

BALTIMORE CITY
PUBLIC SCHOOLS

Office of Achievement and Accountability
Division of Research Services

School Effectiveness Review
2017 - 2018

John Ruhrah Elementary/Middle School

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Baltimore, Maryland 21202
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Part I: Introduction and School Background

Introduction to the School Effectiveness Review

Baltimore City Public Schools (City Schools) developed the School Effectiveness Framework and the School Effectiveness Review process in 2009. The School Effectiveness Review (SER) uses trained school reviewers to measure a school's effectiveness against City Schools' School Effectiveness Standards. The School Effectiveness Standards are aligned with City Schools' effectiveness frameworks for teachers and school leaders.

The SER provides an objective and evidence-based analysis of how well a school is working to educate its students. It generates a rich layer of qualitative data that may not be revealed when evaluating a school solely on student performance outcomes. It also provides district and school-level staff with objective and useful information when making strategic decisions that impact student achievement.

The SER team, comprised of representatives from City Schools who have extensive knowledge about schools and instruction, gathered information from teachers, students, parents, and leadership during a two-day site visit. During the visit, the SER team observed classrooms, reviewed selected school documents, and conducted focus groups with school leadership, teachers, students, and parents. The SER team analyzed evidence collected over the course of the SER to determine the extent to which key actions have been adopted and implemented at the school. This report summarizes the ratings in the four domains and related key actions, provides evidence to support the ratings, and – based on a rubric – allocates a performance level for each key action. More information about the SER process is detailed in the School Effectiveness Review protocol, located on the City Schools website and available upon request from the Office of Achievement and Accountability in City Schools.

School Background

John Ruhrah Elementary/Middle serves approximately 814 students in pre-kindergarten through eighth grades. The school is located on Rappolla St. in the Highlandtown neighborhood of Baltimore, Maryland. The principal, Ms. Mary Donnelly, has been at the school for 17 years. For more information about the school's student demographics and student achievement data, please see the School Profile, located on the City Schools website.

Part II: Summary of Performance Levels

Based on trends found in the collected evidence, the SER team assigns a performance level to each key action.

Domains and Key Actions	Performance Levels			
	Level 4: Highly Effective	Level 3: Effective	Level 2: Developing	Level 1: Not Effective

Domain 1: Highly Effective Instruction	
1.1 Teachers plan highly effective instruction.	Effective
1.2 Teachers deliver highly effective instruction.	Developing
1.3 Teachers use multiple data sources to adjust practice.	Developing
1.4 School leadership supports highly effective instruction.	Developing
1.5 Teachers establish a classroom environment in which teaching and learning can occur.	Effective
Domain 2: Talented People	
2.1 The school implements systems to select, develop, and retain effective teachers and staff whose skills and beliefs represent the diverse needs of all students.	Effective
2.2 The school has created and implemented systems to evaluate teachers and staff against individual and school-wide goals, provide interventions to those who are not meeting expectations, and remove those who do not make reasonable improvement.	Effective
Domain 3: Vision and Engagement	
3.1 The school provides a safe and supportive learning environment for students, families, teachers, and staff.	Developing
3.2 The school cultivates and sustains open communication and decision-making opportunities with families about school events, policies, and the academic and social development of their children.	Developing
3.3 The culture of the school reflects and embraces student, staff, and community diversity.	Effective
Domain 4: Strategic Leadership	
4.1 The school establishes growth goals that guide strategic planning, teaching, and adjusting of practice to meet student needs.	Developing
4.2 The school allocates and deploys the resources of time, staff talent, and funding to address the priorities of growth goals for student achievement.	Developing

Part III: Findings on Domains of Effective Schools

Domains and Key Actions	Performance Levels			
	Level 4: Highly Effective	Level 3: Effective	Level 2: Developing	Level 1: Not Effective

Domain 1: Highly Effective Instruction

Key action 1.1: Teachers plan highly effective instruction.	Effective
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- Teachers implement standards-based daily lessons, units, and long-term plans using appropriate curriculum planning documents. School leadership and teachers reported that teachers use the Baltimore City Public Schools curricula including district endorsed programs to plan daily lessons including Eureka Math, Foundations, and the Science Technology Engineering Math (STEM) Achievement in Baltimore Elementary Schools (SABES) curriculum. A review of lesson plans confirmed the previously mentioned curriculum programs which are based on the Common Core State Standards. Specifically, one plan noted the following standard: SL.K.4 “Describe familiar people, places, things, and events, and with prompting and support provide additional detail” which was related to the objective “Students will be able to use common vocabulary to talk about meals and food.”
- Teachers design daily lessons that meet learners’ unique needs. School leadership reported that the administrative team reviews required lesson plan components at the beginning of the year which include standards, objectives, materials, key vocabulary, procedures, assessments, etc. School leadership reported that lesson plans should include small group instruction with instructional groups determined by data, adding that including instructional groupings is a work in progress. Continuing, school leadership reported that teachers may assign different questions based on proficiency level as well as differentiated activities (graphic organizers, guided notes, etc.). Teachers confirmed small groups and added that accommodations for students with disabilities and well as English Language Learners would be included in the lesson plan. A review of lesson plans confirmed that teachers include small groups and accommodations and modifications for students with disabilities and English Language Learners (ELL), in addition to other types of differentiation. Specifically, one lesson plan included specific goals for the students in each group such as “Correctly identify the letters N and U independently” and “Following a modeled reading, read the book independently with 80% accuracy.”
- Teachers set and track goals based on students’ performance levels. At the time of the site visit, school leadership reported that all teachers had submitted Student Learning Objectives (SLO) and school leadership was in the process of approving the goals. Continuing, school leadership reported that special educators set goals for students based on their Individual Education Programs (IEP) and ESOL (English Speakers of Other Languages) teachers set goals for ELL students based on the Wisconsin Delaware Arkansas (WIDA) assessment rubric. Teachers confirmed the submission of SLOs, goals for students with disabilities, and goals for ELL students. School leadership and teachers reported that goals are tracked through progress monitoring, teacher-created assessments, formative assessment,

and interim assessments. A review of SLOs confirmed that teachers have set these goals for students. Particularly, one SLO was “Students in Target A will move at least one reading level by the SLO deadline.” In the document, the teacher indicated that students’ progress would be tracked through progress monitoring.

Key action 1.2: Teachers deliver highly effective instruction.¹	Developing
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- Some teachers use and communicate standards-based lesson objectives and align learning activities to the stated lesson objectives. In 40% of classes (n=20), teachers communicated standards-based lesson objectives by explaining and/or referencing the objective during the lesson, and in 40% of classes, the teachers communicated lesson objectives by posting it in the classroom. For example, in one class the teacher reviewed the following objective with the class: “We will describe the character, Ma, from our novel by drawing on specific details in the text during a close reading activity...” Continuing, in 75% of classes, the learning activities and resources aligned with the lesson objectives. During previously mentioned class, students read excerpts from the text multiple times, annotated the text, and completed a graphic organizer. However, in most the classes, the objective was posted, although not referenced during the lesson or the objective was not communicated during the time of the observation.
- Most teachers present content in various ways and emphasize key points to make content clear. In 100% of classes (n=20), teachers presented students with accurate grade-level content aligned to appropriate content standards. For example, in one class the objective was “We will subtract from 9.” which was aligned with standard 1.OA.C.6 “Add and subtract within 20, demonstrating fluency for addition and subtraction within 10...” Additionally, in 65% of classes, teachers presented content in various ways (two or more) to make content clear. In the previously mentioned class, the teacher presented three strategies teachers could use to subtract from nine, including using their fingers, drawing circles, and counting beads. Finally, in 80% of classes, teachers emphasized important points to focus the learning of content. During this class, the teacher consistently reinforced the strategies students could use for subtraction.
- Some teachers use multiple strategies and tasks to engage all students in rigorous work. In 60% of classes (n=20), teachers scaffolded and/or differentiated tasks by providing rigorous grade-level instruction for all students. For example, one teacher provided different practice activities for groups of students according to their skill deficits, while the teacher pulled a small group. However, in only 35% of classes did students have opportunities and time to grapple with complex texts and/or rigorous tasks. In some classes students had opportunities and extended time to engage with rigorous

¹ Key action 1.2 evidence comes directly from classroom observations that were conducted as part of the SER. All classroom observations are twenty minute in which the observers are looking for teachers to demonstrate components of the Instructional Framework. The completed classroom visit tool can be found in appendix A.

tasks through the completion of problem sets, individual reading of texts, or having the opportunity to think about and explain complex terms and or processes, but in most classes students had limited time and opportunities to engage with rigorous tasks in a meaningful way or not at all.

- Some teachers use evidence-dependent questioning. In 55% of classes (n=20), teachers asked questions that required students to cite evidence and clearly explain their thought processes. Additionally, in 75% of classes, teachers asked questions that were clear and scaffolded. In one class, the teacher asked the following questions after students read the math problem: “What are the important words in this problem?” After the class worked with the teacher to underline the important words, the teacher asked, “What kind of math problem is this?” After a student answered, the teacher asked the class “Do you agree or disagree?” When some students disagreed, the teacher asked one student, “Why do you disagree?”
- Most teachers check for student understanding and provide specific academic feedback. In 80% of classes (n=20), teachers conducted one or more checks for understanding that yielded useful information at key points throughout the lesson through methods such as questioning, checking students’ work, and surveying students through “thumbs up, thumbs down”. Also, in 70% of classes, teachers gave students specific academic feedback to communicate current progress and next steps to move forward. For example, a teacher gave the following feedback while checking a student’s work: “You have a mistake in one place. You are bundling correctly, but when you add $10 + 2$ you get... $10 + 2$ equals...”
- Some teachers facilitate student-to-student interaction and academic talk. In only 30% of classrooms (n=20), did teachers provide multiple or extended opportunities for student-to-student interactions and academic talk. Moreover, in 20% of those interactions did students engage in discussions with their peers to make meaning of content or deepen their understanding. In most classes, opportunities for student-to-student interaction were not provided. Finally, in 85% of classes, students used academic talk, and when necessary teachers consistently and appropriately supported students in speaking academically. In one class, students used terms such as “text features” and referred to the types of conflict in literature such as “man v/s man” and “man v/s nature”.

Key action 1.3: Teachers use multiple data sources to adjust practice.	Developing
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- Teachers do not consistently analyze students’ progress toward goals. School leadership reported that data analysis has been the focus of collaborative planning meetings for the purpose of planning for small group instruction. School leadership reported that during collaborative planning meetings teachers share the structure of their small instructional groups and what skills are being taught during small group instruction. School leadership reported that each teacher has a different way of analyzing data. Some teachers reported that data generated from Wireless and Dynamic Indicators of Basic Early Learning Skills (DIBELS) gives small group suggestions while other teachers reported that they review

formative assessments to determine small instructional groups. Further, some teachers stated that they look for skills not yet mastered by students in order to determine class or individual students' needs. Finally, some teachers reported that certain grades have a more streamlined process for analyzing data. A review of one, completed small group action plan included the following components: the activity, expected results, actual results, who will perform the task, the due date for the task, and the status.

- Teachers modify instruction in response to data. School leadership and teachers reported that teachers review formative assessments to adjust small instructional groups. Additionally, school leadership reported that teachers may add practice activities to modify instruction. Teachers added that instruction is also modified through re-teaching. A review of one completed small group action plan and lesson plans confirmed the implementation of small group instruction. Specifically, the small group action plan noted the activity, expected results, actual results, person responsible for the small group instruction, the timeline, and the status of the intervention. The action plan submitted showed one small group focusing on letter sounds and letter recognition, while another group focused on reading comprehension.
- Teachers appropriately recommend students for some tiered interventions including opportunities for acceleration. School leadership reported that the school has three intervention teachers for math and literacy for all grades. Teachers confirmed the intervention teacher positions, but some teachers reported that intervention is not provided on a consistent basis. Additionally, school leadership and teachers reported that students in primary grades receive intervention through Literacy Lab. A review of the reading intervention schedule and the literacy lab tutoring schedule confirmed these interventions. Specifically, for mathematics, school leadership reported that students receive intervention through Do the Math (Grades 1-5), Khan Academy (Grades 5-8), and Teacher Assisted Instruction (TAI). School leadership and teachers reported that students also receive support through small instructional groups. Lastly, school leadership reported that first, fifth, and sixth grades have an intervention block built into the schedule. Regarding opportunities for acceleration, school leadership and teachers reported that the school is a Pre-Gifted and Advanced Learning Site and fifty students have been identified as gifted learners. Again, school leadership and teachers reported that students received appropriate instruction through small group instruction. School leadership reported that the school offers Honors Algebra and that all middle school students are enrolled in Honors science and social studies in order to participate in the science fair and National History Day.

Key action 1.4: School leadership supports highly effective instruction.	Developing
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- School leadership holds and promotes a clear instructional vision of high student achievement. School leadership reported that the instructional vision includes a focus on language, adding that all teachers are asked to be language teachers focusing on academic vocabulary, discourse, writing, and

interacting with text. Additionally, school leadership reported an emphasis on differentiation and small group instruction. Teachers confirmed that small group instruction (driven by data) and academic discourse have been instructional areas of focus. Teachers reported that the instructional vision has been communicated through professional development and collaborative planning meetings. A review of a small group implementation plan confirmed the school's emphasis on small group instruction.

- School leadership ensures that teachers engage in the planning of the curricula through oversight of standards-based units, lessons, and pacing. School leadership and teachers reported that lesson plans are submitted to the school leadership team. Additionally, school leadership reported lessons and pacing may be monitored through quick classroom walk-throughs and use of City School's pacing guide. Teachers also reported that pacing is discussed during collaborative planning meetings, however teachers reported that school leadership is understanding when adjustments are made to pacing calendars in order to meet students' instructional needs. A review of one Lesson Plan Checklist and JREMS Classroom Walk-Through Observation Checklist showed that feedback was provided on lesson plans. Specifically, the Lesson Plan Checklist contained eight components to be observed in lesson plans along with a space for commendations and recommendations.
- School leadership provides formative feedback and guidance to some teachers about the quality of planning, teaching, and adjustment of practice. At the time of the visit, school leadership reported that teachers had not been informally observed since the start of formal observations (October 2). Continuing, school leadership reported that they attempt to observe each teacher once prior to formal observations, however not all teachers had been informally observed at the time of the site visit. Some teachers reported that teachers are observed about once per quarter, while other teachers reported that school leadership conducts quick walk-throughs. Still, other teachers reported not being observed during the current school year. When observed, teachers reported that they received verbal or written feedback. A review of informal observation forms confirmed that some teachers have been informally observed. One observation form showed the following comments: "Great job with reinforcing positive behavior."
- School leadership demonstrates an understanding of data analysis and is beginning to ensure the use of a complete student learning data-cycle. School leadership reported that district support staff is collaborating with school based staff to train teachers in a data analysis process, which teachers and a review of the Data Cycle Roll-Out document confirmed. Continuing, school leadership and teachers reported that teachers meet weekly with members of school leadership to review and discuss their students' data, particularly regarding the creation of small groups. School leadership reported that a form has been created for teachers, however some teachers have their own way of tracking and documenting their data. For instance, some teachers stated that they monitor their data through teacher created methods such as excel spreadsheets or a post-it note system. Teachers stated that there is a standard form, but teachers were not required to complete the form. A review of one small

group action plan confirmed that the school has created a tool to monitor the implementation of data-driven small groups.

Key action 1.5: Teachers establish a classroom environment in which teaching and learning can occur. ²	Effective
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- Most teachers implement routines to maximize instructional time. In 85% of classes (n=20), students were idle for very brief (less than 2 minutes) periods of time while waiting for the teachers. In most classes, teachers were prepared in that materials and activities were prepared for instruction. In 65% of classes, routines and procedures ran smoothly with minimal or no prompting from the teacher. In one class, the teacher used a timer to indicate work time for students and students adhered to the parameters set by the timer. However, in some classes it was necessary for teachers to prompt students several times although a routine had been established.
- Teachers build a positive, learning-focused classroom culture. In 95% of classes (n=20), teachers' interactions with students were positive and respectful. In classes, teachers encouraged students by saying "Good Job!" and referring to students respectfully as "friends". Also, in 95% of classes, students' interactions with the teachers were positive and respectful. In 90% of classes, student to student interactions were positive and respectful. Students generally worked well together.
- Most teachers implement routines to maximize instructional time. In 70% of classes (n=20), teachers promoted and reinforced positive behavior. In one class, the teacher awarded points to students for being on task. Continuing, in 60% of classes, students were on task and active participants in classwork and discussions. Lastly, also in 85% of classes, teachers addressed behavioral issues (if any) with minimal interruption to instructional time (2 minutes or less). In most classes, teachers' redirection of students occurred swiftly and was effective.

² Key action 1.5 evidence comes directly from classroom observations that were conducted as part of the SER. All classroom observations are twenty minute in which the observers are looking for teachers to demonstrate components of the Instructional Framework. The completed classroom visit tool can be found in appendix A.

Domain 2: Talented People

Key action 2.1: The school creates and implements systems to select, develop, and retain effective teachers and staff whose skills and beliefs represent the diverse needs of all students.

Effective

- School leadership has created and implemented an organizational and staffing structure that meets the diverse needs of all students. School leadership and teachers reported that the school has implemented a co-teaching model for English Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) classes and is departmentalized in first through eighth grades. School leadership added that these structures were implemented to address the needs of the school's large English Language Learner population and to allow teachers to focus on one content area, which teachers confirmed. Regarding specific positions, school leadership reported that the school has a lead teacher to support ESOL, new teachers, and overall teacher development, which teachers also confirmed. Additionally, the school is staffed with four full-time special educators and one part-time special educator as well as three intervention teachers, according to school leadership and teachers. Regarding resources classes, school leadership and teachers reported that the school has the following: physical education, art (part-time), library science, and music, in addition to classes taught by members of school leadership including personal finance, study hall, a novel study, and cursive writing. Moreover, school leadership reported that the school has a Judy Center coordinator and a community schools' coordinator, which teachers confirmed. Finally, school leadership and teachers reported that the school's student support staff positions include a full-time psychologist, two full-time social workers (partly funded by the school), and a clinician from Johns Hopkins Bayview. Teachers added that the school has a speech pathologist, four Spanish translators, and a part-time Arabic translator. A review of the staff directory and a roles and responsibilities chart confirmed the previously mentioned positions.
- School leadership leverages a pipeline for staff recruitment and uses a measure and includes stakeholders in the assessment of candidates. School leadership and teachers reported that pipelines for recruitment include the College of Notre Dame, the Baltimore City Teaching Residency (BCTR), Teach for America (TFA), the Office of Human Capital for Baltimore City Public Schools, and teacher recommendations. School leadership and teachers reported that candidates participate in an interview with members of school leadership and teachers. School leadership added that if teaching interns are hired, the supervising teacher is asked for input. A review of interview questions confirmed three sets of questions for ESOL teacher, Special Educator, and General Educator candidates.
- School leadership includes staff members and other stakeholders in the development and retention of effective teachers and staff. School leadership reported that some teachers are videotaped as models for teachers, or may model certain instructional practices for other teachers such as small group instruction. When asked, teachers were not able to speak to peer observations during the current school year, but reported that teachers have led professional development on Teacher Assisted Instruction (TAI) for math, Close Reading, and Arts Integration. Teachers also reported that they

collaborate formally and informally. Continuing, teachers reported that in the co-teaching environment, teachers are continuously giving feedback to each other. School leadership and teachers reported that district support staff members are observing teachers and providing feedback as well as working with teachers to on how to use data to inform small group instruction through professional development and after-school professional learning communities, which a review of the *Data Analysis Roll-Out* document confirmed. School leadership added that Lutheran World Relief and employees from The College of Notre Dame have delivered professional development for ESOL teachers. Additionally, school leadership reported that employees from Johns Hopkins Bayview have delivered professional development to teachers in the primary grades. Regarding retention, school leadership and teachers reported that the school has high staff retention rates. Continuing, school leadership and teachers reported that staff members care about the students, families, and each other. Teachers added that school leadership is supportive and allows teachers to take on leadership opportunities when teachers are interested. Some teachers reported that they feel that the school is a safe environment compared to other schools.

- School leadership has created a mentoring program, when applicable, to support the development of all new teachers and staff and monitors the program’s effectiveness. School leadership and teachers reported that there is a designated mentor for new teachers. School leadership reported that individual meetings are held with teachers to address teachers’ individual needs, which teachers confirmed. School leadership reported that the mentoring program is monitored through school leadership’s conversations with the lead teacher. Finally, school leadership reported that the school was unable to host an induction program this year due to unforeseen circumstances. A review of the *John Ruhrah Elementary Middle School New and Novice Teacher Assistance Program for 2017-18* confirmed the mentoring program, specifically noting the teachers mentored as well as meeting schedules.

<p>Key action 2.2: The school has created and implemented systems to evaluate teachers and staff against individual and school-wide goals, provide interventions to those who are not meeting expectations, and remove those who do not make reasonable improvement.</p>	<p>Effective</p>
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- School leadership makes full use of the evaluation system to develop faculty and staff capacity. School leadership reported that teachers are divided amongst the three qualified observers based on grade level, content, and other attributes. Continuing, school leadership reported once dates have been solidified for the formal observations, teachers bring their lesson plans to the pre-observation meeting to discuss their lesson, which teachers confirmed. School leadership reported that following the pre-observation conference, teachers are observed and receive their feedback during the post-observation conference, which teachers also confirmed. School leadership reported that about half of formal observations had been completed at the time of the site review. Teachers confirmed that the formal observation process has begun and teachers who had received feedback reported that the

feedback had been beneficial to their instructional practices. A review of the formal observation calendar and scripted and coded observation notes confirmed that formal observations are underway.

- School leadership provides support and interventions to struggling teachers and staff as indicated by data and/or informal or formal observations and holds them accountable for performance. School leadership reported that struggling teachers are identified by struggles with classroom management, “pop-ins” (informal observations), students’ grades, as well as their demeanor. Some teachers confirmed that struggling teachers are identified by observations of classroom management, however some teachers reported that teachers would need to self-identify as struggling to receive assistance from school leadership because members of the school leadership team are not informally observing teachers often. Continuing, teachers reported that teachers in need of support may work with the lead teacher as well as the intervention teachers, adding that they may be observed and receive feedback. Teachers confirmed that the lead teacher supports struggling teachers and that teachers also reach out to their teacher teams for strategies. School leadership reported that one Performance Improvement Plan (PIP) was currently being drafted for a teacher. However, at the time of the site visit, it was not available for review.
- School leadership engages faculty in a school-wide professional development plan based on identified needs and in alignment with the school’s instructional vision. School leadership and teachers reported that the school’s professional development plan is focused on small group instruction and the Cycles of Professional Learning (CoPL), as the CoPL is a district initiative. Continuing, school leadership stated that the emphasis on small group instruction was identified last year after observing instruction. A review of the professional development plan, emails, and a data cycle rollout document showed that professional development has included understanding City School’s Blueprint for Success, implementing close reading, Teacher Assisted Instruction (TAI) for math, understanding how to serve gifted and advanced learners, and using data to determine small groups.

Domain 3: Vision and Engagement ³

Key action 3.1: The school provides a safe and supportive learning environment for students, families, teachers, and staff.

Developing

- The school community shares some understanding of, and a commitment to, the school mission, vision, and values, including a clear understanding of strategic goals and initiatives. School leadership reported that the mission of the school is to nurture curious, life-long learners, prepare students for the 21st century workforce, promote cultural sensitivity, and to address the needs of the whole child. Most teachers spoke to the students becoming life-long learners, prepared for the 21st century workforce or post baccalaureate education, increasing cultural competency, and creating global citizens as components of the mission. However, some teachers were not aware of the mission or vision. Parents reported that the mission and vision included pushing students to 100% and students reported that the mission is to give them a fair chance to get an education, to engage them as citizens, to prepare them for college, and to help the community. Regarding initiatives to support the mission, school leadership reported that the school has a variety of partnerships such as the food bank, mental health practitioners, faith based organizations, programs that address the medical needs of students (mobile dentist, vision screening). Most teachers confirmed the partnerships through the community school and added that the school has an afterschool program through Education Based Latino Outreach (EBLO) as well as clubs such as robotics, and that the school implements Positive Behavior Intervention and Supports (PBIS). Students reported that teachers make learning understandable for them. A review of the school’s brochure showed the following vision: “John Ruhrah Elementary/Middle is determined to educate all of our students to be productive, engaged, life-long learners ready to compete in the 21st century global workplace. To achieve this goal, we will build students’ intellectual curiosity and knowledge across all disciplines, along with a spirit of cross-cultural sensitivity and civic responsibility. We will do so in a safe, supportive, professional, and collaborative school environment where the ideas and talents of staff, students, parents, and community members are respected and all stakeholders are accountable to one another.”
- Families feel emotionally safe and somewhat physically safe at the school. Most students feel physically and emotionally safe at the school. Staff feel somewhat physically safe and most staff feel emotionally safe at the school. Parents reported that the school community engages students and parents in school activities and quickly resolves issues. Continuing, parents reported that they feel that their students are safe in the building, but noted concerns such as doors needing to be checked more often to make sure they are secured and sign in procedures needing to be more strictly enforced. Parents also expressed the need for more monitoring during dismissal. Most students reported that the school checks visitors’ identification, calls parents for students who misbehave, and have lockdowns when things happen in the building. Some students stated that after school, people who sometimes do not attend the school loiter on the school’s campus and smoke which makes them feel unsafe. Emotionally, most students reported that they feel safe because there is no bullying and they

³ Less than six parents participated in the parent focus group.

can talk to their teachers, school leadership, and other staff members. Some students reported that while most students are nice, some students say cruel things to students about where they are from and when they tell an adult, they are ridiculed by other students. School leadership reported that although the physical building has a lot of issues, the school itself is safe as evidenced by low suspension rates, adding that suspension rates are tracked, and the school is proactive about addressing suspensions. Continuing, school leadership reported that there is no fighting amongst students, which students confirmed. School leadership also reported that teachers are posted around the building and staff check to make sure that doors are locked, a scan system is used for visitors, visitors need to be buzzed in, the school is monitored by cameras, and the school has safety drills. A review of the staff handbook showed emergency drill procedures. Teachers confirmed the facility issues and reported that these issues contribute a feeling of being unsafe because not all doors lock because they are in need of repair, which members of the site visit team observed. In addition, teachers reported that classroom doors do not lock from the inside, which would pose a threat to the safety of students and staff in the event of an intruder. Some teachers also noted the concerns with heating and cooling. However, all teachers and staff reported that they feel safe with the students, families, and the community. Pertaining to emotional safety, school leadership reported that the school has bi-lingual student support staff for students and families in addition to teachers making themselves available to support students emotionally, which teachers confirmed. Most staff reported they can share concerns with members of school leadership honestly, however some teachers reported that when they bring concerns to members of school leadership they are made to feel as if they are complaining and they sometimes feel as though they are identified openly when situations are addressed.

- School leadership establishes structures for the acknowledgement and celebration of student success and some faculty and staff success. School leadership and teachers reported that students receive shout outs on their birthdays, student of the month recognition with their pictures on the bulletin board, and rewards such as field trips through PBIS. Continuing, school leadership and teachers reported that students are celebrated at the classroom level through Class Dojo and receive treats from teachers. School leadership added that different grade levels have different initiatives to recognize students. Students confirmed Class Dojo and in-class treats and parties. Parents confirmed the student of the month and reported that there is also an end-of-year awards ceremony. Regarding staff celebrations and recognition, school leadership reported that there are perfect attendance celebrations for staff, teacher luncheons, a monthly \$5.00 Dunkin Donuts gift card drawing for teachers in addition to recognizing each other at staff meetings with roses, although some teachers reported that the roses had not happened consistently. Some teachers reported that teachers do not receive much individual recognition.
- The school develops some systems that proactively attend to individual students' social and emotional needs. School leadership reported that the psychologist and mental health clinician have been facilitating a novel study with 5th graders on the book, *Wonder*, in order to discuss how to accept others' differences, which teachers confirmed. School leadership and teachers reported that other

grade levels were also conducting novel studies to address social and emotional issues. Teachers reported that clinicians have conducted anti-bullying classes. Some teachers reported that clinicians go into classes if teachers ask for their support. Students and student support staff reported that the school has clubs and activities for students such as Girls on the Run, Soccer without Borders, EBLO, robotics, the green team, and safety patrol. Finally, student support staff reported that the school has an active Student Support Team process to support students with additional interventions for both academic and behavioral concerns.

<p>Key action 3.2: The school cultivates and sustains open communication and decision-making opportunities with families about school events, policies, and the academic and social development of their children.⁴</p>	<p>Developing</p>
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- The school uses multiple strategies, languages, and vehicles to communicate information about school progress, policies, events, and the academic and social development of students to families and the community. School leadership, teachers, students, and parents reported that the school sends home bi-weekly newsletters, flyers, and letters. However, some teachers and parents reported that communication could be more timely for parents because sometimes parents are not always given adequate notice of events. School leadership and teachers reported that the school contacts parents through Parent Link as well as social media. Students added that teachers use the Class Dojo app and email. School leadership, teachers, and parents reported that documents sent home are translated into students’ home languages, and the school has translators on staff (two Spanish interpreters and one part-time Arabic interpreter). A review of newsletters and flyers in English and Spanish confirmed these methods of communication.
- The school is beginning to establish regular structures for two-way communication, which facilitate opportunities for families and the community to participate in, or provide feedback on school-wide decisions. During the time of the review, school leadership reported that the school was holding its first Parent Teacher Organization (PTO) meeting that week, which teachers, students, student support staff, parents, and a review of a flyer confirmed. School leadership and student support staff added that PTO meetings are held in the morning and evening in order to garner more parent participation. Additionally, school leadership reported that the school family council would occur the week following the Thanksgiving holiday. Teachers and parents were not able to speak to the School Family Council (SFC).
- School leadership establishes multiple structures for frequent communication with teachers and staff members regarding policies, progress, and school culture. School leadership and teachers reported that school leadership communicates through faculty meetings, emails, Office 365, and through face-to-face interactions. A review of emails confirmed this method of communication. Teachers confirmed

⁴ The parent/family focus group consisted of fewer than six parents.

the previously mentioned methods of communication and added that messaging via text and announcements are also a method of communication. Some teachers reported that some communication is untimely and in that teachers find out about events through information provided to students and that communication through the public-address system is often unheard because it occurs during transitions.

Key action 3.3: The culture of the school reflects and embraces student, staff, and community diversity.	Effective
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- School leadership, teachers, and staff build strong relationships with families and community stakeholders from diverse backgrounds. School leadership reported that the school intentionally connects with families and younger siblings of students because younger children are the future students of the school. School leadership, teachers, students, parents, and student support staff reported that the Judy Center connects with families by offering workshops and activities for parents such as play groups for younger siblings of students, parent workshops, Zumba classes, and the harvest festival for Pre-Kindergarten and Kindergarten students. A review of pictures confirmed the recent harvest festival. School leadership and teachers reported that the school will offer English classes through Baltimore City Community College and has hosted Back to School Night, an international festival, and will host literacy and math nights in the future. Parents confirmed the intentional festival at the school. A review of the school’s newsletter confirmed an upcoming Family Literacy Night. School leadership, teachers, students, and parents reported that interpreters are on staff and build strong relationships with families. Finally, school leadership and teachers reported that the school has a variety of partnerships with faith-based and non-profit organizations and well as local universities.
- The school’s curricula, resources, and programs consider cultural, linguistic, and socioeconomic diversity. School leadership reported that City School’s curriculum is not reflective of the school’s population, so school leadership and teachers find their own resources to enhance the diversity of the curriculum, specifically noting that *The Circuit* (a widely anthologized Chicano novel about immigration) has been used as a substitute for a novel in the curriculum, which some teachers confirmed. School leadership, teachers, parents, students, and student support staff reported that the school has hosted an international festival and has an international club which exposes students to food from around the world. School leadership added that there is also an international festival at the end of the school year. Additionally, school leadership reported that students have attended field trips to the Jewish museum, the Maryland Science Center, the Maryland Zoo, and the pumpkin farm, which teachers confirmed. Some teachers also reported that teachers received training on cultural sensitivity the previous school year and some teachers are implementing strategies and learnings from the training they received. Students reported that they have read *Where the Mountain Meets the Moon* (Chinese culture) as well as novels about Emmet Till, Malcom X, and George Calvert. Students also reported that they have attended field trips to The Flag House, the Maryland Science

Center, the Air and Space Museum, and Stevenson University. Regarding linguistic diversity, school leadership and students reported that eighth grade students receive Spanish instruction through Rosetta Stone. Regarding socioeconomic diversity, school leadership and teachers reported that the school has a food bank and a weekend backpack program for homeless students (food is sent home for the weekend), distributes school supplies and holiday baskets through partnerships, offers vision and dental services, provides uniforms, and coats through clothing drives, and offers financial assistance for field trips. Students and parents confirmed the availability of the food bank and provision of clothes. A review of the food bank distribution date and food bank sign-in sheets confirmed the food bank.

- The school is working to maintain a positive school culture and climate. School leadership reported that although there are concerns about the school's physical condition, students and staff generally feel safe at the school. Continuing, school leadership reported that school leadership deliberately works to create a climate that makes staff and students want to remain at the school. Teachers stated that they enjoy working at the school with their colleagues and with the families. Parents stated that the climate and culture is mostly positive, and they appreciate how the school works to acknowledge cultural diversity, but noted that the inappropriate behavior of some students is concerning. Students reported that they appreciate the opportunity to learn as well as participate in afterschool clubs and activities, however some students reported that some students can sometimes create a negative environment. Site visit team observations included student work posted on bulletin boards in hallways, monitored transitions, and quiet hallways during class time.

Domain 4: Strategic Leadership

Key action 4.1: The school establishes growth goals that guide strategic planning, teaching, and adjusting of practice to meet student needs.

Developing

- School leadership and teachers establish goals for the improvement of student learning that are measurable and aligned to student need and school improvement. School leadership reported that goals were established by the Instructional Leadership Team (ILT) after a review of data with guidance from district staff, which teachers confirmed. Continuing, school leadership reported that the school did not meet goals established for school year 2016-17, therefore a decision was made to increase Partnership for Assessment of Readiness for College and Careers (PARCC) performance by 10% overall in literacy and mathematics in addition to reducing the At Risk for Chronic Absence (ARCA) rate from 12% to 8%. A review of an ILT agenda notes confirmed discussions around not meeting School Performance Plan (SPP) goals during the previous school year and included some reflection on strategies to meet the goals. Teachers were not aware of specific school-wide goals, although some teachers acknowledged participation on the ILT. Although teachers were not able to speak to specific goals, most teachers were able to speak to wanting to see a general improvement in literacy and mathematics and some teachers spoke to wanting to see an increase in attendance.
- School leadership ensures the alignment of most school goals, action plans and key priorities. School leadership reported that small group instruction, differentiation, the English Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) co-teaching model, literacy lab tutoring, dissecting standards, and the Education Based Latino Outreach (EBLO) afterschool program are aligned to the literacy and mathematics goals. Continuing, school leadership reported that incentives, court referrals, and home visits are aligned to the attendance goal. Although teachers were unable to speak to the goals, most teachers stated that small group instruction, the Cycles of Professional Learning (CoPL), and data driven instruction are aligned to improving students' performance in literacy and mathematics. Finally, some teachers reported that students receive phone calls when they are absent for more than two days which is aligned to the attendance goal.
- School leadership and staff participate in some analysis of school-wide data and plan to revisit and adjust action plans as needed. School leadership and reported that i-Ready data is reviewed during collaborative planning meetings. Continuing, school leadership reported that the ILT is scheduled to meet twice per month, but some of the meetings have been cancelled due to issues. School leadership reported that thus far, PARCC scores have been reviewed during ILT meetings and after first quarter, attendance and discipline data will be reviewed. Teachers confirmed the review of i-Ready data, but could not speak to the review of additional school-wide data. School leadership reported that action plans and strategies would be revisited and possibly adjusted after middle of the year (MoY) testing. A review of an ILT agenda dated September 25, 2017 showed that the ILT discussed SPP goals, attendance incentives, school-wide events, and a data cycle.

Key action 4.2: The school allocates and deploys the resources of time, staff talent, and funding to address the priorities of growth goals for student achievement.

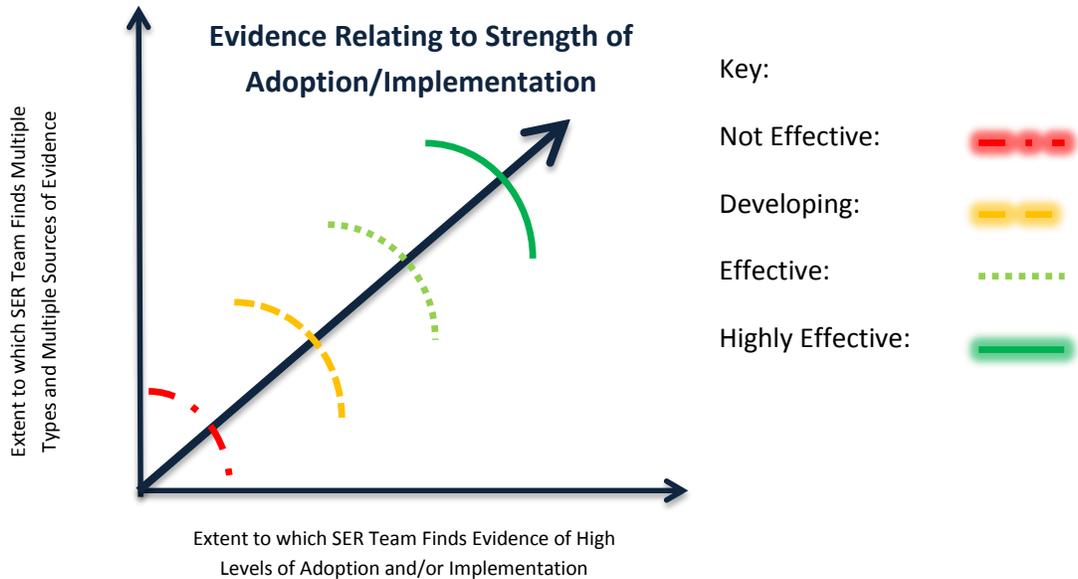
Developing

- Budget distributions and resource allocations do not fully support teaching and learning. Teachers stated that school leadership has worked to allocate funding in the best way possible, but there is not sufficient funding. Regarding staff, school leadership, teachers, and parents reported that although the school has no vacancies, more staff is needed, particularly resource (technology) and special education teachers. Teachers also reported that class sizes at some grade levels are large, however teachers conceded that the space limitations of their current facility would impede the addition of classes. In terms of supplementary materials, school leadership reported that they have purchased Foundations and vocabulary books. Continuing school leadership reported plans to use alternative novels, but stated that they did not have the money to purchase all of the novels. Some teachers reported that they do not have materials for the curriculum, particularly in math and science; and that teachers and families sometimes purchase supplies. Parents confirmed that some parents bring in supplies for teachers. Students reported that some of their novels are old and in poor condition. Teachers reported that they are able to request supplies from school leadership, but during the time of the visit, there was no additional funding to purchase materials which school leadership confirmed. Concerning technology, school leadership reported that a decision was made not to purchase new technology because of the impending new building which will come with upgraded technology. Continuing, school leadership reported that the school currently has 20 iPads, 10 mini iPads, 20 computers in the computer lab (although a few are inoperable), and five laptop carts. Teachers confirmed the computer lab and the laptop carts and stated that some teachers have promethean boards. A review of the school's K12 Buy documentation showed that funds have been used to purchase science books, SABES kits, leveled library materials, toner, copy paper, and other instructional supplies.
- School leadership leverages some teacher and staff talent, expertise, and effectiveness by delegating essential responsibilities and decisions to appropriate individuals. School leadership reported that teachers are strategically placed on teacher teams based on personality and fit. Continuing, school leadership reported that intervention teachers were selected based on leadership aspirations and demonstration of leadership capabilities. Moreover, school leadership reported that teachers are asked to be on the ILT or other committees based on their strengths, and/or interests particularly in leadership. Some teachers reported that there was no formal way for teachers to sign up for committees for the current school year. Continuing, teachers reported that the Instructional Leadership Team is open to all teachers. A review of an ILT agenda sign-in sheet confirmed that teachers serve as members of the ILT. Teachers also reported that teachers may initiate clubs or plan events, or facilitate professional development if they have an interest, adding that teachers serve as testing coordinator, plan family math night, coordinate activities for the Green Team, Girls on the Run, and the robotics club. Finally, school leadership reported that staff are leveraged to free teachers to complete peer observations.

- School leadership consistently provides and focuses common staff time on instructional practices and development in support of student achievement. School leadership and teachers reported that teachers meet collaboratively once per week by grade level and once per month by content area. School leadership and teachers reported that teachers discuss attendance and individual student behavior issues and concerns, skill gaps, and data and small group instruction during team meetings. A review of collaborative planning agendas showed that assessment administration, behavior intervention plans, students' attendance, and school events are being discussed. Specifically, meeting notes from October 3, 2017 indicated that teachers discussed grading, instructional accommodations, and showing differentiation in lesson plans.
- The school collaborates with families and community partners to garner resources to meet the needs of students and the school. School leadership, teachers, students, and parents reported that families volunteer in the food bank, the Snap market (a weekly, on-site, steeply discounted fresh produce market), in some classrooms, in school clean-up, and as chaperones on field trips. Parents added that families also volunteer in the cafeteria. With respect to partnerships, school leadership and teachers reported that the school partners with Johns Hopkins Bayview (classes and counseling), Johns Hopkins University (SABES curriculum and Center for Talented Youth Program) the Highlandtown Community Church ("Adopt-A-Family" and snacks), the College of Notre Dame (interns and tuition discount), the Jewish Museum (field trip opportunities, funding for busses), the Greentown Association, EBLO, Soccer Without Borders, the Judy Center (early childhood and family programs), PNC Bank (grants), and University of Maryland (Health and Nutrition Program). Parents confirmed the school's partnership with the Judy Center. Finally, review of the school's brochure confirmed the school's previously mentioned partnerships.

Performance Level Rubric

The SER team will use the following guidance to select a performance level for each key action. Note that the quality standard for each performance level is based upon: the extent to which the SER team finds multiple types⁵ and multiple sources⁶ of evidence AND the extent to which the SER team finds evidence of high levels of adoption and/or implementation of a practice or system. The SER team will also reflect on the Instructional Framework and School Leadership Framework in their analysis prior to assigning a rating for each key action.



Rating	Performance Level	Quality Standard
1	Not Effective	Evidence indicates that the key action is not a practice or system that has been adopted and/or implemented at the school, or the level of adoption/implementation does not improve the school's effectiveness.
2	Developing	Evidence indicates that the key action (including some indicators) is a practice or system that is emerging at the school, but that it has not yet been implemented at a level that has begun to improve the school's effectiveness, OR that the impact of the key action on the effectiveness of the school cannot yet be fully determined.
3	Effective	Evidence indicates that the key action (including most indicators) is a practice or system that has been adopted at the school, and is implemented at a level that is improving the school's effectiveness.
4	Highly Effective	Evidence indicates that the key action (including all indicators) is a practice or system that has been fully adopted at the school, and is implemented at a level that has had a strong, significant or sustainable impact on the school's effectiveness.

⁵ "Multiple types of evidence" is defined as evidence collected from two or more of the following: document review, stakeholder focus groups; and classroom observations.

⁶ "Multiple sources of evidence" is defined as evidence collected from three or more stakeholder focus groups; two or more documents; and/or evidence that a descriptor was documented in 75% or more of lessons observed at the time of the visit.

Appendix A: Classroom Observation Data

The classroom visit tool is aligned to Baltimore City Schools Instructional Framework. During each classroom visit, the observer collects evidence based on his/her observations and then determines whether the indicator was “evident”, “partially evident” or “not evident” for each of the 22 indicators. Below is the summary of the 20 classroom observations that were conducted.

TEACH 1: Communicate Standards-Based Lesson Objectives	Evident	Partially Evident	Not Evident
Communication of objective	40%	40%	20%
Learning activities and resources align with lesson objective	75%	25%	0%
TEACH 2: Present Content Clearly	Evident	Partially Evident	Not Evident
Accurate, grade-level content	100%	0%	0%
Alternate presentation of content	65%	20%	15%
Emphasis of Key Points	80%	15%	5%
TEACH 3: Use Strategies and Tasks To Engage All Students In Rigorous Work	Evident	Partially Evident	Not Evident
Scaffolded and/or Differentiated Tasks	60%	20%	20%
Opportunities To Engage With Complex Texts and Tasks	35%	40%	25%
TEACH 4: Use Evidence-Dependent Questioning	Evident	Partially Evident	Not Evident
Questions Requiring Justification	55%	15%	30%
Clear And Scaffolded Questions	75%	20%	5%
TEACH 5: Check For Understanding and Provide Specific, Academic Feedback	Evident	Partially Evident	Not Evident
Informative Checks for Understanding	80%	15%	5%
Specific, Academic Feedback	70%	10%	20%
TEACH 6: Facilitate Student-To-Student Interactions and Academic Talk	Evident	Partially Evident	Not Evident
Opportunities for student-to-student interaction	30%	20%	50%
Evidence-based discussions	20%	20%	60%
Student academic talk	85%	10%	5%

TEACH 7: Implement Routines To Maximize Instructional Time	Evident	Partially Evident	Not Evident
Maximized instructional time	85%	15%	0%
Smooth routines and procedures	65%	35%	0%
TEACH 8: Build A Positive, Learning-Focused Classroom Culture	Evident	Partially Evident	Not Evident
Teacher-to-student interactions	95%	5%	0%
Student-to-teacher interactions	95%	5%	0%
Student-to-Student interactions	90%	10%	0%
TEACH 9: Reinforce Positive Behavior, Redirect Off-Task Behavior, and De-escalate Challenging Behavior	Evident	Partially Evident	Not Evident
Reinforce positive behavior	70%	5%	25%
Off-task behavior	60%	35%	5%
Time impact of redirection/discipline or off-task behavior	85%	10%	5%

Appendix B: School Report Comments

Domain 1: Highly Effective Instruction

None

Domain 2: Talented People

None

Domain 3: Vision and Engagement

None

Domain 4: Strategic Leadership

none

Appendix C: SER Team Members

The SER visit to the John Ruhrah Elementary/Middle School was conducted on November 7-9, 2017 by a team of representatives from Baltimore City Public Schools.

Katherine Harris Toler is a Program Evaluator II in the Office of Achievement and Accountability in Baltimore City Public Schools. Prior to joining OAA, Ms. Toler was a District Mentor in the Office of Teacher Support and Development. In Baltimore City Public Schools, Ms. Toler has served as teacher, Academic Coach, Dean of Instruction, and High School Administrator. Ms. Toler has also served as teacher in the Anne Arundel County Public School System, the Baltimore County Public School System and the Vance County Public School System in North Carolina. She holds a B.A. in English with a Concentration in Secondary Education from North Carolina Central University and a Masters of Education in School Improvement Leadership from Goucher College.

Brianna Kaufman is the Manager for the School Effectiveness Reviews in the Office of Achievement and Accountability in Baltimore City Public Schools. Brianna began her career as an elementary art teacher in Bryan, TX. After obtaining her Master's degree, she interned and worked at a number of art museums in the education department including the: Dallas Museum of Art, The National Gallery of Art in DC, and the Walters Art Museum. In 2008, Brianna made the shift from art education to general education reform as a Program Manager at the Fund for Educational Excellence. There she managed a grant from the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation that focused on College and Career Readiness. Prior to joining OAA, Brianna worked as the College and Career Readiness Education Specialist for Baltimore City Public Schools. Brianna holds a Bachelor's degree in elementary education from Texas Lutheran University, a Master's degree in Art Education from University of North Texas, and a Master's of Business Administration from Loyola University in Maryland.

Mona Khajawi is a Program Evaluator II in the Office of Achievement and Accountability in Baltimore City Public Schools. She has had a variety of experience in the field of education, including teaching, program management and evaluation. Most recently, she worked in the capacity of Evaluation Specialist with City Year in Washington, D.C., assessing the quality of educational programming implemented by 140 AmeriCorps members in eleven schools throughout the district. She initially gained exposure to evaluation while interning with the Academy for Educational Development, where she assisted in conducting reviews of a subset of the Gates-funded small schools in New York City. Previously, she also taught English in a rural high school in Ukraine, and served as an Assistant Program Coordinator of the AmeriCorps program at the Latin American Youth Center in Washington, D.C. Mona holds a Bachelor's degree in English Literature from the University of Maryland, College Park, and a Master's degree in Education Policy from Teachers College, Columbia University.

Liepa Boberiene is a Program Evaluator in the Office of Achievement and Accountability in Baltimore City Public Schools, where she analyzes school performance, models teacher and principal effectiveness, and manages state data submissions. Liepa began her career as a school psychologist implementing bullying prevention programs in Lithuania. More recently, she worked as a post-doc research fellow for the Global Alliance for Behavioral Health and Social Justice, heading a task force on safe and humane schools. Her

focus has been school climate and reconnecting disengaged youth, promoting mental health, and supporting children without parental care. Liepa has also served as an instructor and researcher at Clemson University, teaching community research and conducting studies on civic education. She holds a B.A. in Psychology from Northwestern University and a Ph.D. in International Family and Community Studies from Clemson University.

Monica Whippo is the Social Studies Specialist in the Office of Teaching and Learning in Baltimore City Public Schools. Prior to this role, she served as a teacher for six years at the Baltimore Polytechnic Institute. In addition to teaching U.S. History and AP U.S. History, she served as an AP Reader with CollegeBoard, and redesigned AP U.S. History curriculum when the exam was changed. Monica holds a Bachelor's degree in History with Secondary Education Certificate from the University of Maryland, Baltimore County, and a Master's degree in Leadership in Teaching with Administration I endorsement from Notre Dame of Maryland University.