Maryland School Review

Expert Review Team Report

Domain 1: Curriculum and Instruction

Belmont 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 ERT 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 BELMONT ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

Belmont Elementary School, located in Baltimore City, serves a total of 244 students in grades Pre-K – 5th grade. The enrolled population is made up of 96% African American. The school's population includes approximately 86% of students who receive free or reduced meals and 11% 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.

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

The following table summarizes the school's rating on Domain 1. The school scored its highest rating of Accomplishing with Continuous Improvement in Assessment and Timing, and its lowest rating of Accomplishing in Classroom Instruction. A comprehensive list of measures, indicators, and ratings can be found in the full School Review Rubric in Appendix B.

Domain 1: Curriculum and Instruction		
Indicator	Percentage	Rating
Curriculum and Instructional Materials	86%	Accomplishing with Continuous Improvement
Classroom Instruction	83%	Accomplishing
Assessment and Timing	88%	Accomplishing with Continuous Improvement

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.

- Emphasize and provide job-embedded professional development on collaborative learning and student-driven facilitation. Include structures for students to engage in structured collaborative learning opportunities to promote leadership skill development and student agency.

- Encourage students to collaborate based on differentiated content, process, and product to engage with and demonstrate learning. Model and teach peer-reflection and metacognition as collaborative skills.

Domain 1: Curriculum and Instruction

Curriculum and Instruction	High-quality curriculum, instructional materials, teaching practices, and assessment are implemented to support student learning.

Findings and Recommendations

STRENGTHS

The Local Education Agency (LEA) provided documentation supporting the high-quality curricula aligned with the Maryland College and Career Readiness Standards (MCCRS). The school documentation is aligned with the LEA documents provided to MSDE.

The school's culture and climate revealed professionals with warm demeanors who provide structure, support, and encouragement with high expectations. Classrooms were cheerful and all stakeholders' focus groups, and participants expressed their love for Belmont.

The learning environment was conducive toward creating classrooms with supportive structures that helped students engage in the open learning of whole group setting.

- In nine of the eleven classes reviewed evidence of student learning was facilitated using multiple instructional strategies such as sentence frames, resource learning charts, organizational graphs to support writing and teachers modeling the skill or strategy being taught.

Explicit instruction was evident throughout the class reviews, fostering student engagement at high levels.

- Reviewers noted in classes, teachers used passages projected on the board, then guided the students through a paragraph and had them underline key vocabulary and provided feedback on the words that they did not comprehend.

- In all eleven classrooms reviewed, the teacher modeled the strategy for a few minutes, briefly allowing students to practice with some support and then released the students to begin practicing on their own.

- All classes offered evidence of students being prompted to justify their responses with evidence from the current and previous lesson as they were asked open-ended questions which required them to synthesize information.

- In those same classrooms, teachers provided students with feedback to guide their thinking and responses.

- Other examples of explicit teaching were noted in English language arts (ELA) classes for both early childhood and upper elementary.

- All three of the early grades provided evidence of instruction grounded in the science of reading such as, the teacher used a multisensory approach for reinforcing segmentation of sounds while students tapped the words out on various textures and used tactile tracing; and students used the "slide or bumping" method to slide consonants into vowel sounds.

AREAS FOR GROWTH

During the classroom reviews, reviewers noted teacher-led discussion during the learning process.

- In all classrooms, reviewers noted that opportunities for students to lead and collaborate in differentiated strategies, processes, and products were missed.

- Evidence of small groups working together to complete a task was noted in one of the eleven classrooms.

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

Emphasize and provide job-embedded professional development on collaborative learning and student-driven facilitation. Include structures for students to engage in structured collaborative learning opportunities to promote leadership skill development and student agency.

ACTION STEPS:

As a result of this school review:

- Develop structures for students to engage in structured collaborative learning opportunities to promote leadership skill development and student agency.

- Provide job-embedded learning for modeling, teaching, and engaging in peer-reflection practices throughout the learning process about successes and challenges of building student collaborative skills.

- Leverage the current master schedule to include instructional learning tours for teachers to examine each other's practice on collaborative learning with student-driven facilitation.

RESOURCES:

1. 10 Strategies to Build on Student Collaboration in the Classroom.
2. Teacher Moves That Cultivate Learner Agency
3. Improving Teacher Practice Through Collaborative Reflection
4. Learning From Instructional Rounds
5. Leveraging Teacher Leadership

Appendix A

SUMMARY OF EXPERT REVIEW TEAM ACTIVITIES

Expert Review Team Members

1. Dr. Linda C. Brown, Consultant Owner LLC
2. Dr. Leslie L. Palmer, Instructor, Johns Hopkins University
3. Nakeisha Savage, Director, MSDE Early Childhood
4. Tiffany Young, Manager, Teach For America
5. Rima Garg, Mentor Teacher, Prince George's County Public Schools
6. Dr. Andrea Thompson, Education Associate for School Leadership. Delaware Department of Education

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
• Mathematics Intervention 4th Grade • ELA K Grade • ELA K Grade • Mathematics 2nd Grade • ELA Grade 3 • ELA S.P.I.R.E. Intervention • Mathematics PreK Grade	• 5th Grade ELA • 1st Grade ELA/Math Small Group • Health 2nd Grade • Art 3rd Grade

Number of Interviews

One

- Principal

Number of Focus Groups

Five

- 9 students
- 3 school leaders
- 8 teachers (2 groups)
- 7 parents

Documents Analyzed

- Site visit documentation submitted by the school and LEA.

Appendix B

MARYLAND SCHOOL REVIEW RUBRIC

Ratings for Belmont 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.