Maryland School Review

Expert Review Team Report

Domain 1: Curriculum and Instruction

Cold Spring Elementary School

Maryland State Department of Education

Office of Teaching and Learning

March 20-21, 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 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 COLD SPRING ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

Cold Spring Elementary School, located in Montgomery County, serves a total of 351 students in grades K-5th. The enrolled population is made up of 44% White, 39% Asian, 7% Hispanic. 7% 2+ races, and 4% African American. The school's population includes approximately 5% of students who receive free or reduced meals and 7% 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 each domain. The school scored its highest rating of Accomplishing with Continuous Improvement in Classroom Instruction and its lowest rating of Accomplishing in Assessment and Timing. 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	88%	Accomplishing with Continuous Improvement
Assessment and Timing	83%	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.

- Implement opportunities for student-driven learning in classroom instruction. Encourage teachers to gradually release the learning responsibility to their students via student presentations and student-led group discussions. Assist students in developing habits of monitoring their own learning.

- Provide teachers with professional learning opportunities focusing on collaborative learning best practices and classroom management techniques. Facilitate peer observation, feedback, and coaching to enable teachers to learn from experienced colleagues.

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 LEA uploaded curriculum documents that are fully aligned with Maryland College and Career Standards. The documents reveal a clear alignment with state standards and confirm that the materials are of high quality and rated as "strong" by the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) and "Meets Expectations" by EdReports. Lastly, the curriculum documents represent diverse perspectives and cater to varied learning needs, ensuring all students feel valued and understood.

In all classrooms reviewed, there was clear evidence of teachers providing timely, specific, and structured feedback to students.

- In all twelve of the classrooms reviewed, teachers employed multiple methods to check for student understanding, such as thumbs-up gestures, hand-raising, and choral responses, ensuring that comprehension was tracked continually.

- During all classroom reviews, feedback was provided consistently during lessons across all classrooms, provided both individually and in group settings, with teachers actively engaging with students to reinforce learning.

In all classrooms reviewed, there was clear evidence of explicit instruction designed with the student objective in mind. Instructional practices are well-aligned with defined student objectives, and teachers demonstrated thorough planning and assessment strategies throughout lessons.

- In twelve out of twelve classrooms reviewed, teachers consistently reinforced the lesson's main points, objectives, and expectations, ensuring students were clear on their learning targets.

- Content-specific instruction on critical skills and vocabulary was evident in nine out of twelve classrooms, while there was also direct evidence that teachers demonstrated, reviewed, and integrated content-specific vocabulary into classroom discussions and notes.

AREAS FOR GROWTH

During classroom reviews there was evidence of the school implementing student-driven learning practices that allow for instruction to be a collaborative experience between teachers and students.

- In six out of twelve classrooms, students actively presented and shared content, with tasks often completed collaboratively in small groups under teacher guidance.

- Peer learning was encouraged in six out of twelve classrooms, with students offering constructive feedback to one another on assignments and tasks.

- Student agency in learning, including making decisions about their educational path, was not observed in any of the classrooms reviewed.

- In one out of the twelve classrooms reviewed, student-led learning was demonstrated through an independent activity where students collaboratively solved mathematical problems.

While there was direct evidence of collaborative learning in classrooms, there was a specific lack of students engaging with one another to enhance their problem-solving skills and understanding through various group activities.

- In eight out of twelve classrooms reviewed, there was direct evidence of students working together in small groups to cooperatively solve problems, work on assignments, and/or answer questions.

- In four out of twelve classrooms, there was evidence of students being broken into small groups.

- In four out of twelve classrooms reviewed, discussions were well-structured and balanced, accommodating diverse viewpoints. However, there was a lack of clear structure to support students' efforts to contribute individually to their groups.

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

Provide teachers with comprehensive professional learning opportunities on student-driven learning. Create more opportunities for students to take ownership of their learning by creating choices in content, making space for student collaboration, and grouping with specific roles.

ACTION STEPS:

As a result of this school review:

- Identify areas for improvement in student-driven instruction through classroom visits.

- Develop professional learning opportunities covering student-driven Instruction: Adapting teaching methods to student proficiency levels.

- Conduct professional learning focused on hands-on activities and model lessons showcasing effective student-driven learning techniques.

- Provide teachers opportunities to observe peers and provide/receive feedback on student-driven learning techniques.

- Implement regular assessments and feedback mechanisms to measure training impact.

- Provide ongoing support, follow-up sessions, and access to resources as needed.

RESOURCES:

1. Power School
2. Student Role
3. What is a learner Agency?
4. Co-Constructing Success Criteria with Students

FOCUS AREA 2

Provide teachers with professional learning opportunities focusing on collaborative learning best practices and classroom management techniques. Facilitate peer observation, feedback, and coaching to enable teachers to learn from experienced colleagues.

ACTION STEPS:

As a result of this school review:

- Provide concrete strategies for implementing collaborative learning in the classroom.

- Arrange opportunities for teachers to observe experienced colleagues conducting collaborative learning sessions.

- Establish structured feedback protocols so teachers provide and receive feedback on their teaching practices.

- Provide coaching sessions to guide teachers through the implementation of collaborative learning strategies.

- Provide follow-up professional learning sessions based on evaluation feedback.

RESOURCES:

1. Using Collaborative Learning Effectively

2. Big List of Class Discussion Strategies

3. Peer Assessments

4. Making Cooperative Learning Better

Appendix A

SUMMARY OF EXPERT REVIEW TEAM ACTIVITIES

Expert Review Team Members

1. Miguel Cervantes Del Toro, Principal, Baltimore City Public Schools
2. Brooke Gardner, Teacher, Frederick County Public Schools
3. Paul Fer, Principal, Frederick County Public Schools
4. Andrea Johnson, Assistant Principal, Charles County Public Schools
5. Natalie Gay, Coordinator, Frederick County Public Schools
6. David Bell, Teacher, Baltimore City Public Schools

Site Visit Day 1

Wednesday, March 20, 2024

Site Visit Day 2

Thursday, March 21, 2024

Number of Classroom Reviewed

12 classroom reviews

Description of Classroom Visited

Wednesday, March 20, 2024	Thursday, March 21, 2024
- Math AMP - Literacy - PE - ELD - SCI - Art - Math 1st - Literacy 4th	- Lit 2nd - Lit Kindergarten - Math 5th - Math 3rd - Music 5th

Number of Interviews

One

- Principal

Number of Focus Groups

Five

- 13 students (2 groups)
- 5 school leaders
- 8 teachers
- 7 parents

Documents Analyzed

- Site visit documentation submitted by the school and LEA.

Appendix B

MARYLAND SCHOOL REVIEW RUBRIC

Ratings for Cold Spring 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.