

School Support and Readiness Assessment Summary Report

School: Santo Domingo Middle School	LEA: Bernalillo
School Leader: Teresa Little-Gardiner	LEA Leader: Matt Motano
SSRA Team Leader: Eileen Reed	Date: October 3 rd , 2023
School Description	
<p>Santo Domingo Middle School is located on the Santo Domingo Pueblo, on the Rio Grande between Albuquerque and Santa Fe. The school is part of a combination kindergarten through eighth-grade campus under the leadership of principal Teresa Little-Gardiner. The school has recently seen many leadership changes; Principal Little-Gardiner is the fourth principal in as many years.</p> <p>Santo Domingo serves students from grades six through eight. However, at the end of the 2023-24 school year, the two higher grades will be incorporated into the Spartan Learning Academy in the Bernalillo School District. Following this shift, the campus will be reconstituted to focus only on grades K-6.</p> <p>The educators and faculty at Santo Domingo Middle School serve roughly 100 students, of which 100% are designated as English learners (ELs). The school is a multi-lingual campus, with daily instruction in Kewa, the native Keresan language of the Santo Domingo Pueblo. School leadership works closely with the Kewa Keres Language Council to keep the native language of the Pueblo alive.</p>	
School Successes and Celebrations	
<p>The new leadership team has prioritized the school's climate and culture to create a more positive, uplifting atmosphere. Staff meetings begin with a restorative circle activity and a blessing led by a member of the Pueblo community. Activities such as monthly pot-lucks are building camaraderie among staff. The Leadership Team has been redesigned to include a rotating membership to give voice to more faculty members.</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>Principal Little-Gardiner is strategically redesigning her campus leadership team to bring all</p>	

faculty into the process. Teachers rotate through leadership roles; the intent is to engage educators in leadership matters and give a voice to groups of teachers who may have been under-represented in the past.

In addition to redesigning the leadership team, Principal Little-Gardiner is preparing the school site to become an Advancement Via Individual Determination (AVID) campus by creating site visit opportunities for the faculty. Teachers are visiting schools that serve students with the same demographic profile as Santo Domingo and have successfully implemented the AVID program. AVID describes their program as follows: "Regardless of their life circumstances, AVID students overcome obstacles and achieve success. They graduate and attend college at higher rates, but more importantly, they can think critically, collaborate, and set high expectations to confidently conquer the challenges that await them."

Opportunities for Growth:

There is positive momentum in changes to the school climate. The leadership team at the school has made creating a more positive atmosphere their priority; with that ongoing work, their focus can redirect towards elevating student achievement and grade-level expectations among staff.

Potential Next Steps:

Many strategies are planned to continue building the culture of support at Santo Domingo. Chiefly, the AVID site visits are scheduled and continuing until all faculty can participate. Facilitating site visits for teachers to observe a program like AVID in action is a concrete method to see the expectations. Teachers will have the opportunity to ask practitioners questions, which will alleviate fears and increase commitment for implementation.

Additionally, Principal Little-Gardiner plans to focus on grade-level instruction and student work as part of the OFCC (Observation Feedback Coaching Cycle). These two foci are high-leverage for increasing student achievement. When teachers know the administrator is looking for critical instructional strategies, grade-level standards alignment, and visible learning from student work, there is a unified purpose for planning and delivering lessons.

Lastly, A specific push toward promoting self-efficacy among students is planned through data portfolios. The research supporting the importance of students monitoring their learning is prominent in the field. When students become active learners, instead of passive, they are better at self-regulating, asking for help, and problem-solving.

DOMAIN 2: LEADERSHIP

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

Promising Practices:

School leadership is currently involved in implementing procedures, processes, and protocols to support the expectation of grade-level instruction in every classroom. One facet of this is the Lesson Alignment process, a process promoted by the district that requires teachers to translate standards into student learning objectives with defined success criteria and include a daily exit ticket in their lesson plans.

The administrative team closely monitors the use of district curriculum and instructional resources. When all teachers use high-quality instructional materials, students are guaranteed access to grade-level content, regardless of their assigned teacher. Standard curricula also open opportunities for increased collaboration.

Opportunities for Growth:

Developing and articulating an intentional strategy to bridge the gap between current student performance and grade-level achievement could be helpful for the educators at Santo Domingo Middle School.

Potential Next Steps:

Leveraging the weekly support from the district in PLCs (Professional Learning Communities) will assist Principal Little-Gardiner and the leadership team to strengthen Layer 1 instruction schoolwide. When school leaders maximize the collaborative time for teachers with clear planning expectations, protocols, and accountability, collective teacher efficacy is possible. Otherwise, teachers are individually burdened with effective lesson planning—a skill that many teachers struggle to master.

Another next step for the school is to develop and use formative assessment data. During collaborative time, teams use a specific protocol to identify learning gaps and plan data-driven lessons to provide intervention support to struggling students. Strong and frequent data cycles will surely assist the Santo Domingo teachers elevate student achievement.

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:

The leadership team is invested in implementing the *Getting Better Faster* scope and sequence to improve instruction. The principal and assistant principal utilize the OFCC to conduct regular observations and provide targeted feedback to teachers. Assessment data is used during team collaborative time to identify students needing intervention. Systems of communication are in place to reinforce lesson expectations to staff.

Opportunities for Growth:

When teachers understand the purpose of a school's assessment strategy, they can better communicate expectations to students and prepare them through instructional time. The leadership team can guide collaborative time, focusing on expectations for how data is collected, disaggregated, analyzed, and acted upon.

Potential Next Steps:

Principal Little-Gardiner plans to create a template that lists all assessments, administration windows, purpose, how the data helps each stakeholder (principals, teachers, students), and expectations for response to the assessment data. Using an assessment calendar with analysis and action planning built-in is a high-level leadership strategy. It is easy for teachers and school leaders to be distracted by day-to-day business—most educators say lack of time is what gets in the way of potential success. A shared assessment calendar helps everyone prioritize the critical processes of monitoring and improving student achievement. Reinforcing data literacy through professional development will be helpful for teachers at all stages in their careers, whether they are new or have been in the profession for many years.