to district and state standards.
ii. Teachers utilize the technology to implement Lexia and other web based interventions.
iii. Students clearly understand what their goals are in Lexia and where they are currently in the program.

Factors that limit effective student learning:

i.   Although teachers have access to a range of assessment data, they are at various levels of using data to inform instruction. Consequently, data is not being used consistently to guide instruction to ensure students are challenged at the appropriate levels and to differentiate teaching.
ii. Teachers do not consistently share learning objectives with students beyond posting in the classroom. They are not referenced throughout the lesson to ensure students understand what they are expected to learn, and why and how they will know if they have been successful in their learning.
iii. Lessons do not incorporate sufficient opportunities or the level of rigor for students to engage in tasks that help them to become independent learners, and to develop critical thinking and in-depth problem solving skills. Students have very few opportunities to work collaboratively in groups to delve deeper into the content.
iv. Most classes include some students with high needs for social and emotional support and teachers struggle to manage student behavior. Several teachers made attempts to manage highly disruptive students, but were unsuccessful, which directly interfered with instruction, detracted from instructional time and decreased student engagement in learning.
v.   The level of rigor is not sufficient to challenge all students to think deeper about the content. Most questions posed to students are of low cognitive levels; students are seldom engaged in productive discourse that promotes student thinking and actively engage students in their learning.
vi. Most students are not sure what specifically they need to improve upon, or how to improve because most feedback they receive is only numerical and does not identify what the student is doing well or what the student needs to do to improve. Students are not provided appropriate support and follow-up to improve.

3.2   Domain 2: Curriculum & Assessment

Curriculum & Assessment requires support in targeted areas

Factors that support effective student learning:

i. The School District of Philadelphia provides teachers access to a scope and sequence that is aligned to district and state standards.
ii. The curriculum includes art and physical education along with the core content areas.
iii. Teachers administer common assessments and are still growing in their use of that data to inform instruction.
iv. Teachers assign homework that is aligned to the daily lesson. The school offers some after-school activities although they are not as well attended by students as administrators would like, so more students could benefit from the additional support.

Factors that limit effective student learning:

i. Students do not have frequent opportunities to engage in project based learning or to work on multifaceted problems that lead them to develop and apply a wide range of skills and comprehend complex concepts. Some teachers do not believe that students are ready to do so because many students are struggling with some basic skills.
ii. Lessons generally do not have an appropriate level of rigor. Lessons do not provide students with the opportunity to work on in-depth projects or work in teams. Technology is used primarily for web-based interventions, not to provide more challenging or engaging learning opportunities. Student performance on state assessments is low, and students are not being effectively prepared for high school, college, and careers.

3.3   Domain 3: Leadership, Management and Accountability

Leadership, Management and Accountability requires support in targeted areas

Factors that support effective student learning:

i.   The administrators can clearly articulate the instructional goals for this school year and the strategic vision to achieve them. A few stakeholders can explain some general goals.

ii.   The principal is in the beginning phase of implementing some strategies learned from the Relay graduate program to improve learning and teaching.

iii. The principal made some staffing changes last year. She deliberately recruited teachers who have content certification as well as the general knowledge. The administrators have made it clear that they expect improvement in student progress by each teacher.

iv.   The principal adheres to the district and state requirements for lesson observations. Teachers receive timely feedback that is sometimes helpful. The administrators are still in the process of developing and implementing, with consistency, a system of coaching and improving instruction. They wish to expand Relay strategies to more teachers.

v.   The administrators are aware of the school performance data. This year they are using the principal's conference room to post some student data and monitor student progress from "below proficient" up to "proficient". However, students who are proficient are not being charted to ensure they continue to grow. School administrators closely monitor Lexia data in the hope that it will have a positive impact on PSSA.

Factors that limit effective student learning:

i.   The development and monitoring of the school improvement plan falls onto the shoulders of the administrators, rather than sharing that responsibility and gathering buy-in with additional stakeholders to help promote and ensure its successful implementation.

ii.   The administrators do their best to manage the resources available to them. However, it is very difficult to ensure students have the appropriate support they need when key personnel, such as the counselor and nurse, are split between two campuses. The main building generally receives more support and materials due to the fact that the testing grades are located there. It is physically difficult to share common resources.

3.4   Domain 4: The Culture of Learning

The Culture of Learning requires support in targeted areas

Factors that support effective student learning:

i.   Most parents and community members feel welcomed at the school.
ii. Some teachers and the administrators work diligently to promote and maintain positive relationships with the school community.

Factors that limit effective student learning:

i.   Safety outside the immediate school building concerns many stakeholders, especially at the primary building. Students from the main campus gather in front of the primary building, which sometimes leads to chaos and conflicts. Disruptive students contribute to both students' and parents' concerns about safety. Not all stakeholders feel respected by the administrators.
ii. Some teachers model and reinforce appropriate behaviors. However, there are instances where teachers are unable to handle disruptive student behaviors and respond in ways that escalate the situation rather than mediate or resolve the problem.

3.5   Domain 5: Family and Community Engagement

Family and Community Engagement requires support in targeted areas

Factors that support effective student learning:

i.   School leaders and staff provide communication to parents and the community in a variety of ways, including robo-calls, emails, flyers, and the school's website. A group of motivated parents is developing a Facebook page as an additional method of communication.

ii. Some teachers do a good job of keeping parents informed of their children's academic and social-emotional progress. For example, some teachers consistently send folders home and some seek out parents during student drop off and pick up as a way to have frequent and personal conversations.

iii. The school has a range of external partnerships that provide additional support for students. Some examples include Mothers-In-Charge, Delta-T and Drug Abuse and Resistant Education (D.A.R.E), sponsored by Philadelphia Police Department.

Factors that limit effective student learning:

i.   There are a few core parents who are active in the recently re-established school advisory council (SAC) and Parent Home Connection. Although this group is eager and dedicated to support the school, active parent participation by the larger group is very limited at this time.

ii. The district very recently hired a Family and Community Engagement liaison to work with the school. Efforts have not yet begun to organize a system to recruit and coordinate volunteers or mentors to support the learning and development of students.

iii. Some parents are not sure how to advocate for their children. One parent expressed that she does not know who to approach when she has a problem concerning her child. Parents who are actively engaged at the school have a better connection, understanding and comfort level of advocating for their children.

iv. There are some celebrations to acknowledge students' accomplishments; however, parents and students do not feel there are enough opportunities to celebrate student success and talents.

4. Community Engagement and Feedback Focus

This section of the report pertains to the wider Community Engagement and Feedback Focus component of the SQR process. These activities included two community focus groups, small group meetings, one-on-one interviews, as well as a community stakeholder survey. Community members and stakeholders provide valuable contributions to the improvement of schools, and they supplied a significant amount of meaningful feedback that enhanced the overall SQR process.

4.1   Areas of Strength for the School:

i.   Parents support the administrators and believe they are guiding the school in the right direction.
ii. Some teachers have good relationships with the students.
iii. Parents like the Lexia program because they have a clear understanding of how it works and of their children's reading goals, and are provided frequent updates on their children's progress.

4.2   Areas of Improvement for the School:

i.   Sharing inadequate resources between two campuses is putting a strain on both schools. Neither school has enough staff and resources to improve students' learning.
ii. Gifted students who are able to do really well are not given the chance to participate in activities to challenge them. They often help the teachers by helping other students with their work.
iii. Teachers are struggling to manage the large classes and provide small group support.
iv. Safety inside and outside the school is an area of significant concern for parents and some students. The area in front of the primary building becomes heavily congested with older students during dismissal. Some older students bother the younger children during this time. The officer is split between both schools, limiting his ability to quickly respond or prevent safety problems.
v.   All stakeholders acknowledge that low parent involvement is a challenge and needs to improve.

4.3   Stakeholders' views regarding school improvement:

i.   All stakeholders firmly believe that the two campuses should be funded as if they were two independent schools so that they can be eligible to receive more resources to support students.
ii. Some parents would also like the district to consider splitting the school into two separate schools.
iii. Some parents would like to see Science Technology Engineering Math (STEM) offered to challenge their high ability students so they don't become bored with school, and can explore topics of interest to them.
iv. All stakeholders requested that additional teachers and staff be hired to reduce class sizes.
v.   Parents would like additional security guards to be assigned to the front of the school to keep students from congregating in front of the primary building and to provide additional support inside the school for students who fight or become disruptive.
vi. Stakeholders suggested conducting parent meetings in different locations in the community such as McDonalds.

Appendices

A. Community Stakeholders' Input

Families, community members/partners, staff and students shared their perspectives on a range of topics. The following are quotes collected during the School Quality Review and FACE Canvassing activities.

The following are typical of the comments made about the principal:
– *She is data driven focused.*
– *Feedback is quick and sometimes helpful.*
– *Both administrators are on the same page.*
– *The principal is supportive of my child.*
– *She motivates students to do well.*
– *She should be allowed to continue recruiting staff that promote positive change.*

The following are typical comments made about the teachers:
– *There are some awesome teachers here.*
– *Most teachers are stepping up.*
– *The teachers help each other.*
– *They don't have the support they need.*

The following are typical comments made about school culture:
– *They don't know we exist. (referenced about the primary school)*
– *I feel unsafe.*
– *Not enough people (adults) here to keep students safe.*
– *PBIS is not helpful because it's not consistently done.*
– *My child likes being here most of the time.*

The following are typical comments made about communication:
– *We get lots of robo calls to let us know what is going on at school.*
– *We are very excited about the new Facebook page.*
– I hear things from other parents about what is going on at school.
–
The following are typical comments made about engaging families and community members:
– *We have a core group of parents who volunteer at the school on a regular basis.*
– *I wish there were more opportunities for parents to be part of the school.*
– *"Our school is a diamond in the rough. They can perform if given the right support."*

B. Community Survey Data

The were no survey responses for McDaniel Elementary School.

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