

School Support and Readiness Assessment Summary Report

School: Vista Nueva High School	LEA: Aztec Municipal Schools
School Leader: Dreher Robertson	LEA Leader: Kevin Summers
SSRA Team Leader: Phil Valdez	Date: February 2, 2024
School Description	
<p>Vista Nueva High School gives students a new perspective on school achievement and personal success, developing new choices and accepting new opportunities. Students experience classes where teachers work with one another to provide a quality and creative learning environment. Vista Nueva has an enrollment of 80 students, with 16 receiving special education services. An emphasis is placed on supporting students' social-emotional needs with a focused academic path to graduation, including a work-based learning program.</p> <p>Vista Nueva has a history as an alternative school. Since changing models to a more competency-based approach, student enrollment has grown, and a waitlist has been instituted. Eighty students are currently on the waitlist. The school's focus on personal, social, and academic growth and its emphasis on real-world learning experience has become very attractive in a post-COVID educational landscape.</p> <p>The vision of the school is as follows: <i>Our vision for Vista Nueva is to create an alternative high school where personal, social, and academic growth are cultivated through building solid relationships. We aspire to graduate not only intellectually capable individuals but also compassionate, resilient, and socially conscious global citizens. Welcome to a place where education is an enriching journey, relationships are transformative, and futures are genuinely fostered.</i></p>	
School Successes and Celebrations	
<p>There is a palpable culture of positivity and respect at the school. Students and teachers feel safe around one another. This culture is leveraged while the school transitions to Competency & Proficiency-Based Instruction and Evaluation. By tracking competency, students will effectively build portfolios that serve as alternate demonstrations of proficiency to meet state graduation criteria. Another critical aspect of this shift is moving from traditional grade-based credit recovery methods to competency-based approaches. The ultimate goal of this shift is to eliminate the need for ineffective online credit recovery that has been shown not to improve proficiency.</p>	

Vista Nueva is implementing a Work-Based Learning Program to provide students with real-world experiences. The school has restructured its schedule to accommodate this initiative, transitioning to a five-period day plus advisory on a trimester schedule. One day a week is dedicated to work-based learning experiences for students, and the experience is now part of graduation requirements. All four-year students are required to complete 240 total hours of work-based learning to graduate.

Finally, the school operates as an Innovation Zone school. It receives funding for paid student internships, professional development, transportation, and other essential resources. Vista Nueva also maintains a strong partnership with the local community college to offer dual-credit opportunities to 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:

Vista Nueva High School performs periodic assessments and STAR data analysis to inform teaching strategies and drive instruction. Despite the small staff size, the school fosters collaboration and targeted support through weekly Professional Learning Community (PLC) meetings where staff meet to discuss students requiring assistance. Additionally, all students are comprehensively reviewed monthly to ensure adequate and timely progress.

One recent shift has been towards competency-based learning, providing students with opportunities to demonstrate mastery through various means. This student-centered approach prioritizes the individual and emphasizes skill-based knowledge acquisition rather than simple completion of tasks.

Opportunities for Growth:

There seems to be an opportunity to ensure that instructional expectations are effectively aligned to foster student achievement growth. By refining alignment strategies, educators can better tailor their teaching to meet students' diverse needs.

There is also an opportunity to identify and communicate core and differentiated instructional expectations. Clarifying these expectations could empower educators to deliver instruction effectively while accommodating diverse learning needs, promoting equity. These clear expectations can also translate to proficiency growth among students. When students understand what is expected of them in their academics, they may be more likely to engage actively in their learning. Leadership and teachers can create a more supportive learning environment by aligning instructional expectations and communicating those expectations to students.

Potential Next Steps:

Leadership has outlined the launch of competency-based instruction and reporting in their 90-Day Plan. One aspect of this plan is to engage in thorough discussions and map out course designs that align with competencies. Leveraging resources such as EMPOWER by Marzano Resources could provide valuable guidance.

The school leader also plans to meet with educators to identify and build a plan to integrate access to competencies across curricular areas; engagement in monitoring the effectiveness and utilization of competencies has been identified as an area of focus for the leadership team.

DOMAIN 5: SUPPORT & ACCOUNTABILITY

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

Promising Practices:

Vista Nueva boasts a strong sense of support and respect between educators and the building leader. Teachers feel valued and supported, which enables them to contribute to a positive and collaborative school culture. The principal actively engages with teachers through classroom visits and one-on-one feedback sessions. Teachers express profound respect for Principal Robertson.

Feedback at the school is characterized by coaching rather than consultancy. This coaching-oriented model emphasizes collaboration and empowerment, encouraging teachers to reflect on their practice and develop their instructional skills by leveraging their experience. By recognizing teachers' diverse backgrounds and expertise, the principal can ensure that feedback is tailored to be relevant and impactful.

Opportunities for Growth:

There is an opportunity to correlate goal setting to accurate performance data more frequently, as the current STARS assessment is only conducted at the beginning, middle, and end of the academic year. To address this, the school could explore methods to integrate more frequent performance data into the goal-setting process.

Another opportunity is to use a systems-based approach to formative assessment strategies within lessons. As outlined in the current 90-Day Plan, a specific goal has been set to ensure that 75% of students who did not meet proficiency on the beginning of year assessment demonstrate growth. One way to address this goal could be to ensure that instructional feedback and continuous data analysis are embedded into the instructional design process. This may entail incorporating real-time feedback into lesson planning and instructional delivery, allowing educators to assess student progress and adjust teaching strategies accordingly.

Potential Next Steps:

Principal Robertson aims to enhance student performance and accountability through a systematic data collection and analysis approach. Short-cycle data sets, such as attendance records, exit tickets, and unit exams, will be used to create, monitor, and adjust student performance goals. Working with these data points will allow educators and the leadership team to gain valuable insight into student progress and high-leverage areas of improvement.

Further, these short-cycle data points can inform instructional design and reteaching efforts. This data can pinpoint specific areas where students may struggle or excel, allowing for targeted interventions and differentiated instruction. This iterative process could significantly impact student progress.