

St. Mary's County Support Visit

February 6, 2014

Schools visited:

Leonardtown Middle School and Leonardtown High School

Central Office Participation:

Central office administrators representing numerous offices participated in the visit throughout the day. In the morning central office administrators representing elementary and secondary schools, STEM, and the Local Accountability Coordinators joined the conversation. At the afternoon session, administrators from specific content areas shared information with the team.

Teacher and Principal Participation:

After visiting the middle school classrooms, teachers met with us to share information; after visiting high school classrooms, teachers and central office administrators shared information.

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

- The resources shared at the Summer Educator Effectiveness Academies
- The online curriculum resources, including lessons, units, seeds, and webinars were helpful to some teachers (but they need more)
- Teachers felt that it was important to post vetted resources; they do not have time to look through resources that may not be aligned to the Maryland College and Career Ready Standards
- The teachers at the elementary and middle school found the STEM resources helpful; they have developed interdisciplinary units. They used science as the focus content. MSDE is interested in posting a link to these units on the LEA Connections section of Blackboard Learn.
- Some teachers reported that they have found using the EQuIP Rubric (presented at the EEAs and briefings) to be helpful

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)
- Additional resources needed on Blackboard Learn
- More information on the PARCC assessments, especially information about the accessibility and accommodation features for students with disabilities. There was also a request to see a PARCC-like assessment using chemistry content.
- More support for scaffolding instruction for diverse learning; more guidance on incorporating UDL principles into lessons
- In ELA, teachers asked for assistance in locating authentic text, both traditional and non-traditional, with copyright permissions
- ELA teachers also asked for a student friendly PARCC rubric (for writing)
- Support for providing lessons to bridge the gaps as the transition to the new standards proceeds

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
- UDL training
- Strategies for teaching students to develop word-processing skills without taking time from teaching other content
- Strategies for using their PLCs to create more lessons, especially cross-disciplinary STEM lessons
- Strategies for teaching close, analytic reading
- How to create evidence-based selected response items
- With all of the new initiatives with this wave of reform, educators are working harder and longer than they ever have; it would be very beneficial if MSDE could grant CPD credits for recertification, for some of the activities educators engage in as they work to transition to the new standards and assessments.

Key Messages from St. Mary's County:

- Time is a challenge; this transition will take time, but we are impatient and want to do the right thing for our students
- Opportunities to collaborate with colleagues is beneficial but it requires time
- PLCs are working well
- Technology for instruction and assessment is a concern

