



# Maryland School Review Expert Review Team ELA Report

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Andrew Jackson Academy

Maryland State Department of Education

Office of Teaching and Learning

October 23 -24, 2024

**MARYLAND STATE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION**

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**Deputy State Superintendent Name**

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# Overview of Maryland School Site Reviews

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## 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 two or three-day site visit that includes classroom observations, focus groups, and a principal interview.

The Expert Review Team forms a consensus based on student data, documents, observations, focus groups, and a principal interview. The rubric consists of two domains:

- **Domain 1: Instruction and Student Support** - High-quality curriculum, instructional materials, teaching practices, and assessments are implemented to support student learning. Schools use multiple sources of data (qualitative, quantitative, and perceptual) to identify students and implement a multi-tiered approach to support all student groups. Progress monitoring systems are clearly defined and integrated into daily practice.
- **Domain 2: Professional Learning and Educator Support** - Educators at all levels are provided with support to improve results and shift instructional practice. Professional learning goals for educators are clearly aligned with school and LEA overarching student achievement goals.

## 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, is available online in the [Maryland School Report Card](#).

**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 and action steps to address the recommendation.

**Appendix:** The appendix expands 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.

## Executive Summary

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### **ABOUT ANDREW JACKSON ACADEMY**

Andrew Jackson Academy, located in Prince George's County, serves a total of 454 students in grades K-8. The student population is 77.9% African American, 18.9% Hispanic, 2% white, and 1% two or more races. The school's population includes 72% of economically disadvantaged, 16.6% multilingual learners (ML), and 10.5% students with disabilities. More detailed information, including enrollment, attendance, demographics, and student outcome data, can be found in the [Maryland School Report Card](#).

## OVERALL RECOMMENDATIONS

The following actions are recommended to support 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 subsequent sections.

- Leverage existing positive learning atmosphere to model and instill the importance of strategies including student-centered monitoring, ownership, and reflection on learning to foster more opportunities for student voice and choice in the classroom.
- Emphasize community involvement and clear communication of school priorities with all stakeholders, specifically multilingual families eager to support their students, through the implementation of standardized outreach efforts and an expansion of existing community events.
- Provide teacher-centered opportunities and support for expanding professional learning in areas such as science of reading, culturally responsive teaching, differentiation of instruction, and tiered learning/assessment strategies designed to develop all learners.

# Domain 1: Instruction and Student Support

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| <p><b>Instruction and Student Support</b></p> | <p>High-quality curriculum, instructional materials, teaching practices and assessments are implemented to support student learning. Schools use multiple sources of data (qualitative, quantitative, and perceptual) to identify students and implement a multi-tiered approach to support all student groups. Progress monitoring systems are clearly defined and integrated into daily practice.</p> |
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## FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

### STRENGTHS

Throughout the review, teachers across all classrooms visited demonstrated continuous efforts to provide a variety of appropriate, challenging questions, including higher-order thinking questions, designed to create deeper understanding and connections to instructional materials while eliciting student justification or rationale by using text-based support.

- In six out of six classrooms, higher-order, open-ended, text-dependent, and/or expanded thinking questions were utilized to support and enrich student learning.
- Five out of six classrooms demonstrated use of grade-level appropriate variation in both formal and informal assessment methods throughout lessons as a means of measuring student progress toward instructional goals.

Significant evidence of positive and affirming language from multiple stakeholder groups was prevalent throughout the school visit reinforcing the overall atmosphere of learning.

- In five out of six classrooms, teachers and students exhibited patterns of encouragement in response to student answers to questions. These patterns included clapping after an unsure response, cheers/other supportive language without being prompted to do so, and teacher use of affirmative statements such as, “I am proud of you” and “kiss your brain.”

### AREAS FOR GROWTH

Students within classrooms, as well as parents and students attending focus groups, repeatedly praised the culture of learning and affirmation present within the school. At the same time, there appeared to be a disconnect between stakeholder groups on how to continue fostering a sense of community and buy-in that leverages existing processes and resources into more opportunities for growth.

- Ten out of ten students in the focus group articulated that they enjoy classes and find the learning process to be “fun” overall. However, just one out of six classrooms demonstrated any meaningful level of student input for selecting topics or learning strategies.
- Just half out of six, classrooms visited contained an observable process for sharing ownership of learning and in only one out of six classes were students able to identify and utilize established routines, systems, or tools for monitoring their own progress towards achievement goals.

- Parents in focus groups were unanimous in their belief that the school does not communicate often enough or with specificity in terms of learning goals, curricula used, student achievement, and learning resources available for additional enrichment.

**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.

**Focus Area 1**

**Leverage existing positive learning atmosphere to model and instill the importance of strategies including student centered monitoring, ownership, and reflection on learning to foster more opportunities for student voice and choice in the classroom.**

**ACTION STEPS:**

As a result of this school review:

- Use regular staff/team meetings to share success stories related to student-centered learning so that teachers and leaders can begin to highlight ongoing strengths in this area.
- Identify both formal and informal teacher leaders capable of leading a teacher-centered professional development where teachers can articulate their experiences with student-centered practices.
- Develop a peer-to-peer monitoring system that provides teachers with opportunities to share and improve practices without an evaluative lens from administrators.
- Actively model new strategies for students and continue to emphasize the positive, supportive culture already prevalent within the school to praise and encourage students to become more comfortable with new approaches to learning, using teacher visits to follow up.



**Focus Area 2**

**Emphasize community involvement and clear communication of school priorities with all stakeholders, specifically multilingual families eager to support their students, through the implementation of standardized outreach efforts and an expansion of existing community events.**

**ACTION STEPS:**

As a result of this school review:

- Determine effective protocols for communicating with families in their native language whenever possible. Engage the entire staff through surveys, asking how they currently navigate communication, before debriefing and constructing a collective method distilled from existing practices.
- Use communication protocols to transmit ongoing information about achievement and supports on a regular basis, ensuring all students and families are receiving updates within consistent intervals.
- Expand existing family and community-centered events, including Family Fun Night, to offer more frequent interactions between the school and broader community.

# Domain 2: Professional Learning and Educator Support

## Professional Learning and Educator Support

Educators at all levels are provided with support to improve results and shift instructional practice. Professional learning goals for educators are clearly aligned with school and LEA overarching student achievement goals.

### FINDING AND RECOMMENDATIONS

#### STRENGTHS

Amongst the staff, there was consistent evidence of an innate desire to learn and grow. Teachers and school leaders alike repeatedly articulated how current efforts around routines such as data-analysis are always improving and were equally capable of identifying areas of interest for future opportunities to improve professional practice.

- A majority of teachers in the focus group (three out five) indicated a desire for more professional development opportunities throughout the school year in areas ranging from culturally responsive teaching practices to more proficiency with intervention and support platforms like Lexia and Benchmark.
- Teachers and school leaders in focus groups affirmed the use of data at key points throughout the school year as being integral to structuring units, creating groups, and planning lessons or other supports for students.
- Three out of six school leaders emphasized that data drives for collection and reflection is an ongoing collaborative process.

#### AREAS FOR GROWTH

The professional community within the school cares deeply about utilizing resources to best support all learners. In an ever-evolving effort to meet the needs of the community, teachers, leaders, and other staff have stated plainly that they hope to continue their development and learning with regards to elevating student engagement and achievement.

- Five out of five teachers present in the focus group agreed that there was not enough diversity in the stories/readings used in classes, leading to a lack of cultural representation reflective of students' framework of what they know and what their life is.
- Despite many positive calls for expanding professional development opportunities amongst the staff, zero out of five teachers reported having any choice in terms of professional development, learning, or training.
- Additionally, zero out of five teachers viewed feedback from administrative observations or other tools as an opportunity for professional reflection and growth.

**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.

**Focus Area 1**

**Provide teacher centered opportunities and support for expanding professional learning in areas such as science of reading, culturally responsive teaching, differentiation of instruction, and tiered learning/assessment strategies designed to develop all learners.**

**ACTION STEPS:**

As a result of this school review:

- Survey needs and interest amongst teachers and other professional staff members regarding the areas they are most likely to attend professional development or training.
- Drive with data collected through surveys and other informal means, create and implement a system of Professional Learning Communities (PLCs) targeting the areas indicated.
- Through consistent meetings and discussion in specialized areas, the school can begin to leverage their current resources as they continue to develop support systems for teachers.
- Reach out to LEA offices for additional resources/ outside expertise to further augment and support relevant PLCs.
- Have PLCs disseminate their collective learning during regular whole staff assembly, so that the entire school can continue to develop as a byproduct of the specialized focus afforded by this system.

# Appendix A

## SUMMARY OF EXPERT REVIEW TEAM ACTIVITIES

### Expert Review Team Members

1. Dr. Andrea Thompson, Expert Review Team, Maryland State Department of Education
2. Judie Strawbridge, Danielson Facilitator, Charlotte Danielson Group
3. Monica Talley, Director of Training/Work Force, Montgomery County Public Schools
4. Ashley Warfield, Assistant Principal, Carroll County Public Schools
5. Jennifer Hernandez, Administrator for School Support & Improvement, BCPS
6. Andrea Johnson, Assistant Principal, Charles County Public Schools

### Site Visit Day 1

Wednesday, October 23, 2024

### Site Visit Day 2

Thursday, October 24, 2024

### Number of Classroom Reviewed

Six

### Description of Classrooms Visited

**Wednesday, October 23, 2024**

- 1<sup>st</sup> Grade ELA
- 4<sup>th</sup> Grade ELA
- Kindergarten Reading
- 5<sup>th</sup> Grade ELA
- 2<sup>nd</sup> Grade Writing
- 3<sup>rd</sup> Grade Writing

### Number of Interviews

One

- Principal

### Number of Focus Groups

Four

- 9 students

- 6 school leaders
- 5 teachers
- 10 parents

**Documents Analyzed**

1. Site visit documentation submitted by the school.