

Maryland School Review

Expert Review Team Report

Domain 2: Student Support

Domain 3: Educator Support

Westminster High School

Maryland State Department of Education

Office of Teaching and Learning

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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 WESTMINSTER HIGH SCHOOL

Westminster High School, located in Carroll County, serves a total of 1517 students in grades 9th-12th. The enrolled population is made up of 77% White, 8% Hispanic, 6% African American, and 4% 2+ races. The school's population includes approximately 24% 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 Professional Learning. 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	79%	Accomplishing
Opportunities and Access	75%	Accomplishing

Domain 3: Educator Support		
Indicator	Percentage	Rating
Observation and Feedback	88%	Accomplishing with Continuous Improvement
Professional Learning	72%	Accomplishing
Career Growth	82%	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.

- Develop a plan to expand Advanced Placement and Dual Enrollment opportunities to meet increasing student demand and align with the standard of accessible, credit-bearing, rigorous coursework for all students.
- Tailor a professional learning program to meet the specific needs of its teachers, with an emphasis on practical, classroom-related challenges such as student behavior management. This approach should integrate data-driven and job-embedded practices to ensure that professional learning is both relevant and immediately applicable.
- Provide teachers with information beyond the benefits of achieving National Board Certification (NBC) 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

The school has established a continuum of integrated academic, social, and behavioral supports that support and directly address specific challenges that students at the school face.

- In focus groups school leaders, teachers, students, and parents, it was shared that the school has implemented a four-year advisory program where students are paired with a teacher mentor, and this teacher serves as a mentor and supports the students throughout their time in high school.
- The four focus groups indicated that the school has implemented a FLEX period that operates school-wide, providing time for students to seek additional support in tiers 1-3.
- In the student group survey, twelve out of twelve students reported having a caring adult to turn to for non-academic challenges. Additionally, all twelve students confirmed they have a supportive adult at school to assist with any challenges.

There are systems in place to ensure that the school administration can measure and track students' progress towards graduating on time.

- In the school leadership focus group, school leaders stated that the School Support Team, also known as GAPS, is active in tracking and supporting students at risk of not graduating on time.
- School leaders explained that using a system to monitor each student's progress towards graduation helps provide various supports to ensure all students graduate on time.
- In a review of school documents provided, there is evidence of an established support system and team in place to monitor and ensure students progress toward high school graduation.
- During the parent's focus group, parents shared that the school has developed substantial support systems to aid students to graduate on time.
- In the teacher focus group survey, eighteen out of eighteen teachers gave positive feedback about the level of support that students receive at the school.

The course curriculum offers a diverse range of subjects, including Art, Career and Technical Education (CTE), world languages, and other advanced courses.

- Students in focus groups reported having access to a variety of courses such as art, CTE, world languages, and music.

- Parents noted that the courses available at the Career and Tech Center are relevant and effectively provide students with various certification options.

AREAS FOR GROWTH

Evidence highlights a need regarding the availability of Advanced Placement (AP) courses. Although the school effectively offers these advanced courses, there is a need for additional courses to be offered.

- Data from the student focus group survey shows that twelve out of twelve students know that the schools offer advanced placement courses.
- During the student focus group, students expressed the need for more Advanced Placement (AP) courses and dual enrollment opportunities with colleges. They emphasized that these advanced courses fill up quickly, and offering more options would allow more students to participate in these course offerings.

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 plan to expand Advanced Placement and Dual Enrollment opportunities to meet increasing student demand and align with the standard of accessible, credit-bearing, rigorous coursework for all students.

ACTION STEPS:

As a result of this school review:

- Determine the specific AP and dual enrollment courses that students are most interested in and the barriers preventing access to these courses.
- Increase the number of available AP courses and dual enrollment opportunities.
- Ensure that the necessary resources are allocated to support the expansion of advanced coursework.
- Assist students in preparing for the rigors of advanced coursework.
- Continuously evaluate the effectiveness of the expanded course offerings and make necessary adjustments.

RESOURCES:

1. [Pathways in Early College High School](#)
2. [Expanding Access to AP Courses](#)

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 observation and feedback system for teachers and leaders at the school to participate in and receive actionable feedback designed to support professional growth and improve student outcomes.

- During the teacher and school leader focus group, it was shared that non-tenured teachers are observed four times annually, while tenured teachers are observed on three times a year.
- In the teacher focus group, fourteen out of fourteen teachers reported receiving actionable feedback from both formal and informal observations.

The school provides on-the-job mentoring and coaching for novice teachers, ensuring they receive detailed, actionable feedback that supports their professional growth and improves student outcomes.

- The teacher and school leader focus groups reported that the school has implemented a mentoring plan for novice teachers. This plan provides novice teachers with actionable feedback aimed at enhancing their teaching practices.
- The teacher and school leader focus groups highlighted that the school collaborates with the Local Education Agency (LEA) to support novice teachers. This collaboration ensures that novice teachers are paired with mentors from either the school or the central office.
- In the school leader focus group it was shared that every department has a mentoring program designed to support novice teachers.
- From a review of the school and LEA documents shows a developed framework that provides novice teachers with multiple layers of support with actionable feedback and a process to assess effectiveness.

AREAS FOR GROWTH

The school is developing a professional learning program focused on incorporating job-embedded and data-driven practices.

- Teachers also expressed the need for more relevant school-based professional learning topics, particularly related to classroom and student behavior management.
- During the teacher focus group, seven out of eight teachers shared that the county-wide professional learning sessions are not directly aligned with the specific challenges that they face.

The focus groups revealed that while teachers understood the basic tenets of National Board Certification (NBC) and local college programs for career advancement, both teachers and school leaders lacked awareness about the career ladder, though school leaders anticipated future developments.

- The school leader focus group shared that they were unaware of the career ladder, though there was the anticipation of potential future developments.
- In the teacher focus group there was a lack of understanding about the various aspects of the career ladder beyond NBC.
- During the teacher focus group, teachers indicated they understood the National Board Certification programs as part of advancement opportunities as well as school programs associated with local college offerings but did not know about other aspects of the career ladder.

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

Tailor a professional learning program to meet the specific needs of its teachers, with an emphasis on practical, classroom-related challenges such as student behavior management. This approach should integrate data-driven and job-embedded practices to ensure that professional learning is both relevant and immediately applicable.

ACTION STEPS:

As a result of this school review:

- Conduct a comprehensive survey among all teaching staff to gather detailed feedback on their current professional learning experiences, perceived gaps, and specific areas where they seek more support.
- Based on the survey results, collaborate with educational experts to develop targeted training sessions that address the high-priority needs. For example, if classroom management is highlighted as a need, create specific modules focusing on practical strategies for managing diverse classroom behaviors.
- Introduce collaborative, job-embedded learning models such as peer observations, coaching, and co-teaching strategies where teachers can observe and learn from one another in real classroom settings.
- Set up regular reflection meetings where teachers can discuss what they've learned through these observations and how they are applying new strategies in their classrooms.
- Adjust professional learning topics and strategies based on this data, ensuring that the program evolves in response to the actual teaching and learning outcomes observed.

RESOURCES:

1. [Professional Learning Workshops](#)
2. [Professional Learning vs PD](#)

FOCUS AREA 2

Provide teachers with information beyond the benefits of achieving National Board Certification (NBC) 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 ladder, including but not limited to the steps beyond NBC.
- 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 the career ladder.
- Include familiarity with and active engagement in career progression opportunities as a criterion in the teacher evaluation process.

RESOURCES:

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

Appendix A

SUMMARY OF EXPERT REVIEW TEAM ACTIVITIES

Expert Review Team Members

1. Robert Limpert, Director, Harford Community College
2. Tanya Montgomery, Principal, Department of Juvenile Services
3. Laila Watkins, Teacher, Frederick County Public Schools
4. Scott Buhrman, Specialist, Washington County Public Schools
5. Scott Ruel, Director, Howard County Public Schools
6. Seth Barish, Principal, Baltimore County Public Schools

Site Visit Day 1

Wednesday, February 21, 2024

Site Visit Day 2

Thursday, February 22, 2024

Number of Classroom Reviewed

Fourteen (14) classrooms

Description of Classroom Visited

Wednesday, February 21, 2024	Thursday, February 22, 2024
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Int Math • Academic Math • Advisory • English • AP Spanish • Int Reading • World History • AP ENG 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ESOL • Honors • Advisory Flex • SPED • Honors • SPED Math

Number of Interviews

One (1)

Number of Focus Groups

Eight (8)

- 10 Students
- 14 School leaders
- 13 Teachers
- 10 Parents

Documents Analyzed

- Site visit documentation submitted by the school and LEA.

Appendix B

MARYLAND SCHOOL REVIEW RUBRIC

Ratings for Westminster 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.