



Frequently Asked Questions Schools and School Systems

What is the Expert Review Team?

The Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE) is launching a comprehensive school review process. The purpose of school reviews is to support school systems in assessing the effectiveness of curriculum, instruction, interventions, and behavioral health services designed to improve student learning and overall well-being. Effective practices will be identified and shared. Areas of growth will also be identified, and support will be provided to support improvement.

Recently, Maryland enacted the Blueprint for Maryland's Future legislation. The Blueprint is landmark legislation that is designed to enrich student experiences, accelerate student outcomes, and improve the overall quality of education in Maryland. The implementation of the Blueprint occurs at a time when the federal government released unprecedented funding to school systems to maximize student learning in safe environments as part of the American Rescue Plan (ARP) Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief (ESSER) Fund. The Blueprint and ARP ESSER both require school reviews.

All school reviews will be facilitated by review teams led by Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE). Review teams consist of people with expertise in specific content and behavioral health areas and reflect the geographic, racial, ethnic, and gender diversity of the Maryland public school student population. Review team members participate in extensive, on-going training to ensure review protocols are being implemented as intended. All review protocols are grounded in research-based practices.

FAQS FOR SCHOOLS AND SCHOOL SYSTEMS

1. What will the Expert Review Team do when they come out to our schools?

Six members of the Expert Review Team will come out to the schools to conduct classroom visits, and conduct focus groups. Focus groups will be conducted with school leaders, teachers, students, and parents/caregivers. Interviews with School Leaders will also occur to get a better understanding of the school. At the conclusions of the visit the team will calibrate their findings and will provide the school with a brief synopsis of their findings and recommendations for improvement. The school and system will later receive a report on the findings, recommendations, and resources.

2. How and when will we expect feedback from these reviews?

Delivering feedback to schools begins after the collection of evidence during a site review. The review team meets to calibrate findings and develop a preliminary list of effective practices and areas of growth. This report is submitted to the school, and the school will deliver any factual corrections. The Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE) will revise the report and will submit a final report to the school. All reports will contain areas of promise, opportunities for growth, and recommendations for improvement.

3. What do I need to do to prepare for an Expert Review Team site review?

Prior to a site review, Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE) will contact the school system of the school to be reviewed. MSDE will supply the school system with a document requesting data and logistical information from the school. MSDE will collaborate with the school system to ensure that the Expert Review Team has all of the needed information prior to conducting the site visit.

4. If a staff member from my school system is invited to participate on an Expert Review Team, how will I know?

Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE) staff will contact school systems in Maryland to notify them if their employee has been selected for participation on an Expert Review Team. In addition, MSDE will reimburse school systems for the cost of substitute teachers to cover the absence of any Expert Review Team member.

5. Who are the Expert Review Team members?

Each review team consists of the following members:

- Teachers with experience in the grade band, content areas, or type of school being reviewed. Teachers must have experience in improving student outcomes for the identified grade band or content area.
- School leaders or central office staff with experience in the grade band or type of school being reviewed and experience in improving school performance.
- Representatives from organizations with expertise and experience in improving school performance.
- Expert Review Team members reflect the diversity of Maryland public school students and have demonstrated experience in improving student outcomes.

6. How are schools selected for participation in an Expert Review Team site review?

Schools are selected based on requirements established by federal or state law or funding requirements. Superintendents and chief executive officers will be notified in writing of schools selected to participate in the review process at least thirty days prior to the start of school reviews. School system leadership must confirm selection of schools within two weeks of initial notification. School system leadership and Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE) will collaboratively select dates to facilitate reviews.



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FAQS FOR EXPERT REVIEW TEAM MEMBERS

1. How much will I be compensated for my participation on an Expert Review Team?

Expert Review Team members will receive at least a \$5000 stipend for full participation on a review team. Any Expert Review Team member who performs more than the required 4 site visits will receive an additional stipend per site visit. A detailed breakdown of payment is included in the reviewer's contract. Expert Review Team members who are employed in the Maryland Public School System will also be eligible for Continuing Professional Development credits.

2. What is the time commitment for participation on an Expert Review Team?

Full participation on an Expert Review Team requires a total commitment of in person and virtual training, virtual meetings with the Maryland State Department of Education prior to school visits, four school visits, and time preparing reports for schools visited. A detailed record of payment by activity type is included in the Expert Review Team contract.

3. What are the essential qualifications for participation on an Expert Review Team?

Expert Review Teams will consist of teachers, school leaders, and other education experts. Essential qualifications for participation on an Expert Review Team vary depending upon the role of the applicant. Essential qualifications are provided below:

TEACHERS	SCHOOL LEADERS AND CENTRAL OFFICE STAFF	OTHER EXPERTS
<p>Teachers must:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. have a minimum of three years of effective teaching experience and 2. demonstrate evidence of improving student outcomes. This can be demonstrated by submitting evidence of: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. improved student growth as demonstrated by student performance on state or local assessments, or b. improved student attendance rates, or c. increased the percentage of students achieving English proficiency, or d. improved discipline rates (reduced suspensions, expulsions, etc.), or e. increased the number of students earning industry credentials and/or college credits. <p>Data can be for a specific student group or an entire student body.</p>	<p>School leaders and central office staff must:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. have a minimum of three years of school and/or central office leadership experience and 2. demonstrate evidence of improving student outcomes. This can be demonstrated by submitting evidence of: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. improved student growth as demonstrated by student performance on state or local assessments, or b. improved student attendance rates, or c. increased the percentage of students achieving English proficiency, or d. improved discipline rates (reduced suspensions, expulsions, etc.), or e. increased graduation rates, or f. increased the number of students earning industry credentials and/or college credits. <p>Data can be for a specific student group or an entire student body.</p>	<p>Other experts must:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. have a bachelor's degree; and 2. authored peer-reviewed, published research papers/articles on effective practices for school improvement; or 3. have experience leading school quality reviews; or 4. have experience serving as a superintendent, chief executive officer, or other executive leadership position in a school district that demonstrated improvement.

4. Will I be trained in how to use the Expert Review Team protocol?

Review team members must participate in training facilitated both in person and virtually by the Maryland State Department of Education. The purpose of training is to calibrate the review process to ensure a consistent approach to reviews.

5. Will I be reimbursed for travel expenses if invited to participate on an Expert Review Team?

Travel expenses and reimbursement will be provided in accordance with state guidelines.

6. How will I be notified of my selection to participate on an Expert Review Team?

A national search is facilitated by the Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE) to identify review team members. Applications and resumes are reviewed by a team of MSDE staff using a rubric to determine eligibility for interviews. Applicants that sufficiently demonstrate essential qualifications are selected to participate in a virtual interview. Selection of review team members is based on qualifications, experience in improving student outcomes, and interview outcomes. All review team members are required to pass a background check, adhere to MSDE's Code of Conduct, and adhere to local school system policies for visitors in school buildings.

7. I am a current school employee. How will I submit my time when I am attending a school site visit?

School employees will use Professional Development Leave or leave that is in accordance with their school systems guidance when attending a site visit.

8. What does the position entail?

Roles and responsibilities for the Expert Review Team include:

- Adhering to the code of conduct.
- Participating in required training and pre-visit meetings.
- Reviewing the site visit protocol in its entirety, including the classroom review capture sheet, focus group questions, and school information.
- Completing reviews according to protocol.
- Collecting evidence and providing all necessary data to the MSDE team.
- Engaging in debriefs with school teams prior to ending the school review session.
- Developing draft reports using established templates by the timeline established by the MSDE.