

School Support and Readiness Assessment Summary Report

School: Thoreau High School	LEA: Gallup-McKinley County Schools
School Leader: Valarie Antone	LEA Leader: Mike Hyatt
SSRA Team Leader: Lizette Ridgeway	Date: February 28, 2024
School Description	
<p>Thoreau High School, located in the heart of Thoreau, New Mexico, is committed to providing a dynamic and inclusive learning environment that fosters every student's intellectual, social, and emotional growth.</p> <p>Thoreau High School is a public high school located near the Navajo reservation. With a current enrollment of 383 students, the school serves grades 9-12 and has a diverse student population. The student body comprises 97% Native Americans and 3% other ethnicities. All students are eligible for free lunches. The school employs 23 certified and three non-certified staff members who work together to support the academic and personal growth of the students they serve.</p> <p>The school values inclusivity and supports students with diverse needs. Currently, 39 students have Individualized Education Plans (IEPs), and 123 are identified as English Learners (ELs). Thoreau High School is committed to providing all students with a welcoming and supportive environment.</p> <p>The school strongly emphasizes attendance and has been working to improve attendance rates. A new parent liaison makes phone calls and home visits to address student absenteeism, and a positive impact is evident. They currently have an average daily attendance rate of 82.95% for 9th grade, 86.58% for 10th grade, 88.53% for 11th grade, and 90.27% for 12th grade. The school also tracks office and discipline referrals and has had 95 as of February of the 23-24 school year.</p> <p>Thoreau's Mission: <i>Thoreau High School is dedicated to empowering students to achieve their highest potential academically, socially, and personally. We strive to cultivate a culture of respect, resilience, and responsibility, preparing students to thrive in an ever-changing world.</i></p> <p>Thoreau High School is committed to providing an education grounded in academic excellence, community engagement, cultural richness, and a supportive environment. Their academic curriculum is designed to challenge and inspire students to reach their educational goals, offering diverse academic offerings that cater to every student's unique interests and aspirations.</p>	
School Successes and Celebrations	

Thoreau High School celebrates its student body's rich cultural heritage and diversity. Rooted in Navajo traditions and values, the school embraces multiculturalism and promotes cultural understanding and appreciation. They are a small, close-knit community with deep roots in Thoreau.

At Thoreau High School, they believe in the holistic development of their students. They are committed to providing enriching experiences that foster personal growth and success. Thoreau's athletic and extracurricular programs offer students diverse opportunities to engage, excel, and explore their passions. Their athletic programs instill discipline, teamwork, and sportsmanship, with local, regional, and state opportunities to compete. Their Career Pathways are dedicated to preparing students for success beyond graduation by offering comprehensive career pathways aligned with student interests, skills, and aspirations. The pathways provide hands-on learning experiences, equipping students with the knowledge, skills, and real-world experience needed to thrive in today's workforce. Students have expressed their appreciation and enjoyment of internship opportunities.

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 Antone has established specific non-negotiables for teachers. All teachers are expected to have standards, essential questions, and daily objectives posted. Additionally, teachers are required to have a plan for each day and submit lesson plans every Monday. Lesson plans for the week should be easily accessible by the door for observations or walkthroughs. Some teachers are applying the new expectations regarding standards and student objectives, and these inclusions are improving the quality of the lessons.

Gallup-McKinley County Schools is committed to providing its teachers with the necessary support and resources to ensure their success. The district provides Empower consultants and coaches to help train, model for, and support core teachers as part of this commitment. These consultants offer valuable professional development (PD) and coaching to teachers. They work closely with teachers to help them develop their skills and strategies and provide ongoing support to ensure teachers can effectively implement these strategies in the classroom.

The principal has identified the strengths of her core leadership team and implemented distributed leadership strategies and delegation techniques to continue to build capacity and autonomy with her dean, counselors, and lead core content teachers.

Opportunities for Growth:

It would be beneficial for school leaders to receive additional support and coaching on instructional best practices. By providing mentoring and professional learning opportunities to

school administrators, they could better support instructional planning, implementation of classroom strategies, and the analysis of student data. This development would lead to their instructional growth, which would help them establish credibility and gain teachers' trust.

As observation and feedback cycles are strengthened, teachers will be more likely to receive feedback. In addition to developing these systems, more consistency is needed in reviewing and providing input on teacher lesson plans. There is an opportunity to be more specific around areas of strength and opportunities for growth.

Potential Next Steps:

Principal Antone wants to join the Priority Schools Bureau (PSB) LEAD - program. She will contact the PSB to apply for enrollment in the 2024-25 school year. New principals benefit from finding community with other school leaders, engaging in coaching cycles, and participating in ongoing PD.

The principal, dean, and school leadership team will study Bambrick-Santoyo's *Leverage Leadership* or *Getting Better Faster* to guide and calibrate their observation and feedback. Along with codifying the instructional practices that leaders expect to see in classrooms at Thoreau, the leadership team will look at the criteria for the look-fors in high-quality lesson plans. This first layer of feedback will support more rigorous, targeted observations and support continued accountability to determined goals.

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:

Thoreau High School prides itself on having a stable and committed staff. The school has a low turnover rate, and many teachers have deep roots in the community. This connection to the school and community allows for a strong sense of commitment and investment in students' success.

Principal Antone recognizes the importance of knowing the strengths and needs of her staff. In her first few months, she has prioritized visiting each classroom and getting to know the teachers. By doing so, she has identified the unique strengths of each teacher and schoolwide needs for additional resources and professional learning. Additionally, the principal has identified a couple of teachers who require extra support, and she is closely monitoring their progress and providing them with the necessary resources to improve.

Thoreau High School has a master schedule that allows shared time for teachers to meet weekly for professional learning communities (PLCs) to receive PD and collaborate on effective teaching strategies. Additionally, teachers meet with the content teams on Fridays to analyze

student data and revise instructional plans for the coming week. The school leadership ensures the schedule is optimized for student learning and teacher collaboration.

Opportunities for Growth:

School leaders should consider implementing a more comprehensive and structured system to provide feedback to teachers on their performance. This system could include regular classroom observations, identifying areas for improvement, and tailored coaching based on needs. The system could also support the identification and celebration of high-performing teachers.

There is a need to develop the skills of teachers to differentiate instruction more effectively for students with IEPs. The current emphasis is on accommodations as written in the IEP, and teachers are looking for strategies to differentiate during core instruction. Teachers would benefit from specific differentiating methods to serve students with disabilities in a general education setting. Students with disabilities served in an inclusion setting could benefit from a formalized process ensuring inclusion teachers are in classrooms during assigned times.

There is a need to develop a more coherent system to identify EL students, inform teachers when they have them in their classroom, and support teachers with instructional strategies to address the learning needs of their ELs.

School leaders might consider creating a more formal mentoring structure for new teachers.

Potential Next Steps:

Principal Antone and the dean will work on a calendar that allows them to plan focused classroom walkthroughs and calibrate their observations. For example, they may focus on the launch of a lesson and how teachers share the student learning objective and discuss academic vocabulary. They might also focus on the exit ticket.

Principal Antone will survey faculty on what general education teachers need to better serve their students with IEPs. The district special education director may be a resource for addressing identified needs. In addition, the two special education-certified teachers can be tapped to provide PD. The 2024-25 school year master calendar will appropriately align special education services and core instruction.

An initial step to address the needs of EL students is to contact the district Human Resources (HR) office and determine who is certified to teach English learners. Principal Antone plans to pursue this avenue and provide coaching and support to teachers with these students in their classes.

Principal Antone and the leadership team will look at assigning mentors for middle-of-the-year new teacher hires. Mentors are only assigned when teachers are hired at the beginning of the

school year. Consistent onboarding and support during the first years of teaching are protective against teacher burnout and attrition. Experienced teachers also benefit from these partnerships, learning about current educational theories and technologies from new teachers.