

# Maryland School Review

## Expert Review Team Report

Domain 1: Curriculum and Instruction

Thomas S. Wootton 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 THOMAS S. WOOTTON HIGH SCHOOL

Thomas S. Wootton High School, located in Montgomery County, serves a total of 1,943 students in grades 9<sup>th</sup> – 12<sup>th</sup>. The enrolled population is made up of 36% Asian, 12% African American, 8% Hispanic, and 40% White. The school's population includes approximately 13% of students that receive free or reduced meals and 23% 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 in Assessment and Timing and its lowest rating of Accomplishing in Classroom Instruction. 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	81%	Accomplishing
Classroom Instruction	75%	Accomplishing
Assessment and Timing	85%	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 professional development focusing on instructional strategies such as student-centered instruction, formative assessment, and collaborative learning. Create and implement a protocol for data-based discussions and decision-making/planning based on data.

## 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.

There is a high level of academic rigor within the school with a focus on student achievement that is inclusive of all students. Learning that is occurring in the school is tightly connected to future achievement. This rigor was mentioned across all focus groups (teacher, student, parent, and leadership) as well as observed/heard in all classroom reviews.

- In all classrooms that were visited, instructional materials and resources were modified to support learning. Specifically, in the English Language Development class, students were given materials that were modified to their World-class Instructional Design and Assessment (WIDA) level. In the two additional ELA classes, students were provided with text excerpts, scripts, and/or other written material to evaluate, modify, and clarify their understanding of the standard and afford them of the opportunity for mastery.
- All teachers in the focus group indicated that they are allowed to engage in county-wide online professional development with other teachers in their content area.
- The learning environment was conducive to fostering high academic student achievement. In 100% of the classrooms reviewed, positive and respectful interactions were observed in all subject areas. Students were greeted with statements that encouraged them to put forth effort. The ease of conversations with their teachers was evident. For example, one teacher encouraged students to come back for coach class so they could improve their grades, and the student stated that it would help him show parents that he was working hard. The classrooms also support positive messages that are motivational for students. It was evident that students were used to working in collaborative interactions as they were able to have meaningful conversations and accept different viewpoints.

Student learning is promoted by the evidence of engaging questions and actionable feedback during structured learning sessions.

- Students were able to cite evidence to support their thinking and responses in nine out of eleven classes. One math teacher prompted students by saying, "Make sure your answer matches the requirement for the formula that was asked", and "Can you explain how you arrived at the answer...Does that make sense to you?" Students appeared comfortable in all classes as evidenced



by them asking clarifying questions. However, some questions did not lead to probing or hypothesizing.

- Additionally, in nine out of eleven classrooms, teachers asked open-ended questions that required analysis, application, or evaluation of information. For example, in an English Language Arts (ELA) classroom, students were asked to identify mood from text and evaluate the strength of arguments based on textual evidence.
- In all eleven classrooms reviewed, students received feedback on work progression and completion. In all reviewed classrooms this feedback was delivered by the teacher and connected to future assessments. There were multiple ways for teachers and students to check for understanding to assess learning in ten of the eleven classrooms, further evidenced by teacher circulation and one-to-one questioning with students. In nine out of eleven classrooms, student collaborative groups and peers used each other as resources to check understanding.
- All classrooms reviewed provided evidence of students receiving feedback on work progression and completion, delivered by the teacher, and connected to future assessments. However, in one of the eleven classrooms, reviewers noted the feedback provided to redirect students toward the objective of the lessons served as the catalyst for an adjustment in instruction.

## AREAS FOR GROWTH

Provide professional development for all instructional staff on differentiated instructional strategies and increase opportunities for student-driven learning to support peer-to-peer academic acceleration.

- In ten of the eleven classrooms reviewed, more than 50% of activities (class time) were focused on teacher-directed instruction of content. In these classes, varied strategies were not utilized to support student learning. These classes focused on one strategy for all students to demonstrate mastery and activities were teacher-led.

## 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 professional development focusing on instructional strategies such as student-centered instruction, formative assessment, and collaborative learning. Create and implement a protocol for data-based discussions and decision-making/planning based on data.

#### ACTION STEPS:

As a result of this school review:

- Provide professional development focused on instructional strategies that meet individual student needs.
- Leverage the existing expertise in the school to provide a refresher learning opportunity on structuring collaborative learning for students.
- Include professional learning on using a school-wide protocol on using formative data created during the class learning to adjust instruction as needed.

#### RESOURCES:

1. [How to Implement Active Learning Strategies and Activities Into Your Classroom](#)
2. [Learning From Instructional Rounds](#)
3. [The Shift to Student-Led](#)

# Appendix A

## SUMMARY OF EXPERT REVIEW TEAM ACTIVITIES

### Expert Review Team Members

1. Daniel Russell, Co-Founder, Bridge the Gap
2. Eric Counts, SPED Compliance, Charles County Public Schools
3. Andrea Johnson, Assistant Principal, Charles County Public Schools
4. Linda Brown, Consultant, Baltimore City and County
5. Brian Zeleny, Department Chair, Baltimore County Public Schools

### Site Visit Day 1

Wednesday, February 21, 2024

### Site Visit Day 2

Thursday, February 22, 2024

### Number of Classroom Reviewed

Eleven

### Description of Classroom Visited

Wednesday, February 21, 2024	Thursday, February 22, 2024
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• AP Chemistry DP B</li> <li>• English Language Development Seminar Levels 1, 2, 3</li> <li>• Connections Class (Supported Class &amp; Intervention)</li> <li>• Algebra 2B</li> <li>• Honors English 11B</li> <li>• Honors Algebra 2B</li> <li>• Honors English 9B (Supported Class)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Honors English 12B (Supported Class)</li> <li>• Honors Algebra 2B</li> <li>• Honors US History B (Supported Class)</li> <li>• Honors English 10B</li> </ul>

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### Number of Interviews

One

- Principal

### Number in Focus Groups

Seven

- 17 students (2 groups)
- 10 school leaders
- 23 teachers (2 groups)
- 16 parents (2 groups)

### Documents Analyzed

- Site visit documentation submitted by the school and LEA.

## Appendix B

### MARYLAND SCHOOL REVIEW RUBRIC

#### Ratings for Thomas S. Wootton HS

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.