

**School Support and Readiness Assessment & School Monitoring Visit
Summary
Beginning of Year
(SSRA/SITM-BOY)**

School: Larry Lazaro Middle School	LEA: Mora Independent School District
School Leader: Lefonso Castillo	LEA Leader: Norma Cavasos
SSRA Team Leader: Max Perez	Date: October 24, 2024

School Description

Larry Lazaro Middle School currently has 79 students enrolled. The school is predominantly Hispanic, with approximately 97% of students identifying as Hispanic, reflecting the region's rich cultural roots. Additionally, the student body includes a small percentage of Native American (1%), African American (1%), and White (1%) students, contributing to the school's cultural diversity.

Among these 79 students, 13 receive services through the school's special education program. Larry Lazaro Middle School is committed to providing an inclusive environment that embraces its student population's diversity and addresses all students' needs.

Purpose: *Mora, First Always!*

Vision Statement: *Mora Independent School District fosters a safe environment that supports learning, growth, and success.*

Mission Statement: *Mora Independent School District will provide a comprehensive educational program shaped by our positive roots and values. Students will receive academic, social, and emotional support, and graduates will be equipped to enter college, careers, the world of work, and beyond.*

School Successes and Celebrations

Recent improvements at the school have increased English language arts (ELA) New Mexico Measures of Student Success and Achievement (NM-SSA) proficiency scores from 24% to 37%. This increase reflects the positive impact of hiring a certified teacher for ELA last school year. Building on this, school leaders have taken proactive steps to further increase scores by hiring a new math and science teacher, who will begin in January 2025. The new staff is anticipated to further support students in these critical subject areas.

Additionally, the school has expanded its career technical education (CTE) program to promote early career exploration. All eighth-grade students are now taking a career exploration course, which introduces them to various career options and a culinary arts

program that exposes them to vocational and hands-on learning experiences.

All three schools in the district share resources and support systems, creating a unified effort to benefit students of Lazaro Middle School. Teachers and resources are shared across schools, allowing more students to benefit from finite resources.

Year-End Goals, Action Steps, and Progress Monitoring

Larry Lazaro Middle School has been designated More Rigorous Intervention (MRI) for Low Performance.

School Performance Data:

**2024-2025 Goal data was not available at the time of this report.*

NM-MSSA

English Language Arts

Year	All Students
2021-22	14.7%
2022-23	24 %
2023-24	37%

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Mathematics

Year	All Students
2021-22	18.3%
2022-23	6 %
2023-24	7.7%

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NM-ASR Science

Year	All Students
2023-24	2%

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NWEA MAPS (Northwest Evaluation Association Measures of Academic Progress)

ELA

Year	All Students
2022-23	23 %
2023-24	36 %

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Math

Year	All Students
2022-23	10%
2023-24	10%

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Attendance

Year	Overall	Chronically Absent
2021-22	91.36%	30.95%
2022-23	89.46%	47.96%
2023-24	91.06%	40.48%

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Performance Goals:**ELA GOAL**

By the end of the academic year, all students will demonstrate growth in their ELA performance as measured by the NM-MSSA. Specifically, students at each performance level will show measurable improvement:

- Level 1 (Beginning Learner): At least 75% of students will move from Level 1 to Level 2, demonstrating foundational skills in reading comprehension, writing, and language usage.
- Level 2 (Near Proficient Learner): At least 65% of students will either advance to Level 3 or show significant growth within Level 2, particularly in reading comprehension, critical thinking, and writing mechanics.
- Level 3 (Proficient Learner): At least 50% of students will maintain proficiency at Level 3 or advance to Level 4, demonstrating enhanced analytical writing, reading complex texts, and deepening their understanding of language conventions.
- Level 4 (Advanced Learner): At least 40% of students at Level 4 will continue to excel by deepening their ability to engage critically with advanced texts, synthesize information, and produce high-quality, well-organized written responses.

ELA Benchmark Monitoring Goal

100% of students will demonstrate 10% improvement on the ELA Interim Measures of Student Success and Achievement (iMSSA) middle of year MOY 2024-2025 as compared to the ELA iMSSA Beginning of Year BOY SY24-25.

Math GOAL

By the end of the academic year, all students will demonstrate measurable growth in math performance across all four performance levels (Beginning Steps, Nearing Proficiency, Proficient, and Advanced) as measured by the NM-MSSA.

- For students in the Beginning Steps: At least 60% will move to the Nearing Proficiency level.
- For students in the Nearing Proficiency level: At least 70% will demonstrate proficiency by the end of the year.
- For students already Proficient: At least 80% will maintain or exceed their current performance levels, with a target of moving at least 20% to the Advanced level.
- For Advanced students: At least 90% will maintain their advanced level, emphasizing demonstrating growth within this category based on individualized goals.

Math Benchmark Monitoring Goal

100% of students will demonstrate 10% improvement on the MATH iMSSA MOY SY24-25 as compared to the MATH iMSSA BOY SY24-25.

Science GOAL

By the end of the academic year, all students will demonstrate measurable scientific growth, as evidenced by the New Mexico Assessment of Science Readiness (NM-ASR). This growth will span all four performance levels: Beginning Steps, Nearing Proficient, Proficient, and Advanced.

- Specifically, students at the Beginning Steps and Nearing Proficient levels will increase their performance by moving up at least one level.
- In contrast, students at the Proficient and Advanced levels will deepen their mastery through more complex problem-solving, critical thinking, and application of scientific concepts. This goal ensures equitable growth for all students, regardless of their starting proficiency.

Science Benchmark Monitoring Goal

By MOY 2024-2025, 8th grade science students will increase proficiency in science from 2% to 12% as measured by the NM-ASR.

Root Cause Analysis

- The core reason for strengthening basic math skills, reintroducing essential functions, and guiding students toward grade-level proficiency is the foundational gaps in students' understanding of fundamental math concepts, which hinder their ability to engage with grade-appropriate mathematical functions and maintain a positive attitude toward learning.
- The core cause of increasing student willingness to write independently while minimizing dependency on electronic tools and AI-generated platforms is fostering confidence in their writing abilities through consistent practice, constructive feedback, and emphasizing critical thinking and creativity.
- The primary root cause of the school's low English Language Proficiency (ELP) growth can be inadequate instructional support in critical areas such as writing proficiency and vocabulary development and insufficient targeted interventions for underserved subgroups. A research-based dedicated writing program that focuses on key aspects of writing will be purchased. Incorporate regular practice with feedback loops to help students refine their writing skills.
- The 2% proficiency rate in 8th-grade science is primarily due to the lack of a dedicated teacher, over-reliance on online learning, and insufficient hands-on experiences.

Actions to Reach Proficiency Goals:

- Within 90 days, all middle school ELA teachers will implement structured, data-driven layer one instructional strategies daily, such as differentiated instruction, formative assessments, and targeted feedback.

- Within 90 days, all middle school math teachers will implement differentiated, standards-aligned instruction and formative assessments daily during layer one instruction.
- Within 90 days, all middle school teachers will implement targeted, data-driven instructional strategies and interventions for English learners (ELs) daily, including differentiated instruction and regular formative assessments.

DOMAIN 2: LEADERSHIP

Promising Practices:

The leader has been at the school for six years and is originally from the community. This provides the school with a leader who understands the current and historical aspects of the community along with the institutional knowledge of the school and district.

The principal and superintendent work well together to support the school. Being a small school district, the principal and district leaders meet regularly, both formally and informally. This communication mutually supports the school and district's efforts to serve the students, families, and community.

The staff works well together and supports each other through challenges. The community has endured significant environmental impacts, including forest fires and flooding. The staff have reported that these events have helped them work together more effectively as a team and support each other as they kept the school functioning with a minimal impact on students.

ELA has been recently staffed with a licensed teacher and is showing significant growth in student achievement.

Opportunities for Growth:

The school can improve the special education inclusion system and processes, fostering collaboration and communication between general education teachers and the special education staff to support students with individualized educational plans (IEPs).

There is an opportunity to build parent involvement and engagement with school functions and activities.

Potential Next Steps:

IEP reconvening meetings will move more eligible students to inclusion. Currently, there are thirteen (13). The master schedule will be built to support inclusion. The inclusion model will serve 100% of special education students in ELA by the end of the 2024-2025 school year.

The school will offer incentives to include parents more effectively at school functions. Currently, about 20% of parents participate in out-of-school activities. This will increase to 30% by the end of the 2024-2025 school year.

DOMAIN 3: INSTRUCTIONAL INFRASTRUCTURE

Promising Practices:

There is a sense of support, community, and teamwork among the teachers. Instructional staff are passionate and committed to supporting students and their overall well-being.

Opportunities for Growth:

School leaders can formalize the collaborative structure of staff meetings and Professional Learning Communities (PLCs) to focus on student performance trend data, including academic assessments, attendance, and disaggregated sub-populations.

Potential Next Steps:

There is a plan to structure meetings by the middle of the year (MOY) with guiding templates to create an accountability system that aligns the direction and focus of meetings toward the goals and benchmarks of the 90-Day Plan.

By the middle of the year (MOY) The administration will prioritize and formalize collaborative meetings with scheduling and an aligned focus to ensure they occur regularly. This will help identify areas of student need more succinctly and systematically.

DOMAIN 4: TALENT MANAGEMENT**Promising Practices:**

Some teachers have worked at the school for many years, which maintains consistency and builds trust with the families and community.

Many staff members are from the community or long-time residents and are more committed to its success.

The district, middle school, and high school leaders are discussing possibly restructuring grade levels to a mid/high combination or kindergarten through 8th-grade configuration at both schools to better serve students, leverage resources, and support teacher efficacy.

Opportunities for Growth:

There is an opportunity to address the number of staff members who cover multiple duties and responsibilities beyond their typical work assignments.

School leaders can enhance, improve, and proactively recruit and retain teachers.

They can also work to resolve issues around the substitute teacher shortage.

Potential Next Steps:

The administration will hire and have a math and science teacher at the school by January 2025 (MOY).

The school leaders will work with New Mexico Highlands University (NMHU) to recruit and incentivize new teachers through mentorship. The principal will investigate the teacher residency program provided by the New Mexico Public Education Department (NM PED) to host interns and beginning teachers at Lazaro Middle School.

The school leaders will work to increase recruitment efforts, including pay, for substitute teachers. This plan will be in place by the end of year (EOY) to be put into place in the 2025-2026 School Year. Progress toward this will be reviewed at the middle of the year (MOY) 2024-2025 school year.

