

Centennial High School

Howard County Public School System, Ellicott City, Maryland

Location type: Suburban

District enrollment: 52,806 students

School enrollment: 1,460 students

Percentage of students at school eligible for free and reduced price meals: 7

Key Takeaways

Centennial High School's 2014 OECD Test for Schools results showed that although the school performed very well in reading, math, and science, it needed to focus more on students performing at levels 2, 3, and 4 to bring them up to levels 5 and 6. For example, less than one-fifth of students performed at levels 5 and 6 in reading and science. Centennial identified areas of focus, which included more rigor in the classroom and a greater focus on professional development.

Actions Taken

- ✓ Centennial began focusing on placing stronger teachers in 9th- and 10th-grade level classes so that students build the foundations for success early on in their high school careers.
- ✓ Centennial has also begun a mentor program for 9th and 10th graders in standard classes. In addition to access to mentors, the program is intended to provide students with study skills training.
- ✓ The school began hosting professional development sessions dedicated to questioning, performance-based tasks, and collaboration so that teachers have the support and tools that they need to elevate student achievement to globally competitive levels.
 - 50-minute professional development sessions occur every other week and are held in addition to the county's Professional Learning Days and monthly staff meetings. All teaching staff attends the professional development sessions, and content varies based on staff needs and county requirements.
 - Previous sessions have focused on teacher evaluation, student information and learning systems, staff and student engagement (interactive classrooms), data analysis of PSAT, SAT, and AP performance, questioning and discussion techniques to promote rigor in the classroom, and new teacher support.
- ✓ Quarterly, Centennial meets with its feeder middle schools' principals to collaborate on instruction. They hope this collaboration leads to more rigorous instruction earlier on in students' careers, ensuring that they are ready to perform at globally competitive levels by the time they start high school.
- ✓ Centennial participated in two virtual convenings during the 2013-2014 and 2014-2015 school years and attended the 2014 Convening of World-Leading Schools. Through participation in these activities, Centennial continues to collaborate with peers and learn from best practices, as well as share its successes.

Those wishing to learn more about the practices at Centennial High School may contact Sherri Levy, Social Studies teacher and Teacher Development Liaison, at Sherri_Levy@hcpss.org.