

## School Support and Readiness Assessment Site Visit Summary Report

School: Atrisco Elementary School	LEA: Albuquerque Public Schools
School Leader: Yvonne Salazar	LEA Leader: Scott Elder
SSRA Team Leader: Celeste Murray	Date: September 7, 2023

### School Description

Atrisco Elementary School serves 200 students in grades PK-5. The student body has diverse needs and backgrounds: 29% qualify as English language learners and 37% qualify for special education services. In response to students’ needs, the school hosts multiple site and district level special education services. Atrisco also offers a dual language immersion program in Spanish and English.

### School Successes and Celebrations

The staff at Atrisco Elementary are forging ahead despite the real challenge of inadequate staffing. They show resilience in the face of changing leadership for the past few years and have optimism with the support of their new administrative team. Efforts to improve attendance are showing great promise. Students will be rewarded with recess for being the class with the highest attendance and teachers were rewarded with duty-free time during this extra recess. This initiative is new this school year, but the school has already celebrated the classes with 95% attendance for the month of August 2023. Likewise, first glimpses at last year’s summative data are positive: 18 students scored proficient on NM-MSSA, including a student identified as qualifying for special education services; and two students scored as advanced.

The school has also formed positive partnerships with the local community, which has yielded opportunities to celebrate teachers and reward them with gift cards. This past year, all new teachers received \$200 for classroom supplies. The new leadership team has faculty buy-in and is creating structures to continue making student gains.

### DOMAIN 1: CULTURE & EQUITY

*To what degree has the school established equitable practices that ensure ALL students and staff have an opportunity to reach their full potential?*

#### Promising Practices:

Teachers describe a collaborative culture focused on student success. They are beginning to see the positive effects of administrative initiatives, citing the master schedule, data chats and analysis, curriculum mapping, scope and sequence, and pacing guides. Their willingness to change, adopt new practices, and reflect on instructional practices bodes well for continued improvement and the identification of new opportunities.

When teachers' expectations are aligned, there is a greater chance for equity; students receive the same high-quality curriculum regardless of the teacher to which they are assigned. Vertical and horizontal alignment and pacing set the stage for teachers to collaborate on common assessments and review student work, deepening their ability to learn in a professional learning community. New teachers are more successful when joining schools with established curricular guides and resources. In a school as chronically understaffed as Atrisco, recruiting and retaining new teachers is a top priority. Students, families, and teachers benefit from consistency.

### **Opportunities for Growth:**

Atrisco has an impressive roster of programs; attending to the quality of instruction in all of them at once is a challenge. During observations and interviews, teachers cited the dual immersion model as ready for enhanced scrutiny and improvement. Teachers would benefit from professional development that would support them in delivering content and assessing mastery in both English and Spanish. The administrative focus and teacher familiarity with the data cycle is a great place to launch as this school tightens its instructional practices and further identifies student groups in need of support.

### **Potential Next Steps:**

The shared sense of ownership and desire to improve the dual immersion program are promising. Both the principal and teachers are thinking about an appropriate framework to develop the health and wellness of the dual language program: existing data cycles and observations may be fine-tuned as they take a deeper look at how instruction in both languages takes place. This focus has the potential to lift the level of rigor for all students while also adding to the faculty's self and collective efficacy.

## **DOMAIN 2: LEADERSHIP**

*To what degree does school leadership establish, communicate, support, and monitor schoolwide priorities?*

### **Promising Practices:**

Atrisco Elementary has a new administrative team that has quickly earned the respect of its faculty by establishing structures and supports for teachers. Many teachers spoke of increased intentionality during collaboration time and professional development. The leadership team's consistent messaging helps teachers understand the rationale behind new initiatives. Early positive results in attendance and summative assessments increase the sense of momentum.

The principal and dean of students are well-respected by teachers and hands-on in their approach. Teachers noted that the principal currently attends all IEP meetings in the absence of a head of special education. The principal considers the transformational coach to be an accountability partner as she continues to hone her confidence in giving constructive feedback. The team also recognizes the respect that the dean garners; having been a teacher in a similar position, she has credibility and relatability. As the school continues to transform, the collaboration between these three leaders builds the capacity for positive change.

**Opportunities for Growth:**

Parents who volunteer at the school are well-connected with what is happening; however, those who are unable to be involved in this way are seeking more frequent communication about student performance and school events. Some cited Synergy/ParentView at the secondary level and wished for a similar platform at the elementary level. Class Dojo is used by some teachers but is not considered user-friendly by all families.

**Potential Next Steps:**

As the principal continues to increase accountability, transparency will be key. Creating a system, including identified look-fors that are aligned to NM School DASH and academic priorities, will standardize the observation cycle. She can structure her calendar to prioritize constructive, individualized, face-to-face feedback. Following this feedback, she can schedule walkthroughs to observe and commend implementation.

Interviews during the walkthrough showed that parents are aware of school initiatives and eager to give input. Likewise, students are ready to take increased ownership over the standards and skills being prioritized by school staff. Efforts to increase the engagement of both groups will continue to yield positive results.

**DOMAIN 3: INSTRUCTIONAL INFRASTRUCTURE**

*To what degree is the school's instructional infrastructure in place, understood, and utilized by school leaders and teachers?*

**Promising Practices:**

Teachers' adoption of the data cycle, collaboration, and adherence to scope and sequence are all positive indicators. Though there was some push-back, most teachers have adopted the pacing guide. Many appreciate the structure created by aligning their instruction in this way. High quality instructional materials aligned to state standards were found in classrooms. Some teachers had grade level standards and objectives posted during the walkthrough.

**Opportunities for Growth:**

Teachers would benefit from additional support in using the provided high quality instructional materials; observers noted that several were using supplementary materials from educational websites during core instructional time. Professional development focused on differentiated instruction using scripted curriculum would increase teacher capacity while allowing for flexibility. Continuing to examine student outcomes will build on a burgeoning sense of urgency.

**Potential Next Steps:**

Provide content-specific professional development and opportunities for teachers to learn from what is working in other teachers' classrooms. Leverage the skills and capacity of the transformation coach and dean to provide more ongoing, individual feedback.

## **DOMAIN 4: TALENT MANAGEMENT**

*To what degree does the school ensure effective teachers are hired, retained, developed, and leveraged to improve student outcomes?*

### **Promising Practices:**

Teachers like and respect the principal and take pride in their work. This is an excellent place to start as the school seeks to nurture current faculty and attract new teachers. Likewise, data cycles and coaching by the transformational coach will continue to build the capacity of new and veteran teachers. Teachers have goal teams and collaborate to look at student work. This shared sense of ownership protects against burnout and attrition.

### **Opportunities for Growth:**

All interviews indicated issues with being understaffed. Atrisco has eight classrooms without a certified teacher, relying on substitutes and educational assistants to provide instruction. Many of the classrooms without certified teachers serve vulnerable populations (Special Education and Socially Emotionally Support Services), and Intensive Global Support Services (IGSS).

The principal and special education teachers are stretched thin trying to keep up with a large caseload of students who have Individual Education Plans (IEPs) while lacking a head of the special education department. Special education teachers often do not have the support of assigned educational assistants (EAs). EAs from other classrooms are pulled to cover these vacancies. Additionally, EAs are called to lead special education classes that do not have a certified teacher. Parents shared the impact of the inconsistency and observers noted the lack of instruction taking place in some classes staffed by substitutes.

### **Potential Next Steps:**

Atrisco would benefit from increased district support to ensure that each classroom has certified teachers. Teachers are eager for professional development to help them meet the needs of diverse learners. Creating a schedule and feedback cycles learned at ECLIPSE training would standardize the observation process, allowing the principal to support new and veteran teachers. While this would not solve the problems caused by chronic understaffing in the short term, it would be protective against burnout and attrition over the long term.