



English Language Arts Curriculum Vetting Report Anne Arundel County Public Schools



Division of Career and College Readiness
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Contents

Overview	6
The Vetting Process	7
Step 1: Selection of Curriculum Vettors.....	7
Step 2: Training of Curriculum Vettors	8
Step 3: Lesson Selection.....	10
Curriculum for Anne Arundel County Public Schools	11
Step 4: Curriculum Vetting Report Development	11
Areas of Promise	12
I. Grade-Appropriate Variety and Diversity of Text	12
II. Strategies for Vocabulary Acquisition.....	13
III. Varied Engagement with Text.....	14
IV. Availability of Extensions for Students Performing Above Grade Level	14
V. Multiple Means of Expression of Learning	15
Opportunities for Growth	16
I. Clear and Purposeful Alignment of Curriculum with Grade-Level Maryland College and Career Ready Standards	16
II. Expecting Textual Evidence to Support Oral and Written Responses	18
III. Instructional Supports for Diverse Learners	19
IV. Assessment Criteria for Accurately Measuring Levels of Student Performance	22
Overall Rating.....	25
Recommendations for Improvement	26
I. Organize and align grade-level Maryland College and Career Ready Standards (MCCRS) appropriately with all instructional activities, experiences, tasks, and assessments.....	26
II. Ensure text-dependent oral and written responses lead students toward reading, writing, and speaking independently and proficiently	27
III. Offer lesson-specific resources to support students receiving special services.....	28
IV. Incorporate guidance and exemplars for the formative assessment process aligned to the Maryland College and Career Ready Standards	30
Discussion and Conclusion.....	31
References	32
Appendix A: English Language Arts Curriculum Vetting Rubric	35
Appendix B: English Language Arts Consensus Report.....	39
Appendix C: Evidence Organizer	41



Appendix D: Curriculum Vetter and Report Writer Information 44



Overview

High-quality curricula can have a significant impact on student learning outcomes (Steiner, 2017). Curricula defines the essential content to be taught and how deeply to teach it so that each student has access to rigorous academic experiences and instructional supports to meet academic standards. Curriculum is not a textbook or a set of instructional materials. It is the comprehensive academic content and assessments aligned to standards. Curriculum builds instructional coherence within and across grade levels and reflects a clear vision about student learning and achievement. Curriculum includes but is not limited to a scope and sequence; measurable goals and student learning outcomes; instructional scaffolds and benchmarks; supporting instructional materials; and formative and summative assessments.

In August 2019, the Maryland State Board of Education adopted revisions to Code of Maryland Regulations (COMAR) [13A.04.12.02](#) and [13A.04.14.02](#) requiring each local school system to demonstrate evidence that curricula for English language arts (ELA) and mathematics align to Maryland College and Career Ready Standards. Acceptable forms of evidence include a vetting report produced by the Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE); a vetting report produced by a nationally recognized external party; or documentation of national ratings to demonstrate alignment to Maryland Career and College Ready Standards and [level I or II evidence level](#) as defined by the Every Student Succeeds Act.

The [Maryland Every Student Succeeds Act Consolidated State \(ESSA\)](#) plan requires schools that have been identified for comprehensive support and improvement (CSI) to use ELA and mathematics curriculum that has been vetted by the MSDE. CSI schools are the lowest achieving five percent of Title I schools or high schools that do not graduate one third or more of their students based on the four-year adjusted cohort graduation rate. Anne Arundel County had two schools identified for CSI based on graduation rates. [Table 1](#) summarizes the percent of students proficient in English language arts as measured on state assessment for each high school and the 4-year adjusted cohort graduation rates.

Data Summary for Identification of Comprehensive Support and Improvement Schools	
<p>2018-2019 State-wide Assessment Data:</p> <p>2019 State-wide assessment for English 10 Percent Proficient: 41%</p> <p>2019 AACPS assessment for English 10 Percent Proficient: 50%</p> <p>2018 AACPS High School 1 identified: ≤5.0%</p> <p>2018 AACPS High School 2 identified: ≤5.0%</p> <p><i>2019 school level academic data not available</i></p>	<p>2018 Graduation Rate for 4-year adjusted cohort:</p> <p>State graduation rate: 87%</p> <p>AACPS graduation rate : 89 %</p> <p>AACPS 2018 High School 1 identified 1: 24%</p> <p>AACPS 2018 High School 2 identified 2: 53%</p> <p><i>2019 graduation rate data not available</i></p>

Table 1. Data Summary for Identification of Comprehensive Support and Improvement Schools

This report identifies the outcome of the curriculum vetting process for the English language arts curriculum for Anne Arundel County Public school describing areas of promise, opportunities for growth, and recommendations for improvement. The MSDE is committed to

supporting curricula improvements and associated professional learning experiences for Anne Arundel County Public Schools (AACPS) in alignment with recommendations presented in this report.

The Vetting Process

The vetting process consists of six steps identified in [Figure 1](#). The first steps include selecting curriculum vetters with demonstrated expertise in standards and curriculum analysis. Curriculum vetters participate in multiple face-to-face training workshops and virtual check-in support by the MSDE. Veters review and evaluate approximately 20-25% of school system curricula. The process culminates with a summary report highlighting areas of promise, opportunities for growth, and recommendations to maintain or improve curriculum based on a criterion-referenced rubric.

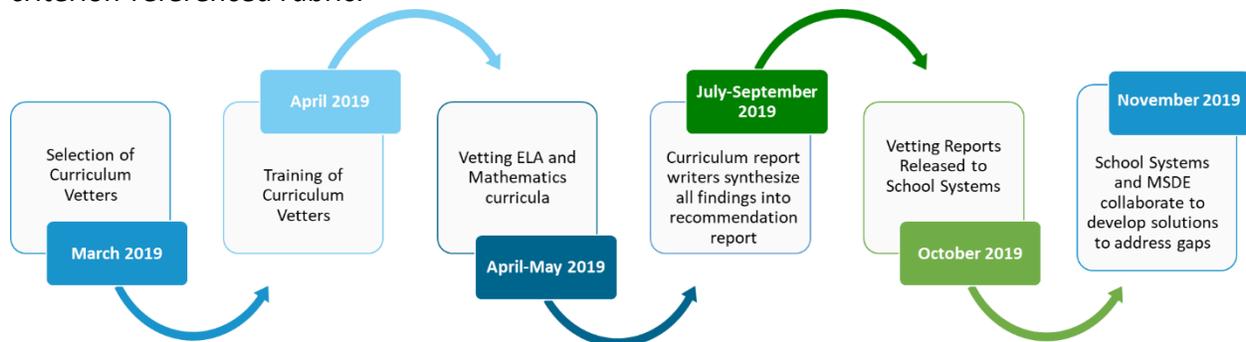


Figure 1. Summarizes the steps involved in vetting a school system curriculum led by the Maryland State Department of Education

Step 1: Selection of Curriculum Veters

The Office of Leadership Development and School Improvement at the MSDE released an invitation to secure curriculum vetters to evaluate English language arts and mathematics curricula to determine the extent to which each grade level or course is aligned with the Maryland College and Career Ready Standard (MCCRS). The invitation was sent to each local school system’s central office leaders who oversee curriculum and instruction, to deans of colleges of education, and the general public. Sixty-seven individuals applied for curriculum vetting positions, only 27 were selected.

Criteria for Selecting Veters

Criteria to select highly qualified individuals began with collaboration between the Office of Leadership Development and School Improvement and the Division of Curriculum, Instructional Improvement, and Professional Learning at the MSDE. A protocol was established to identify curriculum vetters who met essential qualifications and at least one preferred qualification. Using the protocol, each applicant was required to submit an updated resume, transcripts, teaching certificate, and a sample of a standards-aligned lesson for the content for which they applied. Applicants had to meet all essential qualifications (Level 1) and at least one preferred qualification (Level 2) to be considered for an interview ([Table 2](#)). The qualifications listed



below were communicated in writing through the invitation to apply and were detailed in the online application.

Criteria for Selecting Highly Qualified Veters	Level 1: Met <u>All</u> Essential Qualifications	Level 2: Met at Least <u>One</u> Preferred Qualification
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hold or be eligible for Advanced Professional Certificate (not applicable to non-school system applicants). • Exhibit experience in identifying and implementing curriculum aligned with the Maryland College- and Career-Ready Standards. • Provide an updated resume that demonstrated essential qualifications. • Provide at least one reference. • Provide a sample standards-aligned lesson for the content or grade-level for which applicant applied. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Experience as a curriculum/instructional leader (Specialist, Coordinator, Supervisor, etc.) in one of Maryland’s school systems; and/or • Experience in teaching a course(s) in curriculum at a Maryland Institute of Higher Education; and/or • Experience in working with the MSDE in developing or reviewing state assessment items; serving as a Master Teacher; writing example lessons; or leading ELA or mathematics professional learning experiences focused on standards.

Table 2. Essential and preferred qualifications necessary to be invited to interview as a curriculum vetter for the MSDE.

Applicants who met the essential qualifications, matched an open vetting position, and met at least one of the preferred qualifications were invited to interview as potential candidates for a vetting position. Applicants who did not satisfy all essential qualifications and/or did not meet at least one preferred qualification were placed in a pool for consideration of a future opportunity with the MSDE and were not invited to interview.

Interview Scoring Rubric and Selection

Candidates were evaluated and selected by reviewing all parts of the interview process to include: knowledge and experience indicated on the resume; the quality of the lesson plan sample submission; at least one verifiable reference; and the composite scores from the interview panel questions.

Candidates were rated as *Recommended with Reservation*, *Recommended*, *Highly Recommended*, or *Not Recommended*. In determining key attributes that delineated the *Recommended* category and *Highly Recommended*, the interview panel carefully reviewed resumes and lesson plan samples. For more information on the curriculum veters, please see [Appendix D](#).

Step 2: Training of Curriculum Veters

Curriculum veters participate in continuous in-person and virtual training throughout the vetting process to ensure a reliable and valid evaluation was conducted using the tools developed by the MSDE. The English Language Arts 3-10 Grade Level Rubric was developed from research-based practices and exemplars rubrics such as the *Educators Evaluating Quality Instructional Products* (EQUIP), the *Instructional Materials Evaluation Tool* (IMET), and the *Grade-Level Instructional Materials Evaluation Tool/Quality Review* (GIMET-QR).



Four key features of the English Language Arts 3-10 Grade Level Rubric ([Appendix A](#)) include:

- I. alignment with Maryland College and Career Ready Standards;
- II. evidence of key shifts;
- III. instructional supports to build proficiency and independence; and
- IV. assessment design and purpose.

Through key features I and II, curriculum is examined to determine the breadth and depth of the MCCRS. Key Feature III takes into account necessary scaffolds and supports for English learners, students with disabilities, or those not yet meeting grade-level expectations. With Key Feature IV, curriculum is evaluated for how well performance expectations are communicated, inclusion of variety of task types, and the nature of formative and summative assessments.

The English Language Arts 3-10 Grade Level Rubric ([Table 4](#)) was based on explicit components that is found in a high-quality curriculum such as the balance of fiction and non-fiction, depending on the grade band. For example, in K-5, the expectation is that an ELA curriculum will have a balance of roughly 50% fiction and about the same for non-fiction, which includes literary non-fiction. However, as students advance through each grade, the balance shifts to include more non-fiction or literary non-fiction to that of fiction representing approximately 70% nonfiction/literary non-fiction and about 30% fiction, by grades 6-12.

To ensure the highest level of consistency and coherency throughout the evaluation process, the MSDE developed a protocol in which to engage each curriculum vetter in several sessions of using the grade level curriculum vetting rubric and the Maryland College and Career Ready Vertical Progressions, preK-12. To view all grade level and course-specific Vertical Progressions documents for reading preK-12, please visit [MCCRS Progression and Framework for English language arts](#).

During training sessions with curriculum veters, MSDE rubrics and a sample open education curriculum was used to calibrate ratings. Veters determined the degree to which the sample curriculum was aligned with the MCCRS. This included identifying patterns, trends, strengths, and challenges or concerns across the lessons as it relates to each of the four criteria and indicators as shown on excerpt of the English Language Arts 3-10 Grade Level Rubric in [Table 3](#). During this time, veters practiced recording objective and evidence-based comments. It was through this deeper engagement that veters compared how comments and feedback were written revealing any inconsistencies, assumptions, and possible bias. Consequently, it allowed for clarifications and adjustments with the protocol, before the formal evaluation began (Office of Data, Analysis, Research, and Evaluation, 2016).

Rating Scale for ELA Curriculum

Alignment with the Maryland College and Career -Ready Standards	Key Shifts	Instructional Supports	Assessment & Measurability
4- Meets almost all or all of the criteria with strong connections between standards and lessons. 3- Meets most of the criteria with strong connections between standards and lessons. 2- Meets some of the criteria, but connection between standards and lessons is questionable. 1- Meets few of the criteria and connections between standards and lessons is vague or weak. 0- Does not meet criteria.			

Table 3. Shows the four key features curriculum vetters used to evaluate for a high-quality English language arts curriculum.

Following the in-person training sessions, curriculum vetters began the work of reviewing and rating ([Table 4](#)) their assigned grade level ELA curriculum based upon the four criteria and respective indicators. Staff from the MSDE were on hand fielding questions, offering guidance as it relates to the calibration protocol established, thus ensuring a smooth transition to the independent review that continued off-site.

ELA Grade 3-10 Curriculum Vetting Rubric Criteria and Indicators of a High-Quality ELA Curriculum

Criteria	Alignment with the Maryland College and Career Ready Standards	Key Shifts	Instructional Supports	Assessment & Measurability
A high-quality curriculum is evaluated for all indicators	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Measurable alignment Text Complexity Vocabulary Acquisition Variety of Text <i>Tools: Lexile Framework for Reading and Core standards qualitative, quantitative, and reader and task measures)</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Text-based evidence Writing from source Academic vocabulary Balanced of non-fiction to literary text 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Equal access to text Close Reading Techniques Evidence of Differentiation Extensions are Appropriate 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Valid Measures Success Criteria Accommodations and Accessibility Reliable Measures

Table 4. Each of the four criteria sections on the rubric conclude with a rating score based on the presence or absence of evidence for each indicator in [Table 2](#).

During the final in-person training session, curriculum vetters synthesized evidence-based findings into a grade band consensus report ([Appendix B](#)). The purpose of this important step is to identify the areas of promise, opportunities for growth, and recommendations for improvement to the curriculum. Discussion around synthesized findings were used to evaluate and ensure consistency among comments and areas for consideration. As a result, vetters used this activity to edit or revise any comments for one grade band consensus.

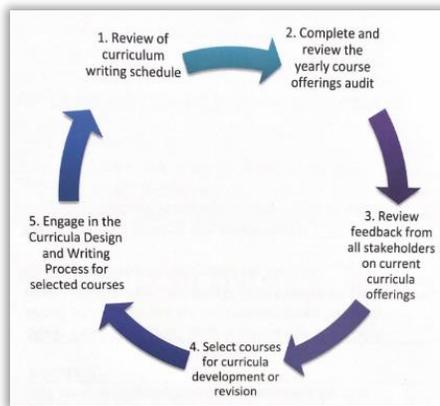
Step 3: Lesson Selection

The MSDE used well-reputed best practices which suggest selecting some curricular documents undergo an evaluation rather than an entire curriculum. Assessing all curricular documents is not practical due to the amount of time such an evaluation would take and the complexity of the documents. Since this evaluation is not assessing the entire selection of curricular documents, collecting a sample size of documents across both courses is a feasible method as long as the same rubric is used and the evaluation is conducted by someone other than those

who wrote the curriculum (Washington State University, 2018). With each quarter having the same or known chance of being selected, it is possible to make generalizations based on the sample size collected (Powell, 1998). From the quarters selected, approximately 20-25% was printed and placed in a binder for each vetter; however, the entire course was available on flash drive. Vettors also received all ancillary and supplemental curricular documents if they were provided by the school system.

Curriculum for Anne Arundel County Public Schools

Anne Arundel County Public Schools (AACPS) implements district-developed curricula for English language arts and mathematics in kindergarten through grade twelve. AACPS integrates both standards and performance-based models to inform its approach to curriculum design and development



The process for curriculum development is ongoing throughout the academic year. [Figure 2](#) illustrates the curriculum development cycle used to review, revise, and update curricula. AACPS encourages all teachers to apply to write district assessments and curriculum. Courses selected for updates start by being reviewed by central office staff and selected curriculum writers. Next, teams review assessments and modify as needed before moving on to writing units aligned to standards. Prior to releasing the new or updated curricula to teachers, the Assessment and Curriculum Management Committee (ACMC) works with content offices to vet the documents and make any additional modifications before the content is made available.

This report is a synthesized summary of findings compiled by the curriculum vettors for Anne Arundel County Public Schools district-developed English 9 and English 10 using the MSDE’s English Language Arts (ELA) Grades 3-10 Curriculum Vetting Rubric ([Appendix A](#)) and the 3-10 Grade Band Consensus Reports ([Appendix B](#)). Approximately 20-25% of each English course curriculum was vetted representing all four quarters and multiple strands, or units, within and across the grade band where 1.1 means Quarter 1, Strand 1 and 3.4 means Quarter 3, Strand 4. Sections vetted include:

- **English 9- p.1-3; Strand 1.1 and 1.2; Strand 3.3; Strand 3.4**
- **English 10- p. 1-4; Strand 1.1; Strand 1.4; Strands 2.1 and 2.2; Strand 4.3**

For the ease of readers, the term “lesson” means the same as Day 1, Day 2, and so on for this curriculum.

Step 4: Curriculum Vetting Report Development

Curriculum report writers were acquired through a Request for Quotation (RFQ) submitted by the MSDE. All candidates had to submit evidence of technical writing experience with at least one writing sample, a resume demonstrating knowledge and experience of the MCCRS, a Master’s degree, and current Maryland Educator certification. Six RFQs were submitted and staff at the MSDE interviewed the most qualified candidates who met the RFQ requirements. Selected report writers were assigned either English Language Arts or mathematics vetting reports or curricula, depending on their background and expertise.

Three report writers were trained which involved having access to the same materials as vetters, all the K-12 grade level curriculum vetting reports, and the K-12 consensus reports also developed by vetters. Training involved a similar calibration, as described earlier for vetters, in which writers objectively synthesized all findings against the respective ELA or mathematics curriculum vetting rubrics. As a first step in organizing all the vetting information, writers were required to complete an Evidence Organizer ([Appendix C](#)) before beginning a first draft report. This way, the MSDE could ensure a consistent and accurate account of the findings from the curriculum vetters. Throughout a 6-8-week period, report writers were required to submit, for feedback from the MSDE, several drafts which underwent many iterations toward a final report ready for dissemination to local school systems. To see the full list of curriculum vetters and report writers, please see [Appendix D](#).

Curriculum Vetting Results

The next pages present the findings for the English language arts course for AACPS. The information, evidence, and examples do not represent an exhaustive account of all findings, but act to highlight and reveal common patterns, strengths, and areas for growth. The grade band concludes with the recommendations and overall score. The grade level curriculum vetting rubrics and consensus documents are available for review.

Areas of Promise

I. Grade-Appropriate Variety and Diversity of Text

The grades 9 and 10 vetted curricula contain a range of materials, both print and digital, to support student learning. The range of texts is reflective of diverse cultures and themes and texts are available for students to explore throughout the year. Lessons prompt students to examine television shows and movies to supplement understanding of the anchor texts. Through the text and supplementary materials, students are exposed to a wide range of topics and themes appropriate to each grade level such as human competition, civil and social constructs, aging, mortality, and more.

The vetted curriculum shows a thoughtful balance of literary and nonfiction text. In the grade 9 vetted curriculum, students read, “The Most Dangerous Game” (740L) and “Macbeth” (1350L), both literary texts. In Quarter 3, Strands 2-3, students read, “I am an American Day,” “Before Hip-Hop Was Hip-Hop,” “Grit: The Power of Passion and Perseverance,” and Malala Yousafzai’s Nobel Peace Prize Speech, all of which are informational texts. In units where literature is the focus, students read or view informational sources to supplement their understanding of the core literature.

In the grade 10 vetted curriculum, students read “Animal Farm” (1170L) and “Fahrenheit 451” (810L-990L), speeches by Ronald Reagan and Billy Joel, the nonfiction narrative “I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings” (1010L), and ten poems including “Sonnet 18,” “The Guitar,” and “Do Not Go Gentle into That Good Night.” Two of the vetted lessons include both fiction and nonfiction, reflecting a balance of literary to nonfiction texts.

II. Strategies for Vocabulary Acquisition

The lessons in the vetted curriculum for grades 9 and 10 contain activities that build students' "ability to acquire and use accurately general academic and domain-specific words and phrases so that students demonstrate independence in gathering vocabulary knowledge important to comprehension and expression" (CCR.L.9-10.6). As important is a students' ability to "determine or clarify the meaning of unknown and multiple-meaning words and phrases on grades 9-10 reading and content, choosing flexibly from a range of strategies (CCR.L.9-10.4). Strategies include using context clues, identifying patterns of words (word structure), using reference materials, and verifying a preliminary determination of meaning by checking other resources (CCR.L.9-10.a-d). Specific examples aligned to these standards are discussed next.

Throughout the grade 9 vetted curriculum, activities call for use of Cornell Notes to learn new vocabulary and concepts. For example, in Quarter 1, Strand 1, an enrichment activity states, "use the Cornell Notes strategy to record and organize the information," on literary elements such as plot, conflict, character, and setting. In the same Strand, a Direct Instruction activity states that the Cornell Notes strategy can be used "to record information...on prepositional phrases and precise diction." Use of this strategy was evidenced in Quarter 1, Strand 2, Day 1 and Quarter 3, Strand 4, Days 5-6. In addition, guidance is offered on introducing terms and concepts related to a unit emphasis. A partial example on p. 82 of the curriculum guide directs teachers to focus on reinforcing skills for "students to continue to build on...by learning the vocabulary associated with rhetorical analysis any by analyzing more complex texts."

In the grade 10 vetted curriculum, the "Big Question," as referenced in the Common Core Literature (CCL) text, p. 184, includes activities that focus on building academic vocabulary related to the themes of the unit through context. Examples of this are evident in Quarter 1, Strand 1, Day 1 and Quarter 2, Strand 1, Day 1. The academic vocabulary related to theme and associated with poetry, including terms such as simile, stanza, personification, is a focus of Quarter 2. Students acquire new vocabulary through teacher modeling as stated in the curriculum. Resources such as AVID Keeping Track of New Vocabulary, the All-in-One Workbook, or AVID (Advancement Via Individual Determination) Cornell Notes are suggested as resources to facilitate standard CCR.L.9-10.4 as evidenced, "explain the connotation and denotation of words."

Although these examples are considered areas of promise the school system is encouraged to consider integrating Tier 2 and Tier 3 vocabulary as a regular part of the instructional sequence. Tier 2 words are likely to be found in written text, technical text, and literary text. By placing greater emphasis on acquiring and using terms through academic discourse, responses to text-dependent questions, and other vocabulary strategies, Tier 2 words often have utility in other disciplines as they are vital to comprehension and literacy skills. These words may have multiple meanings and through regular instructional practice, students can begin to see how words like "relative," "analyze," or "formulate" translate to other contexts (Achieve the Core, 2015). Likewise, learning and using Tier 3 words, or domain-specific words, are key to understanding a new concept such as legislature, aorta, or pi.

III. Varied Engagement with Text

The grade 9 vetted curriculum contains multiple experiences for students to engage with text. In Quarter 1, students have five separate instances to engage with “The Most Dangerous Game” through guided instruction, whole and small group formats, and independent practice before being assessed. Students have additional opportunities to revisit “The Most Dangerous Game” to examine the impact of word choice. After assessment, students revisit passages from the text in the Tableau and Human SlideShow activity. In Quarter 3, the assessment requires reading of three different texts including, “I am an American Day”, “Before Hip-Hop Was Hip-Hop,” “Grit: The Power of Passion and Perseverance,” and/or Malala Yousafzai’s Nobel Peace Prize Speech. Two of these are available in video, ostensibly allowing learners to more fully appreciate the expressive content of the texts (Rose, Meye, Strangman, & Rappolt, 2002). Later, students routinely engage with complex text (“Macbeth”) in whole and small group experiences. The scenes are read aloud in a whole group setting, and students go to small groups to conduct an analysis. Utilizing the whole and small group format allows students reading below grade level to access an above grade level text (1350L) with peer support.

In the grade 10 vetted curriculum, an array of multi-modal literacy strategies is included which could promote engagement with texts, including audio recording, Silent Sustained Reading, teacher reading, partner reading, small group reading, and independent reading of passages. In Quarter 2, Strand 2 activities are present that explicitly require the reading of poems more than once with specific standard-based goals for each reading. For example, in Quarter 2, Strand 2, Day 1, a task states “read the poem once to yourself, then aloud as a group.” After the second reading, students answer questions including “how does the language of the poem help readers to understand the theme” which addresses RL10.2, a listed standard for the lesson. This is followed by a small group task that states, “read ‘The Fish’ to yourself, then as a group...during the second reading, pause after the first six lines. What event triggers the speaker’s thought?” This question addresses RL10.3 which is also listed as a focus standard for the lesson. In Quarter 4, Strand 3, Day 11, students engage with a text in a variety of ways including discussion, a kinesthetic “Four Corners” activity, and a creative “Extending Story Elements” activity.

IV. Availability of Extensions for Students Performing Above Grade Level

Ensuring that as many experiences as possible are in place for students reading above grade level can result in improved learning experiences for not only the above grade level reader, but for all students in the class (Winebrenner & Brulles, 2008). There is observable evidence in the vetted curriculum of extensions for students who read and write above grade level, many of which are listed in the “Background Information for Teachers” sections. In grade 9, extensions include reviews of grammar lessons, additional opportunities for written analysis, and opportunities to complete a creative product to compare the precise diction and prepositional phrases using two versions of “The Most Dangerous Game.” In Quarter 3, Writer’s Workshop contains extensions including participating in a Scoring Circle to evaluate the effectiveness of peers’ writing and to view a series of advertisements to consider what “contributes to an effective argument.” Extension activities in the vetted curriculum indicate that students may “complete one or more” of the provided tasks.

Similarly, there are Extensions and Differentiated Instruction opportunities available in the grade 10 vetted curriculum to support students performing above grade level. In Quarter 2, Strand 1 and 2, students are invited to analyze two additional poems, to search for related images rather than be provided with images, and to compose a narrative poem that imitates the style of a selected poem. Teachers are instructed to “purposefully choose one or more...options based upon student needs.” Other lessons provide advanced students with the opportunity to extend their understanding of text by creating a text that imitates the original. Students are prompted to supply evidence from the original text that served as the basis for their imitation.

V. Multiple Means of Expression of Learning

Providing students multiple opportunities to demonstrate their understanding toward meeting the expectation of a content standard is a valuable instructional practice. As students may not demonstrate proficiency on first attempts, additional chances of the same standard are needed to measure progress and to plan future experiences accordingly (Tomlinson, Moon, & Imbeau, 2015, p. 7). The vetted curriculum shows evidence of providing students with those opportunities, both formal and informal, to demonstrate their proficiency. For example, in the grade 9 vetted curriculum, Quarter 1, Strand 1 contains repeated activities to assess student mastery of RL9.3 as students respond to questions about the conflict characters experience in an independent task, a whole group task, and a small group task before being assessed independently with the MDG Reading Quiz. In Quarter 1, Strand 2, guidance is offered on various options for students to practice speaking and listening as they prepare a presentation for Exploring Classic and Modern Archetypes such as Fishbowl Speeches, AVID Helping Trios, and Direct Instruction on “creating a class list of characteristics of effective and ineffective public speaking.” Each of these experiences enable students to understand and practice preparing a public presentation.

In the grade 10 vetted curriculum, teachers are offered varied guidance on how to assess students’ understanding and proficiency toward meeting the expectation of cited standards in Quarter 1, Strand 1 and Strand 4. For example, in Quarter 1, Strand 1, Days 2-3, there are multiple opportunities to assess student mastery through guided close reading annotations, small group discussions, and independent close reading. In Quarter 2, Strands 1 and 2, students have multiple opportunities to demonstrate proficiency both formally and informally through quick writes and whole and small group discussions. In Quarter 4, Strand 3 of the grade 10 curriculum, students show mastery of RL.9-10.1 in the irony activity, the “Theme Detectives”, and the “Character Changes” activity. There is frequent evidence of learning or proficiency in meeting RL.9-10.3 in the Think-Pair-Share activity, the “Extending Story Elements,” “Character Changes,” and “Reader-Response” activities.

Opportunities for Growth

I. Clear and Purposeful Alignment of Curriculum with Grade-Level Maryland College and Career Ready Standards

The school system is commended for the number of instances in which curricular tasks, objectives, and activities, within each of the vetted strands, contain corresponding grade appropriate MCCRS. When curriculum and curricular materials align with academic content standards, educators can use the standards to set goals for student learning, design instruction, and plan interventions to move students toward mastery of the standards (Key Design, 2019). Nevertheless, vetters identified areas in which: a behavioral objective (*I Can* statement) was listed to the exclusion of the MCCRS; a standard did not align with the *I Can* statement; or lists of activities (from hyperlinks) did not include corresponding content standards or *I Can* statements. New and developing teachers unfamiliar with the standards or not clear on which activity(ies) connects to which standard(s) and *I Can* statements may struggle to figure out how the pieces of learning fit together to ensure student success. Knowing how to interpret, use, and connect the components is essential to effective instruction (Toon, 2017).

In general, vetters found the 9th grade curriculum somewhat difficult to navigate in terms of the organization of key components of a high-quality curriculum. While a complete list of all grade-level standards is provided in the “Overview” and the “Progressions Flow Map” located within the first set of curriculum pages, specific standards were absent on several pages. Purposeful alignment of content standards with an *I Can* statement and associated tasks, activities, and assessments would clarify a connection between and alignment with an explicit activity and student task. Holistically, curriculum vetters’ findings included additional concerns from both the Grade 9 and Grade 10 ELA curricula:

- absence of MCCRS within strands;
- reliance on the Core Standards, instead of the language and intent of the MCCRS;
- unclear connections between MCCRS, tasks and/or objectives;
- misalignment of grade level standards; and
- lack of alignment between *I Can* statements and MCCRS.

Grade 9

Quarter 1, Strands 1-2 and Quarter 3, Strand 4, contain behavioral objectives or “*I Can*” statements incongruent with the “Background Information for Teachers” sections and are not fully aligned to implied standards:

- A reference to the 1st Quarterly Assessments indicates, “a focus on setting, conflict, author’s purpose, use of textual evidence, and structure.” Additional information follows explaining how students will “develop an understanding of how narrative elements are developed...reveal author’s purpose.” The *I Can* statement for this strand expects students to “explain how narrative elements (characters, plot, setting, conflict, and point of view) contribute to the development...and convey meaning in a narrative.” Yet, no standards are included at any point within these first few important days of “instructional delivery.” The *I Can* statement does not align to the true intent and

language of the cited MCCRS for RL.9-10.3 (*Analyze how complex characters develop over the course of the text and advance the plot or develop the theme*).

- “Teacher Note: The goal in English 9 is to move students beyond identification of narrative elements...and how the author’s structural choices...understand author’s purpose in writing the story.” Nowhere is there a citation for the standard on text structure RL.9-10.5 in either the *I Can* statement or a reference to this standard. On p. 9 an extension activity states “consider the tableaux in chronological order” and under Narrative Elements, “How do the author’s choices in structuring the story communicate his purpose?” Although both curricular examples show a reference to the standard, without a clearer intention, the alignment is tenuous.
- In the body of the Teacher Note, it reads, “...includes opportunities to compose and analyze the impact of an author’s use of description.” This seems incongruent with other earlier tasks which expect students to explain how elements reveal the author’s purpose. It seems to point to a possible writing exercise, yet there are no associated writing standards listed within this strand.

Vetted lessons contain activities that implicitly address some standards but are not explicitly listed in the strand(s):

- Quarter 3, Strand 4, Days 1-2 have no listed MCCRS. It has an *I Can* statement that states, “I can summarize the main ideas of the text.” The language of the *I Can* statement (“main ideas”) is inconsistent with the language of MCCRS 9-10.2 (“*theme or central idea*”).
- Quarter 3, Strand 3, Days 2-3 includes the “I can revise and edit an analytical essay to include logical organization and clear, coherent language” which speaks to W.9-10.5, not cited in the Strand.
- Vetted lessons include tasks that are not aligned to explicitly stated standards or to measureable objectives.
- Independent Task: “demonstrate your understanding of the impact of prepositional phrases and precise diction...” could align to L.9-10.3.
- Small-Group Task: “...create a tableau that represent the most important moment in your passage” could align to RL.9-10.2.
- Differentiated Instruction Tasks: “Use one or more strategies to summarize the most important content from each section.” Suggested strategies include a story map, GIST summary, Plot Diagram, to name a few. Summarizing could align to RI.9-10.2, RL.9-10.2, or other standards such as RL.9-10.3, for plot diagram.

Grade 10

Quarter 1, Strand 4 contains MCCRS for reading informational texts (RI.9-10.1, 2, 4-6), but the strand focuses on, “Animal Farm,” a work of literature (replace with Reading Literature, RL).

- Quarter 1, Strand 4, certain activities align with standards that are below grade level:
 - Students are asked to “analyze how particular lines of dialogue or incidents in a story or drama propel the action, reveal aspects of a character, or provoke a decision” which aligns with RL.8.3, not RL. 9.3.

- In Day 6, the chapter 5 Character Analysis is below grade level and aligns with RL.4.3 as students are identifying what the character says, thinks, does, and what other characters say about him/her. Students are not explaining how the character develops over the course of the text.
- In the Day 8 Argument Practice, students are asked to explain the belief or opinion of a character which aligns to RL.8.3 because students are not connecting their explanation of the character's belief to a conclusion about the work as a whole.
- In Quarter 4, Strand 3 shows evidence of misalignment or incorrect use of standards:
 - Thirteen standards are listed in the left column (p.141); however, several tasks do not align to any of the standards.
 - The learning objectives "I can read and annotate for understanding and I can assess my understanding of the text do not align explicitly with any MCCRS.
 - RL.9-10.4- does not align to "identify parts of speech, use word in a sentence, draw the word," as students are not determining the meaning of the word as it is being used in the text or analyzing its impact on text, as it appears in the standard.
 - No evidence of students meeting standard RL.9-10.3 except a mention in "recognize connections between Bradbury's dystopian society and our current society."
 - A reference to "draw inferences about Beatty's character..." but this better aligns with RL.8.3, not RL.9-10.3.

II. Expecting Textual Evidence to Support Oral and Written Responses

Curriculum vetters noted an inconsistent approach to the expectation of quality student responses for key MCCRS standards for citing text evidence from both reading literature and informational pieces (RL.9-10.1 and RI.9-10.1). By grade 9 and 10, the expectation is students know how to accumulate evidence from across text and to evaluate each piece of evidence to judge its worth in supporting literature and literary nonfiction text (Maryland College and Career Ready Standards Clarifications documents). While vetters identified ample evidence of lesson opportunities in which an oral or written response was expected, as cited earlier, the quality or extent to which citing text evidence for oral responses was noticeably diminished as compared to written responses. Intentional experiences for academic discourse can facilitate learning which can be a vehicle for incorporating a gradual release of responsibility as students assume increasing responsibility over their learning (Fisher & Frey, 2008).

Grade 9

- In Quarter 1, Strand 1, there are few opportunities to respond to questions using text evidence.
- Of the approximately twenty margin questions for "The Most Dangerous Game," one question suggests that evidence from the text be included in the response.

- Of the six “Integration of Knowledge and Ideas” questions answered after reading “The Most Dangerous Game”, one requires use of text evidence.
- The MDG Reading Quiz contains no questions that require evidence from the text to support responses.
- Similarly, the vetted curriculum does not afford students routine opportunities to draw evidence from text in writing.
- In Quarter 1, Strand 1, there were no observable activities that required using evidence from text in responding to a question in writing.
- Quarter 1, Strand 1 contains a Narrative Writing Task that does not require students to use evidence from the text to support the decisions they made in crafting their own narrative.
- In Quarter 3, Strand 4, Days 1-6, students have the option to summarize sections of “Macbeth,” but there were no observable writing tasks that required use of evidence from text to support a response.

Grade 10

Lessons involving the texts “Animal Farm” and “Fahrenheit 451”:

- Nineteen of twenty vetted lessons showed evidence of requiring students to utilize textual evidence in their responses. Of those 19 lessons:
 - 6 vetted lessons (Quarter 1, Strand 1, Day 2; Quarter 1, Strand 4, Day 6; Quarter 2, Strand 1, Day 1; Quarter 2, Strand 2, Days 1; and Quarter 2, Strand 2, Day 2) explicitly include opportunities for oral as well as written responses.
- 2.2 Day 3: The graphic organizer (AIOW 160) used to compare themes of “Hold Fast Your Dreams—and Trust Your Mistakes,” “All,” and “Also All” asks students to list the techniques used to convey theme, but it does not require students to provide textual evidence for support.
- 4.3 Day 7-10: Questions are asked about characters in a PowerPoint Mini-assessment without requiring text-based support. During Direct Instruction, students analyze and discuss Bible quotes, watch advertisement jingles, and analyze pictures for juxtaposition with no evidence of making connections back to a text.
- 4.3 Day 11: No evidence is required to support opinions in the “Comparing Ideas, Values, and Perspectives” four corner activity with text-based evidence. A closing discussion appeared to ask for student opinion, but not grounded in textual evidence nor does it allude to defending one’s response.

III. Instructional Supports for Diverse Learners

According to a [“Fast Facts”](#) document published on the Anne Arundel County Public Schools(AACPS) website and [Maryland Report Card data](#), AACPS has seen an increasing trend in the enrollment of English learners and students with disabilities populations. State assessment data for the English 10 exam shows a decreasing trend over the last three years in the performance of English learners, as well as economically disadvantaged, and Hispanic student groups. For the 2019 administration of the English 10 state assessment, approximately 50% of

“All Students” scored proficient, while less than 5% and approximately 9% of English learners and students with disabilities scored proficient, respectively.

This is important information to consider when providing a high-quality curriculum that attends to all learners’ diverse needs. Curriculum vetters examined select sections across both the English 9 and English 10 ELA curricula, as well as several additional ancillary materials supplied by the school system. Vetter findings revealed there appears to be a need for differentiated resources and scaffolding for students who may need support including students with disabilities, English learners, and students reading below grade level. In differentiated classrooms, critical knowledge and material to be learned may not change from student to student, but the means through which the student accesses the knowledge and information can vary. Likewise, student demonstration of mastery in meeting the expectation of content standards may vary as well (Tomlinson & Allan, 2000). Thus, guidance and provisions for setting up instructional supports and scaffolds are warranted.

Indeed, the **grade 9** vetted curriculum showed a considerable number of options for differentiation. Where improvement is needed is in providing specific guidance and examples for teachers on how to scaffold and support learning of the content standards. Excerpts from the “Differentiated Instruction” component exemplify this point:

- Q1 Strand 1, Days 1-3 of, five separate options (DI Option #1-#5) are provided for differentiation (pg.10) such as the consideration for various “learning styles,” struggling readers, “students who need additional support”, or “for less proficient readers”.
- Q1 Strand 1 contains a variety of differentiation items including an “archetype gallery walk” (pg. 15), an abbreviated task “the final individual task as an Exit Ticket rather than a written reflection” (pg. 15); “completing the Strand 2 assessment in small groups rather than as individuals” (pg. 16); or giving students the option to “present a pre-recorded presentation rather than a live presentation” (pg. 17).
- Q3 Strand 3 shares that educators can “differentiate by choosing persuasive texts that are appropriate for their students” (pg. 80) and “teachers could also opt to allow students to select persuasive texts from outside of the English classroom” (pg. 89). There is also an option for use of “the collaborative essay strategy” (pg. 91).
 - Veters pointed out guidance around the terms persuasion or persuasive is not grounded in the assessed reading or writing standards. Persuasive and persuasion are not included in the vertical progressions for high school college- and career-ready standards, except as a Speaking and Listening standard (SL.9-10.1) The appropriate reading or writing standards are RI.9-10.8 or W.9-10.1, which speak to argument, claim, counterclaim, etc.
- Q3 Strand 4 contains differentiation opportunities to use “depending on the needs of...students and their familiarity with Shakespeare” (pg. 96). Further, in the small group tasks, students are invited to “complet[e] one or more of [a number of] ...activities.”

Within the Differentiated Instruction component of the Grade 9 curriculum, there were recurring resources for “English Language Learners”, such as a hyperlink to Characteristics and Needs of English Language Learners, ELL Resource Links, and the Academic Language Functions

Toolkit. The first two links connect users to general information about how English learners (EL) learn. The third link is broken.

These resources are worthy of an educator's time to learn pedagogical techniques as it relates to instruction for English learners, students with disabilities, and struggling readers. With respect to curricular guidance though, little information is available to educators such as models, samples, or scaffolds on how to select alternative text or adjust instruction so that it becomes accessible for English learners, students with disabilities, or those reading below grade level. Moreover, just two of the four texts, "I Am an American Day" and "Before Hip-Hop Was Hip-Hop", and two CommonLit pieces have Lexile levels and other information that could guide teachers in selecting a suitable text, passages, or excerpts. Given the rich vocabulary and concepts often associated with many of these texts, no information or scaffolded supports beyond Lexile levels for the CommonLit pieces was available to guide teachers toward an appropriate choice aligned to the correct content standards and students' needs.

Following the "Possible Texts for Analysis", on p. 81, is a parenthetical notation for teachers: *"You may choose to structure at least part of this as a read-aloud. Although students may not be able to name rhetorical devices at this point, encourage them...help the speaker to convey his or her ideas."* This was concerning to the curriculum vetters as there seems to be a disconnect between the standards listed, the *I Can* statement, and the teacher note informing them of a minimal expectation on what students should know and be able to do by the end of grade 9. Specifically, the *I Can* statement reads, "I can identify an author's central idea and explain how the author uses related ideas, facts, and other evidence to develop that idea." However, the lesson sequence in Quarter 3 continuously references the speaker, but tasks vacillate between the terms persuasion and claim and do not include terms often associated with rhetorical devices (alliteration, hyperbole, simile, counterargument, etc.). Perhaps through instruction the connection is made between standards and the *I Can* statement, rhetorical devices, and the difference between speaker, author, etc.; however, it is not clear in the written curriculum. The sequence was construed as confusing with incorrect or missing standards and may not be appropriate without a moderate amount of scaffolding for students reading below grade level or who are unfamiliar with terms. Since curriculum is considered a key source of information for teachers, erroneous instruction could result.

Similarly, the **grade 10** vetted curriculum contained multiple suggestions for differentiation, but lacked the specificity needed for English learners, students with disabilities, or students who may read below or above grade level.

Highlights of grade 10 showed the following findings:

- 1.1 Day 2: A model for annotations is provided for the close reading and analysis process under "Guided Reading" but alignment to standards is not apparent.
- 1.1 Days 1-3: Options address learners who may have difficulty, including students with expressive language difficulties, visual learners, language weakness, attention difficulties, comprehension weaknesses, and students who require additional processing time. While the references used in the curriculum seem outdated, a message seemed clear: learners' needs are considered for grade 10 content.

- 2.2 Day 2: The approach to “Do Not Go Gentle...” in Collection Two provides two readings/performances of the poem, guided questions for specific portions of the text, and a visual representation of chunked sections.
- There were suggestions referencing the use of Universal Design for Learning and TP-CASTT practices.
- Examples of areas to address, showed the following examples:
 - Days 2-3: Students may struggle with finding appropriate information for the research project.
 - Day 4: As an option to Study Guide #1, an open note quiz is suggested to “increase accountability for completing study guides and reward students who did the work”.
- 2.1 Day 1: Option 1 (only option) is listed as an independent practice for students to “read and analyze two poems”. No other support or scaffolding was included.
- 2.2 Day 1: During direct instruction, the students are asked to “listen and take notes.” No consideration for diverse learning styles or students.
- 4.3 Day 7-10: Little to no evidence of differentiation.
- 4.3 Day 11: Little direction or scaffolded support for locating examples of irony throughout the novel, “Fahrenheit 451” (irony activity), theme (Theme Detectives activity), or characters (Character Changes activity).

IV. Assessment Criteria for Accurately Measuring Levels of Student Performance

Research supports the idea that student achievement improves significantly when teachers and students are clear about learning outcomes and related indicators of success. It is important to analyze assessment and lesson tasks, activities, and resources to ensure the written curriculum, standards, and rubrics or scoring guides are tightly aligned with the taught curriculum (Westerberg, 2019). In general, curriculum vetters noted scoring guides, success criteria, rubrics, or other aspects of the formative assessment process were absent, weak, or vaguely mentioned in both curricula. In other cases, grading criteria was broad or not aligned with listed standards and/or *I Can* statements for vetted lessons. Specific examples are included below.

Grade 9

- Multiple references show absent or vague assessment practices listed under “Assessments” including: Quarter 1, Strand 1, Day 1-3; Strand 1, Days 4-5; and, Strand 2, Days 1-4: “formatively assess students’ understanding based on their responses to the discussion”; “formatively assess students’ understanding by observing small group conversation”; “formatively assess students’ understanding based on their responses to the prompts.”
- Quarter 3, Strand 4, Days 1-8: no assessments included in the “Assessments” column.
- Quarter 3, Strand 3, Days 2-3: Writer’s Workshop- teachers informs students to complete one or more of the eight tasks, but only one mentions a scoring rubric. None appear with a standard or *I Can* statement.

- The rubric provided in Quarter 1, Strand 1, Days 4-5 does not assess the *I Can* statements in the lesson which include: “I can analyze the effectiveness of narrative writing” and “I can evaluate how language establishes tension in a text.” An excerpt from the rubric shows “...it is effectively developed with narrative elements and is consistently appropriate to the task; it demonstrates purposeful coherence, clarity, and cohesion...” However, the language of the rubric suggests an assessment of students’ mastery of W.9-10.4 (*Produce clear and coherent writing in which the development, organization, and style are appropriate...*). No standards are included or aligned to the objective or student tasks.
- In Quarter 3, Strand 3, a Teacher Note states what teachers should look for a Strand 3 Assessment: “Students should be expected to include both an introduction, including a clear thesis statement, a conclusion, and at least two body paragraphs.” The *I Can* statement sets the expectation that students will compose a multi-paragraph written response evaluating the relative effectiveness of two speakers’ persuasive techniques. As mentioned earlier, it was of concern to vetters that there may be confusion between rhetorical devices and persuasive techniques. Maryland College-and Career-Ready Standards focus on the ability to write arguments and/or delineate and evaluate arguments, writing and reading standards, respectively. It is in the Speaking and Listening Standards where CCR.SL.9-10.1 sets the expectation to express ideas clearly and persuasively or CCR.SL.9-10.3 (*evaluate speaker’s point of view, use of rhetoric...*). Clarification and correction are needed in order to effectively determine learning targets aligned to standards, including a rubric or scoring guide.
- In Quarter 3, Strand 4, teachers are cautioned that they “be sure to work with students...to monitor their comprehension of the text.” No rubric is provided to assess students’ mastery of the *I Can* statement, “I can summarize the main ideas of a text.”
- Quarter 3, Strand 3, there are assessment guidelines provided in the “Assessments” column, in Quarter 3, Strand 4, the “Assessments” column is blank, providing no rubric and no assessment guidelines sufficient for interpreting performance.

Grade 10

In the grade 10 vetted curriculum, there are two rubrics included while in other lessons and tasks, no observable evidence on checking student progress was found:

- Quarter 4, Strand 3, Days 7-10 includes a self-assessment rubric for the “Fahrenheit 451” essay.
- Quarter 1, Strand 4, Days 2-3 includes a rubric for the research project. The research project rubric clearly evaluates citations (W.9-10.8), but the language of the rubric is too broad to sufficiently interpret performance on standards W.9-10.7 and 9. For example, the rubric evaluates “detailed and relevant notes” and “informative, well-organized, and visually appealing” handout that “summarizes content of presentations” and “includes information related to the sub-topic.”
- Instances in which success criteria could be included clarify what students should know and be able to do by the end of a larger or more rigorous assessment:
 - Quarter 4, Strand 3, Day 3- “closure/assessment” or “Writing Assignment”;



- Quarter 4, Strand 3, Day 11-“reader-response”; and
- Quarter 2, Strand 2 or Quarter 4, Strand 3, Day 11- little to no guidance for tasks.

Overall Rating

Ideally, a curriculum is fully aligned with the Maryland College-and Career-Ready Standards so that by the end of a year, students have had rich and multiple exposures to and experiences with each of the content standards. To that end, several standards can be addressed by a single rich task addressing the concept of focus and coherence. For example, when editing writing, students address W.9-10.5 (*Develop and strengthen writing as needed by planning, revising, editing, rewriting, or trying a new approach*) as well as L.9-10.1, 2, and 3 (which deal with *conventions of standard English and knowledge of language*). When *drawing evidence from literary and informational texts* per standard W.9-10.9, students are also demonstrating their comprehension skill in relation to specific standards in Reading, such as RL.9-10.8, *delineate and evaluate the argument and specific claims in a text* (Key Design Considerations, 2019). The overall rating for grade band English 9-10 was a **3**. As highlighted earlier in the report, there were several promising practices regarding access to diverse and complex text, multiple means of expression, and extensions for above grade level students. However, there was missing, insufficient, or not always clear alignment between the Maryland College- and Career-Ready Standards, lessons, tasks, and assessments resulting in a curriculum whose focus and coherence was sometimes difficult to perceive.

Curriculum vetters rated the grade ELA 9-10 curricula on a 0-4 scale for each of the criteria. The chart, “Criteria on the ELA Grade 3-1 Curriculum Vetting Rubric” ([Table 5](#)) specifies the rating for each criterion, by course.

Rating Scale:

- 4- Meets almost all or all the criteria with strong connections between standards and lessons.
- 3- Meets most of the criteria with strong connections between standards and lessons.**
- 2- Meets some of the criteria, but connections between standards and lessons are questionable.
- 1- Meets few of the criteria and connections between standards and lessons are weak or vague.

Criteria on the ELA Grade 3-10 Curriculum Vetting Rubric

Course	Alignment with the Maryland College-and Career-Ready Standards	Key Shifts	Instructional Supports	Assessment & Measurability
English 9	2	3	3	2
English 10	2	3	3	3

Table 5. Shows the rating for each criterion by course.

Recommendations for Improvement

- I. Organize and align grade-level Maryland College and Career Ready Standards (MCCRS) appropriately with all instructional activities, experiences, tasks, and assessments

The MCCRS are intended to provide the essential skills and knowledge into what a student should know and be able to do in demonstrating independence and proficiency toward meeting the expectation of a grade-level standard. When students meet or exceed expectations, it is seen as an indication that students are prepared to enter college, workforce training, or pursue a career path. To that end, developing a high-quality, standards-aligned curriculum will:

- Prepare students for college and careers;
- Support teachers in delivering effective instruction; and
- Ensure access for all students to rigorous and meaningful educational experiences in every school and classroom throughout the district (Council of the Great City Schools, 2017).

Throughout the grade band, short and long lists of the reading, writing, language, and speaking and listening standards are arranged along one side of the written curriculum, but noticeably separate and apart from all lesson activities, tasks, and assessments. Separate from the standards list are what could be construed as behavioral objectives called *I Can* statements. Background Information and Instructional Delivery components are organized into days of instruction. Assessment items appear within the Instructional Delivery and, at times, along another side of the written curriculum, as “Assessments.” Within the instructional sequence lie Whole Group tasks, Direct Instruction, Extension or Enrichment, Individual or Independent tasks, Small Group, Differentiated Instruction options, and occasionally Closure/Assessments tasks. These components are indeed integral to a high-quality curriculum; however, standards and objectives absent from the context of teaching and learning does not provide the precise connection with content or the depth of knowledge and rigor associated with the intent and language of the College-and Career-Ready Standards. In turn, this could lead teachers to make erroneous decisions about sequencing, scaffolding, and which of the listed hyperlinks [to activities] moves students toward independence in meeting expectations of the standard(s).

As noted earlier, there were cases in which standards were listed but not always addressed or where the incorrect standards or the objectives and standards did not align. In other vetted sections, a wide range of standards were evidenced in a single lesson/day. While vetters were careful not to stray into a discussion of the “taught” curriculum, the concern was centered on how teachers would be able to determine and collect observable evidence of student learning in meeting a multitude of standards in the course of a day.

Beyond addressing those items mentioned in the “Opportunities for Growth” section, an important first step is to verify if all listed standards are necessary, accurate, and are aligned with the given activities, texts, assessments, and every hyperlink to activities. Following this must be an examination of the materials, text, resources, and interventions that will be used to

support the implementation of the standards. Integrating the language of the standard(s) within the school system guidance makes clear what is considered necessary to build greater coherence within and across grade levels or courses. Well-designed curriculum materials should:

- provide implementation directions;
- help teachers how to think about what to teach;
- contain explicit information on the reasons for certain content and activities;
- show the sequence of activities;
- share examples of student work; and
- describe common misconceptions or errors (Toon, 2017).

It is believed this type of organization will improve the clarity, accuracy, and needed prominence of the *I Can* statements and cited MCCRS to be at the center of the written curriculum, in a pedagogical sense.

II. Ensure text-dependent oral and written responses lead students toward reading, writing, and speaking independently and proficiently

The Key Shifts in English Language Arts stress the need for approximately 80-90% of questions be derived from text through a spiraling of grade level reading, writing, and speaking standards (Common Core Standards Guidance) and with ample opportunities with which students respond to complex text in a way that builds toward independence and proficiency.

Throughout the grade band, there were numerous activities and tasks, as shared in the Areas of Promise section, which incorporated ways for students to draw on and from anchor and ancillary resources. Yet not all of the vetted lessons showed a consistent approach to or rigor in expecting oral or written responses grounded in text. This seemed even more apparent when examining the curriculum for independent or individual tasks. A few excerpts, shown in [Table 6](#), exemplify this point:

	Curricula Excerpts From “Independent Practice/Individual Task”
Independent and/or Individual Tasks found in curriculum are written from a student’s point of view; not as guidance for instruction.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ preview thematic content ○ demonstrate your understanding (seen many times) ○ complete the quiz ○ submit your final draft ○ work on Strand – assessment ○ follow the steps for multi-draft reading ○ present your project ○ respond in writing to the following prompts ○ respond to an assessment...then collaborate with a partner or small group ○ read and annotate another article...for different vocabulary ○ write a one-page reflection to make a personal connection ○ for students who have trouble reading independently ○ provide a moral of your own ○ participate in a close reading

Table 6. Excerpts pulled from “Independent Practice or Individual Tasks” in the grade 9 and 10 curriculum of lower levels of expectation shown in curricular guidance.

All oral and written responses must be grounded in textual evidence aligned to a standard or standards. When this becomes the norm, activities, lessons, and tasks show greater consistency at being at the higher end of Bloom’s Taxonomy (analyze, synthesize, compare, evaluate) suggesting an elevation in higher order thinking or critical thinking. In fact, research shows when higher-order questions are used effectively, the brain becomes less limited and thus more “strengthened” in its ability to apply critical thinking skills over time and with routine practice. The inverse can lead to stifling learning, creating confusion, and limiting creative thinking (Tofade, 2013). To avoid this, Achieve the Core and The Council of Chief State School Officers (CCSSO) developed a brief guide on how to develop close analytic reading exemplars, referenced below:

1. Consider the most important learning for the text (literary and informational text students should read by the end of a grade independently and proficiently- RI/RL.9-10.10).
2. Determine the key ideas (RL.9-10.2 or RI.9-10.2) of the text and create a series of scaffolded questions that will help readers reach these.
3. Locate important academic vocabulary (Tier 2) and find ways to integrate these words into the questions and discussion (oral/academic discourse).
4. Review which standards are addressed in the questions you have created and choose any other standards they will be the focus of the text.
5. Locate the parts of the text that are most complex and create questions that will support students as they read these sections.
6. Develop a culminating activity or task around #1 and targeted to #4 to show progress toward meeting or exceeding expectations of the standards (CCSSO, n.d.)

III. Offer lesson-specific resources to support students receiving special services

Praise was included in findings for the intentional integration of the Differentiated Instruction options and the general guidance on characteristics and needs of English learners (ELs). It is clear the school system has made differentiation a priority for students with varying ability levels.

What needs more attention, especially as Maryland schools adjust to a growing shift in demographics, are specific suggestions and guidance around making content accessible for all learners, with a focus on English learners. It is the school system’s obligation to provide English learners and other student groups with equal opportunities to participate meaningfully in all curricular programs. Further, a standards-aligned curriculum and instructional program must factor in students with developing levels of English proficiency by providing guidance, resources, and methods (US Department of Education, 2017).

Curricula can offer direction in supporting students by providing choices on effective scaffolds as one way to enable teachers of English learners and struggling readers opportunities to navigate through complex text and writing tasks (CCSSO, n.d.). Much guidance has been offered from the field, but it has not been until recent years that important advances in educating



English learners has become more prevalent as the percentage of public school students who were English learners in the United States has grown from 3.8 million in 2000 to over 5 million today (National Center for Education Statistics, n.d.).

With a flood of information from the education marketers and vendors all claiming to have the best program or intervention for English learners, it can be difficult to determine which programs are grounded in strong or moderate levels of evidence (ESSA, 2018). While the intervention (or program) may have been successful in one instructional setting, it does not always translate to the current context of a school system or school. Thus, it is important to seek research on curriculum and instruction that benefits English learners and could be used for students with disabilities. The *What Works Clearinghouse* (WWC), considered the gold standard in evaluating for rigorous evidence-based programs and interventions, posts objective reviews of research for programs, products, practices, and policies.

Before deciding to revise, rewrite, or purchase curriculum or instructional materials for students receiving special services, it is worth taking time to investigate findings from WWC and other evidence-based resources. A few resources are offered in [Table 7](#) below.

Evidence-based Resource Examples

Location	Type and Information
<i>What Works Clearinghouse: Teaching Academic Content and Literacy to English Learners in Elementary and Middle Schools</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Practice guide with recommendations that address what works for English learners during reading and content area instruction. Recommendations include: ○ Teach a set of academic vocabulary words intensively and explicitly across several days of instructional activities (and before, during, and after); ○ Integrate oral and written English language instruction into content-area teaching; ○ Provide regular, structured opportunities to develop written language skills; ○ Provide small-group instructional intervention to students struggling in areas of literacy and English language development.
<i>CCSSO: Promoting Success for Teachers of English Learners Through Structured Observations</i>	Highlights the impact of iterative, and regular observation and feedback can have on teacher practices and underscores the need to provide specialized support for teachers with ELs in their classrooms.
<i>CCSSO: English Language Proficiency Standards</i>	These standards attend to several grade bands including the 9-12 band highlighting critical language, knowledge and language and skills using from the college-and career-ready standards for English learners.
<i>Johns Hopkins School of Education, Institute for Education Policy Policy Brief: English Learners and Content-Rich Curricula</i>	Discusses three research-based principles for planning and delivering instruction for the EL student. While this may point more to instruction, the brief offers easy-to-follow synopses for each principle along with lists of specific references to extend the search for the most appropriate solution given a context.
<i>What Works Clearinghouse: Repeated Reading</i>	Some studies show this approach has a positive effect on reading comprehensions for grades 5-12. It focuses on students who have developed initial word reading skills but struggle with fluency at their grade level. The study describes the implementation and outcomes.

Table 7. Shows examples of evidence-based resources.

IV. Incorporate guidance and exemplars for the formative assessment process aligned to the Maryland College and Career Ready Standards

In order to prepare students for readiness in college, careers, or the workplace, it is important to continually measure their progress toward independence and proficiency as is intended with the MCCRS. Failing to collect accurate data on students' mastery of the standards will result in missed opportunities to intervene for students not meeting the standard or providing enrichment for students who exceed the standard. It begins with unpacking the intent and language of each standard, when learning goals are set and metrics are devised. It is therefore important to align instruction and assessment to a specific standard(s) in order to ensure students are making progress.

It is recommended that the curriculum incorporate the use of rubrics, success criteria, or other metrics to assess student progress. A rubric can serve as a criterion-referenced tool designed to measure students' performance against the performance expectation by the end of an assignment, task, or other learning goal. Instruction is similarly enriched using rubrics as instructors can use these to make informed decisions about how to teach certain content in the future (Brookhart, 2013). Further, the use of a rubric will allow a teacher to point directly to the successes and deficiencies of a students' work in a way that efficiently leads toward student growth and valuable decisions about future instruction and intervention.

Recently, the Council of Chief State School Officers (CCSSO, October 2018) updated the definition of formative assessment. Many in the field have been led to believe formative assessment is a component of a lesson, such as an exit ticket, rather than a critical, evidence-based lever as part of the learning growth process. The CCSSO define formative assessment as: *a planned, ongoing process used by all students and teachers during learning and teaching to elicit and use evidence of student learning to improve student understanding of intended disciplinary learning outcomes and support students to become self-directed learners. Effective use of the formative assessment **process** requires students and teachers to integrate and embed the following practices in a collaborative and respectful classroom environment:*

- *clarify learning goals and success criteria within a broader progression of learning;*
- *elicit and analyze evidence of student thinking;*
- *engage in self-assessment and peer feedback;*
- *provide actionable feedback; and*
- *use evidence and feedback to move learning forward by adjusting learning strategies, goals, or next instructional steps (CCSSO, 2018).*

When the process of formative assessment is learned, practiced, and implemented with both teachers and students in mind, research shows it has a positive impact on student learning and achievement. The Maryland State Department of Education has multiple resources, training, and other valuable tools to assist should the school system decide to invest in this critical lever.



Discussion and Conclusion

Curriculum grounded in standards is the foundation for improved student outcomes. It is a priority of the MSDE that all students engage in curriculum, instruction, and assessments that prepares them for postsecondary success. As a result, the Maryland State Board of Education adopted Maryland College and Career Ready Standards. These standards identify what knowledge is measured through state assessments.

It is essential that students in the Anne Arundel County Public School system have access to high-quality curriculum that will prepare them for future success. Anne Arundel County Public Schools has done a great job of organizing and formatting their curriculum, thus making these documents useable for first-year teachers, actionable for teacher-mentors and/or department chairs, and reliable for school leadership. With that in mind, a greater impact on student achievement is promised with greater alignment to the Maryland College and Career Ready Standards, strategic use of the supporting standards and clarity in guidance over embedded resources. MSDE is committed to supporting Anne Arundel County Public Schools in identifying and implementing curriculum and professional learning experiences that is in alignment with state standards and effective practices for curriculum and instruction.

Next Steps

Recent studies have shown that a high-quality curriculum can have a more noticeable impact than other commonly used interventions such as decreasing class size or merit pay for teachers. Beginning with meeting the **Recommendations for Improvement**, such as tighter alignment between all facets of the curriculum (standards, content, objective, assessment, and all ancillary documents and hyperlinks) or ensuring a clear and balanced approach to all aspects of rigor, can make a difference. However, making the necessary revisions toward stronger curricula is only part of the shift necessary to make the greatest impact on student achievement (Steiner, 2018).

What follows must be a coordinated and collaborative partnership between the MSDE and Anne Arundel County Public School leaders throughout the process of making improvement to the English language arts curriculum. MSDE is committed to supporting Anne Arundel County Public Schools in finding and implementing solutions in a reasonable timeframe. The MSDE will provide resources, tools, and training that supports the improvement and implementation of a high-quality English language arts curriculum.



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Appendix A: English Language Arts Curriculum Vetting Rubric

<p>Criteria I Background: Curriculum and instructional materials must reflect a wide range of text types and genres, as required by the standards. Knowledge built at one grade level should be expanded in other grade levels as indicated in the Vertical Progressions.</p>		
<p>I: Alignment to Maryland College- and Career- Ready Standards (MCCRS) <i>Criteria</i></p>	<p>Strengths <i>Provide specific evidence or examples of commendations.</i></p>	<p>Challenges or Concerns <i>Provide specific evidence or examples of areas for improvement.</i></p>
<p>Curriculum-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Measurable Alignment: includes a clear and specific purpose between MCCRS and the behavioral (measurable) objective. <input type="checkbox"/> Text Complexity: consistently provides opportunities to read both literary and informational texts in the text complexity grade band, which include a mix of short and full selections. <input type="checkbox"/> Vocabulary Acquisition: provides strategies for vocabulary acquisition. <input type="checkbox"/> Variety of Text: There is a range of materials, both print and digital, which feature diverse cultures, represent high quality, and are appropriate in topic and theme for the grade level. <p>Additional tool: Lexile Framework for Reading</p>		
<p>Qualitative Summary of Evidence</p>		
<p>Rating Scale for Part I: Select only one to support your summary above.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> 4- Meets almost all or all of the criteria with strong connections between standards and lessons. <input type="checkbox"/> 3- Meets most of the criteria with strong connections between standards and lessons. <input type="checkbox"/> 2- Meets some of the criteria, but connection between standards and lessons is questionable. <input type="checkbox"/> 1- Meets few of the criteria and connections between standards and lessons is vague or weak. <input type="checkbox"/> 0- Does not meet criteria. 		



<p>Criteria II Background: The Key shifts, as indicated in the adoption of the MCCRS (CCSS), are evident throughout. Thoughtful/Sustained focus on these shifts means students must have access to and regular practice with <u>complex text</u> and related academic language, reading, writing, and language standards. Instruction explicitly calls for students' responses to be <u>grounded in evidence from texts</u>, both literary and informational. Lessons have a greater emphasis on informational texts in order to <u>build knowledge through content-rich nonfiction</u>, which includes literary non-fiction, historical documents, and scientific texts. (corestandards.org)</p>		
<p>II: Key Shifts are Evident <i>Criteria</i></p>	<p>Strengths <i>Provide specific evidence or examples of commendations.</i></p>	<p>Challenges and Concerns <i>Provide specific evidence or examples of areas for improvement.</i></p>
<p>Curriculum-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Text-based evidence: facilitates oral and written responses grounded in textual evidence and driven by higher-order thinking skills. <input type="checkbox"/> Writing from sources: suggests that students routinely draw evidence from texts in writing to analyze, create, or argue. <input type="checkbox"/> Academic vocabulary: focuses on building students' vocabulary through instruction and context. <input type="checkbox"/> Balanced of Non-fiction to Literary text: In K-5, there is a 50/50¹ balance of nonfiction to literary texts, whereas in high school, nonfiction texts are to be more prominently featured in English classes as well as in science, history, and technical classes to maintain a 70/30* balance of nonfiction to literary texts. 		
<p>Qualitative Summary of Evidence</p>		
<p>Rating Scale for Part II: Select only one to support your summary above.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> 4- Meets almost all or all of the criteria with strong connections between standards and lessons. <input type="checkbox"/> 3- Meets most of the criteria with strong connections between standards and lessons. <input type="checkbox"/> 2- Meets some of the criteria, but connection between standards and lessons is questionable. <input type="checkbox"/> 1- Meets few of the criteria and connections between standards and lessons is vague or weak. <input type="checkbox"/> 0- Does not meet criteria. 		

¹ *The balance of non-fiction and fiction should be evident over the course of the unit; however, breakdown may not necessarily be seen in each lesson. For example, over the course of a unit, literary text explicitly connected to standards-based lessons as well as non-fiction text should reflect the 50/50 or 70/30 split.



<p>Criteria III Background: While scaffolds are not a part of the standards themselves, it is important to meet the range of student needs in the classroom. Supports and scaffolds should draw students back to the text and provide strategies for vocabulary acquisition. All scaffolding and supports require ongoing formal and informal assessments that provide multiple opportunities for students to demonstrate their proficiency, both cooperatively and independently. Scaffolding is not just intended for struggling students, but also for students who are ready for above grade-level work.</p>		
<p>III: Instructional Supports Build Proficiency and Independence <i>Criteria</i></p>	<p>Strengths <i>Provide specific evidence or examples of commendations.</i></p>	<p>Challenges or Concerns <i>Provide specific evidence or examples of areas for improvement.</i></p>
<p>Curriculum-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Equal Access to Text: provides all students with multiple opportunities to engage with text of appropriate complexity for the grade level. <input type="checkbox"/> Close Reading Techniques: focuses on challenging sections of text(s) and engage students in productive struggle through academic discussion and text-dependent questioning techniques that build toward independence and proficiency. <input type="checkbox"/> Evidence of Differentiation: Considers students with disabilities, English learners, and students who are performing at or below grade level. <input type="checkbox"/> Extensions are Appropriate: Provides extensions for students who read well above grade level. 		
<p>Qualitative Summary of Evidence</p>		
<p>Rating Scale for Part III: Select only one to support your summary above.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> 4- Meets almost all or all of the criteria with strong connections between standards and lessons. <input type="checkbox"/> 3- Meets most of the criteria with strong connections between standards and lessons. <input type="checkbox"/> 2- Meets some of the criteria, but connection between standards and lessons is questionable. <input type="checkbox"/> 1- Meets few of the criteria and connections between standards and lessons is vague or weak. <input type="checkbox"/> 0- Does not meet criteria. 		



<p>Criteria IV Background: Since assessment drives instruction, lessons include regular formative and summative measures to determine whether students are mastering standards-based content and skills.</p>		
<p>IV. Assessment Design and Purpose <i>Criteria</i></p>	<p>Strengths <i>Provide specific evidence or examples of commendations</i></p>	<p>Challenges or Concerns <i>Provide specific evidence or examples of areas for improvement</i></p>
<p>Curriculum-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Valid Measures: elicits observable evidence of the degree to which a student can independently demonstrate mastery of the standards with appropriately complex text. <input type="checkbox"/> Success Criteria: includes aligned rubrics and/or assessment guidelines sufficient for interpreting performance. <input type="checkbox"/> Accommodations and Accessibility: includes assessments appropriate to all students. <input type="checkbox"/> Reliable Measures: includes assessments, whether formal or informal, designed to provide multiple opportunities for students to demonstrate their proficiency. 		
<p>Qualitative Summary of Evidence</p>		
<p>Rating Scale for Part IV: Select only one to support your summary above.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> 4- Meets almost all or all of the criteria with strong connections between standards and lessons. <input type="checkbox"/> 3- Meets most of the criteria with strong connections between standards and lessons. <input type="checkbox"/> 2- Meets some of the criteria, but connection between standards and lessons is questionable. <input type="checkbox"/> 1- Meets few of the criteria and connections between standards and lessons is vague or weak. <input type="checkbox"/> 0- Does not meet criteria. 		



Appendix B: English Language Arts Consensus Report

Directions: Using the Evaluation Rubric, indicate the criteria evidenced across the grade band curriculum.

I. Alignment to MCCRS (Check <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> all that apply.)	II. Key Areas of Focus/Shift in MCCRS (Check <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> all that apply.)	III. Instructional Supports (Check <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> all that apply.)	IV. Assessment/Measurability (Check <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> all that apply.)
<input type="checkbox"/> Measurable Alignment: Lessons include a clear and specific purpose between MCCRS and the behavioral (measurable) objective.	<input type="checkbox"/> Text-based evidence: Lessons facilitate oral and written responses grounded in textual evidence and driven by higher-order thinking skills.	<input type="checkbox"/> Equal Access to Text: Lessons provide all students with multiple opportunities to engage with text of appropriate complexity for the grade level.	<input type="checkbox"/> Valid Measures: Lessons elicit observable evidence of the degree to which a student can independently demonstrate mastery of the standards with appropriately complex text.
<input type="checkbox"/> Text Complexity: Lessons consistently provide opportunities to read both literary and informational texts in the text complexity grade band, which include a mix of short and full selections.	<input type="checkbox"/> Writing from sources: Lessons suggests that students routinely draw evidence from texts in writing to analyze, create, or argue.	<input type="checkbox"/> Close Reading Techniques: Lessons focus on challenging sections of text(s) and engage students in productive struggle through academic discussion and text-dependent questioning techniques that build toward independence and proficiency.	<input type="checkbox"/> Success Criteria: Lessons include aligned rubrics and/or assessment guidelines sufficient for interpreting performance.
<input type="checkbox"/> Vocabulary Acquisition: Lessons provide strategies for vocabulary acquisition.	<input type="checkbox"/> Academic vocabulary: Lessons focus on building students' vocabulary through instruction and context.	<input type="checkbox"/> Evidence of Differentiation: Considerations are made for students with disabilities, English learners, and students who are performing at or below grade level.	<input type="checkbox"/> Accommodations and Accessibility: Assessments are appropriate for all students.
<input type="checkbox"/> Variety of Texts: There is a range of materials, both print and digital, which feature diverse cultures, represent high quality, and are appropriate in topic and theme for the grade level.	<input type="checkbox"/> Balance of Informational to Literary text: In 3-5, there is a 50/50 balance of informational and literary texts; there is a 70/30 balance of informational and literary texts in grades 6-12.	<input type="checkbox"/> Extensions are Appropriate: Lessons provide extensions for students who read above grade level.	<input type="checkbox"/> Reliable Measures: Assessments, whether formal or informal, are designed to provide multiple opportunities for students to demonstrate their proficiency.



Directions: Using the criteria evidenced above and the Evaluation Rubric notes, provide a synthesis of the strengths and challenges across the curriculum. Be sure to cite specific objective examples for each of the criteria.

I. Alignment to MCCRS	II. Key Areas of Focus/Shift in MCCRS	III. Instructional Supports	IV. Assessment/Measurability
Synthesis of Strengths Challenges/Concerns	Synthesis of Strengths Challenges/Concerns	Synthesis of Strengths Challenges/Concerns	Synthesis of Strengths Challenges/Concerns
<p><i>Select an overall rating for all lessons evaluated for the grade level.</i></p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> 4-Meets almost all or all of the criteria with strong connections between standards and lessons.</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> 3- Meets most of the criteria with strong connections between standards and lessons.</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> 2- Meets some of the criteria, but connection between standards and lessons are questionable.</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> 1- Meets few of the criteria and connections between standards and lessons are weak or vague.</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> 0- Does not meet the criteria.</p>	<p><i>Select an overall rating for all lessons evaluated for the grade level.</i></p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> 4-Meets almost all or all of the criteria with strong connections between standards and lessons.</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> 3- Meets most of the criteria with strong connections between standards and lessons.</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> 2- Meets some of the criteria, but connection between standards and lessons are questionable.</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> 1- Meets few of the criteria and connections between standards and lessons are weak or vague.</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> 0- Does not meet the criteria.</p>	<p><i>Select an overall rating for all lessons evaluated for the grade level.</i></p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> 4-Meets almost all or all of the criteria with strong connections between standards and lessons.</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> 3- Meets most of the criteria with strong connections between standards and lessons.</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> 2- Meets some of the criteria, but connection between standards and lessons are questionable.</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> 1- Meets few of the criteria and connections between standards and lessons are weak or vague.</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> 0- Does not meet the criteria.</p>	<p><i>Select an overall rating for all lessons evaluated for the grade level.</i></p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> 4-Meets almost all or all of the criteria with strong connections between standards and lessons.</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> 3- Meets most of the criteria with strong connections between standards and lessons.</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> 2- Meets some of the criteria, but connection between standards and lessons are questionable.</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> 1- Meets few of the criteria and connections between standards and lessons are weak or vague.</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> 0- Does not meet the criteria.</p>

I. Recommendations for Aligning to MCCRS	II. Recommendations for Demonstrating Evidence of Key Shifts	III. Recommendations for Providing Instructional Supports for ALL	IV. Recommendations for Developing Appropriate Assessments

This tool has been adapted by the MSDE from the Quality Rubric created by the Tri-State Collaborative (Massachusetts, New York, Rhode Island) – facilitated by Achieve.



Appendix C: Evidence Organizer

Curriculum Vetted:

Grade Level/Grade Band:

Check-in Due Date:

MSDE Approved: Yes Needs revision, resubmit by:

Check-in Due Date:

MSDE Approved: Yes Needs revision, resubmit by:

<p><i>Criteria I. Alignment to Maryland College- and Career-Ready Standards</i></p> <p>Curriculum must reflect a wide range of text types and genres, as required by the standards. Knowledge built at one grade level should be expanded in other grade levels.</p> <p>Overall Rating Assigned by Vetter(s): <input type="checkbox"/>4 <input type="checkbox"/>3 <input type="checkbox"/>2 <input type="checkbox"/>1 <input type="checkbox"/>0</p>	
<p>Summary of Recommendation(s) = Opportunities for Growth from Consensus Report</p>	
<p>Grade Band Claim from Consensus Report (Challenges/Concerns)</p>	
<p>Evidence and/or Examples from Consensus and Grade-level Findings as a Challenge/Concern</p>	
<p>Research-Based Rationale for Opportunities for Growth aligned to each Recommendation</p>	
<p>Summary of Strengths = Areas of Promise from Consensus Report</p>	
<p>Research-Based Rationale for Areas of Promise</p>	



Criteria II. Key Shifts are Evident

The Key shifts, as indicated in the adoption of the MCCRS (CCSS), are evident throughout. Thoughtful/Sustained focus on these shifts means students must have access to and regular practice with complex text and related academic language, reading, writing, and language standards. Instruction explicitly calls for students' responses to be grounded in evidence from texts, both literary and informational.

Overall Rating Assigned by Vetter(s): 4 3 2 1 0

Summary of Recommendation(s) = Opportunities for Growth
from Consensus Report

Grade Band Claim
from Consensus Report
(Challenges/Concerns)

Evidence and/or Examples
from Consensus and Grade-level Findings as a Challenge/Concern

Research-Based Rationale for
Opportunities for Growth aligned to each Recommendation

Summary of Strengths = Areas of Promise
from Consensus Report

Research-Based Rationale for
Areas of Promise



Criteria III. Instructional Supports Build Proficiency and Independence

Supports and scaffolds should include small group instruction informed by the assessment of foundational skills including phonological awareness and phonics. All scaffolding and supports require ongoing formal and informal assessments that provide multiple opportunities for students to demonstrate proficiency, both cooperatively and independently. Scaffolding is intentionally designed for all student needs.

Overall Rating Assigned by Vetter(s): 4 3 2 1 0

Summary of Recommendation(s) = Opportunities for Growth
from Consensus Report

--	--

Grade Band Claim
from Consensus Report
(Challenges/Concerns)

Evidence and/or Examples
from Consensus and Grade-level Findings as a Challenge/Concern

--	--

Research-Based Rationale for
Opportunities for Growth aligned to each Recommendation

--

Summary of Strengths = Areas of Promise
from Consensus Report

--

Research-Based Rationale for
Areas of Promise

--



Appendix D: Curriculum Vetter and Report Writer Information

Curriculum Vetting Leadership Team

- Tiara Booker-Dwyer, Assistant State Superintendent
- Ed Mitzel, Executive Director of Leadership Development and School Improvement
- Laura Liccione, Coordinator of Academic Improvement
- Tara Corona, Continuous Improvement Specialist
- Anders Alicea, Instructional Transformation Specialist

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- **Thomas Porter**
Cecil County Public Schools
- **Richetta Coelho-Tooley**
Prince George's County Public Schools
- **Dr. Rachel McGann,**
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- **Julie Heltsley**
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- **Steven Van Rees**
Calvert County Public Schools and Educational Coach for Harvard Graduate School of Education
- **Tricia Blackman**
Prince George's County Public Schools
- **Linda Gent**
Queen Anne's County Public Schools



Mathematics Curriculum Veters

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- **Deborah Mateer,**
Harford County Public Schools
- **Brenda Hommel,**
National Board Certified Teacher,
Worcester County Public Schools
- **Sherri Stevens,**
Montgomery County Public Schools
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