

# School Support and Readiness Assessment Summary Report

<b>School:</b> Los Ranchos Elementary	<b>LEA:</b> Albuquerque Public Schools
<b>School Leader:</b> Craig Robinson	<b>LEA Leader:</b> Scott Elder
<b>SSRA Team Leader:</b> Celeste Murray	<b>Date:</b> October 2, 2023
<b>School Description</b>	
<p>Los Ranchos Elementary serves 225 students. 26.2% of these students are identified as English Learners (ELs), and 26.7% qualify for special education services.</p> <p>Los Ranchos Elementary is a Leader in Me school. The Leader in Me program is "a comprehensive PK–12 framework that nurtures student leadership, fosters a culture of trust, and boosts academic success. This proven approach empowers students, educators, and families with essential leadership and life skills, preparing them to excel," according to their website.</p> <p>Mission Statement:  <b>R</b>eady to teach and learn.  <b>O</b>ur leaders  <b>A</b>ctively  <b>D</b>emonstrate  <b>R</b>esponsibility,  <b>U</b>se kindness, and  <b>N</b>urture the  <b>N</b>eeds of  <b>E</b>veryone. We  <b>R</b>espectfully  <b>S</b>hape the future.</p>	
<b>School Successes and Celebrations</b>	
<p>Los Ranchos Elementary has many successes and celebrations. It is a multi-generational school where students have parents and grandparents who also attended the school. This multi-generational legacy includes Sidney McNeill Gutierrez, the first US-born Hispanic astronaut who attended Los Ranchos Elementary just as his father had. The pride for this former student is evident in the school, reminding students of the possibilities open to them.</p> <p>Principal Robinson has been with the school for eight years, resulting in leadership consistency. Interviews regularly mentioned him as one of the strengths of the school. His commitment to the students has earned him a great deal of respect.</p>	

Los Ranchos is a Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics (STEM) school without the official label; it has a Science, Technology, Writing, Engineering, Art, and Mathematics (STREAM) classroom and achieved the STEM standards by choice rather than mandate.

### **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:**

The special education department is integrated into the school at Los Ranchos Elementary. The classrooms supporting students with Individual Education Plans (IEPs) are in the same halls as their general education classrooms. Not only is this affirming every student's right to belong to this school, but it also allows for daily collaboration between general and special education teachers, both formal and informal. Support from special educators is dispersed among the grades—including a teacher for K & 1, 2 & 3, and 4 & 5, and classrooms support students on the Autism Spectrum as well. Interviews indicate that members of the special education department communicate with parents regularly, sometimes multiple times a day, to ensure parents and staff are partners in each child's education.

The school is equally dedicated and serious about educating its English Learners (ELs). Through a heritage program, the staff works with students in both English and Spanish. Walkthroughs showed the fluidity of staff and students using both languages to ensure understanding, which also validates identity. The expectation is that teachers get to know their students and their cultures. The goal is to have students graduate with true bilingual knowledge.

#### **Opportunities for Growth:**

One opportunity for growth is providing teachers with more support and strategies for differentiation using core instructional materials. Interviews indicated that teachers are sometimes overwhelmed by meeting accommodations, particularly for students with IEPs in the general education setting. Additionally, some teachers voiced concern that their efforts at differentiation are not reflected in student performance. Teachers are aware of the learners in their classes and reflective about outcomes. Because teachers are asking for support, the leadership team can focus on strategies for acceleration.

When asked about equity, many interview participants were unsure how to answer. There is an opportunity to further shape school culture by revisiting what equity means for students and staff at Los Ranchos. Development of this definition and ensuring the school and staff's decisions align with the common goal of equity will likely impact practices and processes to improve student outcomes. Conversations about scaffolding and accommodations for students are one way this might prove helpful.

A concern emerged through interviews that a division between grade bands impacts the school's

ability to work collectively. Many felt that not all teachers or staff are held to the same standards. Defining equity and equality may create understanding and help the school determine when things need to be equal versus equitable. Schools with strong cultures of belonging, safety, and collaboration can better work together for the benefit of students.

**Potential Next Steps:**

School leaders might work with teachers to define or redefine equity at Los Ranchos. Perhaps the union or Human Resources department could provide support if this conversation feels divisive. Unifying teachers and removing barriers to collaboration would contribute to a greater sense of collective efficacy. Collective efficacy is strongly tied to improved student results.

While a conversation about equity can be helpful, implementing strategies to differentiate instruction and providing accommodations for students with special needs are specific actions of equity. Maximizing the collaboration between general and special education teachers can create common practices across the school from which all students benefit.

**DOMAIN 2: LEADERSHIP**

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

**Promising Practices:**

When Principal Robinson provides feedback, most staff feel it is useful. Interviews described the feedback as constructive, immediate, offering opportunities to grow, and based on pre-determined and communicated goals. They also shared that he often leaves notes of gratitude for the strengths he sees when he drops into classrooms, which makes them feel appreciated and valued. The principal also has a system for ensuring he gets into every room regularly.

**Opportunities for Growth:**

Working with the Instructional Council led to an agreement on using the district curriculum and materials and a grade-level created scope and sequence. These in place provide observable evidence to look for when in classrooms, and they serve as structures to which teachers can be held accountable and given feedback for improvement. Identifying other whole-school expectations can create opportunities for teacher growth. Schoolwide clarity may increase a sense of collective responsibility and accountability.

Most of the interviews highlighted attendance as an issue. However, Mr. Robinson indicated attendance this year is much better than in the past couple of years, which suggests that teachers and staff may not understand the current reality of attendance. Regular and transparent communication about absences may be helpful. There is consensus that students who attend school more frequently are generally more proficient; perhaps sharing this correlation would lead to greater attendance and a significant increase in student achievement.

**Potential Next Steps:**

Continue the attendance interventions that have proved successful in the past year, including accurate attendance taking and communication with families. Share attendance data more widely and with more explicit connections to student performance.

**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:**

Mr. Robinson is tracking progress toward the 90-day goal of using district-provided curriculum. There was evidence of implementation during the walkthrough as measured by using consumables. If teachers use the provided curriculum, it increases the likelihood that students will have access to grade-level content that meets state standard requirements. Additionally, interviews stated there was an effort to ensure "the first teach" is strong, reducing the need for reteaching and supplemental materials. Further, staff spoke about the schoolwide reading of Maximum Tier I as a form of professional development to support their work with the core curriculum.

**Opportunities for Growth:**

A possible opportunity for growth is a schoolwide effort to write and post daily learning objectives. Few rooms showed evidence of standards or objectives. Interviews did not speak to using standards or learning objectives to guide lesson planning, instruction, or formative assessment. When teachers know what they will teach, why they are teaching it, and how they will know if students have learned it, student outcomes improve. And when students understand what they are expected to learn and how they will demonstrate mastery, they are more likely to meet learning expectations.

**Potential Next Steps:**

Principal Robinson might follow through with a 90-day plan for scope and sequence determined by grade level. He has built a culture of trust and respect with the method he uses for observations. Building from this foundation, Principal Robinson's focus on learning objectives, standards, or "I can" statements during walkthroughs will increase accountability for standards-based instruction.

**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 interview with the principal indicated that he has new hires read the book Maximum RTI, which focuses on Tier I instruction and differentiation. The Response to Intervention model is a critical schoolwide system that ensures teachers consistently monitor student learning and adjust instruction based on gaps in understanding. Student learning outcomes are strengthened when teachers assess, analyze, and act regularly.

Additionally, Principal Robinson has changed the professional development (PD) model this year. He meets with teachers every two weeks and sets expectations around lead measures for new initiatives. His goal is to build capacity and understanding for using real-time data.

**Opportunities for Growth:**

During the site visit, Principal Robinson identified the opportunity for a stronger focus on high-leverage instructional strategies. A key area would be to help teachers increase checks for understanding as they incorporate more scaffolds and opportunities for student talk.

Along these lines, Principal Robinson may eventually work with grade levels to share strategies that are working and strategies they might try. Leveraging the teachers who have implemented new techniques and are seeing success spreads the learning. It can potentially increase collaboration between grade levels, bringing collective teacher efficacy.

Interviews indicated an opportunity to set shared expectations around which strategies to use for instruction or assessment, increase vertical alignment, and foster collaboration across grade levels. This work would support the goal of looking at lead measures (by specifying how to gather that data) and increasing communication between grades.

**Potential Next Steps:**

In addition to encouraging teacher leaders to share best practices, Principal Robinson might focus walkthroughs on shared instructional strategies and checks for understanding. Domains 2 and 3 from Elevate NM articulate critical teacher moves to plan and provide optimal learning experiences for students.

There is an additional opportunity to enlist students in naming what they are learning. Students, teachers, and leaders can identify learning targets and describe mastery when there is intentionality in lesson design, assessment practices, and instructional scaffolding.