



# Tomé Elementary School

Los Lunas, New Mexico

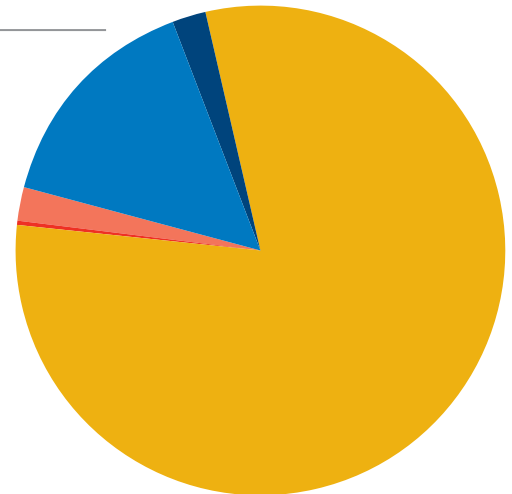
## SNAPSHOT FROM THE FIELD

“Tomé achieved high levels of school effectiveness by implementing the PLC at Work® process and High Reliability Schools™ framework.”



## DEMOGRAPHICS

- 465 Students
- 100% Free and reduced lunch
- 28% Limited English proficient
- 17 % Special education
- 15.2% Caucasian
- 2.24% African American
- 80% Hispanic
- .49% Asian
- 2% American Indian or Alaska Native



Tomé Elementary School is part of Los Lunas School District, located in Los Lunas, New Mexico, a rural community of nearly 16,000 people just 20 minutes south of Albuquerque, New Mexico.

## CHALLENGE

Tomé began building a professional learning community (PLC) in 2007. However, after several years of implementation, it became evident that the school was not fully operating as a PLC. In response, school leadership decided to recommit to the three big ideas of the PLC at Work® process: a collective

responsibility and collaborative culture, a focus on student learning, and a results orientation. To drive learning even further, the school also began using Robert J. Marzano’s High Reliability Schools™ (HRS) framework.

## IMPLEMENTATION

Staff committed themselves to analyzing practices and determining if they were making decisions because they were good for students or convenient for adults. To guarantee student learning, ineffective practices were abandoned, no matter how ingrained the tradition.

Expectations for grade-level collaborative teams were also redefined, which included a minimum of two collaborative meetings per week. Grade-level teams were given the autonomy to create their own instructional schedule within a defined framework, and dedicated intervention blocks were added to the school’s master schedule.

Each grade level developed professional practices and norms, as well as interventions based on common formative assessment data. Administrators

and academic coaches regularly provided feedback to grade-level teams. As the school began pursuing HRS certification, school leadership implemented a formal feedback process, encouraging students, parents, and community members to provide input regarding the optimal functioning of the school.

As Tomé continued to make improvements and learn about both HRS and PLC, staff realized just how intertwined the two processes are. “These models have allowed us to evaluate policies, practices, and procedures to be able to be where we are today,” said Principal Casey R. Ahner. “We have made the guarantee to parents that regardless of the classroom their student is in, their child will receive all the extra time, help, and support they require to be successful. All staff members participate in an ‘all hands on deck’ approach including myself.”

“I would recommend for anyone who puts student learning first to use the PLC at Work® process and HRS framework. I also encourage them to learn the basic tenets of the models, attend an event, and seek support from someone who has taken the journey. Their experience and learning will be invaluable.”

—Casey R. Ahner, principal

## RESULTS

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Tomé is now a certified level 3 High Reliability School as well as a recognized Model PLC on AllThingsPLC.info, a website dedicated to the PLC at Work process. The school has seen growth in the areas of academic achievement, teacher practice, and student behavior.

Teachers track student achievement on formative and common formative assessments, and results show that students are consistently meeting or exceeding grade-level goals of 80 percent proficiency on essential standards. Proficiency rates on interim and benchmark assessments continue to climb. Teacher practice also continues to grow as they participate in job-embedded professional learning, including instructional rounds with peers and use of video. The number of student discipline referrals has continued to decrease, and the school has not had any long-term suspensions in more than three years.



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