Maryland School Review

Expert Review Team Report

Domain 2: Student Support
Domain 3: Educator Support

Abbottston Elementary School

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Overview of Maryland School Site Reviews

PURPOSE

The Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE) is committed to supporting school systems in improving student outcomes. MSDE conducts comprehensive school reviews to identify promising practices and opportunities for growth in curriculum, instruction, interventions, socio-emotional and mental health services, educator support, and school management. School reviews are a collaborative process among local education agencies (LEAs), schools, and MSDE aimed at accelerating student learning, supporting the whole child, and enhancing educator practice.

SCHOOL REVIEW PROCESS AND METHODOLOGY

All school reviews are facilitated by an Expert Review Team (ERT) led by MSDE. ERT members consist of trained teachers, school leaders, and education experts with experience in improving student outcomes. Members participate in extensive training led by MSDE to calibrate the review process to ensure a consistent approach to school reviews. To identify effective practices and opportunities for growth in a school, the ERT analyzes school data, reviews documents submitted by the school, and conducts a one or two-day site visit that includes classroom observations, focus groups, and a principal interview.

The Expert Review Team uses a rubric (see Appendix B) to form a consensus rating for each measure based on student data, documents, observations, focus groups, and a principal interview. The rubric consists of three domains:

- **Domain 1: Curriculum and Instruction** - High-quality curriculum, instructional materials, teaching practices, and assessments are implemented to support student learning.

- **Domain 2: Student Support** - Schools use data to identify students and implement a multi-tiered approach to support all student groups.

- **Domain 3: Educator Support** - Educators at all levels are provided with support to improve results and shift instructional practice.

Each domain contains indicators and measures. Indicators specify criteria within the domain that will be reviewed. Measures identify the component that will be rated within the indicator. Each measure can earn one of four ratings:

- **Accomplishing with Continuous Improvement** - evidence reviewed demonstrates that a school fully addressed action(s) while implementing measures and attaining outcomes and demonstrates a commitment to continuous improvement.

- **Accomplishing** - evidence reviewed demonstrates that a school fully addressed action(s) while implementing measures and attaining outcomes.

- **Developing** - a plan and/or process is observed; however, actions towards attaining measures and outcomes have not yet been implemented.

- **Not Evident** – a plan and/or process towards implementing measures or obtaining outcomes was not observed.

In cases where the measure and/or component does not apply, it will be marked as not applicable.

MSDE will collaborate with LEAs for any school that earns a rating of Developing or Not Evident for any measure to develop recommendations, a support plan, and a timeline for the school to make progress toward the Accomplishing or Accomplishing with Continuous Improvement rating.

STRUCTURE OF THIS REPORT

The following report is organized into three different sections.

Executive Summary: In this section, you will find a summary of the school's review. This includes:

- Information about the school, with more detailed information, can be found online in the Maryland School Report Card.

- The summary of findings is a snapshot of the ratings the school received by each domain, with more detailed ratings of each measure embedded in the complete school rubric in Appendix B.

- Overall recommendations for the school to focus their school improvement work.

Findings and Recommendations by Domain: Each domain contains a section that outlines ERT findings, including strengths and areas for growth. For each domain, targeted recommendations are provided with evidence, action steps, and resources to address the recommendation. Resources are currently being reviewed for accessibility.

Appendices: Two appendices expand on information provided in the body of this report. They provide detailed information on the specific methods used by the ERT during the site visit and a deeper dive into the ratings the school received on the School Review Rubric.

Executive Summary

ABOUT ABBOTTSTON ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

Abbottston Elementary School, located in Baltimore City, serves a total of 363 students in grades Pre-K – 5th grade. The enrolled population is made up of 90% African American and 7% Hispanic. The school's population includes approximately 77% of students who receive free or reduced meals and 16% or less of the population includes either students with disabilities or students with 504 plans. More detailed information, including enrollment, attendance, demographics, and student outcome data, can be found in the Maryland School Report Card.

Schools identified as Comprehensive Support and Improvement (CSI) Low Performing and/or CSI Not Exiting in the 2022-2023 school year and selected for an ERT visit, received a differentiated visit to avoid duplication of data requests and integrate into the school improvement process in collaboration with the Office of School Improvement and Transformation at MSDE.

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

The following table summarizes the school's ratings on Domains 2 and 3. The school scored its highest rating of Accomplishing with Continuous Improvement in Observation and Feedback and its lowest rating of Accomplishing in Professional Learning. A comprehensive list of measures, indicators, and ratings can be found in the full School Review Rubric in Appendix B.

Domain 2: Student Support		
Indicator	Percentage	Rating
Multi-Tiered Systems of Support	83%	Accomplishing
Opportunities and Access	75%	Accomplishing

Domain 3: Educator Support		
Indicator	Percentage	Rating
Observation and Feedback	88%	Accomplishing with Continuous Improvement
Professional Learning	63%	Accomplishing
Career Growth	71%	Accomplishing

OVERALL RECOMMENDATIONS

The following actions are recommended to support improvement in the areas identified as needing improvement through the School Review process. More detailed information about these recommendations, linking them to specific findings in each domain and providing action steps and resources to implement them, can be found in the following sections.

- Leverage the current learning walk structure to collect qualitative data on newly implemented instructional practices to provide follow-up professional development (PD) and evaluate the effectiveness of the professional development sessions. Identify current expertise in the school to serve as models for newly implemented instructional practices for specified PD. Develop a structured monitoring cycle to provide ongoing support and to track the implementation of the feedback recommendations.

- Leverage the current structures in place to create continuous job-embedded school-based learning opportunities to customize Local Education Agency (LEA) PD follow-up to fit the needs of the school staff. Survey all instructional staff for needs and wants for PD and triangulate all data sources existing within the school to determine the priorities and create a continuous series of PD and communicate that cycle to all staff.

- Utilize the existing expertise within the school to serve as model classes for staff to see best practices of identified PD implementation in a rotation cycle that will also build future teacher leaders. Develop a monitoring system that includes representatives from all instructional groups to provide ongoing support and to track the implementation of the feedback recommendations. Provide professional development that emphasizes the updates to this feedback process.

Domain 2: Student Support

Student Support	Schools use data to identify students and implement a multi-tiered approach to support all student groups.

Findings and Recommendations

STRENGTHS

All stakeholders in the school community have a unified appreciation for the intentional focus on supporting students with Student Learning Plans (SLP) that include student collaboration for developing goals to share with families.

- During focus group discussions with school leaders and teachers, all participants agreed that the student learning plans (SLP) are a helpful tool in supporting students to meet their specified academic goals.

- Most teacher participants in both groups highlighted the school's intentional practice for tone-setting with students daily through the check-in questions called "Seeds of Excellence" during morning announcements.

- During the interview, the principal indicated several interventions in place to support students in various methods. Some were, the before-school tutoring initiative, various content intervention groups that draw from the "Amplify", Wit & Wisdom, FUNdations, Eureka Mathematics, and the use of small group instruction.

- All stakeholders in focus group discussions appreciated and acknowledged the social-emotional support provided by the counselors who maintain a flexible schedule throughout the day.

- Three out of the eight parents in the focus groups were clear regarding the academic intervention systems to support students' needs.

- Parents expressed gratitude toward the Judy Center for early learning support and wraparound service for families. meet with the specialist to ensure skills advancement.

- All six participants, in the school leaders group, echoed the impact of the Judy Center resources and added the student support from the onsite counseling support from HOPE Health, which is coordinated by the team.

AREAS FOR GROWTH

While all professionals in the focus groups agreed the school has a mental health system that includes identified professionals to support the system, those professionals expressed there is still a need for comprehensive, intentional data utilization and content development, aimed toward improving teacher practices for each student group.

- Out of the six school leaders of the focus group, all agreed that trying to match the schedules to provide feedback is not through a specific structure, that is varied and can be verbal or emailed.

- Teachers and school leaders in the focus group shared that scheduling is challenging due to teacher retirements, there can be inconsistencies with meeting all challenges and sometimes that doesn't show up in the data.

- Also, when teachers were asked how the school schedule meets the needs of the students, all expressed concern about time and schedules, with one teacher stating, "There is not enough time in the school day to address all the needs of students."

RECOMMENDATIONS

The following recommendations are meant to support school leadership in improving in the areas that were identified as needing growth. Each is closely connected to the evidence presented above under "Areas for Growth," and includes specific action steps and resources to support the implementation of these improvements. Domain-specific ratings can be found in Appendix B.

FOCUS AREA 1

Leverage the current learning walk structure to collect qualitative data on newly implemented instructional practices to provide follow-up PD and evaluate the effectiveness of the professional development sessions. Identify current expertise in the school to serve as models for newly implemented instructional practices for specified PD. Develop a monitoring cycle to provide ongoing support and to track the implementation of the feedback recommendations.

ACTION STEPS:

As a result of this school review:

- Recreate the instructional team leaders to ensure each department and all instructional support is represented on the team.

- Identify teachers using the specified PD successfully as model classrooms to receive learning walks for that specific practice and provide meaningful feedback to teachers who are implementing newly learned PD. Consider developing long-term and short-term objectives when creating the professional development cycle. Plan and implement professional development opportunities that support the identified goals.

- Collaboratively develop a monitoring cycle to provide ongoing job-embedded support and to track the implementation of the feedback recommendations to share successes and learning with the entire staff.

RESOURCES:

1. Building Effective Collaborative Teams
2. What Teachers Really Want When IT Comes to Feedback
3. Learning from Instructional Rounds

Domain 3: Educator Support

Educators Support	Educators at all levels are provided with support to improve results and shift instructional practice.

Findings and Recommendations

STRENGTHS

The school has developed structured supports designed to complement the LEA structure for mentoring/coaching novice teachers. The school leadership has communicated the LEA career path that supports paraprofessionals to become teachers and school leaders.

- During focus group discussions for school leaders, information was shared about the achievement units (AU) that are well known among the paraprofessionals and teachers that support upward progression in the career path.

- According to the teachers in the focus groups, feedback is provided two times a year with a third as an option. Once teachers are identified as "highly effective" there is no need for formal observations. However, informal observations are conducted weekly.

- Teachers and school leaders agreed that all new teachers should be assigned a mentor. Mentors meet regularly with teachers weekly. However, one new teacher expressed that the required check-ins can be overwhelming due to the amount of work required by mentors. Mentors are not housed within the school.

AREAS FOR GROWTH

Evidence shows that the school has solid structures and systems to support processes for supporting students with mental wellness. However, evidence provided by all professional focus group participants suggests the school should be more intentional in ensuring that school-based job-embedded PD is intentionally designed to meet the needs of all instructional personnel who are not in a specific category.

- During the teacher focus group, teachers shared the following statement, "We are observed less than once a year or not at all. No feedback at the observational level, but feedback is given via admin/school leader colleagues on issues at hand." Additionally, there was no mention of how the data is utilized to create an instructional grouping or improve instructional outcomes.

- In the school leaders' focus group, one participant stated that the systemic PD from the LEA is offered but not great and doesn't support growth for teachers.

- One teacher in one of the focus groups shared that the LEA has made a change in the incentivized professional growth program due to changes in the model and removing the AU option.

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FOCUS AREA 1

Leverage the current structures in place to create continuous job-embedded school-based learning opportunities to customize LEA PD follow-up to fit the needs of the school staff. Survey all instructional staff for needs and wants for PD and triangulate all data sources existing within the school. Then determine the priorities and create a continuous series of PD and communicate that cycle to all staff.

Utilize the existing expertise within the school to serve as model classes for staff to see best practices of identified PD implementation in a rotation cycle that will also build future teacher leaders. Develop a monitoring system that includes representatives from all instructional groups to provide ongoing support and to track the implementation of the feedback recommendations. Provide professional development that emphasizes the updates to this feedback process.

ACTION STEPS:

As a result of this school review:

- Leverage one PD session to communicate building-wide improvement goals to ensure each professional can connect their work to the goals.

- Utilize the expertise that exists within the building to customize professional learning opportunities for all instructional staff.

- Leverage the action steps for utilizing the learning walk structure to gather qualitative data on the PD implementation, feedback, and monitoring to provide ongoing job-embedded PD for all teachers.

RESOURCES:

1. Eight Steps to Becoming Data Wise
2. Teaching Teachers: PD To Improve Student Achievement
3. Embedding Voice and Choice in Professional Learning
4. The Power of Learning with Your Peers: #LearningWalks
5. Learning from Instructional Rounds

Appendix A

SUMMARY OF EXPERT REVIEW TEAM ACTIVITIES

Expert Review Team Members

1. Katherine Airey, Teacher, Harford County Public Schools
2. Rebecca Casserly, Teacher, Baltimore County Public Schools
3. Dr. Seth Barish, Principal, Baltimore County Public Schools
4. Tara Dedeaux, Principal, Harford County Public Schools
5. Willanette Lohr, Teacher Specialist, Calvert County Public School
6. LaNisha Robinson, Project Specialist, Anne Arundel County Public Schools

Site Visit Day 1

Wednesday, March 20, 2024

Site Visit Day 2

Thursday, March 21, 2024

Number of Classroom Reviewed

Eleven

Description of Classroom Visited

Wednesday, March 20, 2024	Thursday, March 21, 2024
1st grade math 2nd grade math 5th grade ELA - reading intervention 3rd grade science 3rd grade literacy	1st grade ESOL - Low incidental SPED 2nd grade Math 5th grade Math - Pre-K

Number of Interviews

One

- Principal

Number of Focus Groups

Seven

- 16 students (2 groups)

- 6 school leaders

- 18 teachers (2 groups)

- 15 parents (2 groups)

Documents Analyzed

- Site visit documentation submitted by the school and LEA.

Appendix B

MARYLAND SCHOOL REVIEW RUBRIC

Ratings for Abbottston Elementary School

The Expert Review Team Rubric is used by the review team to form a consensus on a rating for each measure based on all collected evidence. Collected evidence includes documents submitted by the school prior to the on-site review; outcomes of classroom observations; answers to focus group questions from teachers, administrators, students, and parents; and student data. Items checked were reviewed through data documentation or during the on-site school review.