Maryland School Review

Expert Review Team Report

Domain 2: Student Support
Domain 3: Educator Support

Thomas S. Wootton High 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 9th – 12th. The enrolled population is made up of 36% Asian, 12% African American, 8% Hispanic, and 40% White. The school's population includes approximately 8% of students that receive free or reduced meals and 9% 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 Opportunities and Access and its lowest rating of Accomplishing in Career Growth. 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	82%	Accomplishing
Opportunities and Access	88%	Accomplishing with Continuous Improvement

Domain 3: Educator Support		
Indicator	Percentage	Rating
Observation and Feedback	75%	Accomplishing
Professional Learning	69%	Accomplishing
Career Growth	68%	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.

- Strengthen communication with all stakeholders regarding types of student support available and provide regular updates to include authentic stakeholder feedback statements. Survey stakeholders to determine knowledge of existing student support programs/initiatives and to create data that will increase student and other stakeholder voices in decision-making processes in the school.

- Consider addressing this focus area with the data from Domain 1 focus area to create a team centered around strengthening Professional Learning Communities (PLC). Strengthening the coherence between existing and new structures will support the work of improvement to ensure all professionals have optimal space to learn and grow their practice.

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 partnerships with community for student support that is appreciated by all stakeholders.

- The school's Aspire program is designed to provide intentional support to students who are transitioning from middle school to high school connecting adult support focused on learning. There is a Bridge to Wellness-Sheppard Pratt in school therapist that students can self-identify if they are 16 years older or older. Also, there is a full-time social worker and a Pupil Personnel Worker (PPW).

- 100% of School Leaders reported that the Bridge to Wellness (partnership with Department of Health and Shepherd Pratt) provides students with multiple supports and therapeutic sessions.

- 100% of School Leaders reported after analyzing performance data in Performance Matters, that students are assigned to different core content teachers each semester.

- 100% of Juniors and Seniors in the student focus group reported that they receive support from their counselor and/or college and career counselor with all aspects of applying to college and previous internship coordinator (now at Central Office provided direct assistance with obtaining an internship based on student interest).

AREAS FOR GROWTH

The school stakeholders have an appreciation for the known structures in place to support students, however, there is room for growth and improvement to ensure that all stakeholder voice is included in the decision-making processes where applicable.

- While there is evidence, as provided by the school in the site visit documentation, that all staff were trained on the "Student WellBeing Team and Triad (SWBT)", all teachers in the focus group reported not having any PD for this program.

- Two of the sixteen parents reported that students with learning disabilities are not equitably afforded access to signature programs (i.e. AP, honors, and magnet programs) with fidelity.

- Two of the ten School Leaders in the focus group reported plans to revise scheduling to prioritize placing the most effective teachers with the neediest students.

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

Strengthen communication with all stakeholders regarding types of student support available and provide regular updates to include authentic stakeholder feedback statements. Survey stakeholders to determine knowledge of existing student support programs/initiatives and to create data that will increase student and other stakeholder voices in decision-making processes in the school.

ACTION STEPS:

As a result of this school review:

- Develop a survey that lists the supports and opportunities for stakeholders to engage in the listed supports and includes an area to gather suggestions from the community.

- Review current systems and structures to ensure all stakeholders are involved in decision-making meetings as appropriate. Consider following-up meetings with regular communication for stakeholder updates and include various types of social media to meet different learning styles.

- Revisit the survey to determine how the structure shifts are supporting the improvement efforts.

RESOURCES:

1. Students as Decision-Makers
2. Opportunities for Student Decision-Making
3. Supporting Teachers by Including Them in Decision-Making

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

All school-based professionals acknowledged and appreciated the strength of Wellness Wednesdays and School Counselors as the main supports of student mental well-being.

- As stipends have expanded people have come in for restorative justice committees. Growth around NBCT. Being a part of ILT and special projects. Admin cert programs / Resources additional stipend, growth in NBCT by ten teachers this year, healthy schools are new engine for growth, administrative program that adds to school overall, intern projects for teachers and students as well.

- During the teacher focus group discussion, all teachers stated that teachers on cycle are observed 2-3 times annually during an observation cycle year.

- Administrators receive Performance Matters training on how to disaggregate data at county-wide training courses. The county provides IT Newsletters that include how-to guides on using data platforms.

- According to the school's site visit documentation, PLCs are expected to meet regularly to analyze student data, develop plans to improve instruction and share best practices to improve instruction.

AREAS FOR GROWTH

While site documentation and school leaders in the focus groups agree on the observation/feedback structure in place is supportive of professional growth and improving student outcomes, there were differing perspectives on "regularly" from the statements amongst teachers.

- During the teacher focus group discussion, eight of the twenty-three teachers shared that informal observations are infrequent and disproportionately distributed amongst teachers. One teacher reported having seven informal observations to date while another teacher reports having none thus far.

- Two of the twenty-three teachers shared that they meet during lunch or after school to co-plan on occasion.

- Nine of the teachers in one of the teacher focus groups stated there is no formal training for staff but lesson templates are provided.

- All twenty-three teachers reported and agreed to not having peer collaboration time embedded into the daily schedule when this was shared by one teacher.

RECOMMENDATIONS

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FOCUS AREA 1

Consider addressing this focus area with the data from Domain 1 focus area to create a team centered around strengthening Professional Learning Communities (PLC). Strengthening the coherence between existing and new structures will support the work of improvement to ensure all professionals have optimal space to learn and grow their practice.

ACTION STEPS:

As a result of this school review:

- Examine current structures and systems to determine the relevance of topics and how adults engage in the learning for improving practices.
- Survey teachers on the effectiveness of the topic items on the agenda to determine next steps and items for future PLCs.
- Restructure the current structure for learning walks to include teachers and serve as a follow-up to the implementation of new practices to support improvement efforts.

RESOURCES:

1. How Instructional Coaches Can Use Co-Teaching to Support Teachers

2. Helping Education Leaders Build Coherence into Reform Strategies to Support Teachers and Student Learning

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
- AP Chemistry DP B - English Language Development Seminar Levels 1, 2, 3 - Connections Class (Supported Class & Intervention) - Algebra 2B - Honors English 11B - Honors Algebra 2B - Honors English 9B (Supported Class)	- Honors English 12B (Supported Class) - Honors Algebra 2B - Honors US History B (Supported Class) - Honors English 10B

Number of Interviews

One

- Principal

Number of 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 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.