

School Support and Readiness Assessment Summary Report

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| School: Chama Elementary | LEA: Chama Valley Independent Schools |
| School Leader: Peggy Marquez | LEA Leader: Anthony Casados |
| SSRA Team Leader: Eileen Reed | Date: February 20, 2024 |

School Description

Chama Elementary School is a public school in Chama, New Mexico, part of the Chama Valley Independent School District.

The school's enrollment is 71 students in grades pre-kindergarten through six. The staff comprises one teacher per grade level, one special educational assistant, one half-day special education teacher shared with a neighboring school and one physical education (PE) teacher.

Six students (8%) have individualized education plans (IEPs), 4% have 504 plans, and 18% are English Learners (ELs). School is in session four days per week, with students attending a fifth day (Friday) once per month.

The stated mission of Chama Valley School District is to:

Teach, empower, and motivate every child every day.

Chama Elementary School has experienced a high rate of Head Teacher turnover. The most recent Head Teacher left in the fall of the 2022-23 school year, and a Head Teacher led the school for the balance of the school year. Beginning the 2023-24 school year, Peggy Marquez was designated head teacher and will begin working on her administrator certification in the fall of 2024.

Head Teacher Marquez is a multi-generational resident of the Chama community and was a highly effective teacher at Chama ES. Her stated goal is to bring stability to the school while supporting teachers and students and making Chama Elementary School a school of excellence.

School Successes and Celebrations

The Head Teacher and teachers are mutually invested in the success of the school. As an example, two teachers have started a student council, and they work to provide students access to opportunities outside of the Chama community, such as field trips to Santa Fe.

Teachers work together as a team and hold their Head Teacher in high regard. Head Teacher Marquez is working to rebuild strong school and family connections lost during the pandemic.

DOMAIN 2: LEADERSHIP

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

Promising Practices:

Head Teacher Marquez is laser-focused on improving instruction. She is actively involved with her teachers; she visits classrooms, models lessons and teaching strategies, and typically attends professional development sessions with her teachers. She has restructured the instructional day to provide teachers with one planning period a day. This has been a significant improvement.

Head Teacher Marquez is leveraging district and partner resources to address student learning issues and support teacher development. Current partners and programs include Universal Design for Learning (UDL), The New Teacher Project (TNTP) (help with using New Mexico Scope), CORE Eclipse (supports reading for students with IEPs), Structured Literacy (understanding the science of reading, and LETRS (establishing a framework for phonics instruction). Each partner provides various services, including professional development, and some provide in-classroom coaching.

The Head Teacher re-engineered the school's approach to English language arts (ELA) instruction after iStation assessments showed no growth. She collaborated with her staff and created a new schedule with an additional class period for ELA and math interventions. Each teacher works with a group of students identified by need during this intervention period. As a result of this change, students have shown growth, and some have advanced levels in iStation.

Opportunities for Growth:

There is an opportunity to support the school and Head Teacher Marquez as they develop their annual and 90-Day Plans. An outside facilitator or co-facilitator might be contracted to lead this process. Head Teacher Marquez would benefit from participating and observing the process as a new administrator.

A solid 90-Day Plan supports the alignment and possible streamlining of partners. An opportunity exists to align partners more tightly toward the school's key goals. Some teachers report there is "too much support" and feel strained by the number of professional development activities they must attend.

There is a need for the consistent implementation of a schoolwide behavior system to maximize instruction time in the classroom. As of February 2024, there have been 76 behavior referrals this school year.

Finally, there is an opportunity to strengthen communication with parents, especially around their students' academic progress.

Potential Next Steps:

Head Teacher Marquez will explore the possibility of securing an experienced facilitator (potentially another district Head Teacher) to facilitate or co-facilitate the school's annual and 90-Day Plan development. Watching an experienced administrator model the process for developing a high-quality plan will help her learn to create one with her team next year.

Head Teacher Marquez and her leadership team will produce a monthly newsletter to share school news and upcoming events. She plans to engage students and the student council to create the "Wild Cat News." Incorporating student leadership will ensure buy-in and allow students to write for an authentic audience.

Head Teacher Marquez will strengthen the focus on a schoolwide discipline plan. All teachers may understand and consistently implement practices by co-creating a new plan.

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:

Chama ES has created a schedule that includes one hour per day for ELA intervention and a half-hour for math intervention strategies. The identification of the student groups and the focus of their instruction is informed by iStation assessments.

Chama ES and district leadership are investing in building teacher capacity with various PD partners focused on improving literacy instruction, aligning instruction to standards, and using high-quality instructional materials.

Head Teacher Marquez has helped teachers understand how to scaffold learning within small groups. She has worked with teachers to understand which activities require students' depth of knowledge (DOK) to help teachers target instruction.

Opportunities for Growth:

There is an opportunity to address student proficiency and instructional rigor by focusing on grade-level instruction, as mentioned in the 90-Day Plan. For example, using New Mexico Measures of Student Success and Achievement (NMSSA) released test items, teachers can examine the questions and look for alignment between student work, assignments, and in-class assessments with the NMSSA exemplars. They might then reflect on the extent to which the lessons and student work match the level of rigor of the grade-level assessment items.

There is an opportunity to address the 90-Day Plan challenge of lost instructional time by implementing a schoolwide classroom management and behavior system consistently supported by all teachers.

There is an opportunity to address teacher concerns about their understanding and successful use of new district curriculum resources, particularly Houghton Mifflin Harcourt (HMH) for ELA and Math.

Potential Next Steps:

Head Teacher Marquez intends to incorporate the New Mexico Instructional Scope and examine student work in Professional Learning Community (PLC) meetings. She plans to engage her leadership team in this process. These processes increase teachers' capacity to break down content standards into daily learning objectives. By mapping these objectives onto the depth of knowledge required on summative assessments, teachers can create daily assessments that provide quick insight into students' mastery and misunderstandings. By centering student work in the PLC process, teachers can connect teacher inputs with student outputs, collaborating to strategize interventions and extensions.

Head Teacher Marquez will reach out to central office staff to identify teachers in the district who are successfully using the HMH curricular resources and who can provide professional development at Chama ES.

Head Teacher Marquez intends to do a "reboot" of the school's approach to discipline. By implementing a schoolwide strategy that all teachers support, she will help teachers maintain focus on instructional practices rather than behavioral challenges.