Maryland
STATE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

Maryland School Review
Expert Review Team Mathematics Report

White Marsh 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 to 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 and it provides detailed information on the specific methods used by the ERT during the site visit.

Executive Summary

ABOUT WHITE MARSH ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

White Marsh Elementary School, located in Talbot County, serves a total of 278 students in grades K-5. The enrolled population is made up of less than 1.8% Asian American, 13.7% African American, 14% Hispanic American, 6.5% 2+ races, and 64% White. The school's population includes approximately 55.6% of students that receive free or reduced meals and 8.7% 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.

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.

- Set clear high expectations for learning with all students. Setting high expectations for all students is crucial for fostering a growth mindset and a culture of achievement. Additionally, incorporate asset and strength-based language highlighting individuals' abilities, potential, and positive attributes.
- Provide alternate methods and clear guidance for students to engage in peer discussions with each other about their thinking, allowing consistent discourse opportunities for explaining or justifying their mathematical process.
- Increase opportunities for all students to take mathematical risks to construct meaning and ownership of their learning. Include the selection and implementation of cognitively demanding tasks, as this is crucial for enhancing learning outcomes.
- Enhance the current job-embedded structures and systems for building teacher capacity focusing on providing specific feedback as an essential part of the professional learning and monitoring 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

The school fosters a supportive environment for mathematics culture through standard-aligned and goal-oriented instruction with positive and affirming learning classrooms.

- In all eight classrooms observed, students were completing activities related to the standard(s) being addressed. Teachers had the standards posted in student-friendly language in the room and/or referred to the standard before or during instruction.
- In seven of the eight classrooms, teachers created a positive math culture. In one classroom, a student responded to a teacher's prompt incorrectly, and the teacher responded by letting the students know that "great mistakes are opportunities" to continue learning.
- Teachers in seven of the eight classrooms fostered a positive learning environment. Student/teacher interactions were positive and respectful, and teachers were purposeful in ensuring that student interactions were positive and respectful. Students used hand signals to indicate whether they agreed or disagreed, and the use of sentence starters such as, "I respectfully disagree because…".
- One out of the three participants in the school leader focus group shared they have observed buy-in from teachers, specifically a veteran teacher, on the concept of creating positive math mindsets and math culture through the internal videos as well as modeling and co-teaching opportunities with the math coach.
- Three of the six teacher participants indicated that the school focuses on fostering classroom communities where failing is seen as an opportunity for growth and learning, developing a positive mathematical mindset.
- During the student focus group discussions, six of the seven students indicated that they love supporting one another during mathematics. One student described how they ask each other questions about math indicating that this may be a newly learned strategy.

Students engaging in collaboration to solve problems was evident in the environment further supporting a culture for learning mathematics.

- In five of the eight classrooms, students collaborated in pairs to solve problems – specifically discussing groups of an item and solving the total. In a co-taught class, both teachers provided students the opportunity to decide how they would learn by encouraging them to use multiple tools and strategies.

- Students in four out of eight classrooms articulated how to solve the problem with groups of clay, were provided manipulatives, and other tools to ensure all students had multiple entry points into solving the problem.

AREAS FOR GROWTH

In all classrooms visited, students were encouraged and were well-versed in utilizing hand signals to agree, respectively disagree or build upon the previous answer. However, these strategies are not leveraged to encourage student discourse within the learning.

- Two of the school leader participants mentioned internal professional development opportunities being provided for teachers including internal real-time classroom videos used for professional development, teacher peer observations, and modeling by the math coach.
- While there is evidence of the September staff meeting data collection and professional development presentation on "Habits of Discourse", there is no ongoing evidence provided for sharing improvement practices or regularly monitoring implementation 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:

Set clear high expectations for learning with all students. Setting high expectations for all students is crucial for fostering a growth mindset and a culture of achievement. Additionally, incorporate asset and strength-based language highlighting individuals' abilities, potential, and positive attributes.

ACTION STEPS:

As a result of this school review:

- Expand the current structures for informal classroom visits to incorporate providing specific feedback on identified professional learning for setting high expectations.
- Include specific feedback to students on the use of providing feedback peer-to-peer during the learning process.

Focus Area 2:

Provide alternate methods and clear guidance for students to engage in peer discussions with each other about their thinking, allowing consistent discourse opportunities for explaining or justifying their mathematical process.

ACTION STEPS:

As a result of this school review:

- Build in learning opportunities that include a system for students to evaluate the effectiveness of the feedback from their peers after implementation.

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 to school and LEA overarching student achievement goals.

FINDING and RECOMMENDATIONS

STRENGTHS

There was consistent evidence from all professional stakeholders regarding structures that support professional learning and educator support. The school is to be commended for consistent attention to weekly collaboration and monthly professional development.

- One of the three school leaders, and two of the six teachers spoke to the various types of grouping students based on assessment data.
- During the principal interview she shared one approach to supporting teachers and leaders in mathematics, by leveraging a specific partnership with other LEAs professional development the math coach attends and turnkey some of those coaching strategies with teachers.
- All teachers, school leaders, and the principal agreed there are innovative practices in use, such as shared video recordings and math coaching sessions highlighting the school's leadership in professional learning.

AREAS FOR GROWTH

The site visit documentation provided evidence of professional development on student discourse and a schedule for classroom visits by the mathematics coach, however, there is no evidence provided for how teachers receive informal or formal feedback for the practice of implementing strategies for student discourse.

- While some school level professional development was mentioned, neither the teachers nor school leaders mentioned any type of countywide professional learning. One school leader mentioned that this was lacking in the district.
- None of the school leaders nor the teachers added statements regarding how the professional learning for student discourse was monitored or provided feedback by the mathematics coach.
- During the principal interview, information was shared that the data analysis has shown that fluency remains an area of concern, and as a next step, there will be an ongoing focus on fluency and aligning student discourse with this focus.

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:

Increase opportunities for all students to take mathematical risks to construct meaning and ownership of their learning. Include the selection and implementation of cognitively demanding tasks, as this is crucial for enhancing learning outcomes.

ACTION STEPS:

As a result of this school review:

- Leverage the relationship between the mathematics coach and teachers to provide 1:1 feedback session on refining specific actions gathered from the informal learning walks to support teachers with helping students increase taking mathematical risks.
- Survey teachers to determine their current understanding and use of the strategy to determine effectiveness.
- Follow-up during collaborative planning or PLCs with opportunities for teachers to share successes and challenges of this strategy.

Focus Area 2

Enhance the current job-embedded structures and systems for building teacher capacity focusing on providing specific feedback as an essential part of the professional learning and monitoring process.

ACTION STEPS:

As a result of this school review:

- Utilize the current professional learning structures to incorporate teacher classroom visits to the classrooms which currently implement student discourse effectively as a part of the continuous improvement efforts.
- Conduct professional learning focused on model lessons incorporating students engaged in peer feedback techniques.

Appendix A

SUMMARY OF EXPERT REVIEW TEAM ACTIVITIES

Expert Review Team Members

1. Tara O'Barsky, Supervisor of Family, Community & School Programs, Wicomico County Public Schools
2. Nicholas Gardiner, Fifth Grade Teacher, Charles County Public Schools
3. Jessica Grant, Principal, Prince George's County Public Schools
4. Dr. LaChon Winston, Alternative Certification Manager/Liaison, Prince George's County Public Schools
5. David Bell, Staff Associate, Baltimore City Public School
6. Amy Cohn, Retired Educator, Baltimore County Public School

Site Visit Day 1

Wednesday, October 23, 2024

Site Visit Day 2

Thursday, October 24, 2024

Site Visit Day 3

N/A

Number of Classroom Reviewed

Eight

Description of Classrooms Visited

Wednesday, October 23, 2024
• K Math • 1st Math (2) • 2nd Math (2) • 4th Math • 3rd Math co-teaching class • 5th Math intervention

Number of Interviews

One

- Principal

Number of Focus Groups

Four

- 8 students
- 5 school leaders
- 6 teachers
- 7 parents

Documents Analyzed

- Site visit documentation submitted by the school.