

School Support and Readiness Assessment Summary Report

School: Dulce High School	LEA: Dulce Independent School District
School Leader: Dr. William Royal	LEA Leader: Ina Montoya
SSRA Team Leader: Matt Williams, Ph.D.	Date: February 21, 2024
School Description	
<p>Dulce High School is located on the Jicarilla Apache reservation in Northern New Mexico near the Colorado border. The elevation on the Jicarilla Apache reservation ranges from 6,000 to 9,000 feet, with the landscape varying from rugged pine-covered mesas and piñon juniper woodlands to low sagebrush flats, several lakes, and the Navajo River. DHS serves about 166 students, 12% with disabilities and 18% identified as English Learners (ELs). The student body consists primarily of Native American students from Jicarilla Apache and Navajo tribes.</p> <p>Dulce’s mission:</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;"><i>To join parents and the community in assisting students in developing their skills so they may become independent and self-sufficient. We take PRIDE in our school, staff and students who show personal responsibility in their daily effort.</i></p> <p>Dulce’s vision:</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;"><i>To employ research-based methods, systems and resources to ensure that all students learn a curriculum based on real-life. It is the responsibility of parents, staff, administration and the community to raise expectations of all our students, so they may become viable citizens in the future, representing the school, community and global world now and for the rest of their lives. Dulce High School is a place of learning for staff, students and the community.</i></p>	

School Successes and Celebrations

DHS has a mature staff that brings a swath of experience to their students. The staff is diverse, with cultures from around the globe. Teachers make it a priority to build relationships with their students. The new leadership has implemented much-needed systems to make imperative changes throughout the school. Attendance at parent events such as parent-teacher conferences has increased.

Principal Royal is conscious about providing new and seasoned teachers with best practices and proven strategies to engage students and transfer knowledge. The leader has a strong vision for DHS's graduation, attendance, and knowledge building improvement. Students are respectful and very well-behaved.

DOMAIN 2: LEADERSHIP

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

Promising Practices:

The faculty respect Principal Royal for his systematic and transparent approach to leadership. He uses performance data related to graduation, attendance, and assessments to identify trends and articulate the needs of students and staff. He does this work collaboratively, with input from his staff. They feel that he models leadership that invites trust and participatory decision-making. The staff welcomes the clear expectations and increased accountability he has brought to Dulce.

Principal Royal is visible on campus in the morning, at lunch, and after school. He frequently communicates with students and families to ensure they focus on credit attainment, attendance, and graduation. Working with the counselor and staff, he is building data collection, analysis, and communication systems to keep resources streamlined toward common goals. The school is starting to see the impact of these efforts.

Opportunities for Growth:

There is an opportunity to solidify the professional learning community (PLC) structure so teachers can meet more regularly to analyze student data and support schoolwide academic priorities. Infrequent PLCs and PLCs that occur outside of teacher contract hours make collaboration more challenging, delaying or obscuring the potential positive effects.

There is an opportunity to continue and solidify the efforts already established in tracking attendance and credit attainment. The principal can leverage the current practices and strengthen existing systems through dialogue with staff and parents to better meet the needs of students.

Potential Next Steps:

Principal Royal plans to explore scheduling options to create protected time for weekly PLCs. He aims to bolster teachers' feelings of competence and community by prioritizing shared decision-making and professional learning. Teachers who share instructional strategies build collective efficacy and ensure students have a more uniform experience across content areas and grade levels.

The principal will continue graduation audits and Next Step Plans (NSPs). Students, teachers, support staff, and families benefit from understanding requirements and checkpoints toward graduation and post-secondary attainment. As these audits are completed, Principal Royal plans to continue to gather data to inform decisions about schoolwide interventions.

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:

Principal Royal conducts walkthroughs and provides teachers with feedback. Teachers know and adhere to the fundamental classroom expectations: they routinely post objectives and standards, and their lesson plans are available for review. This clarity around instructional goals is foundational as teachers design, administer, and analyze the results of classroom assessments.

Principal Royal has identified intervention needs and is attaining specific support for students below grade level.

Opportunities for Growth:

While teachers at Dulce have identified core standards and corresponding objectives for their lessons, there is an opportunity to close the loop between teacher inputs and student outcomes. Teachers would benefit from protocols and professional development to help design classroom assessments, analyze results, and plan meaningful interventions and extensions.

Secondary teachers often benefit from additional support with differentiating instruction and layering interventions based on dynamic and diverse student needs. As teachers at Dulce High become more comfortable with the systems that Principal Royal has instituted, they will have an expanded capacity to grow their instructional practice. Weekly PLCs, coaching around data analysis, and shared intervention strategies will prime them to make needed changes. As teachers see the connection between interventions and improved student outcomes, the data cycle will become more self-sustaining and ingrained in daily instruction.

There is an additional, complementary opportunity for teachers to provide deeper experiential learning to further student engagement. Teachers can motivate students to develop content-specific skills by identifying and appealing to their interests.

Potential Next Steps:

Principal Royal will collaborate with the faculty to define their professional development needs. Enlisting teacher leadership and shared decision-making empowers teachers to take control of their learning and increases buy-in. Adding high-leverage instructional strategies to help teachers engage students in meaningful interventions has the potential to shift the focus from teacher-centered to student-centered instruction. The multi-layered systems of support (MLSS) framework helps teachers group students flexibly to ensure dynamic responses to student data.

Principal Royal also plans to implement a reading and writing initiative in March. He plans for this to be embedded across content areas, ensuring that students see the broad application of these skills and their importance. The school will use external coaches to analyze data monthly and establish the next instructional steps. This type of third-party, objective analysis can be helpful as teachers learn to step outside their comfort zones and try new instructional practices. Building their professional capacity for this work will yield dividends.

Principal Royal will work with faculty to prioritize deep-level thinking through experiential learning. He will hold teachers accountable and offer instructional coaching by conducting walkthroughs and providing targeted feedback. Depth of Knowledge (DOK) can also be a helpful lens to analyze levels of questioning and rigor. As teachers become fluent with this methodology, they can enhance their instruction to help students master grade-level standards.