

Caroline County Support Visit

February 20, 2014

Schools visited:

Lockerman Middle School and Ridgely Elementary School

Central Office Participation:

Central office administrators representing numerous offices participated in the visit throughout the day. In the morning central office administrators representing English Language Arts, Mathematics, Science and STEM, Social Studies, Minority Student Achievement and ELL, Special Education, ELL and College and Career Readiness, and the Local Accountability Coordinator joined the conversation. Mrs. Brown, Assistant Superintendent for Instruction, was available throughout the visit to answer questions, and facilitate this visit.

Teacher and Principal Participation:

After visiting the middle school classrooms, teachers met with us to share information; after visiting elementary school classrooms, teachers shared insights and information. In the afternoon, central office administrators and classroom teachers met briefly to share information about their transition.

Summary of MSDE resources central office and school personnel felt was **most useful** in transitioning to the Common Core State Standards:

- Mathematics resources (lessons/units) have been helpful, but they want more exemplary lessons (especially for high school). Some of the early lessons really need to be modified
- The webinars are getting better
- Staff development workshops have been very helpful, especially the ones on disciplinary literacy.
- Teachers appreciate how the concept of STEM has evolved over the last three years
- STEM is “going well,” especially in elementary schools
- Teachers appreciate how their supervisors have provided to them all of the updates they get at meetings
- Blackboard Learn has provided many resources that are helpful, but there is concern that the resources will become overwhelming

- EEAs were helpful in assisting with the transition; they have used those resources in their own PD workshops
- The opportunity to participate in the development of the state-led units and lessons provided good professional development for teachers who were writers
- Communication from MSDE to county has been good.
- Common Core has unified their staff because they are working together to implement the standards
- Common Core Crosswalk (library/media) has been a great help for the library

Summary of resources district and school personnel stated they **would like from MSDE**:

- Videos of Maryland educators implementing the new standards (short, focused videos, such as a lesson on teaching fractions)
- Search capabilities for the resources on Blackboard Learn
- More training on the Progressions
- Lists of materials for the standards would be helpful because there are so many vendors saying that their materials are aligned. This would be especially helpful for English Language Arts because of the need for authentic text (copyright is problematic)
- Strategies for helping students who have gaps in their skills and knowledge and ideas for how to get them on grade level
- More PD training; concerned that they won't have as many state opportunities when RTTT ends
- State-wide opportunities for briefings in mathematics
- UDL Frameworks need to be inside of exemplary lessons
- Need geography-related resources
- Exemplary units and lessons that are more streamlined
- PLCs are being used for data dialogue in all county schools, but there is not a countywide format, nor do some schools talk to each other
- Teachers would like to see lasting resources for problem-based learning
- Need content-specific exemplars, especially for secondary (Ex: Buck Institute and ASCD)
- State needs to do mid-year and end-of-year diagnostic assessment piece

Summary of **professional development opportunities** district and school personnel would like MSDE to facilitate:

- How to use the Progressions documents in mathematics
- How to create lessons that focus on students' gaps in understandings

- Strategies for teaching students to develop word-processing skills
- teachers are very concerned about time and how students will do on PARCC assessments
- How to integrate technology in their lessons
- Mathematics PD needs to focus on content as well as strategies and standards
- Mathematics PD that incorporates writing

Key Messages from Caroline County:

- Time is a challenge; there is a lot of concern about how students will perform on PARCC. They appreciate having the technology they have, but would like even more
- Professional development opportunities have really been important to providing classroom teachers with the knowledge they need for the transition.
- Central office educators and school-based educators work together closely and this continues to be strength.