

School Support and Readiness Assessment Summary Report

School: Mission Avenue Elementary	LEA: Albuquerque Public Schools
School Leader: Frances Garcia	LEA Leader: Scott Elder
SSRA Team Leader: Phil Valdez	Date: October 2, 2023

School Description

Mission Avenue Elementary is a Pre-K through 5th grade magnet STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Math) school with a population of 362 students. Mission Avenue consists of English Learners (EL) at 15.5% and Students with Disabilities at 18%.

Mission Avenue Elementary values high academic achievement and, in August of 2022, completed the certification to be named a Magnet School of America Demonstration School. The mission of the magnet school is to attract students from diverse populations and cultivate community partnerships while integrating a science, technology, engineering, and math-focused curriculum. It is the only school in the Albuquerque Public Schools (APS) with a Project-Based Learning science curriculum in all grades, kindergarten through 5th grade. The Project Lead the Way science program starts students on a highly skilled learning path, fostering engineering, robotics, and coding skills necessary to pursue future technical careers.

MISSION: We are engineering the future at Mission Avenue Elementary School. We are a STEM Magnet school focused on computer science and engineering. We develop 21st-century skills by learning with the design process and engineering habits of mind. We thrive in diversity and strive for academic excellence. We use the Advancement via Individual Determination (AVID) program to close the achievement gap by preparing all students for college readiness and success in a global society.

VISION: At Mission Avenue Elementary, we Engineer the Future by offering STEM education to all students, developing intelligent, resilient, and resourceful students today that will be the leaders in the future.

School Successes and Celebrations

Mission Avenue Elementary is a certified magnet STEM school. This school provides hands-on learning opportunities for students and strong collaboration between teachers to address students' social-emotional learning (SEL) needs. Principal Garcia has established celebrations to recognize student achievements.

The school feels a sense of pride in schoolwide practices and expectations such as the teaching of 21st century problem-solving skills, the celebration of the "Habits of Mind," the use of hands-

on explorative learning, the integration of the "Design Process" into all subject areas, the involvement in the first and only Pre-Kindergarten through twelfth grade STEM pathway in the state, and the community partnerships with Air Force Research Labs and Sandia National Labs. Mission Avenue School is proud of its accomplishments.

DOMAIN 2: LEADERSHIP

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

Promising Practices:

Mission Avenue Elementary reports a low turnover of teachers, staff, and administration. Employee retention has contributed to a culture of teachers and staff willing to go above and beyond when asked. The leadership team understands the challenges and celebrates the hard work of its teachers and support staff. Likewise, teachers and staff recognize the hard work the leadership team contributes to the school's overall success, and many report that everyone wears many hats.

Opportunities for Growth:

There is an opportunity for leadership and staff to establish transparent communication systems and expectations, especially regarding the 90-Day Plan and its implementation. Narrowing specific foci within the 90-Day Plan may allow for aligning learning targets. Additionally, there is an opportunity to establish a system of observation and feedback cycles to strengthen teaching practices.

Potential Next Steps:

Leadership plans to create communication systems by narrowing the focus of importance to one or two areas and aligning systems to reflect focus areas. The weekly teacher newsletter is available to remind teachers of the schoolwide priorities. Setting clear expectations will help everyone understand how they contribute to the goals and actions stated in the 90-Day Plan. Recommitting to the teacher clarity strategy of learning objectives in lesson plans and connecting them to students' personal lives will help students see why the learning is essential. Principal Garcia's leadership team can facilitate the discussion of identifying specific learning standards and incorporating those standards explicitly into lesson plans and instruction.

In the next 90 days, the school's Instructional Council will create and distribute a stakeholder (teachers, staff, leadership) survey to identify specific needs related to communication. This survey will help the school maintain solutions-based discussions between leadership and staff to address potential areas for improvement. Ensuring that the members of the Instructional Council understand their role as solution finders will further clarify the expectations from the 90-Day Plan.

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:

Classroom observations indicate that students are on task and engaged. Students are happy and want to be at the school, which increases their readiness to learn. There is a focus on small-group instruction. During the site visit, observers saw evidence of small-group instruction in many classrooms.

Opportunities for Growth:

Balancing the STEM curriculum with English Language Arts and Math will have potential benefits. Teachers are already employing small groups during instructional time; they can increase the efficacy of this time by identifying areas for differentiation of grade-level content. During whole and small group instruction, students can better monitor their learning when they know the "why" of the lesson. Learning objectives and standards are vital to this high-leverage practice.

Potential Next Steps:

Mission Avenue would benefit from implementing observations and feedback coaching cycles. The first step is for the leadership team to narrow down what they seek during classroom visits based on the 90-Day Plan. When observational look-fors are articulated in the 90-Day Plan, teachers better understand why these particular instructional strategies are essential and supported by the administration. Therefore, coaching cycles will center on meaningful learning objectives for students, differentiated lessons, and grade-level standards.

Creating a schoolwide focus on identifying the most critical learning objectives and standards at each grade level is the first step to raising student engagement in their learning. Effective teachers post learning objectives derived from their standards, discuss the objectives with students, and refer to them multiple times throughout the lesson. This practice increases teachers' opportunities to assess student learning informally. Posting the day's learning objective/learning standard in student-friendly language allows students to monitor their progress and be involved in their learning process. When teachers consistently use objectives during the learning experiences, it is easy for administrators to monitor that instruction in whole group and small group is differentiated, rigorous, and aligned to the grade level standards.