

# School Support and Readiness Assessment Summary Report

<b>School:</b> GREAT Academy Charter	<b>LEA:</b> GREAT Academy Charter
<b>School Leader:</b> Jasper Matthews	<b>LEA Leader:</b> Keisha Matthews
<b>SSRA Team Leader:</b> Regina Timms	<b>Date:</b> January 31, 2024
<b>School Description</b>	
<p>The Gain Real Experience through Active Transition (GREAT) Academy is a charter school in the Albuquerque Metro area. It serves approximately 105 students in grades 6-12. Currently, its charter is redefining the mission and vision statement. It is in the process in becoming a Skills USA school and is transitioning to an early career preparatory school.</p> <p>Much of the learning occurs through Edgenuity with limited face-to-face instruction. Nearly half of the student population are students with disabilities, and roughly 30% are English Learners.</p> <p>The GREAT Academy has a rich foundation for student learning, including an audio-visual studio lab and a STEM lab. There is excellent potential to use these labs more as the school grows its enrollment and staffing.</p>	
<b>School Successes and Celebrations</b>	
<p>The GREAT Academy takes pride in getting its students to graduate. They feel like they have a very individualized approach in a small, safe place that lacks the social and emotional challenges such as bullying that occur in traditional school settings. The school also creates a strong sense of belonging and close relationships with students and families. The GREAT Academy is a "landing pad" for students who may feel ostracized in a traditional setting.</p> <p>The middle school grades at GREAT Academy have a community outreach program where students can volunteer to gain experiences beyond those available in the classroom. In addition, there are a lot of dual credit opportunities, not only for credit recovery but also for students to explore other learning opportunities outside of school. These course offerings allow students to find the best fit to accomplish their goals.</p>	
<b>DOMAIN 2: LEADERSHIP</b>	
<p><i>To what degree does school leadership establish, communicate, support, and monitor schoolwide priorities?</i></p>	

**Promising Practices:**

Principal Matthews and his leadership team are committed to frequent communication and engagement. Information is shared through multiple methods, including email, text messages, and regularly scheduled memos. The school community feels well-informed about upcoming events and changes.

**Opportunities for Growth:**

While information regarding external events is frequently communicated and well-understood, there is an opportunity to make internal decisions, processes, and changes more transparent and collaborative. As Principal Matthews creates and adjusts the 90-Day Plan, there is an opportunity to ensure that his staff understands the goals and the rationale behind them. A clear vision, intermediate steps, and specific goals will help all staff feel they are working for a united mission.

The school has collaborative structures, such as weekly professional learning community meetings (PLCs) and bimonthly staff meetings. There is an opportunity to deepen the conversations in these meetings to include shared decision-making and discussion of instructional goals and schoolwide initiatives.

**Potential Next Steps:**

Principal Matthews plans to work collaboratively with his staff to refine the vision and mission of the school to align them with current practices and future priorities. As it becomes a Skills USA school, greater emphasis may be placed on career readiness and job-specific training.

Principal Matthews will begin more frequent communication with his staff by reviewing recent changes and explaining how middle-of-year (MOY) data is used in DASH. When staff understand the rationale behind changes, they are more likely to buy in. When they know how and why data is collected, as well as how the school is being held accountable, they can, in turn, explain the importance of those measures to students and families.

**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:**

There is a clear focus on student success at GREAT. Teachers at the school are dedicated to their students and understand that equity means giving each student what they need and meeting them where they are. While student success is a goal for everyone, there are current challenges connected to low enrollment and short staffing.

**Opportunities for Growth:**

Edgenuity has been a helpful tool for facilitating self-paced student learning, but students and faculty agree that more face-to-face opportunities for applied learning would be beneficial. There is an opportunity to solicit student feedback about potential learning opportunities, including science labs, field trips, career experiences, and hands-on learning.

One contributing challenge to offering more face-to-face learning opportunities is inadequate staffing. Efforts to recruit and retain highly qualified teachers could yield better learning opportunities and help grow student enrollment.

**Potential Next Steps:**

The GREAT Academy is currently in the process of filling the science teacher vacancy. Once this position is staffed, that person can implement practices to increase face-to-face learning.

Principal Matthews is also investigating alternative routes to staffing the school's labs, including collaborating with Central New Mexico Community College to have one of their staff or graduate students provide instruction in the A/V studio lab. The school is also considering partnerships with community organizations that could offer guest instructors, including Explora and the Water Authority. As the school transitions to becoming an early career preparatory Skills USA school, these partnerships could help students network with career professionals while gaining hands-on experience.

**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:**

Despite the dual challenges of low enrollment and short staffing, the teaching staff at GREAT Academy are dedicated and nurturing to their students. Collaborative structures are in place, and the school has the facilities to attract teachers who are interested in STEM. In the same way students who prefer a smaller learning environment are drawn to the school, some teachers may be attracted to the tight-knit community at GREAT.

**Opportunities for Growth:**

Current staff at GREAT may be powerful thought partners in recruiting additional teachers and students. Their input into the school's revised vision will also allow them to help develop systems to support student learning and teacher retention. As the school seeks to offer more face-to-face learning, their desire to actively teach rather than merely "facilitate" online education can be leveraged to emphasize instructional practices more deeply.

GREAT Academy has an opportunity to reinvent itself; with a dedicated staff and open-minded leader, there is immense potential to build a school that caters to students' needs while preparing them for career success.

**Potential Next Steps:**

Principal Matthews eagerly anticipates the culmination of the transition into a Skills USA school. As an early career preparatory school, he plans to develop a plan to market the school to students seeking career readiness. Many students seek certifications and experiences that make them immediately employable upon graduation; the staff at GREAT sees this potential and is poised to offer opportunities for students to do so.

Principal Matthews plans to connect with community organizations to build pipelines into the school and jobs as the school grows and changes. This will help boost enrollment and connect the students with community members invested in their success.