School Support and Readiness Assessment
Monitoring Visit Summary Report

School: Rio Grande Preparatory Institute	**LEA:** Las Cruces Public Schools
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SSRA Team Leader: Tiffany Hinsley	**Date:** May 10, 2024

School Successes and Celebrations

The Rio Grande Preparatory Institute (RGPI) has undergone significant changes in its operations, resulting in notable successes and celebrations within the school community. In alignment with these changes, the application process has been revised, and the institute will no longer accept applications from students who need credit recovery courses. This decision has been made to streamline the master schedule for the 2024-2025 school year, focusing on aligning students with graduation plans that correspond to RGPI's three primary career technical education (CTE) pathways.

District leaders have worked diligently to develop a comprehensive course guide for the upcoming academic year (2024-2025). The guide provides clear outlines for the construction, hospitality and tourism, and culinary CTE pathways, which are being strengthened within the institute. During the 2024-2025 school year, CTE classes will be integrated with core classes to enhance student engagement and academic success.

To further enhance student engagement and academic success, school leaders have provided staff members with professional development opportunities on project-based Learning (PBL). This initiative will foster a more engaging learning environment that aligns with RGPI's objectives.

The decision to discontinue the credit recovery program was challenging; however, campus and district leaders believed it was necessary for the institute's future success. The RGPI community has shown significant support throughout this transition, encouraging a shift in focus towards other programs and initiatives. Despite a decline in enrollment, RGPI sees this as an opportunity to redefine its mission and vision for the future. The district has commended the campus leadership and staff's vulnerability and commitment to this journey of rebranding and redesign.

Progress Toward Next Steps Identified in SSRA Summary

SSRA Summary Next Step #1: Staff, leadership, and central office representation will begin a mission and visioning process for the combined campuses, considering how they

fit together. The administration and the building and district maintenance departments will continue communicating to address operational and maintenance issues within the building.

District and RGPI school leaders recently convened to identify core values and determine educational priorities. The goal was to define what the campus wanted to be known for and what knowledge and skills they wanted to impart to their students.

Enrollment is currently at 162 and includes the Student Success Academy (students who have been long-term suspended). Still, it has been determined that the SSA will be a separate program in the coming academic year. This will allow RGPI to embrace its new identity.

During a recent visit to Deming, the campus team wanted to explore a new school focusing on Career and Technical Education (CTE). This was aligned with the direction of the future of the campus to implement more CTE courses that can be concurrently taught with core classes, and they plan to infuse project-based learning activities to make learning more engaging and practical for students. The campus offers three career pathways: construction, culinary, and hotel and restaurant tourism management. They plan to have all first-year students take Construction, Algebra I, English 1, and Introduction to Hospitality. As sophomores, they will then choose their career pathway. The school leader has developed a comprehensive four-year course sequence and shared the RGPI course guide with the monitoring team as evidence of progress. RGPI is committed to ensuring all students can complete a pathway by graduation and participate in an internship.

The second portion of this next step has been a challenge. Both maintenance and operations have been issues this year. School leaders are working with engineers and other district personnel to ensure student safety is the priority. The school has had to endure some construction and will continue to address issues in phases that will continue throughout the summer. They have had to remind students how ongoing maintenance projects will impact the learning environment and the school's aesthetics during this period. They have allowed them to both have a voice and understand *why* and *how* these issues will be addressed. Students have played a prominent role and have taken pride and ownership in the redecorating of spaces throughout the school.

SSRA Summary Next Step #2: School leaders will consult with similar schools to create the structure, time, and tools for students to take part in tracking their progress toward graduation.

The school has implemented a seminar (advisory period) in their schedule to enable students and teachers to discuss graduation requirements and monitor progress. Each student receives a folder with testing information and a transcript to be more aware of their progress and better understand where they are academically. RGPI wants students to take more ownership of their progress and decisions. The folders provide more context and understanding for students, and they have seen that some students take testing more seriously. Some students use this to push themselves, but others have been challenging. The school will work on refining these processes for next year. As the school leaders began pulling data and doing data dives, they found that the information was messy and some were not being reported accurately. The school leader worked

to clean up some of that data and made some progress in getting accurate attendance and student achievement data. Moving forward, the school leader would like to keep a closer eye on their data to ensure that it is correct for both students and our data dives.

SSRA Summary Next Step #3: As teachers develop their skills for lesson planning in PLCs, there needs to be accountability for the collaborative discussions to translate into instructional practices. Both leadership and staff would benefit from creating a walkthrough or informal observation protocol that reflects the RGPI Three and universal classroom expectations.

RGPI Three is a protocol used on the campus. Teachers are expected to engage students in taking Cornell notes, marking the text, and vocabulary. The students will better understand these strategies as the teachers become more proficient. The school aimed to create more accountability for students and teachers while incorporating universal best practices into every classroom.

The school leader plans to focus on developing a classroom observation protocol this summer. She has created a form that reflects the RGPI Three and the universal classroom expectations. This year, the school leader focused on relationships and gaining an understanding of the school. The school began concentrating on best planning and preparation practices this year. Teachers were provided a general overview of expectations rather than a lesson plan template and encouraged to reflect on their practices during PLCs. Next year, the school would like to start the year with professional development around lesson planning, design, and expectations, which include best practices. The school leaders plan to use the observations as a way of providing feedback, both from administrators and from peers, to support ongoing improvement.

School Leader's Next Steps

The school is prioritizing higher-level training in project-based learning to ensure staff feel prepared and supported in this direction. It is essential to school leaders that staff understand the distinction between project-based learning and merely completing projects. The aim is to maintain the rigor of education, adhere to priority standards, and ensure students are prepared similarly to their peers in other schools. Additionally, the school leadership and team are focusing on rebranding efforts, emphasizing clearly communicating the school's identity and educational approach. Gathering evidence to share with the community will support recruitment endeavors, with an explicit focus on marketing to schools, students, and the broader community.