Maryland School Review

Expert Review Team Report

Domain 1: Curriculum and Instruction

Frost Elementary School

Maryland State Department of Education

Office of Teaching and Learning

March 6-7, 2024

MARYLAND STATE DEPARTMENT OF
EDUCATION
EQUITY AND EXCELLENCE

Table of Contents

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 Expert Review Team 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 FROST ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

Frost Elementary School, located in Allegany County, serves a total of 236 students in grades Pre-K through 5th. The enrolled population is made up 90% white. The school's population includes approximately 44% of students that receive free or reduced meals and 11% 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 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	86%	Accomplishing with Continuous Improvement
Classroom Instruction	89%	Accomplishing with Continuous Improvement
Assessment and Timing	70%	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 teachers with comprehensive professional learning opportunities on differentiating instruction according to student proficiency levels. This program should be designed to assist teachers in fine-tuning their instruction to align with each student's unique learning abilities and proficiency levels, offering students' choices in how they demonstrate their learning, at what pace they learn, and opportunities to extend their learning.

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.

Curriculum and Instruction indicates the school is effectively implementing high-quality curricular and instructional materials to bolster student learning.

- Documentation provided by the Local Education Agency (LEA) confirms that curriculum and instructional materials have been rated as "Strong" by Evidence for ESSA or Tier 1 by What Works Clearinghouse.

- Additional LEA documentation indicates that some curriculum and instructional materials meet the expectations set by EdReports.

The school is actively engaged in continuous professional development to align teaching practices with state standards and to promote a curriculum that values supporting and improving teacher practice.

- During the teacher focus groups, it was shared that teachers and leaders engage in continuous professional learning that is directly related to the curriculum and materials that teachers use in the classroom daily.

- In teacher and school leader focus groups, staff articulated the universal use of the LEA's instructional materials such as "iReady Math, Core Knowledge Language Arts, and other materials" provided by the LEA.

- Through regular meetings with content-area coaches, teachers are aligning instructional practices with the curriculum to meet state standards.

- Teacher and school leader focus groups shared that the leadership team has established scheduled time during "delayed school opening" dedicated to professional development in English Language Arts (ELA) and Mathematics.

During classroom reviews, it was clear that the school's learning environment is strong. In all ten classrooms reviewed, evidence showed a positive learning atmosphere, effective positive reinforcement, clear behavior management, and nurturing teacher-student interactions, all contributing to the holistic development of students.

- Positive behaviors were consistently fostered by teachers using a range of reinforcement methods including the Lion Loot system, verbal accolades, and physical gestures of approval, alongside the Class Dojo management tool.

- Teachers and support staff managed behavior with minimal disruption to learning, applying proximity control, personalized verbal cues, calming strategies, and clear reminders of expected behaviors to maintain a conducive learning atmosphere.

AREAS FOR GROWTH

While differentiation and scaffolding were present in all classrooms reviewed, provide student choice and extension opportunities to fully support all aspects of student learning.

- In 4 out of 10 classrooms, students did not have the option to choose how they demonstrated their learning, and avenues to go beyond the set curriculum were lacking, leading to a uniform progression pace among students.

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:

Provide teachers with comprehensive professional learning opportunities on differentiating instruction according to student proficiency levels. This program should be designed to assist teachers in fine-tuning their instruction to align with each student's unique learning abilities and proficiency levels, offering students' choices in how they demonstrate their learning, at what pace they learn, and opportunities to extend their learning.

ACTION STEPS:

As a result of this school review:

- Survey teachers to determine their current understanding and use of differentiation strategies.

- Offer workshops that progress from differentiation fundamentals to advanced applications, including hands-on practice and guidance on how students can share their learning, manage their learning pace, and explore extended learning opportunities.

- Assemble and distribute a range of differentiation resources and establish a system for easy access.

- Schedule regular opportunities for teachers to observe each other's classrooms and collaborate on differentiation techniques.

- Implement classroom observations with subsequent feedback sessions and use student data to guide and adjust instructional strategies.

- Regularly review the impact of differentiation on student outcomes and refine approaches based on teacher input and student performance, ensuring options are provided to students for how they share their learning, at what pace they learn, and opportunities to extend learning.

RESOURCES:

1. Differentiating up, Strategies to Enhance, Extend and Enrich Learning

2. Divergent Questioning

Appendix A

SUMMARY OF EXPERT REVIEW TEAM ACTIVITIES

Expert Review Team Members

1. Howard Franklin, Pupil Personnel Worker, Baltimore County Public Schools
2. Chris Beers-Arthur, Specialist, Frederick County Public Schools
3. Jill Snell, Coordinator, Baltimore County Public Schools
4. Willanette Lohr, Inclusive Education Facilitator, Calvert County Public Schools
5. LaChon Winston, Professional Learning, Prince George's County Public Schools
6. Jane Wildesen, Director, Garrett County Public Schools

Site Visit Day 1

Wednesday, March 6, 2024

Site Visit Day 2

Thursday, March 7, 2024

Number of Classroom Reviewed

Eleven

Description of Classroom Visited

Wednesday, March 6, 2024	Thursday, March 7, 2024
- ELA - SPED - ELA - INT - Math - ELA 5th grade ELA 2nd grade ELA	- ELA - SPED - Pre-K Math

Number of Interviews

One

- Principal

Number of Focus Groups

Nine

- 8 students (2 groups)
- 5 school leaders
- 13 teachers (4 groups)
- 9 parents (2 groups)

Documents Analyzed

- Site visit documentation submitted by the school and LEA.

Appendix B

MARYLAND SCHOOL REVIEW RUBRIC

Ratings for Frost 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.