

Maryland School Review

Expert Review Team Report

Domain 1: Curriculum and Instruction

Dundalk Middle School

Maryland State Department of Education

Office of Teaching and Learning

April 17, 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 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. 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 DUNDALK MIDDLE SCHOOL

Dundalk Middle School, located in Baltimore County, serves a total of 860 students in grades 6th – 8th. The enrolled population is made up 46% Hispanic, 24% African American, 22% White, 7% 2+ races, and 1% Asian. The school's population includes approximately 65% of students who 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](#).

Schools identified as Comprehensive Support and Improvement (CSI) Low Performing and/or CSI Not Exiting in the 2022-2023 school year and selected for an ERT visit, received a differentiated visit to avoid duplication of data requests and integrate into the school improvement process in collaboration with the Office of School Improvement and Transformation at MSDE.

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

The following table summarizes the school's rating on Domain 1. The school scored its highest rating of Accomplishing in Curriculum and Instructional Materials 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 | 81% | Accomplishing |
| Classroom Instruction | 79% | Accomplishing |
| Assessment and Timing | 80% | 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.

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 with the LEA documents provided to MSDE.

The LEA supplied curriculum and instructional materials rated "Strong" under ESSA, fully aligned with Maryland College and Career Standards. Input from a broad range of stakeholders is actively sought, ensuring the curriculum is continually reflective of the community's needs.

- All curriculum is completely aligned with the Maryland College and Career Standards, ensuring that instructional content is relevant and comprehensive.
- Documents provided by the LEA and school show that materials are rated as "Meets Expectations" by EdReports. Curriculum and instructional materials are directly aligned to standards, incorporate culturally responsive strategies, are supported by research, and include stakeholder input.
- The curriculum consistently represents diverse perspectives and acknowledges the varied cultures, values, and identities of students, contributing to an inclusive learning environment.

Evidence from school reviews shows that collaborative learning is evident, with most classrooms effectively engaging students in group work.

- In six out of six classrooms, there was evidence of students being assigned specific roles during group work, facilitating effective teamwork, and supporting each other in the quality of classroom work.
- In five out of six classroom reviews, students regularly participated in collaborating in pairs or groups to complete lesson activities.

During classroom reviews, there was clear evidence of a positive learning environment, with direct evidence of positive teacher-student, student-teacher, and student-student interactions.

- In six out of six classroom reviews, interactions between teachers and students, students, and teachers, and between students were positive and respectful.
- In six out of six classroom reviews showed clear evidence of teachers fostering a supportive learning environment.

- During classroom reviews there was evidence that teachers in classrooms utilized positive reinforcement effectively in five out of six classrooms.

AREAS FOR GROWTH

There was evidence that classroom instruction incorporates differentiation within classrooms. However, there is a need to further expand differentiation efforts to ensure that instruction is tailored to meet the individual needs of every student in all classrooms.

- In three out of six classrooms reviewed, instruction was designed and delivered based on individual student needs.
- In one out of six classrooms reviewed, there was evidence of the use of varied instructional strategies during classroom instruction.

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](#)

Appendix A

SUMMARY OF EXPERT REVIEW TEAM ACTIVITIES

Expert Review Team Members

1. Ann Heflin, Principal, Montgomery County Public Schools
2. Monica Talley, Career Education Manager, Worksource Montgomery
3. Eric Counts, SPED Compliance, Charles County Public Schools
4. ShoShauna McCoy, Assistant Principal, Prince Georges County Public Schools
5. Jazmine Rhone, Ed.D., Academic Content Liaison, Baltimore City Public Schools
6. Noraida Ankobia, Resident Principal, Baltimore City Public Schools

Site Visit Day 1

Wednesday, April 17, 2024

Number of Classroom Reviewed

Six

Description of Classroom Visited

| Wednesday, April 17, 2024 |
|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Math 6 Self-Contained • Effective Learning Habits • Language Arts 7 • Math 7 • Algebra 1 • Language Arts 6 Inclusion |

Number of Interviews

One

- Principal

Number of Focus Groups

Four

- 9 Students
- 6 School Leaders
- 9 Teachers
- 2 Parents

Documents Analyzed

- Site visit documentation submitted by the school and LEA.

Appendix B

MARYLAND SCHOOL REVIEW RUBRIC

Ratings for Dundalk Middle 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.