

## **District Support Visit Report**

**County: Talbot**

### *Schools visited:*

- Easton High School (morning)
- Easton Elementary School (afternoon)

### *Teacher Classroom Participation:*

- The MSDE specialists were divided into three teams at the high school and each team visited three teachers. In total, nine teachers were observed in English 9, 10, and Pre-AP; Algebra 1; Geometry; Biology; and Anatomy/Physiology.
- The MSDE specialists were divided into three teams at the elementary school and each team visited three teachers. In total, nine teachers were observed.

### *Participation at meetings:*

- At the elementary school, MSDE staff met with teachers after the observations in order to hold candid discussions with teachers regarding their needs. Due to a delayed weather opening, the discussion with the high school teachers in the morning was cancelled; however, MSDE staff returned to the high school in the afternoon to meet with teachers; additional teachers from Talbot County joined at the end of the day to talk to MSDE staff in an open forum format. Approximately 20 teachers met with and talked to MSDE staff throughout the day.
- Approximately ten central office staff attended a meeting in the morning with MSDE staff. Information regarding the county's status in the transition to the new College and Career Ready standards was shared, as well as the results of a county survey on teacher understanding and readiness to implement the new standards.

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

- Resources from 2013 Educator Effectiveness Academies
- Resources on the Learning Management System (Blackboard), especially the units/lessons/lesson seeds. Teachers appreciated the ability to modify the Word documents in the units for classroom use/differentiation
- The support visit and the opportunity to talk to MSDE specialists about needs
- Common Core crosswalk
- Communication from the state to the county—consistent message coming from both the county and the state.
- Disciplinary Literacy academy to the Eastern Shore.
- Use of Tell Survey data to make instructional decisions

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

- Professional development needs from MSDE:
  - ELA:
    - Elementary: Teaching Language Standards pertaining to grammar/mechanics
    - Writing

- Disciplinary Literacy: Incorporating all contents including CTE and fine arts
  - UDL training for general education teachers.
  - Differentiation/scaffolding/interventions for special education/ELL students
  - How to balance scaffolding with allowing students to “struggle” over complex questions and ideas.
  - How to facilitate a student-led classroom/activities/discussions
  - How to address student learning gaps as a result of the shift from the previous Maryland standards to the new
  - Assisting students to become more independent—scaffolding independence so that students meet with success
  - Shifting instruction toward performance-based tasks, student-centered, inquiry-based instruction.
  - Moving students from knowledge-based understanding (like BCRs) to more conceptual understandings.
- Additional Resources Needed from MSDE:
    - Encouragement of collaboration between LEAs
    - Mathematics: resources for Problem-Based Learning/projects
    - English: rich, non-fiction texts in lower elementary grades
    - Additional exemplary lessons and videos aligned to the standards.
    - Assistance with parent communication
    - PARCC-aligned resources,
    - PARCC-aligned models of sample test items, formative assessments, and prototypes that teachers can use to write their own assessment items/tasks.
    - Lists of resources/materials that are aligned to the new standards.

### *Overview/Key Messages*

- Teachers clearly and enthusiastically expressed appreciation that MSDE visited and asked them what they need.
- Talbot County is to be commended for the great strides they have made in upgrading technology. Talbot has achieved a 1-to-1 laptop ratio at the high school level and a 3-to-1 ratio at the middle and elementary levels. Use of technology was evident in almost every classroom visited.
- Teachers were pleased with the professional learning provided by Talbot County. It was impressive that in the County survey, 70-75% of teachers in all content areas expressed that they were confident in their knowledge and understanding of the CCR standards and the expectations for teaching and learning.
- In general, Talbot County teachers are positive and working hard in transitioning to the College and Career Readiness Standards. They are focused on the students and how to move them forward; they are dealing with all of the challenges realistically and strategically. It is clear that they care about their students and the needs of those students. Teachers are realistic, without complaint, about their expectations and the increased time needed to plan quality instruction. The teachers clearly expressed understanding that in the future, their students will be better-prepared, and, as they establish a new repertoire of resources, success and achievement will increase.