

School Support and Readiness Assessment Summary Report

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| School: University High School | LEA: Roswell |
| School Leader: Lucie Hall | LEA Leader: Brian Luck |
| SSRA Team Leader: Connie Copeland | Date: December 6, 2023 |
| School Description | |
| <p>University High School (UHS) is a small, alternative high school serving the students of Roswell Independent School District. The school offers career and technical education (CTE) classes for students enrolled at UHS and the two other high schools in the district. Roughly a dozen teachers, a counselor, and a part-time attendance clerk support the students at UHS. The school hosts several college access partners, including TRIO and GEAR UP.</p> <p>UHS also offers GRADS (Graduation Reality and Dual-Role Skills), a multi-generational case management program for expecting and parenting students that provides childcare and parenting classes while also equipping students with the academic and career skills that will prepare them to support their families.</p> <p>According to the 2023-24 University High School Student Handbook, <i>“University High School is a school of great tradition and honor. University High School has evolved its mission to meet the changing needs of the students who are the heart of the school. Like its mascot, the Phoenix, the school is periodically changed and reborn as a better, stronger place where all young people can get a wonderful education and develop lifelong skills that will help them secure, active citizens of their communities.”</i></p> | |
| School Successes and Celebrations | |
| <p>University High School has made measurable strides in helping students attain academic goals. The GRADS program at UHS is the second largest in the state and had the highest graduation rate last year: 91%. The GRADS program has been featured in the local newspaper four times in the previous eight months, reflecting the number of success stories produced. The overall graduation rate at UHS rose from 28% in 2022 to 51% in 2023. Similarly, the H6 graduation rate increased from 33% in 2022 to 51% in 2023.</p> <p>The partnerships between UHS and other schools in the district are strong. Students are offered CTE and pathways at UHS. They can also complete dual enrollment credit through Eastern New Mexico-Roswell (ENMU-R).</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:

University High School provides students with a safe and supportive environment. Students and parents feel both physically and emotionally safe at the school. The physical space at University High is clean and inviting, with student work displayed in the halls.

Academically, University High supports equitable access to content by offering students the possibility of earning full-year credits in one semester. The Gaining Early Awareness and Readiness for Undergraduate Programs (GEAR UP) program is integral to the school community and is working with students to form a student government. Students are also taking the initiative to plan the school's first prom.

Opportunities for Growth:

There continues to be the misperception that University High School is only for troubled or at-risk students. As a result, few students apply for admission. Compounding this enrollment challenge is the fact that the school is not a part of the 8th-grade high school tour.

Potential Next Steps:

To mitigate the enrollment challenges with younger students at University High, the school plans to engage in targeted recruitment with 8th-grade students. The Career and Technical Education (CTE) offerings can be a draw for potential students. To continue to enhance the offerings at University High, Principal Hall plans to increase programming such as electrical, health, psychology, and cosmetology. CTE classes allow students to explore potential careers and earn certifications that can improve their earning potential immediately after high school.

DOMAIN 2: LEADERSHIP

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

Promising Practices:

University High School has invested in its personnel to meet the needs of its student body. The school now employs a part-time attendance clerk and a full-time counselor. The attendance clerk conducts home visits and meets with students who are late. The counselor is very visible in the school and receptive to the needs of students, staff, and parents.

Opportunities for Growth:

Despite the deployment of an attendance clerk, University High continues to have a low attendance rate – around 60%. Some students are reported to have missed as many as 67 days this semester. Other students with chronic truancy cannot be dropped because they will return for a day before missing the ten days required for withdrawal proceedings.

There are multiple contributing factors to attendance challenges at University High. There is no comprehensive transportation system to the school. Additionally, there is inconsistent enforcement of the attendance policy. For a school that serves many students who have not experienced success in other school environments, attendance can continue to be a chronic problem, often with deeper root causes requiring intervention.

Potential Next Steps:

Principal Hall plans to intentionally redesign the credit recovery program at University High, moving it to UHS rather than the two traditional district schools. She would like to visit other schools with CTE programs that bridge students’ home schools and satellite locations like University High strives to do. She is looking into more flexible transportation options for students.

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:

Teachers at UHS are allotted collaboration time during their contract day: 30 minutes weekly. During this time, they address the needs of specific students as well as more significant school issues such as behavior and attendance. These meetings are called CPI meetings and are teacher-directed and facilitated.

Opportunities for Growth:

While some collaborative structures are in place at UHS, there is an opportunity for further administrative leadership and oversight to ensure that all students are gaining access to grade-level content standards. Students complete projects to demonstrate mastery in some classes, and there is an opportunity to raise the level of rigor required. Classroom observations and feedback could be employed to coach teachers in raising their standards and incorporating more rigorous tasks.

Additionally, students with IEPs are pulled from core instruction after the first thirty minutes of classes. There is an opportunity to ensure these students maintain access to grade-level content while receiving special education services.

Potential Next Steps:

Principal Hall plans to support teachers through a multi-pronged approach. She intends to restructure professional development time to address the standards. She wants to incorporate end-of-course assessments as a measurement of mastery. Beginning with the end in mind helps teachers understand more fully the level of rigor required to master the standards. To serve this purpose, Principal Hall plans to share student exemplars with teachers and lead them in challenging conversations about the standards.

Peer mentorship can be a powerful tool when coaching teachers. Principal Hall plans to provide opportunities for peer observations with master teachers. She then plans to follow up to ensure that teachers implement the instructional practices they have learned through this process. Finally, Principal Hall plans to leverage community schools to address students' academic needs rather than solely focusing on social-emotional learning needs.