

School Support and Readiness Assessment Summary Report

School: Pojoaque Valley Middle School	LEA: Pojoaque Valley School District
School Leader: Mario Vigil	LEA Leader: Sandra Adams
SSRA Team Leader: Matt Williams, Ph.D.	Date: November 15, 2023
School Description	
<p>Four Pueblos are in the Pojoaque Valley School District boundaries: Nambe Pueblo, Pojoaque Pueblo, San Ildefonso Pueblo, and Tesuque Pueblo. The student population at Pojoaque Valley Middle School is approximately 80% Hispanic and 20% Native American. About 60% of the students qualify for free or reduced school meals. About 15% of the students receive special education services. The school serves seventh and eighth-grade students with a sixth-grade academy housed on campus. The school has seen turnover, but Principal Vigil and his team are dedicated to providing students and staff with a safe, secure, and academically strong campus.</p>	
School Successes and Celebrations	
<p>Pojoaque Valley Middle School is making positive changes to meet the needs of its students and community. The leadership team, led by Principal Vigil, has spearheaded a shift from punitive discipline to a restorative practices approach with students. The leadership is loved and respected by students, staff, and parents. There is a strong rapport with parents and the community.</p> <p>The school has partnered with Big Brothers and Sisters, Boys Council, Santa Fe County, National Latino Behavioral Health Association, Los Alamos National Labs, and other organizations to provide much-needed student support. These organizations help support students with current needs such as mentorship, food security, school supplies, substance prevention, and more. The school has strong relationships and is growing as a team to meet the needs of students.</p> <p>Leadership utilizes two teacher-coaches to help build teacher capacity and increase student learning in math and English language arts (ELA). Teachers from the school have participated in math professional development (PD) opportunities through the state and partner organizations to increase teacher capacity. ELA PD is also building momentum. The district has provided a teacher-constructed pacing guide for math and ELA.</p>	

DOMAIN 2: LEADERSHIP

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

Promising Practices:

The leaders at Pojoaque Valley Middle School have developed a strong team mentality within the school. As a result, teachers and staff are willing to take responsibility to close known gaps. They have structured a positive working environment for all staff. They have enlisted teacher leadership and provided professional development to foster this collaborative culture. Two teachers serve as instructional coaches for English language arts (ELA) and math, offering meaningful professional development and availability for one period a day. This structure builds the capacity of these teacher leaders and distributes the load of instructional leadership, ensuring that more teachers have access to support.

There is support at Pojoaque Valley for curricular design and creativity. They have communicated lesson design expectations while allowing teacher autonomy and professional discretion. Administrators have a system to ensure that all teachers are being observed, employing walkthroughs to provide feedback and monitor the quality of instruction.

The leadership team models restorative practices when working with struggling students. When students make mistakes, administrators use these as an opportunity for growth.

Opportunities for Growth:

While there are systems to ensure that teachers are observed regularly, more can be done to systematize and standardize these processes. By envisioning weekly walkthroughs as supportive of other systems at the school, there is an opportunity for the leadership team to prioritize them.

Similarly, while some expectations for curricular design have been communicated, there is a need for greater clarity and consistency. The feedback sessions after walkthroughs are an opportunity to clarify these expectations through timely, specific coaching. Observations provide a means to hold teachers accountable while offering support.

Potential Next Steps:

To prioritize observations and face-to-face feedback sessions, Principal Vigil plans to delegate low-level issues to counselors, the security officer, and the assistant principal. Instructional leadership can help prevent other problems school-wide by addressing root causes in layer one instruction. Attendance, behavior, and student performance directly relate to students' engagement during class instruction. By coaching teachers on how to raise the level of rigor in their classrooms, Principal Vigil can help them feel supported and continue improving the school climate.

Principal Vigil and the leadership team also plan to provide clear and consistent classroom-level teacher expectations through department meetings. When all teachers know what is expected and understand the rationale, they can better support one another in meeting these expectations collaboratively. Similarly, sometimes, teachers do not see the utility of lesson plans, exit tickets, or posting standards and objectives. For these not to feel like mandated extra work, there can be intentional discussions of the rationale behind these expectations. Teachers and instructional coaches can help identify the highest-priority areas of focus when invited to problem-solve with the leadership team. This collaboration ensures greater buy-in and deeper engagement with curricular design.

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:

Pojoaque Valley Middle School has established expectations for some aspects of instruction. A standardized lesson plan with critical components for a solid lesson is used throughout the school. Teachers are expected to create lesson plans weekly. Most classrooms have objectives and standards posted in the classroom so students know what they will be learning for the day. ELA and math teachers have a scope and sequence based on the standards that have been developed district-wide.

Teachers receive feedback through observation notes and student data. After walkthroughs, the leadership team shares their feedback digitally, making it readily accessible. Assessments are used regularly to assess benchmark and summative acquisition of learning in ELA and Math. Data is generated and available to teachers and leaders to analyze and improve student learning outcomes.

Opportunities for Growth:

Many pieces are in place at Pojoaque Valley Middle School: pacing, assessments, instructional coaching, data gathering, and an observation and feedback coaching cycle are anchored by a collaborative, growth-oriented culture. From this base, there is an opportunity to increase the rigor of classroom instruction, assignments, and tasks to engage all students more meaningfully.

To support teachers in raising the level of rigor, the leaders at Pojoaque Valley can work to increase teachers' understanding of the standards and how to construct grade-level learning aligned with the standards. They would benefit from discussing mastery, measuring mastery, and planning what to do when students have not mastered the standard. Teachers should be encouraged to make this data analysis routine in classroom instruction.

There is an additional need to provide targeted short bursts of intervention for students below grade level. These students might be identified with a more formal approach of data analysis based on the standards in formative assessments. The ELA and math instructional coaches could co-teach to increase the capacity of the classroom teacher. Pojoaque Valley is poised to innovate ways to support all students.

Potential Next Steps:

Exit tickets are an approachable, context-embedded way for teachers to get immediate feedback on students' mastery of the standards. To support teachers in using exit tickets meaningfully, the administrative team and instructional coaches plan to help teachers identify the data that is being generated and its utility for action.

Teachers can collaborate during Professional Learning Community meetings to align exit tickets to standards. Some teachers might need support in creating exit tickets that produce clear, actionable next steps when analyzed. Grade-level standards often have multiple components, and well-written tasks can help teachers assess more accurately where students are performing and where any misunderstandings might occur. They might also benefit from protocols to help them do quick sorts – this allows teachers to disaggregate trends in student responses to drive further instruction, reteaches, and enrichment.

Once teachers are fluent in creating exit tickets and sorting results to determine the next steps, they may need support structuring their instruction. They can engage in whole class, small group, and individual interventions to support students in clarifying misunderstandings or deepening their knowledge and application of the skills inherent in the standards. Administrative observations, peer observations, and frequent, bite-sized feedback will help speed this learning process.

