

District Support Visit Report

County: Kent

Schools visited:

- H. H. Garnett Elementary School
- Kent County Middle School

Teacher Classroom Participation:

- The MSDE specialists were divided into two teams at the elementary school and each team visited approximately 4 teachers. In total, approximately 8 teachers were observed.
- The MSDE specialists were divided into three teams at the middle school and each team visited approximately 5 teachers. In total, approximately 15 teachers were observed in English/Language Arts, mathematics, and science.

Participation at meetings:

- After each of the rounds of observations in both the elementary and middle schools, MSDE staff was permitted to meet privately with teachers so that they were allowed to talk candidly regarding their needs. In the middle school, additional teachers joined at the end of the day to talk to MSDE staff.
- Approximately 12 central office staff attended the afternoon meeting, as well as approximately 6 classroom teachers.

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

- Resources from 2013 EEAs
- MSDE webinars
- MSDE resources on the Learning Management System (LMS) on Blackboard.

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

- Professional development needs from MSDE:
 - Mathematics:
 - How to teach fractions
 - How to teach using the practice standards
 - ELA:
 - Writing
 - text complexity
 - vocabulary
 - Disciplinary Literacy: Writing, especially in social studies and science
 - Administrators: observing for the instructional shifts
 - How to integrate the standards in a lesson—not focusing on one standard at a time
 - How to shift instruction from teacher-centered to student centered.
 - How to scaffold instruction/unpack the standards (NC's website was mentioned as a good resource)

- How to address student learning gaps as a result of the shift from the previous Maryland standards to the new
- Pre-assessing students
- Assisting students to become more independent—scaffolding independence so that students meet with success
- Shifting instruction toward performance tasks
- Additional Resources Needed from MSDE:
 - Encouragement of collaboration between LEAs
 - Short videos about 5-15 minutes in length, especially on the following topics:
 - Guided reading
 - Vocabulary instruction
 - Writing
 - Typing/keyboarding activities/classes for K-3 elementary students
 - Assistance with parent communication, especially with math
 - PARCC-aligned resources
 - Early childhood resources/alignment

Overview/Key Messages

- Teachers appreciated that MSDE visited and asked them what they need
- There was a lot of technology available to students and teachers, especially Promethean Boards and iPads. Teachers were very comfortable with the use of the technology.
- Participants expressed pleasure that MSDE was providing one central location (the LMS) where they could find additional resources; they were especially pleased to learn about the LEA Connections area on the LMS.
- Teachers in grades K-3 expressed concerns that keyboarding may interfere with the ability of a third grader to take the PARCC assessment.
- Teachers were pleased with the professional learning provided by Kent County, but would like more, especially during the summer months
- MSDE appreciates the open, collegial, and candid conversation. Participants were open about successes and obstacles that they were experiencing.
- MSDE appreciates that Kent County scheduled the visit for a Title I elementary school and that they allowed teachers to talk to MSDE specialists without the presence of central office personnel.
- In general, Kent County teachers were positive and working hard in transitioning to the College and Career Readiness Standards. It was clear that they cared about their students and their needs. There was a lot of frustration expressed over whether to teach MSA or Common Core. Because teachers cared about the needs of their students, most were attempting to teach both. Although teachers admitted that Kent County had communicated that they should focus on Common Core not MSA, few had done so and as a result, they expressed difficulty with deciding on where to focus, how to prioritize, and how to blend the two.

