

# School Support and Readiness Assessment Summary Report

<b>School:</b> Lavaland Elementary School	<b>LEA:</b> Albuquerque Public Schools
<b>School Leader:</b> Nicole Jaramillo	<b>LEA Leader:</b> Scott Elder
<b>SSRA Team Leader:</b> Bernadette Ellis	<b>Date:</b> September 27, 2023
<b>School Description</b>	
<p>Lavaland Elementary School is located on the original west side of Albuquerque, an area with a rich cultural heritage and a proud community. The staff at Lavaland serve a student body of just over 400 students, close to a third of which are English Learners (ELs, ELLs) from grades pre-kindergarten to fifth. They boast a heritage bilingual program dedicated to integrating elements of the local culture into the curriculum. Their vision statement is as follows:</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>Q3: Quality Leadership + Quality Teaching = Quality Achievement</i></p> <p>The leadership and staff at Lavaland Elementary manifest their vision by focusing on the following mission: <i>Lavaland scholars are loved, independent, and collaborative thinkers who learn by doing to transform their community!</i></p>	
<b>School Successes and Celebrations</b>	
<p>Lavaland has much to celebrate. Teacher turnover is a common problem in public schools, but Lavaland is an exception; they have a 100% teacher retention rate for the previous two years. The return of faculty indicates a strong culture of support and dedication among the leaders and educators on staff.</p> <p>The master schedule at the school provides all students with dedicated literacy hours, protected hours for MLSS interventions, and community lunches. By minimizing transitions, time in classrooms for deep learning is maximized. The school has a 90-day plan in place to outline its forward motion toward academic success.</p>	
<b>DOMAIN 1: CULTURE &amp; EQUITY</b>	
<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>	
<b>Promising Practices:</b>	
<p>Equity and access are the guiding pillars of a robust, influential school culture. The leadership team at Lavaland has built a culture in which every student has access and is expected to</p>	

participate in high-quality instructional programs. Lavaland prioritizes stakeholder engagement in developing and maintaining its growth-oriented, positive school culture.

The master schedule at Lavaland was developed with equity and literacy in mind. Every morning, during a forty-minute instructional period, there are no pull-outs for any students. These instructional periods provide students with hands-on literacy opportunities centered around writing development, termed 'Lava Literacy' by the school staff.

A direct result of a positive culture is a decrease in discipline referrals. Lavaland has seen a sharp reduction in discipline referrals over the past two years. They have developed multiple social-emotional learning (SEL) supports, including sensory rooms separated by grade level, a community lunch inviting students to eat with their teachers, and weekly SEL activities.

Since becoming a Transformation Opportunity Pilot School (TOPS) in May of 2021, Lavaland has experienced an increase in enrollment and attendance. To better serve the student body and support communication pathways related to the three school foci (SEL, project-based learning, Genius Hour), the Instructional Council (IC) was revamped to include representatives from each of the following disciplines: primary grades, intermediate grades, MLSS, the bilingual program, as well as the Transformational Coach and the Community Coordinator. The school's instructional council was established as part of a collaborative and inclusive effort that guided the election of representatives, resulting in a membership with a strong desire to be present in positive change at the school site.

The school hosts regular events to facilitate familial involvement in the culture at Lavaland. These events include a math night, gingerbread house-making for kindergarten and Pre-K, a Dia de los Muertos celebration, and a family meal night.

**Opportunities for Growth:**

Lavaland tracks student performance through i-Station and i-Ready (reading and math, respectively), indicating upward student performance trends this year. Many educators find that one way to drive student growth is to employ instructional strategies that emphasize student-centered learning that is on grade level.

**Potential Next Steps:**

The strong culture and community at Lavaland can leverage Professional Learning Community (PLC) time to come to a common understanding of grade-level standards and to define what grade-level instruction looks like both as a school and in discrete teacher teams. While base-level systems for teaching are in place, creating a uniform expectation for a culture of grade-level rigor could benefit Lavaland Elementary School. An additional area of focus could be to increase student talk in the classroom—rather than being the center of the lesson, the teacher facilitates students to problem solve and demonstrate learning through projects of exploration, inquiry, and academic discourse.



**DOMAIN 2: LEADERSHIP**

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

**Promising Practices:**

The leadership team at Lavaland, led by Principal Jaramillo, has a clear vision and a plan to get there by utilizing an authentic distributed leadership approach. Principal Jaramillo has a strong personal connection to the school, having attended it herself as a student. Trust is evident among the teachers and leaders at the school, as is pride in aligning the work of days to the school mission. This begins with solid leadership and manifests in the schedule, the budget, school-level PD, teacher-led PLC structures, and resource support for teachers.

**Opportunities for Growth:**

Principal Jaramillo and her colleagues have established a positive school culture emphasizing student well-being and a positive mindset. With a positive culture, the leadership team could begin on their next step of necessary work: formalizing systems to ensure that all teachers are supported in using content standards and strong instructional practices.

The building blocks are in place for a decisive push towards grade-level instruction all across the school. The leadership team can leverage stakeholder buy-in and well-established relationships between teacher teams to support a diagnostic approach that prioritizes improving student academic achievement.

**Potential Next Steps:**

Teacher clarity practices are high-level strategies proving a significant impact on student learning. Posting standards and objectives in all areas around the school site will provide accountability and support in pursuing grade-level instruction.

PLCs among teacher teams, led by influential teacher leaders or the leadership team at the school site, can work together to identify grade-level standards, unpack them, and define best practices moving forward.

**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:**

A systems approach to instructional infrastructure is in place at Lavaland Elementary School. Lava Literacy, a 40-minute instructional period every morning, is a protected time of focus for writing and literacy development for all students.

PD is an excellent resource for any educator. Learning opportunities to think outside the box, roleplay new strategies, and hear about ‘the next thing’ in educational research can be invigorating for educators. Lavaland regularly provides its teacher teams with PD on instructional strategies such as Kagan, AVID, project-based learning (PBL), and Guided Language Acquisition Design (GLAD).

**Opportunities for Growth:**

When students can comprehend and verbalize facts about their data, it demonstrates a sincere investment in their learning journey. Data conversations are happening with students and among educators at Lavaland. A formalized system to track and support these conversations schoolwide is the next step in pushing student achievement. As teachers develop their skill of using immediate formative assessment, they can make real-time adjustments in instruction to better meet students’ needs.

**Potential Next Steps:**

PLCs are a place for support but also for serious and sometimes difficult conversations about student outcomes and instructional practices. Many educators find it helpful to share samples of grade-level student work to align expectations, standardize grading practices, and make critical adjustments to their instruction. With expectations aligned, schools have fewer pocket areas of high/low expectations. Leveraging the strong bonds between educators could be a boon for student achievement. Collaboration is a protected time for teachers to learn about their practice through tight data cycles.

**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:**

An essential part of leadership is ensuring that school staff is empowered to seek improvement and growth at all levels. The team at Lavaland is engaged in self and school-improvement practices. School leadership has collaborated with other leaders at the district and school levels to create teacher leaders entrusted with sharing specific leadership responsibilities. Outreach has taken place to recruit new teachers and grow the current staff to pursue administration.

Through TOPS funding, ten teachers at Lavaland are pursuing National Board Certification. Principal Jaramillo has cultivated a culture wherein grant writing and intervention training occur.

**Opportunities for Growth:**

Leaders can grow their staff in many ways. While grade-level instruction must occur in every class, school leaders are aware that special care and attention must be given to the English Learner (EL) students at Lavaland, who comprise roughly a third of the student population. Supporting educators in using scaffolding and sheltered language strategies such as Universal Design for Learning (UDL), Guided Language Acquisition Design (GLAD), and the C6 Biliteracy Framework will ensure that equitable, research-tested, rigorous strategies are used in every classroom.

**Potential Next Steps:**

One way Principal Jaramillo can support her team moving forward is to prioritize TESOL certification for present staff and highlight the certification as something to look for when filling open positions. Often, educators may feel unprepared or unqualified to support EL students. PD focused on WIDA can assist with this, but TESOL certification is the next step for a leader looking to grow their staff.

**DOMAIN 5: SUPPORT & ACCOUNTABILITY**

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

**Promising Practices:**

The leadership team at Lavaland comprises Principal Jaramillo, the Dean (an administrative intern), and the Transformational Coach. Each is responsible for a third of the staff, monitoring progress towards growth targets and fostering an environment of growth and collaboration. They each participate in Observation Feedback Coaching Cycles (OFCCs) with their assigned staff, performing five observations per teacher per semester. Giving this specific, individualized support to teachers will have a significant impact on teacher performance and student outcomes.

**Opportunities for Growth:**

Systems of accountability are a natural piece of the OFCC. These feedback sessions can be used to monitor growth data as a whole. They can also be utilized to focus classroom strategies on EL proficiency targets, high-leverage instructional practices, and the effective use of content standards tied to grade-level instruction.

**Potential Next Steps:**

A systems approach to data can be helpful at many levels. Defining a schoolwide approach to monitoring data, specifically for English Learners, will pair seamlessly with the 10-10-10

protocol (instructional focus, feedback, and coaching) on which the leadership team at Lavaland is focused. Research supports that the best coaching practice is to provide teacher feedback in person. With such a heavy focus on uninterrupted instructional time at the school, the leadership team may find it valuable to schedule these feedback sessions with teachers in advance or to publish a calendar of the OFCCs for reference.