Maryland School Review

Expert Review Team Report

Domain 2: Student Support
Domain 3: Educator Support

Pocomoke Elementary School

Maryland State Department of Education

Office of Teaching and Learning

March 20-21, 2024

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 POCOMOKE ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

Pocomoke Elementary School, located in Worcester County, serves a total of 443 students in grades Pre-K – 3rd. The enrolled population is made up of 42% African American, 39% White, 10% 2+ Races, and 6% Hispanic. The school's population includes approximately 80% 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 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. 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	85%	Accomplishing with Continuous Improvement
Implementation with Fidelity	80%	Accomplishing
Opportunities and Access	71%	Accomplishing

Domain 3: Educator Support		
Indicator	Percentage	Rating
Observation and Feedback	88%	Accomplishing with Continuous Improvement
Professional Learning	78%	Accomplishing
Career Growth	79%	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.

- Expand the school's extracurricular and enrichment activities to include world languages, particularly Spanish, and additional Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math (STEM) programs. This will address the needs and desires expressed by both parents and students, providing a more comprehensive educational experience.

- Provide teachers with information beyond the benefits of achieving National Board Certification (NBCT) and acquiring advanced degrees.

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 an established comprehensive student support system, addressing the academic, social, emotional, and behavioral needs of students. This integrated approach utilizes a multi-tiered system of support, guided by detailed analysis of student data, to ensure that each student's specific needs are met effectively.

- In discussions with school leaders and teachers, they shared that the curriculum includes weekly social-emotional lessons. The principal also leads sessions on "morning manners" and wellness topics, incorporating these essential themes into the daily routine.

- During the teacher focus group, teachers stated that the school implements Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (PBIS). This system uses "kindness cash" and positive office referrals to encourage and reward good behavior. Additionally, quarterly PBIS incentives help maintain a positive school culture.

- Teachers revealed that the school has partnered with the local health department to offer counseling services. These services are enhanced by a social worker and a school counselor, providing comprehensive mental health support for students.

- Parents emphasized in their focus group that the school has a strong support system that engages the community. Programs like Tiny Tot and Frog Street Time provide social and educational activities, promoting active community involvement.

- In the student focus group survey, fourteen out of fourteen students indicated that they feel supported, feel safe at the school, and each has at least one trusted adult that they can approach if they have a problem at the school.

The school has implemented comprehensive mental health support structures, employing qualified staff and multiple programs to ensure the mental well-being of students.

- During the school leader focus group, school leaders stated that teachers and staff have been trained in restorative teaching strategies and provided training on Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs) to better support students.

- In the teacher focus group, teachers stated that a school counselor and social worker are available, with additional support from the local health department to directly address mental health challenges that students face.

- Parents during the parent focus group shared that the school offers various programs like "The Bounce Back" and the "I Love You Guys" Foundation program, which are specifically designed to provide social-emotional support and crisis response for students.

AREAS FOR GROWTH

The school offers extracurricular and enrichment activities complementing the standard well-rounded state curriculum. However, an identified need exists for expansion in areas such as world languages and Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math (STEM).

- During the parent focus group, parents stated the need for the school to offer foreign language classes, specifically Spanish, as part of the school program.

- In the student focus group, students stated that they would like to participate in additional STEM classes or programming.

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 the school's extracurricular and enrichment activities to include world languages, particularly Spanish, and additional Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math (STEM) programs. This will address the needs and desires expressed by both parents and students, providing a more comprehensive educational experience.

ACTION STEPS:

As a result of this school review:

- Survey parents, students, and staff to gather detailed information on specific interests and needs in world languages and STEM.

- Collaborate with teachers and curriculum specialists to design a plan for integrating Spanish and additional STEM courses into the existing curriculum.

- Determine the resources (e.g., textbooks, technology) and professional development required for teachers to deliver the new programs effectively.

- Start with a pilot phase, offering Spanish and new STEM activities to a small group of students to gather feedback and make necessary adjustments.

- Regularly evaluate the effectiveness of the new programs through student performance data, feedback from participants, and overall engagement levels.

RESOURCES:

1. STEM Education Coalition
2. Language Line Solutions

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 team has developed an observation and feedback system that ensures teachers and leaders are regularly observed and receive actionable feedback from their supervisors designed to support professional growth and improve student outcomes.

- In the school leadership focus group, the school leadership team stated that the school principal and assistant principal have common goals, and their observations are provided by the superintendent.

- During the school leadership focus group, it was shared that all formal feedback is provided within ten days of observation and that the school leadership team conducts informal walkthroughs very often, providing verbal or written actionable feedback.

- Teachers in the teacher focus group stated that both tenured and non-tenured teachers are regularly observed and given regular walkthroughs with actionable feedback.

- In the teacher focus group, teachers stated that after observation feedback has occurred, teachers are provided with an opportunity to provide evidence for specific areas not seen during the observation.

- During the teacher focus group survey, eleven out of eleven teachers indicated that they are observed regularly, provided with actionable feedback that improves their teaching practices, and

Teachers and leaders participate in ongoing, job-embedded professional learning on how to use data to improve student outcomes, specifically addressing the disproportionality between student groups.

- School leaders and teachers stated that Professional Learning Communities (PLC) take place at least four days per week and that these PLCs focus on assessment data for both English Language Arts and Math.

- In the teacher focus group, teachers shared that there has been specialized training on disaggregated data that occurs throughout the year.

- Nine of eleven teachers in the teacher focus group reported that they are provided with time throughout the day to review disaggregated data and are provided with data that allows teachers to adjust instruction accordingly.

Novice teachers are provided with job-embedded induction and support that provides them with the skills necessary to improve their practice and students' academic results.

- During the school leadership focus group, school leaders shared that each novice teacher is paired with a grade-level mentor and a new teacher coach who comes to support during the instructional block.

- In the teacher focus group, it was shared that novice teachers have access to retired teachers who come back to mentor and each teacher is also offered a mentor in the grade level. Novice teachers return 2 weeks before other teachers in the fall for new teacher orientation. Teachers report that this mentoring program is very helpful in supporting novice teachers to improve their practice.

- Teachers in the focus group stated that novice teachers also have Wednesday evening meetings at the central office throughout the school year as an additional support system.

AREAS FOR GROWTH

While teachers are currently aware of certain aspects of the career ladder, there is a gap in the knowledge between the various components of the career ladder.

- During the teacher focus group, teachers shared that the "LEA offers support for National Board Certification" (NBCT) and that there are incentives for "obtaining a master's degree". However, teachers are unfamiliar with other components of the career ladder beyond NBCT.

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 teachers with information beyond the benefits of achieving National Board Certification (NBCT) and acquiring advanced degrees.

ACTION STEPS:

As a result of this school review:

- Initiate a thorough evaluation to ascertain the extent of teachers' knowledge regarding their career progression opportunities.

- Collaborate with educational experts to create comprehensive, accessible resources that clearly outline the career growth including but not limited to the steps beyond NBCT.

- Organize a series of workshops aimed at disseminating this information among faculty. These sessions should encourage teachers to plan their professional growth, incorporating these opportunities.

- Implement a system for regular feedback from teachers regarding the clarity and usefulness of the information provided about career growth.

RESOURCES:

1. [MSDE Blueprint Pillar 2: High Quality and Divers Teachers and Leaders](#)

Appendix A

SUMMARY OF EXPERT REVIEW TEAM ACTIVITIES

Expert Review Team Members

1. Dr. Joshua Fine, Principal, Montogomery County Public Schools

2. Abigail Metcalf, Teacher, Baltimore County Public Schools

3. Kelly Cleland, Specialist, Calvert County Public Schools, (Retired)

4. Elizabeth Hazelwood, Tacher, Garrett County Public Schools

5. Susan Huff, GATE Instructional Coach, Cecil County Public Schools

6. Eric Counts, SPED Compliance, Charles County Public Schools

Site Visit Day 1

Wednesday, March 20, 2024

Site Visit Day 2

Thursday, March 21, 2024

Number of Classroom Reviewed

17 classrooms

Description of Classroom Visited

Wednesday, March 20, 2024	Thursday, March 21, 2024
• PK 4 • PK 3 • Inclusion 3rd • PE 2nd • EL 3rd • ELA 2nd • K • EL • Math 3rd	• EL 2nd • EL 1st • Writing PK • ELA PK • Math • Music 2nd • Writing PK • Math 2nd

Number of Interviews

One principal interview

Number of Focus Groups

Five

- 8 students

- 5 school leaders

- 11 teachers

- 8 parents

Documents Analyzed

- Site visit documentation submitted by the school and LEA.

Appendix B

MARYLAND SCHOOL REVIEW RUBRIC

Ratings for Pocomoke 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.

[Insert the school's completed rubric checklist here.]