Maryland School Review

Expert Review Team Report

Domain 2: Student Support
Domain 3: Educator Support

Watkins Mill High School

Maryland State Department of Education

Office of Teaching and Learning

March 20-21, 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 three 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 WATKINS MILLS HIGH SCHOOL

Watkins Mill High School, located in Montgomery County, serves a total of 1715 students in grades 9th – 12th. The enrolled population is made up of 61% Hispanic, 23% African American, 8 % Asian, 6% White, and 2% 2+ races. The school's population includes approximately 68% of students that receive free or reduced meals and 13% 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	75%	Accomplishing
Opportunities and Access	72%	Accomplishing

Domain 3: Educator Support		
Indicator	Percentage	Rating
Observation and Feedback	88%	Accomplishing with Continuous Improvement
Professional Learning	75%	Accomplishing
Career Growth	85%	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.

- Enhance the delivery of academic, social, emotional, and behavioral support services to better meet the diverse needs of students. This involves making the wellness center more inclusive and accessible, increasing consistent support and communication from teachers, improving school structure and discipline, and fostering a stronger sense of community within the school.

- Ensure that all departments have consistent and structured opportunities for teacher collaboration and data discussions to enhance peer support and professional growth. Standardize collaboration schedules across all departments to ensure equitable and effective use of time for peer support and data-driven discussions.

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 implemented a comprehensive plan to safeguard students' mental well-being by providing them with qualified staff.

- In the teacher's focus group, teachers shared that there are regularly scheduled periods each week dedicated to social-emotional learning, facilitating relationship building, and discussing mental health topics.

- During the parent, student, teacher, and school leader focus groups it was shared that there is a well-developed wellness plan, where students have access to mental health support systems.

- In the student focus group survey, fourteen out of fourteen students indicated that they have access to at least one caring adult they could go to if they faced a problem that was not related to schoolwork.

The school administration has developed measures and systems to ensure that students graduate on time.

- In the school leader focus group, school leaders shared that attendance is prioritized, and teachers are provided a list of students to check in with.

- Students in the focus group reported having access to career and college planning resources. They also mentioned that they are given opportunities to take SAT and IB exams. Additionally, students shared that the school communicates graduation information through emails and flyers, and students have access to college counseling services.

The school provides students the opportunity to participate in credit-bearing, advanced, and rigorous coursework.

- In the school leader focus group, school leaders shared that the IB program is open-access and allows students the opportunity to participate in the IB program.

- In the student focus group survey, all twelve students who responded indicated that the school offers advanced classes. Nine out of thirteen students reported that they are currently participating in advanced classes, and eleven out of fourteen students felt that their classes and teachers challenged them.

- During school reviews, there was clear and direct evidence that the school has implemented a magnet program designed to systematically prepare students for the International Baccalaureate (IB) program, including preparatory pre-IB courses.

AREAS FOR GROWTH

The school has implemented established protocols and processes to offer a range of academic, social, emotional, and behavioral supports. However, there are opportunities to enhance the delivery of these services to better meet the needs of the students.

- In the student focus group, students emphasized the importance of expanding the wellness center to be more inclusive and accessible, noting that not all students feel comfortable using it.

- Students in the focus group shared that there is a need for more consistent support from teachers, improved communication about available resources, and better structure and discipline within the school.

- Parents in the focus group expressed a desire for more community support within the school and suggested the possibility of transforming the school into a community school.

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

Enhance the delivery of academic, social, emotional, and behavioral support services to better meet the diverse needs of students. This involves making the wellness center more inclusive and accessible, increasing consistent support and communication from teachers, improving school structure and discipline, and fostering a stronger sense of community within the school.

ACTION STEPS:

As a result of this school review:

- Survey to gather feedback from students about their needs and suggestions for making the wellness center more inclusive and accessible.

- Provide professional development for teachers focused on consistent student support, effective communication, and resource awareness.

- Provide professional development for teachers focused on consistent student support, effective communication, and resource awareness.

- Engage with parents and community members to explore the possibility of transforming the school into a community school.

RESOURCES:

1. What is MTSS?
2. Multi-Tiered System of Support
3. A Comprehensive Guide to MTSS

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

There is an established framework that ensures that teachers and school leaders are regularly observed and receive actionable feedback from their supervisors designed to support professional growth and improve student outcomes.

- School leaders during the school leader focus group stated that administrators and department leaders conduct weekly informal observations with a standardized tool, providing feedback to teachers.

- In the teacher focus group, teachers stated that they receive frequent informal observations, along with a formal mid-year and end-of-year evaluation, and that the feedback that is provided is actionable.

- During the school leader focus group, the school shared that principals receive weekly informal feedback on performance and undergo formal observations every five years.

- In the teacher focus group survey, nine out of eleven teachers indicated that they receive regular feedback and support.

The school engages teachers and leaders in a continuous cycle of professional learning that is practical, evidence-based, and data-driven, fostering improvement in teaching practices and student outcomes.

- Full participation of teachers in professional learning activities, including Professional Learning Communities (PLCs), staff development sessions twice a month, and virtual learning, as mandated by MCPS.

- Ongoing professional development sessions occur twice a month, with a shifting focus on pertinent issues such as attendance and racism, supporting the overarching goal of fostering a sense of belonging within the school community.

- Feedback from teachers indicates a need for increased focus on mental health training within the professional learning curriculum.

Novice and new teachers to the school are provided with job-embedded induction, support, development by being provided with high-quality feedback designed to improve their practice.

- In the school leadership focus group, it was shared that novice teachers and new teachers to the school are provided a "New Teacher Professional Learning Community" designed to provide specific support to these teachers.

- In the teacher and school leadership focus group, it was shared that new teachers are provided with mentors, both the LEA and school level. Additionally, the school provides novice teachers with a "buddy" teacher and provides specific support to novice teachers.

AREAS FOR GROWTH

The school has established a schedule that facilitates teacher collaboration and provides teachers with peer collaboration time. However, it was noted that the times allocated vary by department.

- During the teacher focus group, teachers shared that their regular department meetings and PLCs are held to foster peer collaboration. However, there were some inconsistencies noted in collaboration across departments, with some groups requiring more structured teamwork opportunities than others.

- In the teacher focus group survey, responses varied regarding how often teachers have opportunities to collaborate and discuss data. Four teachers reported having these opportunities monthly, three teachers said they occur once a week, three teachers indicated bi-weekly, and one teacher mentioned never having such opportunities.

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

Ensure that all departments have consistent and structured opportunities for teacher collaboration and data discussions to enhance peer support and professional growth. Standardize collaboration schedules across all departments to ensure equitable and effective use of time for peer support and data-driven discussions.

ACTION STEPS:

As a result of this school review:

- Create a uniform schedule that provides equal collaboration time for all departments.

- Ensure that collaboration time is used effectively across all departments.

- Ensure that data discussions occur regularly and consistently.

- Encourage collaboration and sharing of best practices between departments.

RESOURCES:

1. All Things PLC
2. National School Faculty Protocols

Appendix A

SUMMARY OF EXPERT REVIEW TEAM ACTIVITIES

Expert Review Team Members

1. Stephanie Ware, Principal, Frederick County Public Schools
2. Laila Watkins, Teacher, Frederick County Public Schools
3. Laurie Jenkins, Supervisor, Montgomery County (Retired)
4. Roman Ganoe, Teacher, Washington County Public Schools
5. Natalie Rebetsky, Teacher, (Retired
6. ShoShauna McCoy-Hill, Assistant Principal, Prince Gorge's County Public Schools

Site Visit Day 1

March 20, 2024

Site Visit Day 2

March 21, 2024

Number of Classroom Reviewed

13

Description of Classroom Visited

Wednesday, March 20, 2024	Thursday, March 21, 2024
• ENG Lit	• IB Bio
• Found TECH	• MSPC
• Hon Health	• ALG 2B
• IBS Stats	• SPAN 1B
• Ceramic Sculpture	
• ENG 9B	
• Astronomy	
• Hon Health	
• HON Modern World	

Number of Interviews

One principal Interview

Number of Focus Groups

4

- 14 students
- 8 school leaders
- 12 teachers
- 10 parents

Documents Analyzed

- Site visit documentation submitted by the school and LEA.

Appendix B

MARYLAND SCHOOL REVIEW RUBRIC

Ratings for Watkins 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 before 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.