

# Maryland School Review

## Expert Review Team Report

Domain 1: Curriculum and Instruction

Dorothy I. Height Elementary School

Maryland State Department of Education

Office of Teaching and Learning

April 10, 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 DOROTHY I. HEIGHT ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

Dorothy I. Height Elementary School, located in Baltimore City, serves a total of 460 students in grades Pre-K – 5<sup>th</sup>. The enrolled population is made up of more than 95% African Americans. The school's population includes approximately 77% of students who receive free or reduced meals and 15% 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 rating on Domain 1. 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	78%	Accomplishing
Classroom Instruction	86%	Accomplishing with Continuous Improvement
Assessment and Timing	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.

- Provide a job-embedded professional learning series on research-based instructional practices and strategies that focus on student-driven learning. Topics to consider include, but are not limited to, project-based learning, how students make decisions on what and how they will learn, how students monitor their learning, and how students develop strategies for learning.
- Leverage the current expertise within the building to ensure all instructional personnel build learning opportunities that are designed to promote student agency and critical thinking.

## 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 the Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE).

The school culture and climate were positive and provided evidence that this environment creates a space for students and teachers to grow both academically and socially. All parents expressed feeling welcomed and seen by staff who always addressed them by their name.

The level of instructional design and support in the learning environment was exceptional.

- In four of the five classrooms reviewed, it was noted that a variety of instructional strategies were used to support student learning. Additionally, scaffolded lessons to support student learning were evident in three of those classes.
- All five classrooms visited provided evidence of students engaged in learning with questions that required probing, inquiring, and hypothesizing.
- Student engagement was elevated further with questions that required justification, citation of evidence, or elaboration in all five classes.
- In all five classrooms reviewed, students received feedback that was timely and aligned to the lesson.
- All classrooms provided evidence of the lesson's main objective and expectation for the learning which intentionally made connections to prior learning and academic vocabulary.

The level of instructional design and support in the learning environment was exceptional.

- The mathematics class that was reviewed provided strong evidence of mathematics goals in student-friendly language with appropriate visuals, students engaged in instruction that was aligned to rigor expectations at grade-level standards, feedback being offered by teachers using errors as learning opportunities, and students developing conceptual understanding of mathematics through concrete, representations, and abstract methods.



## AREAS FOR GROWTH

While there is evidence of high expectations for students to engage in building understanding, skills, and concepts through strategic thinking, there is a need to build students' critical thinking through extended questioning and learning opportunities.

- In all five classrooms reviewed, questions were used to engage students around their knowledge and depth of skills; however, there were missed opportunities for extended thinking through analysis, complex reasoning, and connecting to real-world application.
- In one of the five classes reviewed, student agency during collaborative learning groups was evident.
- In one of the five classrooms reviewed, students provided helpful feedback and responses to each other or worked collaboratively to solve a problem or complete an assignment.

## 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 a job-embedded professional learning series on research-based instructional practices and strategies that focus on student-driven learning. Topics to consider include, but are not limited to, project-based learning, how students make decisions on what and how they will learn, how students monitor their learning, and how students develop strategies for learning.

#### ACTION STEPS:

As a result of this school review:

- Provide a professional learning series on leveraging structured collaborative groups to provide student-led learning opportunities.
- Provide professional development in implementing project-based learning to anchor collaborative, student-driven learning.

#### RESOURCES:

1. [Student-Led Discussions](#)
2. [Teacher Moves That Cultivate Learner Agency](#)
3. [How to Monitor Student Progress in the Classroom](#)

## FOCUS AREA 2

Leverage the current expertise within the building to ensure all instructional personnel build learning opportunities that are designed to promote student agency and critical thinking.

### ACTION STEPS:

As a result of this school review:

- Create or modify the learning walk structure to provide opportunities for teachers to serve as models for instructional practices to be shared building-wide and cultivate peer-to-peer learning opportunities for student-driven learning.
- Include teacher leaders in developing a feedback capture document and protocol to support continuous improvement efforts.

### RESOURCES:

1. [Learning From Instructional Rounds](#)
2. [Leveraging Teacher Leadership](#)
3. [Teacher Leader Model Standards](#)

# Appendix A

## SUMMARY OF EXPERT REVIEW TEAM ACTIVITIES

### Expert Review Team Members

1. Tara Dedeaux, Principal, Harford County Public Schools
2. Katherine Landen, Assistant Principal, Garrett County Public Schools
3. Holly Hatton, Supervisor of Special Education, Wicomico County Public Schools
4. Megan Stein, Principal, Frederick County Public Schools
5. Stephen Isler, School Testing Coordinator & Instructional Lead Teacher, Prince George’s County Public Schools
6. Georgina Whalen, Instructional Lead Teacher, Prince George’s County Public Schools

### Site Visit Day 1

Wednesday, April 10, 2024

### Site Visit Day 2

N/A

### Number of Classroom Reviewed

Five

### Description of Classroom Visited

Wednesday, April 10, 2024
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Pre-K</li><li>• Kindergarten</li><li>• 4th grade Math</li><li>• Self-Contained Special Education Classroom</li><li>• Special Education Resource Classroom</li></ul>

### Number of Interviews

One

- Principal

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### Number of Focus Groups

Four

- 9 students
- 3 school leaders
- 8 teachers
- 6 parents

### Documents Analyzed

- Site visit documentation submitted by the school and LEA.

## Appendix B

### MARYLAND SCHOOL REVIEW RUBRIC

#### Ratings for Dorothy I. Height 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.