TO:	Members of the State Board of Education
	Members of the Accountability and Implementation Board
FROM:	Carey M. Wright, Ed.D., State Superintendent of Schools
DATE:	June 25, 2024
SUBJECT:	Expert Review Team and the School Review Process

Purpose

To provide the State Board and the Accountability and Implementation Board with an update on the Expert Review Team (ERT) and the School Review Process.

Background

The Blueprint for Maryland's Future specifies that the purpose of the Expert Review Team (ERT) program is to conduct interviews, observe classes, and use other data to analyze the extent to which the Blueprint for Maryland's Future is being implemented; collaborate with school-based faculty and staff and local school system staff to: determine reasons why student progress is insufficient; and develop recommendations, measures, and strategies to address the issues identified by the Expert Review Team. The ERT program also allows teams to identify promising practices and growth opportunities in curriculum, instruction, interventions, and educator support to accelerate student learning.

The ERT completed 50 school reviews for the 2023-2024 school year and will conduct approximately 150 school reviews for the 2024-2025 school year focusing on ELA/Literacy and Math.

Executive Summary

The presentation provides updates on the following:

1. Expert Review Team: Purpose and Background
2. ERT Development and Pilot Review Process 2021-2023
3. ERT School Visits and Reviews 2023-2024
4. ERT Deployment for School Year 2024-2025

Action

No action is required; this information is for discussion only.

Attachments

Expert Review Team and the School Review Process.pptx

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OFFICE OF TEACHING AND LEARNING

Expert Review Team and the School Review Process Update

June 25, 2024

Presented By | Dr. Paula Cage, Director, Office of School Review, Support, and Improvement
Dr. Matthew Duque, Director, Office of Research, Planning and Program Evaluation
Phil Lasser, Senior Executive Director, Office of Teaching and Learning

Maryland
STATE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

Presentation Outline

1. Expert Review Team: Purpose and Background

2. ERT Development and Pilot Review Process 2021-2023

3. ERT School Visits and Reviews 2023-2024

4. ERT Deployment for School Year 2024-2025

Purpose of the Expert Review Team (ERT)

(c) The purpose of the Program is for teams of expert educators to:

- (1) Conduct interviews, observe classes, and use other data to analyze the extent to which The Blueprint for Maryland's Future is being implemented; and

- (2) Collaborate with school-based faculty and staff and local school system staff to:

    o (i) Determine reasons why student progress is insufficient; and

    o (ii) Develop recommendations, measures, and strategies to address the issues identified by the Expert Review Team.

MD Code, Education, § 5-411

- (e)(3) If the Department, based on a recommendation of an Expert Review Team, determines that a school's low performance on assessments is, largely, due to curricular problems, the school shall adopt the curriculum resources developed under this section.

- (4) Except as provided in paragraph (3) of this subsection, this section does not require a public school or county board to adopt the Department's curriculum standards and curriculum resources and may not be construed to restrict a county board's authority to adopt curricula under § 4-111 of this article.

MD Code, Education, § 7-202.1

Review of ERT Pilot Visits: 2021-2023

- With the charge from the Blueprint to visit schools across Maryland, MSDE implemented a pilot school review process to visit schools and examine causes of student performance trends, behavioral health services, and Blueprint implementation. As part of that process, MSDE:

  o Researched national and international school review practices

  o Developed a pilot school review system (focus group questions and classroom capture sheet) and rubric

  o Completed 5 pilot school visits (2 elementary schools, 1 middle school, 2 high schools)

  o Gathered Feedback from school visit participants and other stakeholders

  o Vetted, interviewed, and hired about 150 ERT members

  o Trained ERT members in July, August, and October 2022

  o Continued to refine the measures included in the review rubric to strengthen alignment with the Blueprint and other best practices.

Summary of Official School Visits: 2023-2024

- Based on lessons learned and feedback from the pilot school visits, the Expert Review Team completed 50 official ERT school reviews in the 2023-2024 school year. To successfully complete these visits, MSDE achieved the following tasks:

  - o Facilitated training in Summer 2023 of the ERT members

  - o Developed site visit documentation and hosted a meeting with all LEA Blueprint Coordinators and Principals

  - o Facilitated December 2023 ERT training (cohort 2)

  - o Offered continuous ERT Virtual Training

  - o Organized Principals' Collaborative Conversations sessions to review and discuss best practices

  - o Administered an End of Year Survey to ERT Member, Blueprint Coordinators, Principals, and other Central Office staff members to gather their feedback

2023-2024 School Selection Methodology

Schools were selected for ERT visits in 2023-2024 based on the six criteria below.

Criterion Number	Criterion Type	Definition
1	Lowest Performing	Schools with the lowest percent proficient in ELA and math in 2022*†
2	Lower Performing	Schools not identified by criteria 1 with the lowest percent proficient in ELA and Math* Schools not identified by criteria 1 with the lowest percent proficient in ELA and math* or the lowest growth from 2021 to 2022†
3	Highest Performing	Schools with the highest weighted average percent proficient in ELA and math* or highest growth from 2021 to 2022†
4	Learning Loss	Schools with the largest decreases in percent proficient in ELA or math from 2019 to 2022‡
5	Learning Gaps	Difference in percent proficient in 2022 ELA and math for individual student groups (race/ethnicity, Students with Disabilities, English Learners, and Economically Disadvantaged) compared to their same school peers*†
6	Other	Selected at random from the list of remaining schools not identified by criteria 1-5

*An average of ELA and math results, weighted by the number of test takers on each test was used.
†Schools with fewer than 10 test takers combined in ELA and Math are not considered.
‡Schools with fewer than 10 test takers in ELA or math are not considered.
Note: Some schools may be removed from the list to ensure two or more different districts are represented.
Assessment data from 2023 will not be available before the list of schools needs to be identified.
1 The removal of schools with fewer than 10 enrolled students is only applied to criteria 1-5. Criterion 6 (random selection) includes these schools to ensure all schools are visited.

End of Year Feedback on the ERT Process

Overall, 79% of Expert Review Team members reported an excellent experience for the 2023-2024 school year, while 20% reported a satisfactory experience.

Topic	Responses	Excellent	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory
Process for signing up for school reviews	140	45%	49%	6%
Process for signing up for lodging	100	87%	13%	0%
Pick up and drop off of materials process	42	62%	29%	9%
Conducting classroom reviews	125	73%	26%	1%
Focus group process	100	66%	33%	1%
School Site Review Documents	135	64%	35%	1%
Reporting template (Teams/Excel)	135	23%	62%	15%

Note: The end of year survey was sent to all 145 Expert Review Team members and received 141 responses for a response rate of 97%.

ERT School Visits in School Year 2024-2025 (1 of 2)

For the 2024-2025 school year, the ERT school visits and reviews will focus specifically on improving instruction in Literacy/ELA and Mathematics in elementary schools.

Literacy/ELA School Visit Focus	Math School Visit Focus
• Phonemic awareness, phonics, vocabulary, fluency, and comprehension. • Ensuring all students have access to evidence-based literacy instruction using standards aligned, high-quality instructional materials (HQIM) grounded in the science of reading.	• Problem-solving, reasoning and proof, communication, representation, and connections. • Instructional strategies that explicitly demonstrate evidence-based teaching practices which include strategies to develop student mathematical proficiency in adaptive reasoning, strategic competence, conceptual understanding, procedural fluency, and productive disposition.

ERT School Visits in School Year 2024-2025 (2 of 2)

Literacy/ELA Visits	Math Visits
• Teams will visit only elementary schools in alignment with comprehensive literacy and math plan submissions for the 2024-2025 school year. • Schools that are low performing in both ELA and Math will receive two separate visits.	
Team of 6 experts • At least 2 Literacy/ELA Content Experts • MSDE is exploring at least one partner content expert or MSDE expert to attend the review with the team	Team of 6 experts • At least 2 Math Content Experts • MSDE is exploring at least one partner content expert or MSDE expert to attend the review with the team
Visit at least eight Literacy/ELA classrooms across multiple grade levels.	Visit at least eight Math classrooms across multiple grade levels.
• Focus groups will be conducted with teachers, students, parents, and school leadership. • Prior to the conclusion of the school site review visit, the ERT members will meet with the principal and school leadership and/or central office staff to debrief the school review process. • At the end of the day of the visit, the ERT members will come together to write the initial report. • Each school principal will be given a survey to provide any additional information regarding Literacy/ELA and Math initiatives and practices throughout the school. Principals will also be invited to participate in an interview.	

ELA/Literacy and Math Partnerships

In the 2024-2025 school year MSDE will continue to partner with the Maryland Initiative for Literacy Equity (MILE) to prioritize LEAs that demonstrated challenges with the development of their comprehensive school literacy plans.

MSDE is currently working to finalize a partnership with a Maryland university math education research team composed of math education researchers, professors, and associated math experts.

ELA/Literacy Partner	Math Partner
Review and provide feedback on the secondary literacy plans	Review ERT school reports
Provide comprehensive LEA reports addressing the alignment of the team's observations with the systemwide initiatives outlined in the LEA's Comprehensive Literacy Plans	Provide comprehensive LEA reports addressing the alignment of the team's observations with the systemwide initiatives outlined in the LEA's Comprehensive Math Plans
Provide ongoing technical assistance supporting LEAs with revising and fully implementing initiatives in their Comprehensive Literacy Plans aligned to best practices for literacy instruction and student outcomes	Provide ongoing technical assistance supporting LEAs with revising and fully implementing initiatives in their Comprehensive Math Plans aligned to best practices for math instruction and student outcomes.

Proposed School Selection Methodology for 2024-2025

Approximately 150 elementary schools will be selected for ERT visits based on seven criteria in 2024-2025. The schools to be visited in school year 2024-2025 will be determined and notified in August 2024, using assessment score results from Spring 2024. Criteria 1-6 are applied for ELA and math separately.
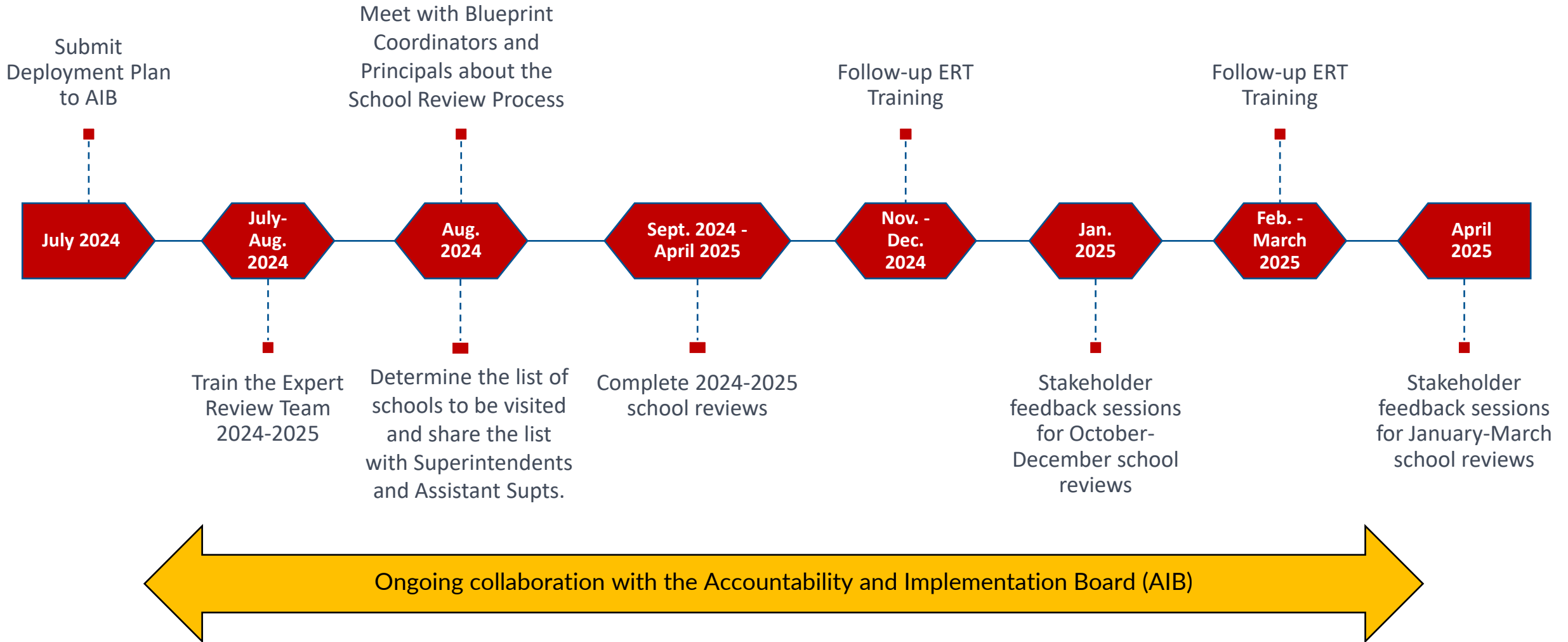
Criterion Number	Criterion	Definition
1	Lowest Performing	Lowest proficiency in 2024
2	Lower Performing*	Largest decrease in proficiency from 2022 to 2024
3	Highest Performing	Highest proficiency in 2024
4	Higher Performing**	Largest increase in proficiency from 2022 to 2024
5	Low Performing (SwDs)	Lowest proficiency for Students with Disabilities in 2023 and 2024
6	Low Performing (MLs)	Lowest proficiency for Multilingual Learners in 2023 and 2024
7	LEA Inclusion	Lowest proficiency of any LEA not selected by the above criteria (if necessary)

Note: No LEA will represent more than 50% of the schools selected in a single criterion.
*Only schools below the statewide proficiency rate are eligible for selection under this criterion.
**Only schools above the statewide proficiency rate are eligible for selection under this criterion.

Expert Review Team Deployment Timeline

Submit Deployment Plan to AIB

Meet with Blueprint Coordinators and Principals about the School Review Process

Follow-up ERT Training

Follow-up ERT Training

| July 2024 | July-Aug. 2024 | Aug. 2024 | Sept. 2024 - April 2025 | Nov. - Dec. 2024 | Jan. 2025 | Feb. - March 2025 | April 2025 |

Train the Expert Review Team 2024-2025

Determine the list of schools to be visited and share the list with Superintendents and Assistant Supts.

Complete 2024-2025 school reviews

Stakeholder feedback sessions for October-December school reviews

Stakeholder feedback sessions for January-March school reviews

Ongoing collaboration with the Accountability and Implementation Board (AIB)

Questions