

Maryland School Review

Expert Review Team Report

Domain 2: Student Support

Domain 3: Educator Support

Benfield Elementary School

Maryland State Department of Education

Office of Teaching and Learning

March 6-7, 2024



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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 BENFIELD ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

Benfield Elementary School, located in Anne Arundel County, serves a total of 472 students in grades ESCE-5th. The enrolled population is made up of 1% African American, 1% Asian, 5% Hispanic, and 87% White. The school's population includes approximately 8% of students who receive free or reduced meals and 14% 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 ratings on Domains 2 and 3. The school scored its highest rating of Accomplishing with Continuous Improvement in Opportunities and Access 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	81%	Accomplishing
Opportunities and Access	92%	Accomplishing with Continuous Improvement

Domain 3: Educator Support		
Indicator	Percentage	Rating
Observation and Feedback	75%	Accomplishing
Professional Learning	69%	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.

- Increase stakeholder communication regarding the processes and structures in place for all students to access advanced courses: “Gifted & Talented (GT)” and “Advanced Learners Program (ALPs)”.
- Leverage the expertise that currently exists in the school. Consider restructuring the “learning walk protocol” to include teachers who successfully implement new learning from professional development to build teacher capacity with new learning and collegial coaching opportunities.

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

The school boasts of a strong multi-layered student support structure, the Collaborative Decision Making (CDM) process, and was highlighted by all adult professionals. These monthly meetings by grade level are held to address students' academic, behavioral, and/or social-emotional concerns.

- The principal shared that screenings at the beginning of the year provide foundation classes at each grade level following the LEA structure.
- The principal also discussed the tiered support/positive behavior plan for social-emotional support including a Counselor, Psychologist, and PBIS.
- During the interview, the principal shared that teachers have five hours during the week for planning, and they plan with the literacy teacher twice weekly. Additionally, once a month, collaborative planning is dedicated to using data for students in need of extra support.
- During the parent focus group discussions, six out of eleven parents mentioned being able to complete a parent request form for their children to participate in small group counseling.
- Teacher focus group discussions included three early childhood parents who mentioned that K – 2nd grade teachers develop specific lessons, prior to the Cognitive Abilities (CogAT) test, to build the talent pool. Also, they maintain documentation to be included in the review to support identifying students for Gifted and Talented placement in preparation for the 3rd grade.

AREAS FOR GROWTH

The school documentation provided evidence of the structures in place to support the “Gifted & Talented (GT) and Advanced Learners (ALPs) Program”, however, there could be increased clear communication, provided to stakeholders, on the process for the multiple points for accessing entrance.

- During focus group discussions, teachers collectively agreed there is limited discussion around gifted and highly-capable students.
- Out of thirteen student participants in the focus group, none of the students mention either the GT or ALPs.
- Collectively, during the parent focus group discussions, parents requested that the school provide clarity on how the GT program is being implemented and to increase information about the process to parents.

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

Increase stakeholder communication regarding the processes and structures in place for all students to access advanced courses: “Gifted & Talented (GT)” and “Advanced Learners Program (ALPs)”.

ACTION STEPS:

As a result of this school review:

- Provide clear communication to all stakeholders on the processes for entrance to GT & ALPs.
- Include student-voice to promote the program to all stakeholders, specifically students and parents.

RESOURCES:

1. [Simple Ways to Include Student Voice in the Classroom](#)
2. [Letting Student Voice Lead the Way](#)

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 multiple ways to support teacher's focus on advancing their careers toward leadership opportunities.

- During the focus group discussions twelve of the fourteen teachers shared, "The principal walks through almost daily". One teacher also added, "The principal will leave a half sheet with feedback after a walk-through."
- During the interview, the principal mentioned several leadership opportunities at the school level, such as lead mathematics and science teacher, ALPS, and Equity Liaison. Additionally, the LEA offers support for National Board Certification, curriculum writing during the summer and a mentoring program for teachers seeking to advance to administration.
- Out of the fourteen teachers in the focus group, eleven mention that Equity training is held quarterly. One teacher said, "Equity is on the brain and how learning happens...and be gentle with the students."
- Four of the teachers share an appreciation for the LEA's new mentoring program for all new employees that lasts for three years.
- Five teachers expressed knowing about the LEA focus for National Board Certification, and another three mentioned the cohort with the university for graduate degrees or certificates.

AREAS FOR GROWTH

The school provides teachers with the LEA information for career ladder development. However, many teachers stated that there is a need for job-embedded professional development to strengthen instructional strategies and practices.

- During the discussions with the teachers in the focus group, three out of fourteen teachers indicated that the LEA is providing professional development for the new math curriculum. One teacher stated that she attended the monthly meetings and then shared with the math teachers at school.

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 expertise that currently exists in the school. Consider restructuring the “learning walk protocol” to include teachers who successfully implement new learning from professional development to build teacher capacity with new learning and collegial coaching opportunities.

ACTION STEPS:

As a result of this school review:

- Restructure the current learning walk protocol to include teachers and paraprofessionals to build job-embedded collaborative learning and coaching opportunities.
- Provide teachers with continuous professional development opportunities to support internally building schoolwide instructional strategies and practices.

RESOURCES:

1. [The Case for Instructional Coaching Throughout a Teacher’s Career](#)
2. [Eight Steps To Becoming Data Wise](#)
3. [Treating the Instructional Core: Education Rounds](#)

Appendix A

SUMMARY OF EXPERT REVIEW TEAM ACTIVITIES

Expert Review Team Members

1. Zaharah Valentine- Director of Secondary School Support; Baltimore City Public Schools
2. Tisa Holley, Director - Student Services; Prince George's County Public Schools
3. Shawanda Spivey- Talented & Gifted Coordinator; Prince George's County
4. Tara O'Barsky- Supervisor of Family, Community, and School Program; Wicomico County Public Schools
5. Susan Huff- Gifted and Talented Instructional Coach, Cecil County Public Schools

Site Visit Day 1

Wednesday, March 6, 2024

Site Visit Day 2

Thursday, March 7, 2024

Number of Classroom Reviewed

Eleven

Description of Classroom Visited

Wednesday, March 6, 2024	Thursday, March 7, 2024
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mathematics Grade 2 • Mathematics Grade 5 • Intervention Grade 1 • Literacy Grade 2 • Mathematics Grade K • Literacy G/T • Mathematics Grade 4 • Mathematics Grade 1 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Foundations Grade 1 • Literacy Grade PreK • Reading Grade 4

Number of Interviews

One

- Principal

Number of Focus Groups

Four

- 13 students
- 5 school leaders
- 14 teachers
- 11 parents

Documents Analyzed

- Site visit documentation submitted by the school and LEA.

Appendix B

MARYLAND SCHOOL REVIEW RUBRIC

Ratings for Benfield 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.