

Maryland School Review

Expert Review Team Report

Domain 1: Curriculum and Instruction

Burning Tree Elementary School

Maryland State Department of Education

Office of Teaching and Learning

February 7-8, 2024



Table of Contents

Overview of Maryland School Site Reviews.....	2
Executive Summary	4
Domain 1: Curriculum and Instruction.....	7
Appendix A	11
Appendix B	13

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 BURNING TREE ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

Burning Tee Elementary School, located in Montgomery County, serves a total of 484 students in grades K-5th. The enrolled population is made up 52% White, 21.7% Asian, 10% Hispanic, 7.44% two or more races, and 8% African American. The school's population includes approximately 7.2% of students that receive free or reduced meals and 18% 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 rating on Domain 1. The school scored its highest rating of Accomplishing in Classroom Instruction and its lowest rating of Accomplishing in Assessment and Timing. 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	81%	Accomplishing
Classroom Instruction	86%	Accomplishing with Continuous Improvement
Assessment and Timing	75%	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.

- Provide teachers with comprehensive professional learning opportunities on differentiating instruction according to student proficiency levels. This program should be designed to assist teachers in fine-tuning their instruction to align with each student's unique learning abilities and proficiency levels.
- Provide teachers with comprehensive professional learning opportunities on student-driven learning. Create additional opportunities for students to take ownership of their learning by creating choices in content, making space for student collaboration, and fostering an environment for students to actively engage in their learning.

Domain 1: Curriculum and Instruction

Curriculum and Instruction

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

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 to the LEA documents provided to MSDE.

- The LEA and school submitted various documents demonstrating a thorough review of curriculum materials. These documents reveal a clear alignment with state standards and confirm that the materials are of high quality, rated as "strong" by Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA), and "meets expectations" by EdReports.
- Instructional materials are not only aligned to state standards, but also culturally responsive and designed to connect academics with practical, real-life contexts, enriching the student learning experience.

The school demonstrates a commitment to educational excellence and robust communication, which is evident in its proactive, organized efforts to engage with the community and focus on integrating real-world applications into the curriculum. Key highlights include:

- In focus groups with parents and school leaders, it was noted that the school uses various communication methods—report cards, parent-teacher conferences, Sunday emails from the principal, monthly teacher newsletters, and platforms like REMIND and OG+—to maintain clear, ongoing communication with families about student progress and activities.
- Feedback from focus groups with caregivers, students, and teachers reflects the school's dedication to accessible communication, real-world relevance in teaching, and the monitoring of academic strategies.

Students are nurtured in a learning environment that promotes both their academic progress and the enhancement of key social and emotional skills, such as self-awareness, self-management, understanding others, building relationships, and making responsible choices.

- Various focus groups stated that the presence of teacher assistants and resource personnel in classrooms enhances the learning environment, offering targeted support where needed and ensuring that all students can access the curriculum.

AREAS FOR GROWTH

During classroom reviews, there was evidence of a need to shift toward additional differentiation.

- In 9 out of 13 classrooms, content was delivered primarily through a whole group lens, with limited scaffolding for individual students' needs.
- In 12 out of 13 classrooms reviewed, there were no instances that allowed students the choice of when and how to complete an assignment.

During classroom reviews, there was evidence of a need to shift toward additional student-driven learning.

- In 4 of the 13 classrooms reviewed, student-driven learning was infrequent, with minimal opportunities for student input into their learning; instruction was also predominately teacher-led. Students were not given ownership over the time, place, pace, and path of their learning and were not able to make decisions about what or how they learned.

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 comprehensive professional learning opportunities on differentiating instruction according to student proficiency levels. This program should be designed to assist teachers in fine-tuning their instruction to align with each student's unique learning abilities and proficiency levels.

ACTION STEPS:

As a result of this school review:

- Survey teachers to determine their current understanding and use of differentiation strategies.
- Offer workshops that progress from differentiation fundamentals to advanced applications, including hands-on practice.
- Assemble and distribute a range of differentiation resources and establish a system for easy access.
- Schedule regular opportunities for teachers to observe each other's classrooms and collaborate on differentiation techniques.
- Implement classroom observations with subsequent feedback sessions and use student data to guide and adjust instructional strategies.
- Regularly review the impact of differentiation on student outcomes and refine approaches based on teacher input and student performance.

RESOURCES:

1. [Differentiating up. Strategies to Enhance, Extend and Enrich Learning](#)
2. [Divergent Questioning](#)

FOCUS AREA 2

Provide teachers with comprehensive professional learning opportunities on student-driven learning. Create additional opportunities for students to take ownership of their learning by creating choices in content, making space for student collaboration, and fostering an environment for students to actively engage in their learning.

ACTION STEPS:

As a result of this school review:

- Identify areas for improvement in student-driven instruction through classroom visits.
- Develop professional learning opportunities covering student-driven Instruction: Adapting teaching methods to student proficiency levels.
- Conduct professional learning focused on hands-on activities and model lessons showcasing effective student-driven learning techniques.
- Provide teachers opportunities to observe peers and provide/receive feedback on student-driven learning techniques.
- Implement regular assessments and feedback mechanisms to measure training impact.
- Provide ongoing support, follow-up sessions, and access to resources as needed.

RESOURCES:

1. [Power School](#)
2. [Student Role](#)
3. [What is a learner Agency?](#)
4. [Co-Constructing Success Criteria with Students](#)

Appendix A

SUMMARY OF EXPERT REVIEW TEAM ACTIVITIES

Expert Review Team Members

1. Abigail Metcalf, Teacher, Baltimore County Public Schools
2. John Ridenour, Principal, Frederick County Public Schools
3. Jessica Zentz-Ridenour, Grants Coordinator, Frederick County Public Schools
4. Duane Arbogast, Consultant, Children's Guild
5. Susan Huff, Teacher, Cecil County Public Schools
6. Lashawn Terrell, Assistant Principal, Prince George's County Public Schools

Site Visit Day 1

Wednesday, February 7, 2024

Site Visit Day 2

Thursday, February 8, 2024

Number of Classroom Reviewed

Thirteen

Description of Classroom Visited

Wednesday, February 7, 2024	Thursday, February 8, 2024
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Math 3rd • SPED 1st • Kindergarten • ELA 3rd • ELA 5th • Math 4th • Math 2nd 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Intervention 1st • ELD 2nd • WIN Time 2nd • Kindergarten • Math 4th • Music 4th

Number of Interviews

One

- Principal

Number of Focus Groups

Five

- 10 students
- 6 school leaders
- 10 teachers
- 20 parents

Documents Analyzed

- Site visit documentation submitted by the school and LEA.

Appendix B

MARYLAND SCHOOL REVIEW RUBRIC

Ratings for Burning Tree 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.