Maryland School Review
Expert Review Team Mathematics Report

East Salisbury Elementary School

Maryland State Department of Education

Office of Teaching and Learning

October 23-24, 2024

MARYLAND STATE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

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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 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

ABOUT EAST SALISBURY

East Salisbury Elementary School, located in Wicomico County, serves a total of 421 students in grades 3-5. The student population is 48.7% African American, 23.8% Hispanic, 18.3% white, .5% Asian, 8.6% two or more races. The school's population includes 73.4% of economically disadvantaged, 25.8% multilingual learners, and 14.6% 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 the overwhelmingly positive and inviting learning atmosphere to expand on existing opportunities for key community stakeholders, especially parents, to support students through events, enrichment, and additional forms of involvement in school improvement efforts.

- Continuing development and expansion of current support systems including instructional performance coaches, existing Professional Learning Communities, and professional learning opportunities for teachers and staff that will further empower students to shape their own learning through improved small group instruction implementation and an increase in student choice and voice in the learning process.

Domain 1: Instruction and Student Support

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.

FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

STRENGTHS

Throughout the process, strong and consistent evidence of a positive, supportive, and affirming learning environment was apparent in all classrooms. Student to staff, staff to student, and student to student relationships emphasized the commitment from the entire school community toward creating a student-centered, inclusive learning environment.

- More than 85% of all classrooms observed displayed an affirming learning environment that included intentional praise for effort and responses around mathematical questions.

- In seven out of nine classrooms, student affirmation and multiple modalities of affirming student backgrounds were evident through the use of positive reinforcement to encourage positive actions and mindsets.

- Six out of nine classrooms demonstrated opportunities for students to discuss mathematical argumentation allowing peers to articulate their thought processes when approaching learning activities and lessons.

AREAS FOR GROWTH

While strong evidence of stakeholder commitment to a positive school environment was clearly displayed during this review, the prospect of including more involvement from parents and community members could continue to expand the influence of collective efforts designed to foster student-centered learning and enrichment opportunities.

- All parents participating in the focus group communicated a desire for more steady and clear messaging from teachers and the school regarding curriculum pacing, instructional strategies, and homework or other supports outside of school.

- Families within the focus group expressed that some, but not all, teachers and school officials provide updates about progression throughout the year, creating an inconsistent message.

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 the overwhelmingly positive and inviting learning atmosphere to expand on existing opportunities for key community stakeholders, especially parents, to support students through events, enrichment, and additional forms of involvement in school improvement efforts

ACTION STEPS:

As a result of this school review:

- Coordinate efforts between teachers and school leaders to add and share curriculum scope and sequences across all areas of instruction to existing school websites and resources and/or the Talking Points family engagement platform by the beginning of each school year.

- Expand existing stakeholder events including STEM Night, Math Night, and parent teacher conferences by combining with offers to display student exhibitions of learning, allowing families to witness end products derived from areas of study.

- Use scheduled staff and team meetings to discuss key information and concerns being communicated by parents to share exemplary answers through Talking Points. Construct a monthly newsletter that may assist families in accessing educational sites often used by students, additional instructional materials, or curricular resources.

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

Both educators and school leaders repeatedly cited authentic buy-in through professional reflection and development practices as being a tremendous support in several key areas including data-analysis to elevate specific strategies. Teachers in focus groups demonstrated a resounding positive perspective for leadership and coaching teams supporting mathematics instruction and reflective practices.

- All school leaders within the focus group affirmed the meaningful impact of providing cyclical learning opportunities based directly on identified/perceived teacher need. While teachers within focus groups felt this feedback allowed them to work more openly with coaches, equipping them with effective strategies as they continued to navigate and receive ongoing feedback.

- Teachers and school leader focus groups were unanimous in their support of the existing Professional Learning Community (PLC) structure. Specifically, both groups stated this time was valuable to reflect on instructional practices, as well as to unpack and review data from formal and informal assessments. PLC meetings also yielded innovative strategies such as "launch parties" to prepare differing levels of professional staff for each curricular unit.

- Ongoing professional learning, as well as specific professional development opportunities presented through workshops, conferences, or other sources, are routinely led by members of the instructional and leadership teams, giving a platform for teacher-centered development.

AREAS FOR GROWTH

Most teachers interviewed in the focus groups, and observed in the classroom, demonstrated knowledge and implementation in small group instruction and creating opportunities for student collaboration. As the school continues to revel in the success of their current support structure (coaches, PLCs, etc.), students and staff could continue this momentum by expanding areas of interest, allowing for more student voice and reflective practices in the classroom.

- Just two out of nine classrooms visited demonstrated students leading math-related discussion or reflection (in groups, pairs, or as individuals), one out of nine classrooms displayed students being given strategies or activities that indicated student-generated choice and voice as a cornerstone of the learning, and zero out of nine classrooms reflected peer-to-peer collaboration that resulted in feedback that led a student to refine the mathematical process.

- While 85% of all classrooms visited demonstrated a positive learning environment where students were supported and encouraged to succeed, eight out of nine classes illustrated small group and individual strategies were used to deliver more instruction rather than true critical thinking, reflection, or collaboration 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.

Focus Area 1:

Continuing development and expansion of current support systems including instructional performance coaches, existing Professional Learning Communities, and professional learning opportunities for teachers and staff that will further empower students to shape their own learning through improved small group instruction implementation and an increase in student choice and voice in the learning process.

ACTION STEPS:

As a result of this school review:

- Survey teachers to determine their current command of small group instructional strategies to craft schoolwide supportive materials and to identify potential presenters for future professional development opportunities.

- Expand PLC reflective discussions to incorporate small group strategies including math talks, peer teaching opportunities, and assessment menus within the data-driven decision making associated with current PLC dynamics.

- Instructional coaches should regularly review the impact of variation of instructional strategies on student outcomes, learning, and buy-in with staff and refine approaches based on teacher input and student performance.

- Allow students to experiment with reflection through strategies such as math reflection journals that give space for internal dialogue alongside an increase in group discussion.

- Schedule regular opportunities for teachers to observe each other's classrooms and collaborate on best practices for supporting the development of student voice.

Appendix A

SUMMARY OF EXPERT REVIEW TEAM ACTIVITIES

Expert Review Team Members

1. Daniel Russell, Co-Founder, Bridge the Gap
2. Dorothy Jackson, Concentration of Poverty Coordinator, Somerset County Public Schools
3. Joshua Fine, Principal, Montgomery County Public Schools
4. Jamila Denney, Principal, Montgomery County Public Schools
5. Tiffany Tresler, Principal, Howard County Public Schools

Site Visit Day 1

Wednesday, October 23, 2024

Site Visit Day 2

Thursday, October 24, 2024

Number of Classroom Reviewed

Nine

Description of Classrooms Visited

Wednesday, October 23, 2024
• Math 3 (4) • Math 5 (3) • Math 4 (2)

Number of Interviews

One

- Principal

Number of Focus Groups

Four

- 10 students

- 9 school leaders

- 8 teachers

- 10 parents

Documents Analyzed

- Site visit documentation submitted by the school.