

School Support and Readiness Assessment Monitoring Visit Summary Report

School: New America School- Las Cruces	LEA: New America School- Las Cruces
School Leader: Margarita Porter	LEA Leader: Margarita Porter
SSRA Team Leader: Eileen Reed	Date: April 25, 2024
School Successes and Celebrations	
<p>New America School (NAS) is celebrating several accomplishments. For example, the on-site Childcare Center moved from a two-star facility to three stars. New America has also created a Dream Team Club to support its male students. The club was created as a result of a capstone project and is student-led.</p> <p>An example of NAS's efforts to engage with the community is the adoption of NAS by the Soroptimist Club of Las Cruces. The organization will provide one senior with a \$500 scholarship and hold monthly meetings to support female students' future goals.</p> <p>NAS has received several recent grants and awards. An Innovation Grant of \$200,000 has allowed NAS to hire a graduation specialist, place eleven students in community-based internships, create a graduation capstone project, and create a profile to support students with graduation and credit recovery. They have also received the Stronger Connection Grant of \$18,000 to create more robust security systems within the campus. A \$25,000 grant was received to strengthen teachers' understanding of students' social and emotional learning (SEL) needs through professional development. A grant of \$125,000 was received and will be used to create the "Patriot Zen Den," a safe space for students and practices to provide mental health support for students.</p> <p>NAS is particularly proud of its recent progress in improving attendance, the graduation rate, and student performance in English language arts (ELA). Principal Porter shared the following metrics: attendance rate went up from 31% to 38%, ELA scores increased by 17%, and graduation rate went from 23% to 45% on a four-year cohort. One of the strategies NAS employed to accomplish these improvements is the addition of recovery classes for students who are significantly behind in credits necessary for graduation. These classes are embedded into the school day, and students complete coursework online within the classroom context.</p> <p>NAS also points to a growth in student enrollment as a measure of its success. The campus has increased its enrollment from last year to this year, and while they were projected to be at 150 students they are ending the year with 200. They are also excited about adding a 9th-grade "jump-start" week for newly enrolled 9th-grade students. Jump Start will include a skills assessment of each student, allowing NAS to plan for these students proactively.</p>	

Progress Toward Next Steps Identified in SSRA Summary

SSRA Summary Next Step #1: Explore an integrated data system, including the current school information system (SIS) capabilities, to better support teachers and administrators in entering, analyzing, and acting on data.

This was not considered a priority given the relatively small transient student population and one teacher per content area. Principal Porter and her assistant principal shared that they have several processes in place, such as their Early Warning System (EWS), that provide the data they need to address student learning needs; instead, they intend to focus on the work that takes place within the schoolwide Professional Learning Community (PLC) meetings, such as discussing Measures of Academic Progress (MAP) assessment data and formative assessment information. The intention is to formalize the expectations and strengthen the processes around how the faculty analyzes and responds to assessment data.

SSRA Summary Next Step #2: Continue to solicit teacher expertise and monitor progress, ensuring transparency and shared goals. Create a plan for teachers to monitor the plan together as a collective agreement.

Principal Porter shared that she and her team created the 90 Day Plan together at the beginning of the school year but acknowledged that there was little to no follow-up. The school leadership team and faculty have planned a spring meeting to review and reflect upon the practices that have positively impacted the graduation rate. Principal Porter intends to approach the NM DASH and 90 Day Plan planning process next year by looking at the practices that must be continued in the 2024-25 academic year.

SSRA Summary Next Step #3: Find ways to incorporate data collection into lessons so teachers can collaborate on strategies for struggling students.

Principal Porter and her assistant principal acknowledged that while teachers have access to the beginning-of-year (BOY) and end-of-year (EOY) MAP data and formative assessment data such as exit tickets, there needs to be more formal expectations for responding to and acting upon these data. There are plans next year to modify the master schedule to create a common schoolwide planning and preparation period. The work expected to take place during this time will include a weekly data review with the expectation that the data will inform lesson planning.

SSRA Summary Next Step #4: Explore multiple ways of supporting teachers in data-driven instruction, such as a day to review other districts' pacing guides, student outcomes, and learning objectives.

The current approach to planning is primarily teacher-driven. There is only one teacher per content area at each grade level, and historically, teachers have self-selected the focus of their lessons. The school leadership has not provided pacing guides for content areas for the 2023-24 academic year.

Several new faculty members who joined NAS for the 2023-24 academic year are new to the profession. This is especially evident in ELA and science. As a result, a new ELA program (Houghton Mifflin Harcourt, HMH) was purchased, and leadership agrees there is a need to develop a pacing guide for these teachers. The same need was identified for science. It was noted that the math teacher has 22 years of experience and uses two program resources (Mathia and Carnegie Learning).

NAS has a standard lesson planning template with required components that teachers must address. The school emphasizes supporting students in developing their academic language skills in speaking, writing, reading, and listening. The mnemonic SWRL is used for this priority. In addition, teachers are expected to open and close their lessons by reviewing the lesson objective.

School Leader's Next Steps

For the upcoming 2024-25 academic year, Principal Porter and her assistant principal identified the following next steps to build upon the school's existing priorities and to address identified areas of need discussed during the visit:

The principal and core team will review the 90 Day Plan as a foundation for planning the 2024-25 academic year and will commit to more frequent progress monitoring of the plan regardless of when NAS receives feedback from district reviewers.

The principal and her leadership team will leverage the common preparation time in the master schedule to address student performance challenges. This practice will include formalizing the expectations for the standing Wednesday meetings to include a review of student progress from MAP assessments and formative assessment data. This data will comprise exit tickets and data from the school's early warning system. The principal and her leadership team will clarify expectations for how teachers respond to these data.

The NAS leadership team identified the need to connect course content to their students' reality to help them see the relevance between their learning in school and their future. This need was identified due to a root-cause activity focused on why some students are not attending and staying in school. Teachers are expected to emphasize these connections through the lesson objectives reviewed during the opening and closing of their lessons. Classroom walkthroughs have identified inconsistent implementation, and school leadership is committed to more closely monitoring this expectation, working towards 100% compliance.

NAS leadership will pursue developing pacing guides for ELA and science for the 2024-25 academic school year. It was noted that given the prevalence of school districts using HMH, they likely could ask districts to share their pacing calendars and then work with their faculty to modify the pacing guides to the NAS calendar.