

# School Support and Readiness Assessment Summary Report

<b>School:</b> David Skeet Elementary School	<b>LEA:</b> Gallup McKinley
<b>School Leader:</b> Kyron White	<b>LEA Leader:</b> Mike Hyatt
<b>SSRA Team Leader:</b> Eileen Reed	<b>Date:</b> February 27, 2024
<b>School Description</b>	
<p>David Skeet Elementary School is in Vanderwagen, New Mexico, a remote rural setting. The school’s enrollment is 202 students in grades pre-kindergarten through fifth, and there are 14 certified staff, one vacancy (special education), and 17 non-certified staff. The school administrative team includes the principal and a dean of students. 97% of the students are Native American. 100% of students receive free or reduced-price lunch. 14% of students are enrolled in special education, and 29% are English Learners.</p> <p>David Skeet’s mission statement is: <i>The LOBO community will RELENTLESSLY strive for excellence by working together to nurture global citizens.</i></p> <p>Their vision statement is: <i>The loyal LOBO pack works hard, reaches high expectations and is relentless.</i></p> <p>Their motto is: <i>Lobos work hard, do their best to help themselves and others reach excellence, and learn all they can. We are relentless! HOWL!</i></p>	
<b>School Successes and Celebrations</b>	
<p>Principal White is proud of his teachers’ steps to commit to the instructional program introduced by him and his dean. The school has many new teachers and teachers who previously were on growth plans, and the focus has been on coaching them. He has focused on clarity of expectations and support, and the school is beginning to see momentum in student learning. The school was recognized as third in the district for growth in all subject areas as measured by middle-of-year (MOY) assessments during the 23-24 school year.</p> <p>Principal White and his administrative team have strengthened the system for monitoring and addressing absenteeism by establishing processes that include incentives and tiered levels of response based on the severity of absenteeism. On a recent day, the school had a 98% attendance rate. This, together with establishing a mentoring program that pairs higher-grade students with K-2 students, positively impacts the culture and climate of David Skeet Elementary School.</p>	

**DOMAIN 2: LEADERSHIP**

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

**Promising Practices:**

Principal White is establishing systems to improve both operations and instruction. He is narrowing the school's priorities and, together with his leadership team, is designing supports to help teachers meet expectations. He has a clear vision of improving instruction at David Skeet, focusing on the foundations of teaching to include the district's gradual release model of instruction. He sets monthly student learning goals, keeps a scoreboard, and, together with his dean, reviews the data in weekly professional learning community (PLC) meetings.

As one example of a learner-focused system, Principal White is implementing a three-week backward planning cycle that helps his teachers understand the purpose and use of student data. The planning cycle aligns with the district year-at-a-glance (YAG) and pacing guide. Teachers design weekly math and English language arts (ELA) formative assessments using the New Mexico Instructional Scope. These data are used to assess the effectiveness of instruction and identify students who may need additional support.

Principal White and the dean have clarified and strengthened the system for how Specials teachers push in and work with small groups during core instructional time.

**Opportunities for Growth:**

There is an opportunity to improve the process of identifying and supporting students with special needs. For example, there is confusion around the student action team (SAT) process. Teachers are unclear about their roles and responsibilities in the process and how to access resources to guide them. Some students who have gone through the SAT process and didn't meet the threshold for special education services are still experiencing issues impacting their learning. For example, the recent vision screening process left out some students needing glasses.

A special education teacher vacancy has created an additional burden on teachers. Teachers need extra support in providing services and accommodations as written in student individualized education plans (IEPs).

**Potential Next Steps:**

Principal White plans to clarify and reinforce professional learning and resources on the SAT process for new teachers. He also plans to incorporate additional modeling and practice using the SAT process. Principal White or a representative of his leadership team will investigate social work assistance and gain clarity around vision screening needs.

Teachers value and trust the expertise of Empower consultants. Principal White plans to leverage their support to provide professional learning for serving students with disabilities. Best practices for differentiating and scaffolding instruction for students with disabilities benefit all students.

#### **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:**

There are several district and school-provided resources to support teacher development, including staff members and structures. Teachers view the Dean of Instruction and Empower coaches as valuable resources. The Empower coaches are responsive to teacher needs and provide job-embedded professional learning, especially around the systems for administering assessments. The Empower coaches research and secure teacher resources and model and co-teach when necessary.

Principal White and his dean are in classrooms observing instruction and providing timely feedback and opportunities for improvement. Professional development is provided for the school's instructional improvement efforts during weekly PLC/PD meetings.

##### **Opportunities for Growth:**

Parents and teachers share concerns about the impact of the pandemic on student literacy and numeracy. Some students read well below grade level, and teachers face many student needs. Teachers would benefit from professional development on differentiating based on student performance. There is an opportunity to deepen teachers' learning by offering professional development with opportunities to practice and implement. Existing structures for observations and feedback can be leveraged to reinforce and hone teachers' application of new learning.

Teacher retention is an issue and is having a negative impact on improving student learning. The school is constantly in a state of "reboot" due to high teacher turnover each year. There is an opportunity to partner with the district to look at the factors impacting turnover at David Skeet ES. The school and the district may want to explore options that make teaching at David Skeet ES more desirable.

Potential mitigating factors may include improved working conditions, teacher recruitment and retention pay, and efforts to boost morale through community support. There is an opportunity to explore and address the differences in class size for some teachers. For example, one first-year teacher has 29 students as she is the only teacher for that grade level.

Teachers would benefit from protected planning time within the school day. Research on teacher retention has noted that it negatively impacts retention when teachers must plan outside

the school day. There is also the possibility of offering a retention bonus before the window opens for in-district transfer.

Finally, the leadership team may explore opportunities for external support, including parent-operated Teacher Appreciation activities and expanded housing options for teachers. Housing challenges related to the remote location of David Skeet ES and winter inclement weather driving should be explored and addressed. Leveraging community support enhances the school's internal capacity to make sustainable change.

**Potential Next Steps:**

Principal White will continue to engage with district leadership about the unique personnel needs and issues that impact David Skeet ES.

Principal White and his leadership team will consider adding practice opportunities during skills-based professional development sessions. The district and school have made significant investments in instructional resources and staffing. New and experienced teachers will benefit from clarity on using district and school systems.

Finally, Principal White plans to explore opportunities for parent-operated Teacher Appreciation activities. Community engagement and teacher retention help improve school-home connections and morale, building the capacity for improved student learning.