

# Maryland School Review

## Expert Review Team Report

Domain 2: Student Support

Domain 3: Educator Support

Burning Tree Elementary School

Maryland State Department of Education

Office of Teaching and Learning

February 7-8, 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 BURNING TREE ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

Burning Tree Elementary School, located in Montgomery County, serves a total of 437 students in grades K-5<sup>th</sup>. The enrolled population is made up of 50% White, 23% Asian, 12% Hispanic, 8% two or more races, and 7% African American. The school's population includes approximately 10% of students that receive free or reduced meals and 21% 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 Observation and Feedback and its lowest rating of Accomplishing in Career Growth and 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	85%	Accomplishing with Continuous Improvement
Opportunities and Access	79%	Accomplishing

Domain 3: Educator Support		
Indicator	Percentage	Rating
Observation and Feedback	88%	Accomplishing with Continuous Improvement
Professional Learning	75%	Accomplishing
Career Growth	75%	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.

- Create a more structured supplemental tutoring and after-school programming, ensuring these services are effectively communicated and accessible to students and parents alike. When expanding on the current offerings, ensure the relevance, accessibility, and visibility to all students, teachers, and parents.
- Tailor professional learning sessions that closely align with the challenges faced by teachers and paraeducators daily, incorporating flexible, self-paced learning opportunities. Additionally, a structured professional learning series should be developed for paraeducators, ensuring access to professional growth opportunities that are directly applicable to their roles and the needs of their students.

## 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 has established a structured multi-tiered system of support that supports a continuum of students across academic, social, emotional, and behavioral supports.

- In the school leadership focus group, school leaders shared that the school has “What I Need” (WIN) sessions that are implemented for targeted student support based on individual needs. During these sessions teachers provide reteaching for students not meeting benchmarks and students are regularly regrouped based on academic data.
- Teachers in the teacher focus group, shared that they conduct thorough reviews of student needs with a focus on data-driven decision-making.
- School leaders shared that the school has Social Emotional Learning (SEL) teams that regularly meet student needs through data analysis through online platforms to monitor and address student learning needs. Additionally, school leaders stated that a School Improvement Plan (SIP) is actively used to guide strategies and Professional Learning Communities (PLCs) with special attention being paid to addressing biases.
- In focus groups with parents and teachers, it was shared that the school has an established “Home School Model” and “Learning Center” program that supports students with disabilities at home and an inclusion model that provides opportunities to learn with their peers. Special education progress reports are regularly provided to families, with frequent data monitoring.
- In the student focus group survey, eight of the nine students felt supported by their teachers and reported having a supportive adult at the school to approach when facing challenges.

The school demonstrates a commitment to students' well-being through regular SEL meetings, effective mental health support, and transparent communication with parents.

- In the teacher and school leader focus group, it was shared that the school provides a SEL team that meets weekly to discuss and plan for student needs. During the student's focus group, students stated that they have access to various mental health support systems and adults that they can reach out to if they need additional SEL-specific needs.
- During the teacher and school leader focus group it was shared that the school has established monthly well-being team meetings that involve a review of student needs with follow-up actions.



- Parents in the parent focus group, stated that when there is a situation at the school, the school communicates so that parents and the community at large are aware and that there is an immediate response from the school leadership team.

### AREAS FOR GROWTH

The school is implementing strategies to provide additional academic support, but there is room for more structured and communicative approaches.

- During the parent focus group, parents expressed uncertainty about the availability of supplemental tutoring offerings and communication regarding these services available at the school. Parents also shared that compensatory services are offered but scheduling access is limited.
- In the student's focus group, students suggested the development of additional offerings of after-school programming that provide students with leadership opportunities.

## 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

Create a more structured supplemental tutoring and after-school programming, ensuring these services are effectively communicated and accessible to students and parents alike. When expanding on the current offerings, ensure the relevance, accessibility, and visibility to all students, teachers, and parents.

#### ACTION STEPS:

As a result of this school review:

- Conduct a review of all current academic support and after-school programs by gathering input through a survey/informal conversation with parents, students, and teachers.
- Evaluate the demand for academic/leadership courses and consider expanding offerings based on feedback provided by stakeholders.
- In response to student feedback, design after-school programs specifically focused on leadership development.
- Establish a formal feedback system for parents and students to share their experiences with academic support and after-school programs.
- Schedule periodic reviews of the academic support and after-school programs to assess their effectiveness.

#### RESOURCES:

1. [Youth Leadership Toolkit](#)
2. [Harvard Family Research Project](#)

## 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 a structured approach to observation and feedback, fostering a culture of consistent review and support for professional growth for teachers and improving student outcomes.

- In the school leadership focus group it was shared that in-class observations are conducted weekly with a data tracking tool and a specific protocol for what administrators should look for. During, formal and informal observations, administrators also provide immediate feedback to teachers on various aspects of their teaching practices.
- School leaders state that central office personnel provide direct support to assistant principals through a direct coaching model, and directors frequently engage with the school's leadership team to offer feedback and provide support.
- During the teacher focus group, teachers report that administrators are consistently available to them and actively involved in student monitoring throughout the school.
- The school submitted documentation demonstrating that observation and feedback processes are regularly monitored. This is achieved through a system that assesses the effectiveness of feedback using data collected from the "Student Learning Objectives" form and analyzes teacher practices via the "Instructional Visit Feedback" form.

Teachers and school leaders participate in job-embedded professional learning on how to use data to inform instruction and student support.

- In the school leader focus group it was shared that the "What I Need" (WIN) time incorporates data-driven meetings to assess and address individual student needs, allowing for flexible regrouping based on enrichment and reteaching needs. Teachers stated that they are utilizing various online platforms to monitor student data regularly during WIN time.
- Teachers in the focus group shared that individual grades use data to set specific learning objectives and adapt instructional strategies according to the specific needs of students.
- Teachers and school leaders through their respective focus groups shared that grade-level meetings occur daily with a dedicated data tracking tool to consistently monitor assessments like Dynamic Indicators of Basic Early Literacy Skills (DIBELS).

## AREAS FOR GROWTH

Evidence shows that the school is developing a process where teachers and leaders are engaged in a cycle of learning that is job-embedded, aligned to research-based practices, and grounded in data.

- During the teacher's focus group, teachers shared that professional learning sessions are sometimes repetitive and not always directly applicable to their daily work and do not align with their actual classroom challenges.
- In the teacher's focus group, teachers expressed a need for more self-paced learning opportunities, which would allow them to engage in professional learning more flexibly and dynamically and accommodate their schedules.
- The teacher focus group noted that there is a lack of professional learning for paraeducators, with some staff being pulled away for classroom coverage.
- Data from the teacher focus group survey indicates that five out of ten teachers would rate professional learning provided by the LEA as needing improvement.

## 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

Tailor professional learning sessions that closely align with the challenges faced by teachers and paraeducators daily, incorporating flexible, self-paced learning opportunities. Additionally, a structured professional learning series should be developed for paraeducators, ensuring access to professional growth opportunities that are directly applicable to their roles and the needs of their students.

#### ACTION STEPS:

As a result of this school review:

- Conduct a detailed needs assessment to identify specific classroom challenges and areas of interest among teachers.
- Design professional learning sessions directly linked to these identified needs, ensuring practical application in classroom settings.
- Offer synchronous and asynchronous learning opportunities, allowing teachers to select what best suits their professional development needs and schedules.
- Establish a dedicated professional learning track for paraeducators to address their unique roles and contributions within the school.
- Gather data on the specific needs and challenges of both teachers and paraeducators through surveys, interviews, and focus groups. Use the data from the needs assessment to design relevant and practical professional learning sessions.

#### RESOURCES:

1. [Inclusive Schools Network](#)
2. [Paraprofessional Training Support](#)

# Appendix A

## SUMMARY OF EXPERT REVIEW TEAM ACTIVITIES

### Expert Review Team Members

1. Abigail Metcalf, Teacher, Baltimore County Public Schools
2. John Ridenour, Principal, Frederick County Public Schools
3. Jessica Zentz-Ridenour, Grants Coordinator, Frederick County Public Schools
4. Duane Arbogast, Consultant, Children's Guild
5. Susan Huff, Teacher, Cecil County Public Schools
6. Lashawn Terrell, Assistant Principal, Prince George's County Public Schools

### Site Visit Day 1

Wednesday, February 7, 2024

### Site Visit Day 2

Thursday, February 8, 2024

### Number of Classroom Reviewed

Thirteen

### Description of Classroom Visited

Wednesday, February 7, 2024	Thursday, February 8, 2024
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Math 3<sup>rd</sup></li> <li>• SPED 1<sup>st</sup></li> <li>• Kindergarten</li> <li>• ELA 3<sup>rd</sup></li> <li>• ELA 5<sup>th</sup></li> <li>• Math 4<sup>th</sup></li> <li>• Math 2<sup>nd</sup></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Intervention 1<sup>st</sup></li> <li>• ELD 2<sup>nd</sup></li> <li>• WIN Time 2<sup>nd</sup></li> <li>• Kindergarten</li> <li>• Math 4<sup>th</sup></li> <li>• Music 4<sup>th</sup></li> </ul>

### Number of Interviews

One

- Principal

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### **Number of Focus Groups**

Five

- 10 students
- 6 school leaders
- 10 teachers
- 20 parents

### **Documents Analyzed**

- Site visit documentation submitted by the school and LEA.

## Appendix B

### MARYLAND SCHOOL REVIEW RUBRIC

#### Ratings for Burning Tree Elementary

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.