Maryland School Review

Expert Review Team Report

Domain 2: Student Support
Domain 3: Educator Support

Matthew Henson Middle School

Maryland State Department of Education

Office of Teaching and Learning

February 21-22, 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 MATTHEW HENSON MIDDLE SCHOOL

Matthew Henson Middle School, located in Charles County, serves a total of 736 students in grades 6th – 8th. The enrolled population is made up of 2% Asian, 66% African American, 13% Hispanic, and 9% White. The school's population includes approximately 33% of students that receive free or reduced meals and 8% 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 ratings on Domains 2 and 3. The school scored its highest rating of Accomplishing with Continuous Improvement in Career Growth and its lowest rating of Accomplishing in Multi-tiered Systems of Support & Opportunities and Access. 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	67%	Accomplishing
Opportunities and Access	67%	Accomplishing

Domain 3: Educator Support		
Indicator	Percentage	Rating
Observation and Feedback	75%	Accomplishing
Professional Learning	72%	Accomplishing
Career Growth	89%	Accomplishing with Continuous Improvement

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.

- Leverage current professional learning structures to increase opportunities for teachers learning on Multi-Tiered System of Support (MTSS) and student instructional support through disaggregated data. Provide an ongoing series of job-embedded professional learning for teachers and instructional leaders to engage in data literacy to analyze student performance data to inform collaborative planning and coaching processes. Using data to drive differentiated instruction in the short and long term and provide deeper knowledge of platform structures: iReady and MTSS to drive pedagogical strategies for impactful learning opportunities like, reciprocal teaching, philosophical chairs, and writing rubrics.

- Reconsider structures to build teacher practices within the school staff. Utilize the expertise within the building to accompany the LEA Anchor Mentor efforts. Include specific actions for all instructional teachers and support to engage in building assessment literacy to support the learning for leveraging data to improve teacher practice to move up the career ladder.

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

Educator support and career development is an area of promise. MHMS provides high quality, differentiated, embedded support for teachers [i.e., Beginning Teachers' Programs, content-specific professional development (school-based and systemic), and ample individual and collaborative planning time].

- One of the six teachers in the focus groups offered, "It's all about the kids. We are always trying new ways to do what's best for students. Students are changing constantly. We have Math labs and literacy labs now and used to have double periods of math and ELA. We're constantly doing things to try to meet all of the needs of our kids, but their needs are different. We don't know if the schedule works because it is new this year. We are able to meet different student levels more effectively with our current schedule.

- Another teacher from the teacher focus group shared, that teachers of Science use a mock MISA – at the end of 7th grade, to identify gaps for the test in 8th grade year. Also, four of the six teachers shared that the use of common assessments, administered quarterly, show what students are learning and identify learning gaps by standards.

- Learning environment is an area of promise. In sixteen out of sixteen classrooms, teachers' interactions with students were positive and respectful. For example, teachers were open to a number of viewpoints, respectful of all students and displayed positivity. Likewise, student interactions with their peers and the teachers were positive and respectful, students were engaged and motivated by the lesson and related discussions. Students were respectful of each other as well as their teachers when lessons and activities as well as discussions were going on.

- Schedule seeks to optimize how many options students have, which has resulted in some mix-matches for lunch. Admin has addressed concerns as they have been raised. New course for Spanish Native and Heritage Speakers. There are lots of opportunities, which is good, but the logistics are difficult for implementation.

- Four of the four participants in the school leaders focus group mentioned specific practices that support use of data to guide instruction including Multi-tiered Systems of Support, student and staff surveys sent out multiple times a semester, use of classroom and assessment data for the gifted screening process and the use of iReady assessments to place students in tiered lab classes targeted to their needs.

- Collectively, teachers in the focus group expressed the school's future plan is seeking opportunities to bring high school coursework into the middle school building that will allow for students to pursue their interests as well as certifications.

AREAS FOR GROWTH

As stated in the interview the school has seen an increase in teacher retention, however, there must be greater attention to sharing knowledge of supportive structures and systems for teachers new to the teaching profession and those who are new to the school/LEA.

- From the school leadership focus group, one of the four leaders reported that weekly Wednesday provides opportunity for content PD unpacking standards with teachers during co-planning.

- Explicit instruction was observed in all sixteen classrooms, however independent or collaborative student work processes that resulted in data which informed teacher instruction were not evident in any of the classrooms reviewed. As a result, there was no evidence of formative assessment driving instruction to meet individual student needs. Although instructional coaches spoke to the use of a protocol for analyzing student work, specific formative assessment and data gathering was not evident in supporting student learning.

- When teachers in the focus group were asked about PD, all six agreed that there were in-service opportunities for professional growth. However, one of the six mentioned that the content PD was useful.

- One of the four parents mentioned during the group that they are paying for tutoring and would like to see more tutoring programs offered by the school.

- Three of the four parents in the focus group reported that they were unaware of the support available to students and would like to know more about school-based tutoring supports.

- While leadership and teachers mentioned that there was an increase in new teachers and conditionally certified staff, none mentioned the analysis of teacher assignments based on student data to ensure an equitable distribution of teachers.

- Two of the six teachers and one administrator mentioned that the school utilizes PBIS as one of the school's SEL initiatives; however, all teachers agreed that the students do not view PBIS as important. The staff considers it to be ineffective and that students would rather be appreciated via praise.

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

Leverage current professional learning structures to increase opportunities for teachers learning on MTSS and student instructional support through disaggregated data. Provide an ongoing series of, job-embedded professional learning for teachers and instructional leaders to engage in data literacy to analyze student performance data to inform collaborative planning and coaching processes. Using data to drive differentiated instruction in the short and long term and provide deeper knowledge of platform structures: iReady and MTSS to drive pedagogical strategies for impactful learning opportunities like, reciprocal teaching, philosophical chairs, and writing rubrics.

ACTION STEPS:

As a result of this school review:

- Revisit current structures on building data literacy and multi-tiered support systems. Survey teachers and informal observation data to gather information on teachers who are already successfully implementing formative assessment practices. Then utilize Anchor Mentors to support the creation of a layered learning series that incorporates the knowledge gained to be used in planning differentiated lessons to meet student needs.

- Restructure the existing the current school monitoring system using the learning walk protocol to "chase the learning back to the classroom" to include teachers and paraprofessionals that build their capacity with these practices to serve as model classrooms and teacher leaders.

RESOURCES:

1. How MTSS Supports Gifted Students
2. Embedding Voice and Choice in Professional Learning
3. 7 ways to measure instructional coaching for impact, not activity
4. Eight Steps to Becoming Data Wise
5. Learning from Instructional Rounds

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 community agrees that the Anchor Mentor Program is impactful and beneficial toward improving teacher practice and improving student outcomes.

- All teachers agreed that the "Anchor Teacher Program is supportive and provides a formal mentor for new teachers and they get support in completing the portfolio.

- Another teacher shared that there are targeted supports for teachers in different ways. Such as informal mentors to support new teachers; a school-based person to help and support teachers navigate the school setting, and LEA level meetings for new teachers. Also, it has been helpful with ELA content planning support which is virtually guided and supported.

- One of the six teachers wished to share one additional statement regarding teacher support, "Yes, admin [leader] is supportive, and the school provides the opportunity to grow. I started as an instructional assistant and now I am working on my certification and that support motivates me to become a good teacher for the kids."

- The principal interview provided space for the topic of successes experienced and one was the literacy and mathematics labs that are scheduled to provide double periods of these contents support.

- During the principal interview, the significance of teacher turnover was raised about the school has increase to a 90% teacher retention rate.

- Three of the six teachers are currently working on NBCT credentials and the support from the LEA helps to afford the cost which makes it more reasonable to stay in the classroom.

AREAS FOR GROWTH

The school and LEA is to be commended for increasing teacher retention and having half of the teachers in the focus group working toward Nation Board Certification (NBC), however, there are other teacher support that can improve teacher practice and support teachers as they enter the NBC program.

- Leadership focus group participants reported that 5% of students received group support from the counselor: none of the focus group participants in the other groups mentioned having specific measures for student progress toward graduating on time.

- While leadership and teachers mentioned that there was an increase in new teachers and conditionally certified staff, no one from mentioned the analysis of teacher assignments based on student data to ensure an equitable distribution of teachers.

- During school leaders discussion, one in four shared that weekly Wednesday PD provided the opportunity for unpacking content standards with teachers during co-planning.

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

Reconsider structures to build teacher practices within the school staff. Utilize the expertise within the building to accompany the LEA Anchor Mentor efforts. Include specific actions for all instructional teachers and support to engage in building assessment literacy to support the learning for leveraging data to improve teacher practice to move up the career ladder.

ACTION STEPS:

As a result of this school review:

- Survey all instructional staff to determine professional interest and understanding for current knowledge and goals for continuous improvement.

- Design structures to ensure new teachers and those seeking certification licensure are knowledgeable of the structures and systems to support student on-time graduation.

RESOURCES:

1. Embedding Voice and Choice in Professional Learning
2. Eight Steps to Becoming Data Wise
3. Learning from Instructional Rounds

Appendix A

SUMMARY OF EXPERT REVIEW TEAM ACTIVITIES

Expert Review Team Members

1. Duane Arbogast, Educational Consultant
2. Tisa Holley, Director, Student Services, Prince George's County Public Schools
3. Natalie Zinkham, Teacher, Baltimore County Public Schools
4. Miguel Cervantes Del Toro, Principal, Baltimore City Public Schools
5. Rhonda Asplen, Instructional Coordinator, Secondary ELA, Cecil County Public Schools
6. Devorah Danielson, Educational Consultant

Site Visit Day 1

Wednesday, February 21, 2024

Site Visit Day 2

Thursday, February 22, 2024

Number of Classroom Reviewed

Sixteen

Description of Classroom Visited

Wednesday, February 21, 2024	Thursday, February 22, 2024
• Math Lab (6)	• Spanish I (7/8)
• ELA Inc. (6)	• Social Studies Honors (8)
• 6/7 Math Lab 1	• Algebra I
• ELA Lab (6)	• ELA Honors (8)
• Math Lab 3 (6)	• Social Studies (6)
• Social Studies (7)	• Science (8)
• Science 7 Honors	• Math Accelerated (6)
• Science (8)	• Gateway to Tech (7)

Number of Interviews

One

- Principal

Number of Focus Groups

Four

- 8 students
- 4 school leaders
- 6 teachers
- 4 parents

Documents Analyzed

- Site visit documentation submitted by the school and LEA.

Appendix B

MARYLAND SCHOOL REVIEW RUBRIC

Ratings for Matthew Henson Middle 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.