

School Support and Readiness Assessment Summary Report

School: Mark Armijo Academy	LEA: Albuquerque Public Schools
School Leader: Shawn Morris	LEA Leader: Scott Elder
SSRA Team Leader: Connie Copeland	Date: October 19, 2023
School Description	
<p>Mark Armijo Academy is a high school serving over 200 students in grades nine through twelve. There are 25 full-time staff members. 30% of the students at Mark Armijo qualify for special education services, and 40% are identified as English learners.</p> <p>47% of students at Mark Armijo display chronic absenteeism. There are four to five office referrals per week, and the school employs restorative practices.</p> <p>The school has identified graduation as a top priority for DASH; graduation rates are 34% within four years, 65% within five years, and 77% within six. The school would like to enhance monitoring and communication of students' progress toward graduation. They also have a social-emotional learning goal to take daily attendance with fidelity and refer students for interventions when necessary.</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>Mission/Vision: To provide a quality and relevant education in a community that promotes caring and belonging for all students, especially those who seek a more personal and innovative educational setting.</i></p>	
School Successes and Celebrations	
<p>Mark Armijo Academy has a solid foundation of warmth and openness to change. School leadership has instituted many structures that have not been in place before. Staff and school leaders are innovative and responsive to student needs. There are strong ties to the local community.</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>Mark Armijo is a warm and welcoming environment that creates a sense of community. There is a strong teacher presence before and after school, and teachers are very positive and happy to</p>	

see the students. All adults in the building are helpful and supportive, evident in the strong relationships between the school, families, and the local community.

Mark Armijo is a small school, which allows for small class sizes; everyone knows one another by first name. School systems support this feeling of belonging. Students are in advisories with the same group and teacher for four years at the school. Additionally, every student is assigned an advocate. During the site visit, students were compliant and positively interacted with teachers.

The connection between school, home, and community is strong. Family and community events are well-attended. The school is inclusive, inviting interpreters to assist during interviews.

Opportunities for Growth:

While some staff members work together frequently and fluently, there is an opportunity to increase the collegiality in and between some groups. Systems are in place in some areas but not well understood in all. While teams meet weekly, there is a need to standardize deliverables so that all staff members across all teams have a cohesive understanding.

Potential Next Steps:

Principal Morris has prioritized the NM DASH and attendance teams and must observe other team meetings before making specific suggestions or changes. However, protocols to ensure equitable dialogue from all staff members and consistent structures for reporting the results of these meetings are best practices have not been developed. The development of these protocols would be a priority next step. An additional next step will be to develop a new schedule that would allow for collaboration teams to meet more frequently.

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:

Principal Morris has created and enhanced systems to support teacher professionalism, including attendance, professional development, and administrative presence in classrooms. Teachers' professional responsibilities have been identified and clarified. Teachers have attended professional development on math and English language arts standards alignment. This training was evident during walkthroughs when standards and objectives were posted in some classrooms.

Principal Morris has also been instrumental in bringing additional resources to Mark Armijo Academy. He hired a Parent Liaison and an Innovation Coordinator. The latter position has

helped the school expand its career and technical education offerings through internships. Additionally, Principal Morris leverages strong connections with outside partners to provide learning opportunities for students.

Opportunities for Growth:

While the school has increased the breadth of offerings, there is an opportunity to increase the depth. Interviews indicated that students could pass classes without attending. Classroom instruction during the site visit showed an area of growth to increase the rigor required for students to master grade-level standards. Teachers can choose their instructional activities, and not all align with grade-level standards. Observers noted that the questions asked by teachers could have been more challenging, requiring greater depth of knowledge and student engagement. There is an opportunity to encourage more student-student talk and increase student voice through thoughtful lesson planning and standards alignment.

Potential Next Steps:

As Principal Morris supports teachers in raising the level of rigor in their classes he plans to start with non-negotiables. Teachers will be coached or given professional development on prioritizing and unpacking standards and how to continuously assess those standards. Tools like student-friendly learning objectives, protocols for student talk, and exit tickets can be modeled and expected.

Teaching in a block schedule can be challenging for some teachers; slow pacing can lead to lowered expectations for student outputs. To counter this and offer support in breaking blocks into meaningful learning segments with discrete and cohesive objectives tied to real-world applications, Principal Morris plans to provide professional development around project-based learning. Project-based learning would draw on the success of career and technical education offerings at Mark Armijo Academy and prepare students for college and careers.

In addition to inviting teachers to observe their peers at Mark Armijo, Principal Morris also plans to provide opportunities to observe at other school sites.

DOMAIN 5: SUPPORT & ACCOUNTABILITY

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

Promising Practices:

Principal Morris has established clear expectations for professional behaviors, setting the baseline for more streamlined systems and greater accountability. Attendance at staff meetings, taking attendance with fidelity, and the standardized use of hall passes all increase feelings of cohesion and the ability to participate in the learning community. Monitoring and intervening when students begin to miss classes is challenging without consistent attendance data. By setting attendance-taking as a DASH priority, the leadership team has helped to strengthen one of the most visible systems that needs to be in place. Teachers, families, and students must see

that attendance matters and that students will be held accountable. During the site visit, attendance was taken in all classrooms, signaling that this schoolwide priority has been implemented by faculty.

The other DASH priority was monitoring graduation progress. This is a much larger data point to track and more difficult to implement as quickly. It is also linked to student engagement and teachers' instructional practices. As Principal Morris continues to support his staff in raising the level of rigor, it is evident that he is taking a systematic approach. He is more visible in classrooms and requires that his staff submit semester syllabi and unit plans.

Opportunities for Growth:

As Principal Morris is more present in classrooms, he is emphasizing relationship-building. Teachers, like students, learn best from leaders with whom they feel connected. At the same time, all parties desire accountability. To identify the focus for accountability, rigorous and engaged learning are two high-leverage areas.

Potential Next Steps:

Principal Morris plans to conduct more walkthroughs and develop a universal form so teachers know the school expectations.

Along with more frequent walkthroughs and feedback in the form of observation notes on a universal form, Principal Morris plans to meet with teachers following an observation. This feedback meeting will be timely, close enough to the day of the observation so that both parties remember the lesson and may include difficult conversations that hold teachers accountable to their commitments to instructional change.