

Maryland School Review

Expert Review Team Report

Domain 1: Curriculum and Instruction

Abbottston Elementary School

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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 ERT 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.

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 ABBOTTSTON ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

Abbottston Elementary School, located in Baltimore City, serves a total of 363 students in grades Pre-K – 5th grade. The enrolled population is made up of 90% African American and 7% Hispanic. The school's population includes approximately 77% of students who receive free or reduced meals and 16% 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 Domain 1. The school scored its highest rating of Accomplishing with Continuous Improvement in Curriculum and Instructional Materials and 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	92%	Accomplishing with Continuous Improvement
Classroom Instruction	84%	Accomplishing
Assessment and Timing	92%	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.

- Begin incorporating student-driven learning as a shared experience among the teachers and students. Student-driven learning should focus on the students sharing their learning, actively leading discussions, making their learning their own by making decisions about what/how they will learn and beginning to take ownership of their learning by having them monitor their learning and develop strategies for learning.
- Leverage structured collaborative learning models to provide space for teachers to design instructional learning opportunities for students, while leveraging the current knowledge capital with the teachers who execute this successfully.

Domain 1: Curriculum and Instruction

Curriculum and Instruction	High-quality curriculum, instructional materials, teaching practices, and assessment are implemented to support student learning.
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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.

The school’s climate is viewed as positive and supportive. In all stakeholder focus groups, participants offered complimentary statements regarding their appreciation for the school and leadership.

- All sixteen of the students in the focus groups offered appreciation for the school’s efforts toward improving the staff stating, “Good people work here”.
- This was echoed by all fifteen parents as they offered evidence of their children’s improvement. They attributed the growth to the school’s nurturing and academic program. One parent offered that her son had speech issues before school – now he is doing wonderful and is willing to talk more and hold conversations.
- Another parent stated that her child in second grade is autistic, and because of the support provided by the school, he talks now and is getting on track.
- In one of the eleven classrooms reviewed, the Pre-K class participated in a whole class read-aloud as students engaged in listening, saying, writing, and reading spelling patterns.

Most of the classrooms offer a variety of critical thinking strategies through the use of questioning and varied instructional strategies designed to meet students’ learning styles.

- Ten of the eleven classrooms provided evidence of variations of instructional strategies like whiteboards, poster paper, worksheets, organizers, tagged pages, diagram, flash cards, and manipulative tools (e.g., bug in a cup, flower bulb).
- In another classroom student instruction was differentiated to include strategies such as: Skywrite and then board white, visual, and verbal, read “outloud”, anchor charts, timers, small group tasks, whole group, choral reading, body language to support verbal language, kinesthetic rote counting.
- In nine of the eleven classrooms, students were encouraged to think toward building critical thinking.

AREAS FOR GROWTH

Instruction was not a shared exchange with student learners and was primarily led by the teacher. The school would benefit from developing a continuous learning model for peer learning around instructional strategies using structured collaborative learning groups and student-driven learning.

- Seven of the eleven classrooms did not provide evidence of students working together in small groups to cooperatively solve problems, develop answers to questions, or complete assignments.
- Three of the eleven classrooms provided evidence of students leading their learning.
- According to the teachers and school leaders in the focus groups, veteran teachers beyond year five do not have professional development choices unless they participate in a fellowship program or early childhood professional development.

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 a series of continuous professional development strategies for infusing student-driven learning as a shared experience among the teachers and students with collaborative learning models. Students should share their learning, actively leading discussions, make their learning their own by making decisions about what/how they will learn, and begin to take ownership of their learning by having them monitor their own learning and develop strategies for learning.

ACTION STEPS:

As a result of this school review:

- Provide continuous improvement by developing professional learning for all instructional staff by designing structured collaborative learning models for students.
- Develop a professional development series for student-driven learning opportunities in conjunction with the collaborative learning model.
- Use the current master schedule to develop peer-to-peer learning tours to support veteran teachers with continuous improvement practices of teaching and learning.
- Incorporate the current structures for peer learning walks to include learning from colleagues who currently implement collaborative learning groups with student-driven learning successfully.

RESOURCES:

1. [10 Strategies to Build on Student Collaboration in the Classroom.](#)
2. [Learning From Instructional Rounds](#)
3. [Leveraging Teacher Leadership](#)
4. [Teacher Moves That Cultivate Learner Agency](#)

Appendix A

SUMMARY OF EXPERT REVIEW TEAM ACTIVITIES

Expert Review Team Members

1. Katherine Airey, Teacher, Harford County Public Schools
2. Rebecca Casserly, Teacher, Baltimore County Public Schools
3. Dr. Seth Barish, Principal, Baltimore County Public Schools
4. Tara Dedeaux, Principal, Harford County Public Schools
5. Willanette Lohr, Teacher Specialist, Calvert County Public School
6. LaNisha Robinson, Project Specialist, Anne Arundel County Public Schools

Site Visit Day 1

Wednesday, March 20, 2024

Site Visit Day 2

Thursday, March 21, 2024

Number of Classroom Reviewed

Eleven

Description of Classroom Visited

Wednesday, March 20, 2024	Thursday, March 21, 2024
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• 1st grade math• 2nd grade math• 5th grade ELA• reading intervention• 3rd grade science• 3rd grade literacy	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• 1st grade ESOL• Low incidental SPED• 2nd grade Math• 5th grade Math• Pre-K

Number of Interviews

One

- Principal

Number of Focus Groups

Seven

- 16 students (2 groups)
- 6 school leaders
- 18 teachers (2 groups)
- 15 parents (2 groups)

Documents Analyzed

- Site visit documentation submitted by the school and LEA.

Appendix B

MARYLAND SCHOOL REVIEW RUBRIC

Ratings for Abbottston Elementary

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.