Maryland School Review

Expert Review Team Report

Domain 2: Student Support
Domain 3: Educator Support

River Hill High School

Maryland State Department of Education

Office of Teaching and Learning

April 17-18, 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 RIVER HILL HIGH SCHOOL

River Hill High School, located in Howard County, serves a total of 1424 students in grades 9th – 12th. The enrolled population is made up of 39% Asian, 39% White, 11% African American, 6% 2+ races, and 5% Hispanic. The school's population includes approximately 8% of students that receive free or reduced meals and 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.

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

The following table summarizes the school's ratings on Domains 2 and 3. The school scored its highest rating of Accomplishing in Opportunities and Access and its lowest rating of Accomplishing in Observation and Feedback 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	68%	Accomplishing
Opportunities and Access	84%	Accomplishing

Domain 3: Educator Support		
Indicator	Percentage	Rating
Observation and Feedback	63%	Accomplishing
Professional Learning	81%	Accomplishing
Career Growth	75%	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.

- Formalize the established mental health support system at the school to ensure that all members of the school community are fully aware of the available resources and how to access them. Provide ongoing training for teachers and staff, fostering a supportive environment that prioritizes mental well-being and addresses potential issues proactively.

- Develop a comprehensive observation and feedback system with clear protocols for both formal and informal observations. Train school leaders on providing actionable feedback and establish a regular monitoring schedule. Create platforms for teachers to share their experiences and suggestions to foster continuous improvement.

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

The school has created College and Career Pathways (CCR Pathways) that support students to develop an in-depth specialization and earn industry-recognized credentials for post-high school graduation.

- In the student focus group, five out of nine students stated opportunities to specialize in specific fields through the school and LEA.

- Students in the student focus group specifically spoke about programs including the Teacher Academy with childcare certification and a culinary program at the Application and Research Laboratory (ARL) Off-Site Learning Facility.

- In a review of the LEA and school documents, there is direct evidence that the LEA has created various pathways to supporting students' success in high school and beyond.

- Ten out of twelve teachers in the teacher focus group indicated that the school has developed a system that directly supports students' high school academic success.

- In the student focus group survey, eight out of nine students indicated that teachers and schoolwork challenges them to improve.

The school has developed specialized programs that not only support students to earn their high school diplomas but also provide opportunities for all students to enroll in credit-bearing, advanced, and rigorous coursework.

- In the teacher focus group, eight out of nine teachers stated that students can take courses that are important in the real world and prepare them for college.

- During the teacher and student focus groups stated that students can participate in the "Teacher Academy", business courses, advanced coursework, and investment courses.

- In the parent focus group, parents highlighted the abundance of AP courses as a cornerstone of the school's academic offerings.

Students have access to art, career and technical education (CTE) courses, world language, STEM, or other content areas beyond mathematics, ELA, science, and social studies.

- In the student focus group, seven out of nine students reported having access to non-core courses other than English, Science, Math, and Social Studies.

AREAS FOR GROWTH

The school is in the process of having a mental health support plan to support the well-being of students. However, while some teachers receive mental health training, support staff and students need additional support.

- While school leaders in the school leader focus group stated that the school has provided training for staff on mental health supports, six out of twelve teachers in the teacher focus group survey indicated that the support provided to teachers needs improvement.

- Data results from the student focus group survey indicated that four out of nine students stated that teachers were the primary mental health support for them.

- During the teacher focus group, two out of nine teachers reported receiving training at the beginning of the year to support mental health and social-emotional learning, with one mentioning additional optional training throughout the year. Teachers indicated that they attempt to meet this need on their own, but do not have the required training in mental health to be successful.

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

Formalize the established mental health support system at the school to ensure that all members of the school community are fully aware of the available resources and how to access them. Provide ongoing training for teachers and staff, fostering a supportive environment that prioritizes mental well-being and addresses potential issues proactively.

ACTION STEPS:

As a result of this school review:

- Gather detailed feedback from teachers, students, and parents regarding the current mental health support system.

- Create a structured mental health program that includes clear protocols and procedures.

- Establish partnerships with local mental health service providers.

- Offer training sessions for teachers on handling challenging situations and recognizing mental health issues.

- Launch a communication campaign to inform the school community about the mental health support system.

RESOURCES:

1. Implementing School Mental Health Supports

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 has developed a data support system to enhance student outcomes through ongoing, job-embedded professional learning to improve student outcomes.

- During the school leader focus group, four out of eight school leaders mentioned using baseline data LEA/School-based analytics system to guide instruction and interventions.

- In the teacher focus group survey, twelve out of twelve teachers indicated that they are provided with student disaggregated data at least monthly.

The school has created a mentoring and coaching program to support novice teachers (0-3 years) through job-embedded induction and support.

- In the school leader focus group, school leaders stated that a Teacher Development Liaison (TDL), who is also a full-time teacher, provides direct support and monthly check-ins for novice teachers.

- In the teacher focus group, teachers stated that novice teachers receive informal check-ins and walkthroughs as well as formal observation four times are conducted throughout the year.

AREAS FOR GROWTH

The school is in the process of developing its observation and feedback system to enhance professional practice and improve student outcomes.

- Throughout the school leader focus group, zero out of seven school leaders could speak to observation actionable feedback being provided to teachers as part of the observation cycle.

- During the school leader focus group, assistant principals reported following the formal observation process with fidelity but indicated that informal walkthroughs never receive much feedback aside from "thanks".

- In the teacher focus group, zero out of nine teachers stated hat that they are receiving meaningful feedback during observations. Further, only two out of nine teachers mentioned that off-cycle teachers receive observations aside from occasional walkthroughs, which in not accompanied by actionable feedback.

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

Develop a comprehensive observation and feedback system with clear protocols for both formal and informal observations. Train school leaders on providing actionable feedback and establish a regular monitoring schedule. Create platforms for teachers to share their experiences and suggestions to foster continuous improvement.

ACTION STEPS:

As a result of this school review:

- Develop and distribute a clear protocol for both formal and informal observations.

- Provide training sessions for assistant principals and other school leaders on how to give effective, constructive feedback.

- Establish a regular schedule for monitoring the implementation of the feedback protocols.

- Create opportunities for teachers to share their experiences and suggestions regarding the feedback they receive.

RESOURCES:

1. Effective Feedback

Appendix A

SUMMARY OF EXPERT REVIEW TEAM ACTIVITIES

Expert Review Team Members

1. Diana Sung, Coordinator, Frederick County Public Schools

2. Dr. Duane Arbogast, Consultant, Arbogast & Associates

3. Dr. John Seelke, Instructional Specialist, Montgomery County Public Schools

4. Jacob Goldberg, Data Coach, Prince George's County Public Schools

5. Maureen Liakos, Department Chair, Anne Arundel County Public Schools

6. Tammy Luttrell, Instructional Facilitator, Somerset County Public Schools

Site Visit Day 1

Wednesday, April 17, 2024

Site Visit Day 2

Thursday, April 18, 2024

Number of Classroom Reviewed

14

Description of Classroom Visited

Wednesday, April 17, 2024	Thursday, April 18, 2024
- ELD 1 - Adv. Algebra - Music Tech - English 12 - English 11 Honors - Micro/Macro AP - Art History - Spanish IV	- Resource English - Strategic Reading - Biology - Physics AP - Biology GT

Number of Interviews

One

- Principal

Number of Focus Groups

Four

- 9 Students
- 8 School Leaders
- 8 Teachers
- 5 Parents

Documents Analyzed

- Site visit documentation submitted by the school and LEA.

Appendix B

MARYLAND SCHOOL REVIEW RUBRIC

Ratings for River Hill High 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.