

# **School Improvement and Transformation Monitoring Visit Summary Report**

## **Beginning-of-Year**

### **(SITM – BOY)**

**School:** Ute Lake Online Learning Center

**LEA:** Logan Public Schools

**School Leader:** Dennis Roch

**LEA Leader:** Dennis Roch

**SITM Team Leader:** Lizette Ridgeway

**Date:** October 7, 2024

#### **School Description**

Ute Lake Online Learning Center is an independent online campus within Logan Public Schools, offering students an asynchronous learning environment for course completion. Established around 2008 as part of a statewide graduation initiative, the center initially functioned within Logan High School, serving learners of all ages without an age cap. Initially, it supported approximately 40-50 students and was fully integrated with the high school until 2019, when it transitioned into a standalone entity. At that point, Ute Lake Online Learning Center established its graduation rate and was designated as an alternative school.

Today, Ute Lake Online Learning Center serves approximately 90 students in grades 6-12, providing an alternative pathway to high school graduation for New Mexico students who have encountered challenges in traditional school settings. As of the end of the 2023 school year, the student population consisted of 47% white, 46% Hispanic, and 7% other races or biracial students. A majority, 58%, are considered low-income. No English Learners are currently enrolled, and only one student receives special education services through an Individualized Education Plan (IEP).

Many middle school students begin their education in traditional, in-person settings before transitioning to Ute Lake to realign their academic progress, often after falling behind in their four-year graduation pathway. Despite these challenges, the school has implemented enhanced data review systems this year, intentionally analyzing student data monthly with more detail than in previous years. Their approach allows staff to identify students at risk of falling behind and intervene earlier to support their progress. No significant changes in enrollment or staffing occurred this year, allowing the center to focus on refining its systems for improved student outcomes.

#### **School Successes and Celebrations**

Ute Lake Online Learning Center has experienced significant support from its leadership, with the superintendent serving as the LEA administrator and school leader. The superintendent has been actively involved in key initiatives, including attending Priority Schools Bureau trainings and overseeing the design and submission of the school's DASH/90-Day Plan and its Comprehensive Support and Improvement (CSI) budget. In addition, the LEA has provided supplementary funding through at-risk funds and the Family Income Index. These funds have been instrumental in enhancing student and family engagement, supporting orientation meetings, incentivizing participation in standardized spring assessments, and hosting receptions for families of graduating seniors.

One of the critical successes since last year was implementing a more robust onboarding process for students

and their families. School staff were sent directly into communities to meet with students and parents, offering hands-on support and guidance to help them better understand the online platform and their academic responsibilities. This initiative has significantly improved family engagement and ensured students are better prepared for the demands of online learning.

Regarding student outcomes, Ute Lake Online Learning Center celebrated the graduation of 16 seniors last spring, with 21 students currently on track to graduate this year. The proactive approach to identifying students who are off track has led to notable improvements; two years ago, eight students were retained at the same grade level, while last year, there were zero retentions. This success is attributed to the school's early identification of students struggling to progress and their efforts to help students recognize whether the online learning model was a good fit for them.

## NM DASH Development and Implementation

Ute Lake Online Learning Center's designation as a Comprehensive Support and Improvement (CSI) school stems from its challenges in achieving graduation outcomes. The school's Annual and 90-Day Plan development was a collaborative effort involving school leadership, teachers, and key staff who analyzed data to identify the root causes behind their graduation rates and other performance challenges. The team prioritized data-driven decision-making, focusing on course completion, attendance, and academic proficiency in their planning process.

### Problem Statements and Root Causes

The school's primary challenge is the correlation between course completion and graduation. As an online learning center, Ute Lake's success in improving its graduation rates depends heavily on ensuring students complete their courses and pass the in-course assessments and final exams. Data analysis from the past three years shows that students often arrive at Ute Lake already behind academically, negatively impacting their ability to graduate on time. A key performance challenge identified is the lack of consistent academic proficiency in core subjects such as English language arts (ELA), math, and science.

Several root causes were identified:

- **Course Completion Deadlines:** Historically, Ute Lake staff have extended deadlines for students facing life challenges, which has led to delayed graduation outcomes.
- **Inconsistent Academic Preparation:** Students often enroll with gaps in foundational skills, particularly in math, which hinders their ability to meet grade-level expectations.
- **Limited Engagement in Asynchronous Learning:** The school's online environment creates challenges in providing rigorous hands-on experiences, particularly in science.
- **Absence of English Learners (ELs):** Although no current EL students are enrolled, there is a lack of urgency in preparing for potential students with language support needs.

To address these challenges, Ute Lake Online Learning Center outlined several key strategies in its 90-Day Plan:

- **Course Progress Monitoring:** The team implemented a system for generating regular reports on student course completion, lesson progress, and overall performance, which includes in-course assessments and unit/final exams. This data is reviewed monthly to identify students who are off track

and to take corrective actions, such as placing students on academic probation.

- **Improved Student Onboarding:** A more robust onboarding process for students and families was introduced, with staff conducting community outreach to ensure that students and their families are well-prepared for the online learning platform.
- **Increased Student Accountability:** The school shifted its philosophy to a "coach them up or coach them out" approach, emphasizing that students must meet academic expectations and earn credits. Retention rates have improved as a result.
- **Data-Driven Instruction:** Ute Lake's leadership team continues to use data from formative assessments and course progress reports to make instructional adjustments and provide targeted interventions.

## School Progress

Ute Lake Online Learning Center has ambitious goals to improve its graduation rates and academic performance. Over the past three years, the school's graduation rate has declined, dropping from 43.7% in 2021-2022 to 39.1% in 2022-2023. For the 2023-2024 school year, the school has set a target of increasing the graduation rate to 48%, with a long-term goal of achieving a 57% graduation rate by 2025. Mr. Roch emphasized the importance of increasing graduation rates by nine percentage points each year over the next three years. The school does not currently have any other trend data beyond what is shared above.

Ute Lake Online Learning Center has established both benchmark and summative targets to guide its progress:

- **Graduation Rate:** The school's 4-year graduation rate target is to increase from 39% to 57% by the end of the 2024-2025 school year.
  - The benchmark goal for mid-year is that 65% of students will have completed their courses on time.
- **ELA and Math Proficiency:** The school set ambitious goals for academic proficiency. By spring 2025, they aim to have 33% of students proficient in ELA and 25% proficient in math (as measured by the SAT).
  - The benchmark goal for both subjects is 5% growth toward proficiency by mid-year. The school plans to use semester exam scores as a predictor of summative proficiency.
- **Science Proficiency:** The goal is to improve proficiency rates from 32% to 37% by the end of the year. For 11th-grade students, the school has set a target of 40% proficiency on the NM-ASR, although this cohort is small and not directly tied to graduation rate calculations.
  - There is a benchmark target of 35% at mid-year. The school plans to use semester exam scores to measure student progress toward MOY and EOY goals.
- **Attendance and Engagement:** Attendance is a critical factor in student success, and the school is committed to maintaining 100% online participation, with students being required to log in and engage regularly.
  - Attendance is monitored formally during monthly meetings and informally by teachers weekly.

Additionally, the school continues to monitor students at risk of falling off track. Last year, two 11th-grade students were off track to graduate, but this year, no students are in that category. While dual credit options were available in the past, the school currently has no students pursuing early graduation through this pathway. The school also ran a STARS report on Career Technical Education (CTE) courses and included

internship stipends in its CSI application to support students' work readiness. Also, at the mid-year review, the campus will be able to share how the campus is tracking students identified as being on or exiting academic probation.