

School Support and Readiness Assessment Summary Report

School: Escalante Mid-High School	LEA: Chama Valley Independent Schools
School Leader: Lea Leyba	LEA Leader: Anthony Casados
SSRA Team Leader: Phil Valdez	Date: February 20, 2024
School Description	
<p>The Chama Valley Independent School District comprises two elementary schools and one combination middle and high school, Escalante Mid-High School (EMHS). EMHS is in the scenic community of Tierra Amarilla. The vision for the school is <i>Ringing the Bells of Purpose</i>. This vision centers around each person identifying their purpose and role in the school environment.</p> <p>EMHS has a population of 163 students in grades seven through twelve, with 106 high school students and 57 middle school students. The English learner (EL) population is 37%, and the special education population is 37%. EMHS serves a diverse cultural background, with the highest percentage being students who identify as Hispanic at 80%, followed by those who identify as Native American at 15%, and all others making up the remaining 5%.</p> <p>EMHS prides itself on providing students with various academic and elective programs. These include robotics, drawing, calligraphy, photography, mathematics, engineering, science achievement (MESA) program, and academic competitions. They currently have dual credit memorandums of understanding (MOUs) with the University of New Mexico (UNM) Taos and Northern New Mexico College. They have an active career and technical education (CTE) department supporting the welding program.</p>	
School Successes and Celebrations	
<p>EMHS is under new leadership. The change has brought a palpable enthusiasm and optimism for enhancing student outcomes, driven by innovative initiatives and a forward-thinking approach. This includes the reintroduction of discontinued electives and the introduction of new ones to help foster a diverse and enriching academic environment.</p> <p>A vital aspect of this leadership’s vision is the establishment of clear expectations within classrooms, particularly regarding technology usage. The staff’s commitment to implementing a policy where students deposit their phones upon entering the classroom underscores their dedication to creating an environment where students can learn and thrive. Concerning technology, students are provided with laptops to help them engage with learning tasks.</p>	

EMHS prioritizes student performance and graduation rates with a concerted effort to bolster academic rigor and support student success. The school's close-knit community fosters a familial atmosphere facilitated by small class sizes. These class sizes enable personalized attention and support for students. One final aspect of this community is principal and counselor involvement in tracking graduation plans for the senior class. These leaders have recently implemented a robust tracking system to ensure proactive support for seniors struggling or unsure of the credits they need to graduate.

DOMAIN 2: LEADERSHIP

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

Promising Practices:

Under the leadership of Principal Leyba, there has been a shift in priorities, with a renewed emphasis on academics taking the place of a prior focus on athletics. This change reflects the principal's educational background and rich experience, shaping a mindset centered on academic achievement and excellence.

The staff at the school have expressed appreciation for Principal Leyba's openness and genuine responsiveness as an instructional leader. This approach has begun to foster an environment of support where staff feel valued and heard. Additionally, the principal has introduced new elective opportunities for students, such as robotics, art, photography, and calligraphy, enriching the educational experience and providing students with varied avenues for exploration and growth.

Opportunities for Growth:

There seems to be an opportunity to establish or formalize a leadership team. This team could play a role in contributing to the development and communication of essential frameworks such as the 90-Day Plan, Professional Development (PD) initiatives, and data analysis protocols.

In line with the above commitment to data-informed practices, there is an opportunity to identify critical datasets that can be used to drive student outcomes. By identifying and utilizing high-leverage data, the leadership team can empower the educators at the school to make informed decisions about instruction and actionable strategies.

Finally, another opportunity for growth is the clear and consistent communication of classroom expectations. When educators are empowered and know what is expected of them, they can better foster a positive and stable learning environment. The school leader has an opportunity to articulate and reinforce three core classroom expectations and hold staff accountable to these standards. The school can cultivate a culture of excellence by ensuring clarity and accountability while guaranteeing positive outcomes for all stakeholders.

Potential Next Steps:

Principal Leyba plans to formalize and communicate the 90-Day Plan to all staff members. This communication will include details on how the formal leadership team will revise the plan, fostering transparency and collective ownership of the school's strategic agenda. As part of this communication, there is also a plan to formalize the three core expectations to staff, illustrating how these expectations are connected to the overall school plan. By establishing this connection, staff members can better understand their roles in contributing to the overall organizational goals.

The leadership team also plans to identify pertinent datasets within the school's control that can be regularly analyzed to inform decision-making. This practice will assist with productive goal-setting at all levels and help identify performance challenges among the student body.

The principal will develop a structured schedule and incorporate explicit feedback and coaching sessions into her calendar at least twice monthly to provide each teacher with support for improvement. This commitment to ongoing feedback and support underscores the school's dedication to continuous improvement.

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:

Lesson planning with the provided Sheltered Instruction Observation Protocol (SIOP) template is required for all teachers. This helps to facilitate structured and effective teaching practices. This practice is strengthened through regular informal feedback from Principal Leyba on instruction during and after walkthroughs.

There is an expectation for all teachers to provide instruction on grade-level content and prominently display daily learning objectives. Teachers incorporate Universal Design for Learning (UDL) strategies into their lesson plans to accommodate diverse learning needs and enhance student engagement.

Opportunities for Growth:

There is an opportunity to enhance the feedback process for teachers following observations and walkthroughs. Scheduling a specific time with teachers, administrators, and leaders can ensure that feedback is comprehensive, constructive, and conducive to professional growth.

Additionally, staff reflection on the professional development sessions dedicated to differentiated instruction that has taken place this year, and emphasizing the use of such strategies will help meet the diverse student needs. Moreover, targeted feedback concerning

implementing differentiated instruction in the classroom could reinforce effective teaching practices and promote student engagement and success.

One powerful way to leverage the school's mindset shift towards data-focused instruction could be through Professional Learning Communities (PLCs). By harnessing the collective expertise of educators at the school, leadership can establish actionable goals aligned with the 90-Day Plan.

Potential Next Steps:

Principal Leyba plans to incorporate and foreground conversations about direct instruction (DI) in the feedback cycle with teachers. This will help emphasize intentional connections between training and classroom implementation. Educators can refine their instructional strategies by identifying instances of DI during observations and assessing effectiveness.

Finally, the school leader plans to work with the leadership team to establish better and align the PLC framework structure with the objectives outlined in the 90-Day Plan. This framework will delineate PLC structures by department, including meeting schedules, designated leaders, and specific data sets to be utilized. By leveraging PLCs as platforms for collaborative goal-setting and data-driven decisions, educators can work collectively to pursue district and school-level outcomes.