Maryland School Review

Expert Review Team Report

Domain 2: Student Support
Domain 3: Educator Support

Johnston Square Elementary School

Maryland State Department of Education

Office of Teaching and Learning

January 24, 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 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 JOHNSTON SQUARE ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

Johnston Square Elementary School, located in Baltimore City, serves a total of 262 students in grades Pre-K to 5th. The enrolled population is greater than 95% African American. The school's population includes approximately 92% of students who 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.

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 ratings on Domains 2 and 3. The school scored its highest rating of Accomplishing with Continuous Improvement in Observation and Feedback and its lowest rating of Accomplishing in Opportunities and Access & Professional Learning. A comprehensive list of measures, indicators, and ratings can be found in the full School Review Rubric in Appendix B.

Domain 2: Student Support		
Indicator	Percentage	Rating
Multi-Tiered Systems of Support	87%	Accomplishing with Continuous Improvement
Opportunities and Access	75%	Accomplishing

Domain 3: Educator Support		
Indicator	Percentage	Rating
Observation and Feedback	88%	Accomplishing with Continuous Improvement
Professional Learning	75%	Accomplishing
Career Growth	82%	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 clarity on existing structures and systems dedicated to supporting the SEL support system. Ensure these structures are inclusive of stakeholders (that are allowed), with a clearly communicated process for identifying students, and shared with all stakeholders.

- Expand teacher professional development (PD) to include ongoing learning segments regarding growth opportunities for teacher-leader pathways.

Domain 2: Student Support

Student Support	Schools use data to identify students and implement a multi-tiered approach to support all student groups.

Findings and Recommendations

STRENGTHS

There is high regard for the systems and structures that support students academically and social-emotional. All stakeholder groups agreed that there are multiple layers of support in place that have made positive impacts on students' academic growth and life choices.

- During the school leadership focus group, both participants shared an appreciation for the "Coach-weekly Academic Planning". During these 90-minute periods, time is dedicated to lesson plan review, looking at student work samples, and reviewing assessment data such as the Maryland Comprehensive Assessment Program (MCAP).

1. Both school leaders agreed that the partnership with Johns Hopkins, which provides therapy to students and works with parents, is helpful with social-emotional support for students with specific needs of wrap-around service.

- In the student focus groups, two of the six participants described a strategy that is used for social-emotional support. One student stated, "When there is a need, I can go to another teacher's classroom, put my head down, take some deep breaths, use some resources in the room for support, or use the affirmation wall to encourage yourself [myself]."

- All three parents highlighted the welcoming school culture and climate. As each parent provided evidence of a specific example related to their child, the other parents agreed to have seen or known about a similar example.

- Teachers and students provided evidence for a social-emotional (SE) coordinator, a coach, a mathematics teacher, and an ELA teacher that they can go to when they need emotional support.

There is a common understanding of the academic expectations for excellence. All students, teachers, and school leaders agreed that this message is consistently communicated by the principal every day.

- During the principal interview, it was stated how the master schedule ensures teachers have four planning periods each week and collaborative weekly academic planning which is broken down by content for 90 minutes every Thursday for reading and mathematics each week.

- All stakeholders in each focus group expressed appreciation and love for the ACALETICS Program's Green Party celebrations for students who met their academic performance goals.

AREAS FOR GROWTH

While there is an appreciation for the multiple interventions offered by the school and the wrap-around services, there is an ongoing need for continuous improvement to ensure all students receive the necessary academic support.

- The four teacher participants in the focus group agreed there is an informal system of how students are identified for support and referred to the SE coordinator, social worker, and psychologist.

- Also, parents expressed they were unclear about how students were identified and/or selected to attend tutoring.

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 clarity on existing structures and systems dedicated to supporting the SEL support system. Ensure these structures are inclusive of stakeholders (that are allowed), with a clearly communicated process for identifying students, and shared with all stakeholders.

ACTION STEPS:

As a result of this school review:

- Develop a survey to share with all stakeholders to determine the broad understanding of the current SEL process to determine necessary adjustments. Use the stakeholder feedback data to strengthen the process.

- Explore current school-based and LEA partnerships to support the development of a communique for each stakeholder level and provide clear guidance on the SEL process that the school will move forward with to ensure the community shares common knowledge of the process.

RESOURCES:

1. Key Elements of SEL Implementation
2. Giving Marginalized Families a Voice

Domain 3: Educator Support

Educators Support	Educators at all levels are provided with support to improve results and shift instructional practice.

Findings and Recommendations

STRENGTHS

The school leadership is highly regarded for developing a consistent system for teaching and learning for all stakeholders that is consistent with the LEA guidelines.

- School leaders and teacher focus group participants provided a common understanding of the school's formal and informal learning process.

- During focus group discussions, all participants stated the observation process is regularly conducted and actionable feedback is provided and discussed.

- One of the six teachers shared, "We get an informal once-a-week or once every two weeks, depending on how close we are to formal observations. "We always receive feedback and there are next steps. I think we're pretty thorough with the feedback." Another teacher explained that the process concludes with the feedback being emailed and then discussed.

- During the principal interview, when the discussion topic of teacher growth was brought up, a statement offering evidence for stipends offered for teachers to lead school programs, was shared openly. Also, information was shared regarding having had two teachers become leaders (one as program director) and move onto the central office.

- The support was further explained that the Attendance Team, who meet weekly to discuss data and interventions to reduce chronic absenteeism, was an essential part of the school's structure.

AREAS FOR GROWTH

While the teachers in the focus group highlighted some of the instructional structures available to support classroom learning, the shared information regarding the career ladder amongst teachers was inconsistent.

- One of the four teachers in the focus group expressed data is captured and data meetings are held, however, there is no ongoing professional learning grounded in the data.

- Another teacher expressed knowing that the career ladder was attached to units that move you up based on the yearly evaluation.

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

Expand teacher professional development (PD) to include ongoing learning segments regarding growth opportunities for teacher-leader pathways.

ACTION STEPS:

As a result of this school review:

- Consider partnering with previous staff members to share their experiences about teacher leadership opportunities.
- Utilizing the existing structure of 1-on-1 meetings for teacher-leadership and career ladder goal-setting conversations.

RESOURCES:

1. Encouraging Leadership at all Career Phases
2. Career Pathways for Teachers Inside Scoop: For Staff

Appendix A

SUMMARY OF EXPERT REVIEW TEAM ACTIVITIES

Expert Review Team Members

1. Kendra Gray, Director, Deans for Impact
2. Robert A. Murphy, President, Comprehensive Discipline Solutions
3. Dr. Tisa Holley, Director, Prince George's County Public Schools
4. Dr. Toi Davis, Principal, Prince George's County Public Schools
5. Nicole Cole, Consultant, SchoolWorks
6. Dr. Mark M. Rust, Professor Emeritus, McDaniel College

Site Visit Day 1

Wednesday, January 24, 2024

Site Visit Day 2

N/A

Number of Classroom Reviewed

Four

Description of Classroom Visited

Wednesday, January 24, 2024
• Grade 1 - Science • K - FUNdations • Grade 3 - Science • Grade 4 - Math

Number of Interviews

One

- Principal

Number of Focus Groups

Four

- 6 students
- 2 school leaders

- 4 teachers

- 3 parents

Documents Analyzed

- Site visit documentation submitted by the school and LEA.

Appendix B

MARYLAND SCHOOL REVIEW RUBRIC

Ratings for Johnston Square 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.