

# School Support and Readiness Assessment Summary Report

<b>School:</b> El Camino Real Academy	<b>LEA:</b> Santa Fe Public Schools
<b>School Leader:</b> Evan Gourd	<b>LEA Leader:</b> Larry Chavez
<b>SSRA Team Leader:</b> Celeste Murray	<b>Date:</b> October 17, 2023
<b>School Description</b>	
<p>The leaders and educators at El Camino Real Academy serve a student body of roughly 730. Around two hundred of these students are in seventh and eighth grades, with the other five hundred comprising the elementary grades. Approximately 70-80% of the school population are English learners (ELs). 100% of the students at El Camino Real qualify for free or reduced-price lunch. The school is a dual-language school except for pre-kindergarten and special education classes.</p> <p>The school states the following as its mission:</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>El Camino Real Academy is a multicultural, multi-literate community of respectful, kind, responsible, creative learners striving for excellence.</i></p> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>La Academia El Camino Real es una comunidad multicultural y multilingüe de estudiantes amables, respetuosos, responsables y creativos que se esfuerzan para lograr la excelencia.</i></p>	
<b>School Successes and Celebrations</b>	
<p>The highlight of the school is the dual-language program, which brings in teachers from all over the world through a partnership with PED. These educators come from Spain, Mexico, Argentina, Guatemala, and Columbia. El Camino Real is the only school in New Mexico that offers a bilingual seal from Spain.</p> <p>Another strength of the school is the music department. Choir, band, and guitar are offered; students love the opportunities, and the teachers support their students all along the way. Throughout the year, the music classes offer performances that the local school community enjoys.</p>	

## **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:**

One of the prominent promising practices of the school is readily apparent from the moment one steps onto the campus. The building and the staff are warm and welcoming. Students are comfortable with the leadership at the school and regularly talk with the principal, going as far as instigating fist bumps and high-fives.

Another element of the culture at El Camino Real is the school's deep and meaningful cultural responsiveness. The school regularly features cultural displays such as an *ofrenda* for Dia de los Muertos front and center as you enter the school, and student work is displayed throughout the hallways and classrooms. It is evident in the environment that the school is respectful of diverse cultures and promotes cross-cultural understanding.

### **Opportunities for Growth:**

An opportunity exists to help staff understand the impact of low socioeconomic status (SES) backgrounds and build a culture of learning and high expectations, including a belief that all students can learn and achieve. The current culture of solid relationships and a positive atmosphere can be leveraged to build teacher fluency around interventions addressing poverty's adverse effects.

One critical element of culture and equity work is the involvement of stakeholders at multiple levels. Ensuring systems exist to facilitate familial engagement in the educational process is an opportunity that the leadership at El Camino Real may capitalize on. Many schools find it helpful to invite volunteer translators to school events for the sake of family participation. Offering virtual involvement and ensuring multi-lingual greetings and directions will assist the school site in building a culture of equity and inclusion. Multi-lingual supports for program access, such as Class Dojo or PowerSchool, will also help to facilitate stakeholder involvement.

### **Potential Next Steps:**

El Camino Real Academy leadership plans to begin including multi-lingual songs in their music program to foreground an emphasis on Spanish instruction. Communication should always be in both languages. Representation is a powerful tool in helping students see themselves in their environment, increasing their stake in their educational journey.

Principal Gourd also plans to partner with the American Alliance for Innovative Schools (AAIS) to foreground conversations about poverty and its effects during the professional development (PD) provided at the school. This background will assist educators from outside of the U.S. in understanding the environment some students come from and how the difficulties

from specific backgrounds may manifest in perceived behaviors and challenges in the classroom. It is also critical to include asset-oriented conversations about the community as they have much to contribute and honor despite the challenges they may experience.

## **DOMAIN 2: LEADERSHIP**

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

### **Promising Practices:**

The leadership team has a firm grasp on designated roles. A clear delegation of responsibility is in place, with one assistant principal (AP) responsible for the early grades, the principal supporting the middle grades and special education, and one AP for teachers from seventh, eighth, and specials. The three counselors are spread throughout the school and aligned to the same groupings administrators serve. This consistency in the organization facilitates clear communication and a streamlined approach to leadership. This level of organization makes it straightforward for educators to know whom they need to reach out to when voicing concerns or asking questions, creating clarity and a sense of order for decisions in the school.

The dual-language program, which is aligned with the population, is another promising practice organized by the leadership at the school. As stated, the school serves a population of 74% English learners. An alignment with spoken home languages helps the educators and the students at El Camino Real build fluency and academic literacy in English and Spanish.

### **Opportunities for Growth:**

One way that El Camino Real may continue to build academic literacy for their students is to reallocate staff resources to ensure K-3 students are provided English Language Development (ELD) instruction by TESOL (Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages) endorsed teachers.

There is a concern that students' reading levels and English proficiency in the upper grades may be affected by a lack of appropriately rigorous English instruction in the lower grades. Interviews spoke of some students, whose first language was English, falling behind in reading in English. While teachers from abroad bring a tremendous wealth of Spanish language knowledge to the school and their classrooms, a deeper understanding of English and language development strategies may help build student proficiency.

### **Potential Next Steps:**

The leadership team at El Camino Real is involved in talks with the district to assist in providing professional development focused on ELD instruction to all teachers at the school. Dual-language instruction is a powerful tool for developing fluency in native and target languages. However, careful attention is necessary to ensure students grow in both languages.

The leadership team also asks additional screening questions about guest teachers' English fluency. While it is deemed that the 80/20 is an appropriate instructional model for the school, careful attention is being paid to instructors' training to try to mitigate any unintentional adverse effects of dual language instruction.

### **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:**

High-quality language models (academic language levels in both English and Spanish) are used in classrooms throughout the school. Staff are conversationally fluent and quickly shift between languages with students, families, and other stakeholders. This practice not only facilitates clear communication but helps build the robust culture of representation and acceptance that is so present at El Camino Real.

The school also offers different levels of language classes depending on the proficiency with which students enter their program. These levels are beginner, intermediate, and advanced. The school can better cater to specific student needs by adopting this approach.

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

El Camino Real has recently shifted towards a standards-based model for grading. This shift offers an opportunity to use data in a renewed effort to increase lesson rigor. Professional Learning Communities (PLCs) can be utilized to facilitate deep dives into student data, assessment norming, and vertical alignment. The leadership team at El Camino Real may find it helpful to engage the staff in conversations on what meaningful demonstrations of proficiency look like as it pertains to each grade level standard.

One way this can take place is through the identification and communication of instructional priorities clearly and consistently across grade levels. Again, PLCs are a powerful point of leverage for collaboration to occur. When teachers are given dedicated time to collaborate, with clear instructional focus and goals, powerful outcomes can emerge on the student side of the effort.

#### **Potential Next Steps:**

The staff and leadership at El Camino Real demonstrate a focus on ensuring that all students can access grade-level standards. This practice is in line with district expectations. However, transitioning to a standards-based grading model is complex, with many factors involved. The school leadership will need to facilitate teachers unpacking their core standards to identify discreet knowledge and skills students need to master, create a shared agreement on the level of

rigor for each standard, collect standard-aligned formative assessments, and design lessons that mirror the expected level of mastery.

To implement a focus on standards-based instruction with fidelity, the staff would benefit from professional development focused on the Guided Language Acquisition Design (GLAD) framework. Coming to a shared understanding of what it means to differentiate instruction for students performing at different levels will assist the staff in providing high-quality, rigorous education. Similarly, some staff need training in delivering the appropriate scaffolds for students struggling to access grade-level content.

#### **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:**

One point of pride for the leadership team at El Camino Real is the recruitment of diverse, talented educators from other countries. This practice helps build the school's dual-language program and represents the large percentage of the student body whose first language is not English.

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

Leadership can effectively grow and coach their staff through Observation Feedback Coaching Cycle (OFCC) cycles. This support system can be particularly effective in establishing reflective teaching practices. Consistent OFCCs will enable the administrative team to promptly provide constructive and practical feedback.

Another avenue of staff support is establishing a scope and sequence for those new to teaching or the U.S. school system in general. With many teachers coming from countries outside of the U.S., an orientation process focused on ongoing guidance may assist in providing educators with the tools necessary to drive student achievement.

##### **Potential Next Steps:**

El Camino Real boasts a robust dual-language program with teachers recruited from around the globe. However, acclimating to a new school can be challenging for an educator, even more so if that educator has no prior experience with the American school system. The leadership team works hard to provide new staff with a welcoming, thorough orientation and ongoing support.

Canvas is currently being explored as a support resource for training new or visiting faculty. As busy as school days can be, a resource that can be accessed at any time could be a powerful springboard for a staff member who has a question or needs to be refreshed on the normal flow of systems at the school site.

