

District Support Visit Report

District: Baltimore County

Schools visited:

- Rodgers Forge Elementary School
- Dumbarton Middle School
- Towson High School

Teacher Classroom Participation:

- The MSDE specialists were divided into two teams in the morning for Rodgers Forge Elementary School and Dumbarton Middle School. Eight (8) teachers were observed at the middle school and six (6) at the elementary school.
- For the afternoon, MSDE specialists came together at Towson High School. Twelve (12) teachers were observed at the high school.

Participation at meetings:

- Approximately eight (8) central office staff attended a meeting in the afternoon with MSDE staff. Information regarding the county's status in the transition to the new College- and Career- Ready standards was shared.
- At both schools, MSDE staff met with teachers after the observations in order to hold candid discussions with teachers regarding their needs. Twenty-six (26) teachers at the three schools met with and talked to MSDE staff throughout the day.
- In the late afternoon, MSDE staff met with teachers in order to hold candid discussions in an open-forum format with teachers regarding their needs. Baltimore County advertised the open-forum county-wide. Approximately four (4) teachers participated in the discussion.

Summary of MSDE resources and support that teachers and district personnel found most useful:

- MSDE Division of Curriculum Webinars
- Materials from the Educator Effectiveness Academies
- Resources on Blackboard Learn
- Professional Learning Sessions with Sandra Alberti, of Student Achievement Partners
- Math third grade resources on fractions

Summary of resources and support that district personnel and teachers reported they would like from MSDE:

- *Professional development needs from MSDE:*
 - Building capacity with disciplinary literacy in all content areas
 - Teaching grammar/language
 - Teaching struggling writers
 - Text complexity
 - Disciplinary Literacy for elementary teachers, especially with social studies
 - Support with STEM for elementary teachers
 - How the standards interconnect—developing lessons with integrated standards
 - UDL training for general education teachers
 - Professional learning on NGSS

- How to integrate and transition to both NGSS and STEM
 - Understanding the process of the connection between content and practice
 - How the standards translate into student engagement—what are students doing; what are teachers doing?
 - Dealing with gaps in student learning due to shift from MSA to Common Core
 - A presentation from Sandra Alberti to principals and assistant principals on the application of the CCR Standards
- *Additional Resources Needed from MSDE:*
 - “What’s New” section on the Welcome page of Blackboard Learn, so that educators do not have to search to find out what’s been added.
 - Resources English Language Arts in writing
 - Examples of how to take a lesson plan and revise it to be aligned with the CCR Standards (Before and after lesson plan examples)
 - Resources for Gifted and Talented
 - Models/videos of instructional practices and strategies aligned to shifts (with lesson plans for the videos)
 - Resources for STEM
 - FAQs for NGSS
 - Parent communication
 - Sample press release items for PARCC (similar to MSA and HSA)
 - Tag and chunk the content of existing MSDE videos so teachers can access the topics more easily/quickly
 - Collaboration between MSDE/LEA and IHEs.

Overview/Key Messages

- Teachers clearly and enthusiastically expressed appreciation for the support that MSDE has provided and for the opportunity to express their concerns openly and candidly.
- In the classroom visits, MSDE staff witnessed collaboration between students; higher-level questioning; reflection and justification by students; a focus on student investigation; hands-on activities; multiple means of representation; multiple means of assessment; and lesson modification due to the formative assessments that were occurring.
- The Central Office personnel, with whom MSDE staff met, were very supportive and clearly expressed a desire to hear and understand the needs of the educators in order to better assist them. Educators expressed gratitude for the work that Verletta White was doing.
- In general, teachers seemed to have a good basic understanding of Maryland College and Career-Ready Standards and are trying hard to appropriately and effectively implement them in to their instruction. They expressed a need for time to collaborate and reflect and perhaps have some opportunities for data dialogue. There was some concern over being overloaded with the demands and responsibilities of making a successful transition, while at the same time, meeting the needs of their students; however, teachers are dealing with all of the challenges realistically and strategically, especially the challenge of time. It is clear that the teachers who met with MSDE care about their students and the needs of those students and understand the instructional shifts aligned to the College- and Career- Ready Standards.