

School Support and Readiness Assessment Summary Report

School: New America School-Las Cruces	LEA: New America School-Las Cruces
School Leader: Margarita Porter	LEA Leader: Margarita Porter
SSRA Team Leader: Andrea Fletcher	Date: 9/12/23
School Description	
<p>New America is a charter high school serving 170 students from ninth grade to age 21. Their mission is to empower all students, especially the academically underserved, with the educational support they need to reach their potential, succeed in life, and realize the American dream.</p> <p>Traditional high school-aged students attend during the day, and non-traditional students (over 18 years old) work toward their diplomas during night school. The regular week is four days, with Fridays reserved for additional optional tutoring. There are nine additional Friday instructional days during the year used for enrichment. Students can attend in person, hybrid, or virtually. In addition, New America offers daycare for students and staff, providing care for children aged six weeks to two years old.</p>	
School Successes and Celebrations	
<p>In the first seven years, almost 300 non-traditional students graduated. The school has been awarded many grants, including the Innovation Grant. New America School-Las Cruces has a warm, inviting culture where all staff and students feel safe and supported. Through their innovative use of time and scheduling to ensure students have the support they need, the school has dramatically impacted students who were previously not on track to graduate.</p>	
DOMAIN 1: CULTURE & EQUITY	
<p><i>To what degree has the school established equitable practices that ensure ALL students and staff have an opportunity to reach their full potential?</i></p>	
Promising Practices:	
<p>All stakeholders interviewed reflected on the positive culture that felt safe and supportive for families, students, and staff. Students are respectful and polite. New America hosts Friday school to offer extra support and interventions to students. They have support structures for students and families through the homeless liaison, a counseling service, staff and family interventions, and early warning systems.</p>	

Opportunities for Growth:

While it was reported that teachers collaborate to support students in danger of not remaining on track for graduation, there may be an opportunity to create a more robust data system that immediately identifies struggling students, systematically tracks their progress, and allows staff to document interventions and their effectiveness.

Multiple interventions might be necessary for students who have previously not been successful in school. As teachers at the high school level collaborate across disciplines, a common language around interventions and a central repository for student data will save time and increase collaboration.

Potential Next Steps:

Explore an integrated data system, including the capabilities of the current school information system (SIS). Teachers and administrators might also benefit from additional support and training in entering, analyzing, and acting on data and reports generated by this new or enhanced system.

DOMAIN 2: LEADERSHIP

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

Promising Practices:

Principal Porter is soliciting staff input as she creates a plan for moving the school forward and supporting students. She reported that their input on the 90-day plan was insightful and beneficial and is excited to use their expertise. When school leaders seek teacher input, they model transparency and vulnerability. They build teacher leadership capacity and ownership over schoolwide initiatives. In a school with many new teachers, both factors protect against teacher burnout and attrition.

Opportunities for Growth:

With a school of this size and the collaboration structures in place, there are opportunities to create a system where all teachers can provide input into the plan, implement it collectively, and monitor it rigorously. As mentioned in the prior section, information systems that help the school report, track, and reflect collectively on progress toward schoolwide goals would lessen the burden on individuals and leverage broader collaboration.

Potential Next Steps:

As Principal Porter has done while creating the 90-day plan, continue to solicit teacher

expertise and monitor progress, ensuring transparency and shared goals. Create a plan for teachers to regularly monitor the plan together as a collective agreement.

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:

The administration consistently conducts regular observation and feedback cycles that teachers find useful and helpful. Teachers are expected to submit lesson plans on a common template, and the principal provides feedback when needed. Professional learning communities (PLCs) exist, and teachers routinely collaborate to support students. These structures develop new teachers' capacity while leveraging veteran teachers' expertise. By providing multiple checks for the quality of instruction, Principal Porter tightens the connection between schoolwide goals and classroom practices.

Opportunities for Growth:

Identify measurable and useful data sources aligned to standards that teachers can routinely use to progress monitor and adjust interventions as necessary. Utilizing the established PLC and observation structures, support teachers in identifying these data sources and follow up to assess interventions' effectiveness.

Potential Next Steps:

Find ways to incorporate data so teachers know where students are struggling. This could be in the form of common formative assessments, which provide opportunities for teachers to identify key standards, write performance tasks that allow students to show mastery, and work with colleagues to define exactly what mastery looks like. From this point, teachers can identify skills and standards in need of re-teaching at the whole class, small group, and individual level. Ongoing, formative data is a diagnosis rather than an autopsy, empowering teachers to intervene quickly.

DOMAIN 5: SUPPORT & ACCOUNTABILITY

To what degree do school leaders establish and communicate expectations, monitor progress, provide support, and hold staff accountable?

Promising Practices:

There is a strong support system for teachers through a mentorship program and instructional coaching from the assistant principal, especially for new teachers. School leaders are routinely in classrooms and give instructional feedback. Teachers feel supported in their growth and

development.

Opportunities for Growth:

Given the high percentage of new teachers, more explicit expectations might speed their growth. Resources that might be helpful could be a pacing guide to keep them on track, time to create unit assessments that they can teach towards and monitor progress, and support in providing targeted interventions.

Potential Next Steps:

Provide teachers with a day to review other districts' pacing guides and choose one that will help keep them on track. Support teachers in data-driven instruction. While using pacing guides, also focus on student outcomes: what are they expected to be able to know and do by the end of a unit? What will it look like when they master a standard? Breaking the process into smaller parts will ensure that students and teachers understand learning objectives.