

School Support and Readiness Assessment Monitoring Visit 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: April 16, 2024
School Successes and Celebrations	
<p>The school community has seen significant successes and celebrations across various academic and extracurricular activities. Through targeted boot camps and goal-setting sessions, students demonstrated growth in their PSAT scores, with notable improvements across all grade levels. To recognize and incentivize this growth, a field trip to Main Event in Albuquerque was organized for students who achieved a 30-point increase in their scores. An additional field trip to an Isotopes game is planned for high-scoring students who have maintained proficiency. Additionally, a pep rally was held on March 8th for the girls' and boys' basketball teams, during which the school celebrated the achievements of students' progress on the PSAT.</p> <p>Efforts have also been made to engage with the wider community, such as extending invitations to Navajo Chapter Houses, demonstrating the school's commitment to fostering meaningful connections and partnerships. Invitations have been sent to attend an upcoming parent night and visit the Career Fair organized by the 9th-grade team.</p> <p>The school is also proud of a recent assignment designed by two teachers who collaborated to create a thought-provoking project on uranium waste disposal and the potential impacts it may have on the community. The students wrote letters and sent them to several media outlets. Nine students were selected to be part of a panel defending why their community should not be a storage or transport spot, which will be part of media coverage.</p>	
Progress Toward Next Steps Identified in SSRA Summary	
<p>SSRA Summary Next Step #1: School leaders receive additional support and coaching on instructional best practices to support their instructional growth.</p> <p>Significant progress has been made in supporting the school leader with coaching on instructional best practices. The principal has engaged with an Empower coach, dedicating three days to enhancing instructional leadership skills. This collaboration has focused on various aspects, including classroom observations, utilizing Canvas for form submissions, and developing a vocabulary around instructional practices such as teacher talk versus student talk. Notably, reports showcasing this work are available for review, demonstrating tangible progress toward enhancing instructional leadership capabilities and providing timely written feedback to teachers. Additionally, plans are underway for potential collaboration with the University of</p>	

Virginia for leadership training, indicating a commitment to continued growth and development in this area.

In mid-March, the state offered training on lesson planning and digging deeper into instructional planning. The campus was very proud that all four members of the math team and teachers from other content areas joined the principal in attending the voluntary training in Albuquerque. The attendees shared that they found the training beneficial and actionable, sparking a conversation about the importance of professional development opportunities and intentional lesson planning.

SSRA Summary Next Step #2: Campus administration will strengthen observation and feedback cycles by planning more focused classroom walkthroughs and calibrating before observations.

Efforts have been initiated to strengthen observation and feedback cycles through more focused classroom walkthroughs. The groundwork has been laid for increasing the frequency of walkthroughs and feedback by setting a schedule and calendar blocking for the Principal and Dean of Students. Despite initial challenges in maintaining consistency due to daily operational demands and unforeseen interruptions, strategies have been devised to mitigate these obstacles moving forward. These include clear communication with the front office to prioritize walkthroughs and adjustments to scheduling processes to facilitate smoother coordination. The Dean of Students has prioritized her time for walkthroughs and reported that she visits about five classrooms per week fairly consistently.

SSRA Summary Next Step #3: Campus administrators will consistently review and provide feedback and input on teacher lesson plans.

Progress has been made towards achieving more consistency in reviewing and providing feedback on teacher lesson plans. Professional development sessions emphasizing the importance of lesson planning have resulted in increased adherence to submission deadlines and improved lesson plan quality. Teachers have reported that comprehensive lesson plans contribute to smoother classroom management and improved student outcomes, and this has been observed by the Dean of Students and Principal during walkthroughs. The principal also reported that teachers are more consistently making their lesson plans available near their doors to support visitors observing their classrooms.

SSRA Summary Next Step #4: Survey general education teachers to identify the training and support needed to serve special education students better.

While progress has not yet been made in surveying general education teachers to identify training and support needed for special education students, plans are in place to address this goal. With staffing changes in the special education department, including a reduction from three special education teachers to two, the focus has shifted towards informing staff of these changes and addressing their questions and concerns about preparations for the next school year. Once these transitions are managed, the school plans to conduct a survey to assess the training and support needs for serving special education students effectively. This will include considerations for lesson plan templates, pre-planning supports, and accommodations/modifications to meet the needs of all students better.

SSRA Summary Next Step #5: The campus will coordinate with the district and the HR department to determine who is certified to teach English learners.

Progress has been made in coordinating with HR to determine who is certified to teach English learners. The school has identified one special education teacher with TESOL endorsement as the sole certified teacher for English learners. However, with staffing changes impacting special education resources, challenges arise in utilizing her expertise for EL support. To address this, the district has initiated training for all ELA teachers in ESL methods and literacy training for secondary teachers, ensuring that educators across disciplines can effectively support EL students.

SSRA Summary Next Step #6: Campus will coach and support teachers who serve EL students.

While the campus has not yet started implementing this next step, the district has implemented training initiatives, including ESL training for ELA teachers and literacy training for secondary teachers. Additionally, a cohort of 10th-grade teachers on the campus have engaged in Reading Apprenticeship training, with plans for further expansion in the next cohort. With increased coaching support planned for the coming year, the school is poised to continue enhancing instructional practices to serve EL students' unique needs better and to formally begin implementing this next step.

SSRA Summary Next Step #7: Campus will create a mentoring plan for middle-of-the-year new teacher hires.

Minimal progress has been made in creating a mentoring plan for mid-year new teacher hires due to the timing of the initial SSRA visit being in late February. Of the four mid-year hires, one is currently being mentored, two have selected mentors for the upcoming year and will undergo district mentorship training, and one is still selecting a mentor. Despite this progress, formalizing a mentoring plan for future mid-year hires remains a priority and will be revisited at the beginning of next school year. However, existing support structures, including mentorship from colleagues and engagement with Empower coaches, ensure that all new teachers receive guidance and assistance as they acclimate to their roles.

School Leader's Next Steps

For the upcoming 2024-25 academic year, the school leadership team is focusing on several key areas to enhance teacher effectiveness and support student learning. One of the main focuses is to increase and improve teacher use of instructional strategies. This includes raising awareness of the balance between teacher talk versus student talk in the classroom and strengthening the implementation of the "We-Do" component in lesson planning and instruction. Additionally, teachers will be encouraged to engage in self-directed professional development by video recording themselves, reflecting, and analyzing their instructional delivery practices.

In terms of supporting Special Education and English Learner (EL) students, specific steps are being taken to address individual student needs and improve overall outcomes. Due to some staffing changes on the campus, general education teachers will need to be prepared to support

special education students in more robust ways next school year. For Special Education, there will be a focus on preplanning accommodations and modifications for instruction to ensure that all students receive the support they require to succeed. Also, the district is developing a comprehensive plan for EL training, particularly emphasizing the intentional selection of teachers for the next cohort to participate in Reading Apprenticeship training. They hope this will equip educators with the tools and strategies necessary to support EL students in general education classrooms effectively.

In support of graduation initiatives, especially for students involved in credit recovery programs, there is a need to increase the frequency and clarity of communication for parents and families. This targeted approach aims to provide additional resources and support to ensure more students are on track for graduation. Additionally, efforts are underway to increase communication and consistency with senior parents regarding their student's academic progress, credits, classes, and attendance. These efforts will be primarily led by counselors, who will hold meetings with senior parents twice per quarter, fostering a stronger partnership between the school and families and promoting student success and graduation readiness.