



Nevada State Public Charter School Authority

Site Evaluation Report
Somerset Academy - Aliante
Evaluation Date: 3/10/2021
Report Date: 4/19-2021

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Appendices

A: Nevada State Performance Framework

<http://www.doe.nv.gov/Accountability/NSPF/>

B: SPCSA Academic Framework

http://charterschools.nv.gov/uploadedFiles/CharterSchoolsnvgov/content/News/2019/19062_2_8-Academic-Performance-Framework-Guidance-Document.pdf

C: SPCSA Organizational Framework

http://charterschools.nv.gov/uploadedFiles/CharterSchoolsnvgov/content/News/2019/19062_8-OPF-Att-1-Ratings-Scorecard.pdf

INTRODUCTION AND SCHOOL BACKGROUND

INTRODUCTION

This Site Evaluation Report offers an analysis of evidence collected during the school evaluation that took place on March 10, 2021 at Somerset Academy - Aliante. The State Public Charter School Authority (SPCSA) conducts a comprehensive review of evidence related to all charters within the portfolio during the 1st, 3rd, and 5th year of operation. This comprehensive analysis addresses the academic success of the school and the effectiveness and viability of the school organization.

An analysis of the school's academic and operational success is undertaken by reviewing the most current versions of the Nevada State Performance Framework (Appendix A) and the State Public Charter School Authority Academic Framework (Appendix B) as well as the Organizational Framework (Appendix C).

In addition, the Site Evaluation Team conducts classroom observations within the areas of classroom environment and instruction. The purpose of these observations is to collect evidence using a rubric which has been normed by our team. All classroom rating outcomes will be displayed within this report so that school leaders have an overall idea of what is happening in general, at any time, in any classroom. The overall numbers will provide information about the school outcomes on this one day.

SPCSA staff will track "best practices", using a checklist and a summary of best practices observed, and will be contained within the report. Using information from focus groups of students, parents, staff, school leaders and the school's board, the SPCSA team will conduct focus groups and summarize results for schools within the report. The operational portion of the evaluation will be observed and take-aways recorded using a checklist and observing all aspects of the school's operational components as outlined in the SPCSA operational framework.

This evaluation has been designed to focus on teaching and learning (e.g. curriculum, instruction, assessment, and services for at-risk students) as well as leadership, organizational capacity, and board oversight. The SPCSA uses the established criteria on a regular basis to provide schools with a consistent set of expectations leading up to renewal.

SCHOOL BACKGROUND

Somerset Academy - Aliante is located in North Las Vegas, Nevada in a facility at 6475 Valley Drive. The school serves 1,092 students (as of the most recent Validation Day) in Kindergarten through 8th grade. The mission of Somerset Academy - Aliante is: "We prepare students to excel in academics and attain knowledge through life-long learning by dedicating ourselves to providing equitable, high-quality education for all students. We promote a culture that maximizes student achievement and fosters the development of accountable 21st Century learners in a safe and enriching environment."

ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE

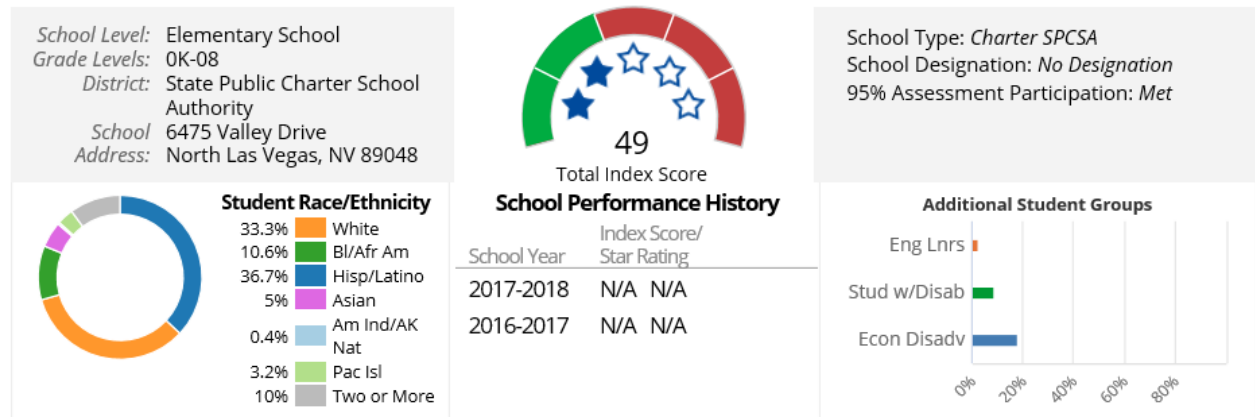
Somerset Academy - Aliante Nevada School Performance Framework 2019

Somerset Academy - Aliante serves 1,092 students in grades Kindergarten through 8th grade

Elementary School

Somerset Aliante

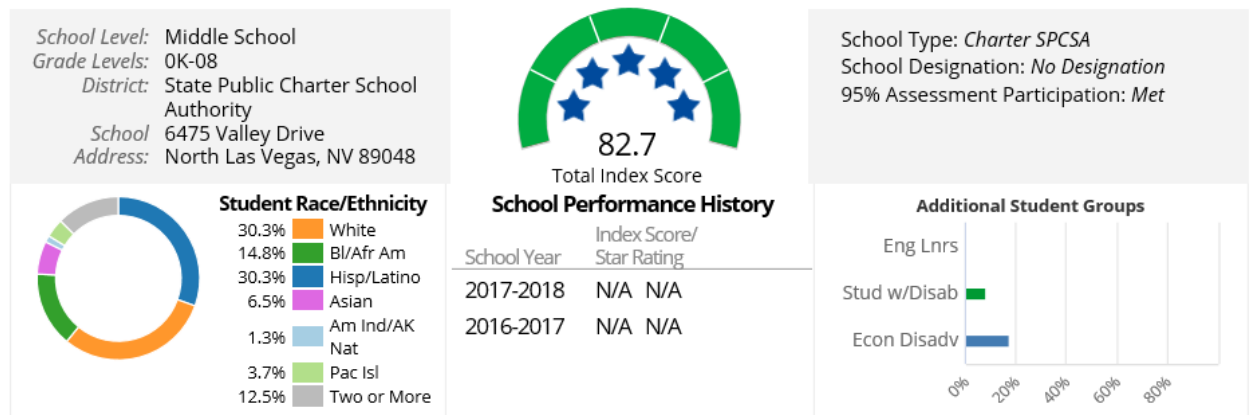
School Year 2018-2019 Nevada School Rating



Middle School

Somerset Aliante

School Year 2018-2019 Nevada School Rating



Somerset Academy - Aliante
Math and ELA Results
Nevada School Performance Framework
2019

Elementary School

Math Proficient

Groups	2019 %	2019 % District	2019 % MIP	2018 %	2018 % District	2018 % MIP
All Students	50	54.5	48.5			45.8
American Indian/Alaska Native	-	45.7	34.3			30.9
Asian	87.5	75.5	68.8			67.2
Black/African American	26.6	31.3	32.3			28.8
Hispanic/Latino	41.5	44.6	39.6			36.5
Pacific Islander	80	48.7	48.3			45.6
Two or More Races	59.2	58.2	55.3			52.9
White/Caucasian	53.3	62.2	59.3			57.2
Special Education	22.5	27.3	28.6			24.8
English Learners Current + Former	50	42.2	35.8			32.4
English Learners Current	40	32.3				
Economically Disadvantaged	40.6	39.7	39			35.7

ELA Proficient

Groups	2019 %	2019 % District	2019 % MIP	2018 %	2018 % District	2018 % MIP
All Students	54.5	60.1	57			54.7
American Indian/Alaska Native	-	62.5	42.5			39.5
Asian	75	78.5	75.4			74.1
Black/African American	30	40.8	42.6			39.6
Hispanic/Latino	48.6	51.1	48.2			45.5
Pacific Islander	80	51.7	57.9			55.7
Two or More Races	59.2	63.7	64.4			62.6
White/Caucasian	60.2	66.7	67.4			65.7
Special Education	22.5	26.6	30			26.3
English Learners Current + Former	55.5	42.2	41.4			38.4
English Learners Current	53.2	29.3				
Economically Disadvantaged	45.7	45.3	46.8			44

Middle School

Math Proficient

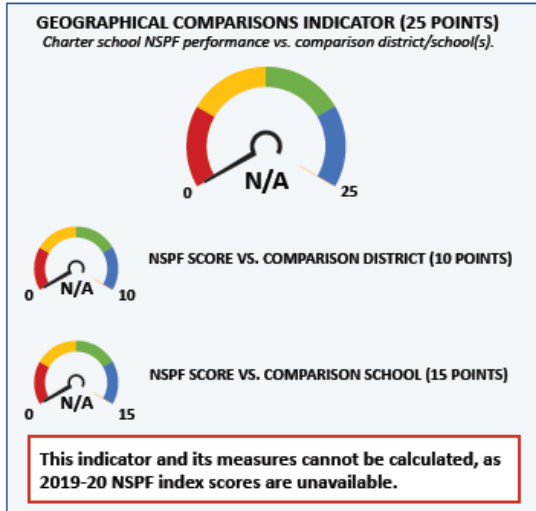
Groups	2019 %	2019 % District	2019 % MIP	2018 %	2018 % District	2018 % MIP
All Students	40.2	42.6	36.5			33.2
American Indian/Alaska Native	-	22.6	28.4			24.6
Asian	-	66.2	58.6			56.4
Black/African American	29.3	24.1	23.5			19.5
Hispanic/Latino	31.5	31.8	29.3			25.5
Pacific Islander	-	44.8	36.9			33.6
Two or More Races	46.6	47.2	40.6			37.5
White/Caucasian	42.5	51.2	47.1			44.4
Special Education	0	12	18.6			14.3
English Learners Current + Former	-	26.8	20.2			16
English Learners Current	-	12.5				
Economically Disadvantaged	38	29	29.2			25.5

ELA Proficient

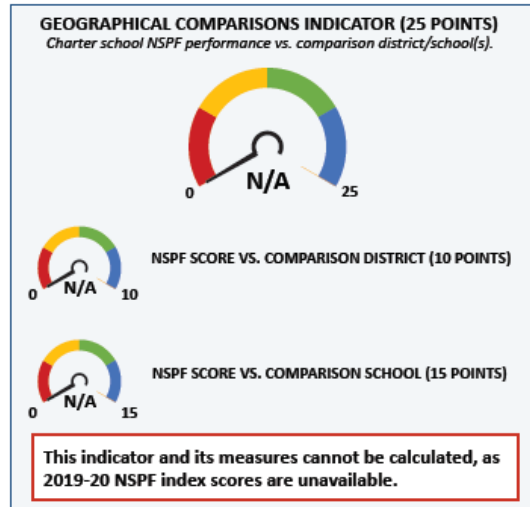
Groups	2019 %	2019 % District	2019 % MIP	2018 %	2018 % District	2018 % MIP
All Students	55.6	59.6	54.1			51.7
American Indian/Alaska Native	-	61.2	43.4			40.5
Asian	-	78.4	75.9			74.6
Black/African American	52.8	40.1	37.8			34.5
Hispanic/Latino	47.2	50.2	45.1			42.2
Pacific Islander	-	61.1	53.2			50.7
Two or More Races	60	66.7	61.3			59.2
White/Caucasian	55	67.7	66.3			64.6
Special Education	18.1	19.8	21.9			17.8
English Learners Current + Former	-	42.7	24.3			20.3
English Learners Current	-	22				
Economically Disadvantaged	42.7	46.3	44.4			41.4

SPCSA Academic Performance Framework Geographic Comparison Report

Elementary School

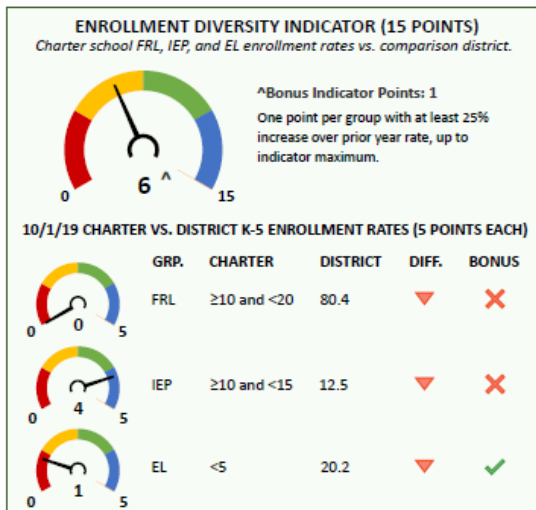


Middle School

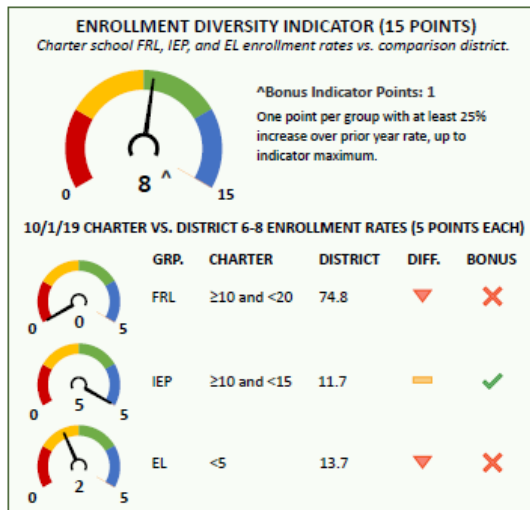


SPCSA Academic Performance Framework Diversity Comparison Results

Elementary School



Middle School



FOCUS GROUP SUMMARIES

FOCUS GROUP SUMMARY

Group	Number of Participants	Duration of Focus Group
Governing Board ¹	2	30 minutes
Parents/Families	9	30 minutes
Students	4	30 minutes
School Leadership	5	30 minutes
Staff	8	30 minutes

Governing Board¹:

- Board members were asked what the schools' key design elements were and how they related to the mission and vision of the schools. Board members responded by sharing that the Somerset schools are college preparatory-focused and, through the leaders at each campus, the culture is promoted to reflect this. The *Leader in Me* is used across the network of campuses. Additionally, board members shared that the Lone Mountain campus has the Wildcat Angels that focus on giving back to the community.
- The board was asked to describe the information they receive regarding academic outcomes at the campuses. The board said they receive updates from Academics at board meetings for all of the schools in the Somerset network. The board has been pushing to have more data at the meetings so they can be better informed about each campus. At board meetings, board members stated that they receive updates campus-by-campus so they can understand the unique issues at individual campuses across the network. Each campus principal is also involved in the presentations of data by Academics according to board members. Finally, board members indicated that they also receive weekly updates from each campus. Each board member is assigned a specific school to act as a liaison to the full board.
- Next, the board was asked how they onboard new members and to describe the training that the new members receive. According to focus group participants, each new member participates in training and the board does retreats biannually. Board members shared that Academics also coordinates new board member orientation to assist them in getting comfortable as a board member of the Somerset charter network. Another board member added that when board seats are vacated, they identify what expertise is needed on the board and strategically identify people to serve on the board to fill those gaps. The board members said they have a diverse board that bring a wide variety of expertise as the board is made up of people with business backgrounds, attorneys, financial experts, educators, and insurance experts. Overall, the board indicated that the full board is made up of three educators and four non-educators who each bring their expertise to help serve the school.

¹ Two members of the seven-member board participated. Quorum was not met, and Open Meeting Law was not violated.

FOCUS GROUP SUMMARY continued

Governing Board

- The board was asked about the policy and procedures in place to comply with Open Meeting Law. The board members said they are very aware of Open Meeting Law and respecting quorum. If they are unable to obtain a quorum, they will not hold the board meeting. The board said they do not communicate about business offline, and only discuss Somerset related issues in open forums.
- The board was asked how they evaluate principals at each campus. The board changed their evaluation last year to make it more beneficial for leaders at each school. Now, they use data to see where each school is at through a committee that are experts in education data. Committee members are made up of both Nevadans and Floridians from the sister network.
- When asked how the board evaluates Academica as the EMO, members said Academica sends a survey to board members to provide feedback. The board members emphasized that this survey truly is done to allow members to give honest feedback regarding the relationship of the EMO with the schools. Academica is very open to the feedback from those surveys.
- The board was asked how they solicit feedback from parents. Board members responded by sharing that they have times set aside at the beginning and end of the meetings so parents can have time to come up and discuss issues they may be having at campuses. The board also tries to have members be present at each campus during the beginning of the year to solicit feedback and to encourage parents to become involved with the school. Members indicated that the board has also sent out surveys to parents at the beginning of the school year to get feedback on how the campuses were doing in addressing the COVID-19 pandemic. The board continues to encourage each school leader to customize the educational delivery based on the needs of their specific campuses. When board members receive a parent complaint, the process the board follows is to first understand if the parent has first spoken to leaders at the campus. The board also includes Academica in parental complaint matters. According to the board, once the parent has been able to talk with the campus leader, the issue ends there. In the event it doesn't end at the campus, the board chair will take the lead to discuss the issue further with the parent.

Parents/Families:

- Families were asked how satisfied they were with communication from the school staff. Parents described their overall satisfaction with the school's communication and noted that the staff and leaders are responsive to parents' questions. Parents described "Class Dojo" (a software program) and how it has been helpful in maintaining contact with their children's teachers and with school leaders. Parents also said they appreciated the school going live on social media for interactive question and answer sessions.
- The families were also asked how well they felt the teachers knew their child. They described how teachers check in with the parents to give them updates on how their children are doing and relay any concerns they may have noticed during class time. The families also described their understanding of the behavioral expectations of students online, speaking about how teachers are very clear at the beginning of classes about what students should, and should not, be doing while they are engaged in learning. According to parents, the teachers also consistently remind students of the expectations when students become off task. Parents also spoke about the consistency of the teachers' expectations across different grade levels that ensure students always understand what they are supposed to be doing during classroom time.

FOCUS GROUP SUMMARY continued

Parents/Families:

- The families were asked how they know that their child is learning. Parents said it has been difficult to monitor learning in a virtual setting. However, they said that when the students show excitement about lessons, it shows the parents that the students are engaged in class and learning new content. Family members also said they use Infinite Campus to keep track of their child's progress and they appreciated when teachers were quick to update Infinite Campus with new information. Parents shared that the teachers are also willing to meet with parents to discuss what grades and scores on assignments mean in relation to the progress their children are making. Parents did describe some confusion on where to find grades and assignments. The confusion stemmed from accessing Google Drive or Infinite Campus and how that could be confusing sometimes. Parents said the school had conducted conferences with only the parents and the teachers during the fall.
- Parents were then asked to describe some of the barriers they have seen and encountered with their children's learning. The families spoke about how students have been unable to have as many opportunities for the small group learning since the school has returned to a hybrid learning model given the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic. When all students were working virtually, it allowed the teachers to break out the students into smaller Zoom rooms for more direct instruction according to parents participating in the focus group. Family members also said the age differences of students affect how they handle the virtual environment, with younger students struggling to stay engaged for long periods of time on Zoom.
- Finally, the families were asked if there was anything else they would like the SPCSA to know about their experience at Somerset Academy – Aliante. Parents spoke about their overall happiness with the school and how great the school managed the online learning environment for their children.

Students:

- Students were asked about the positive aspects of virtual learning. One student said they liked not having to deal with students eating in the classroom or having side conversations. Other students said they feel more comfortable answering questions in the smaller classes and feel more comfortable in the virtual setting overall. Students described some of the drawbacks of the virtual learning as not being able to see and interact with their teachers or friends. Others said it was harder to communicate with teachers in class because it was not as efficient as when they were in person. Students expressed that they missed being able to talk with the teacher one on one during class time. The internet connection can also be an issue when trying to participate in class according to students while other students said there more distractions at home then if they were in a classroom.
- The students were asked to explain how they know they are learning beyond the grade they received. The students said they use their i-Ready assessments to understand their level of understanding. They also described that if they are able to recognize the lessons materials in their day-to-day life shows them, they have learned that lesson and truly understand it.
- Students were then asked if they feel respected at school. The students said they feel like the teachers respect them, but some students don't show the respect they should. Students went on to say that some students don't pay attention in class, whether they don't mute themselves on Zoom or are doing things other than participating in the lesson, and that can be disrespectful of the class. The students also said that, since they are at home, some choose to ignore the instructions of the teacher. Some students will stay on their phone or play video games even when the teacher has asked them not to.

FOCUS GROUP SUMMARY continued

Students:

- Students responded to questions about if they find classes challenging by saying that they have felt challenged, but the virtual learning is difficult. Students went on to say that they thought that being in-person would be better for their learning, but they understood that being in-person was not fully possible right now. Another student mentioned that since they did not learn as much at the end of last year because of missed class time, lessons this year have been more difficult because they are expected to know things that they didn't end up learning last year.
- Students were then asked to describe how classroom discussions have happened during the year and what that experience was like. Students said it is harder to have discussions online and that some students don't answer any questions in class when they are participating online. Students said there are usually one or two students who do most of the question answering, while the rest of the classroom doesn't say anything. Students explain that some classes allow the students to use the chat function to talk to the class, but not every teacher allows that in their classroom. Plus, a few students noted that some abused the chat function by posting irrelevant material which forced teachers to lock the chat for classes.
- Finally, the students were asked to describe the one thing they would like to see changed or improved at the school. Students said they would like to see the school bring back more students in-person and that they would like to see the smaller class size continue as students are brought back into the school building. Students would also like to see more breakout rooms in the virtual learning because it helps them understand the lessons and also get to know their classmates. They said they would also like to see more interaction between each other while they are virtual and they would like to be able to interact with their classmates without having to interact with the whole class. One student said they would also like to have "homeroom" again so they can hang out with their classmates at the beginning of the day because not enough students attend the social hour.

Leadership:

- The leadership team was asked about the ways that the teachers have worked with students to ensure they are engaged and challenged in a virtual and hybrid environment. The leaders described a number of strategies including ensuring that the content the students viewed was rigorous, encouraging teachers to learn from one another to help implement best practices, near-pod activities, engaging the whole class by having cameras on and audio available, and by also using a lot of different visuals to help students participate remotely.
- The leadership team was then asked how they ensure lessons and materials are aligned to the standards when doing classroom observations. School leaders spoke about how teachers tell the students the "why" up front so they are clear what the lesson will entail. In a normal setting they would pull a student aside and inquire about whether the student understands why they are learning a certain lesson, but virtual learning makes this tactic difficult. The leaders explained that teachers provide feedback to students by using breakout rooms through Zoom. Teachers also use verbal praise and praise through the chat to show students that their participation is appreciated. In the middle school the teachers have office hours at the end of the day where students can go to for extra help or feedback on previous lessons. Teachers are also using Google Classroom which allows teachers to view the student learning in real time.

FOCUS GROUP SUMMARY continued

Leadership:

- The leaders also described how they have tried to implement student led teaching as an aspect of their lessons. While difficult in an online setting, they spoke about how teachers turn the lesson over to students so they can explain to their peers how they did the lesson. According to school leaders, the students have also become more comfortable in the virtual environment which has allowed more flexibility for teachers to use the breakout rooms, to have small groups work with one another, and to allow students to share their screen as they complete a lesson so all of the students can watch together. The leaders reiterated that one of the most impactful strategies they have employed at Aliante is encouraging teachers to watch one another so they learn new and innovative ways to connect with students virtually and be able to take that back to their classrooms.
- Somerset Aliante underwent a recent leadership change and the current leadership team was asked what changes have occurred at the school due to this change. The leaders said there has been more focus on math instruction which has been identified as a weakness by the leaders during their initial site evaluation presentation. Another change that was relayed was there has been a more direct focus on the curriculum as a whole and on identifying ways where the implementation of said curriculum can be streamlined. Finally, leaders indicated that there has been more focus on vertical alignment between grades, so teachers understand where students are when they move to higher grades.
- Lastly, the leaders were asked what they have done to retain staff during the challenges of the past year. The school leaders said engaging the staff and allowing staff to get to know the new principal has been a primary focus over the past few months. The leaders stated that they have also maintained a focus on the teachers' mental health to help ensure teachers have built in opportunities to decompress. Overall, leaders shared that there is high morale and strong camaraderie between the leaders and the staff which has lent itself well in maintaining a cohesive team throughout all of the constant change over the last year.

Staff:

- When asked about the ways they have adapted during the COVID-19 teaching environment, the staff shared that one of the first items that needed to be addressed was the sending, and collecting, of assignments in a reasonable timeframe. Staff expressed that using Google Classroom has been a great benefit, with some saying they would like to continue to use it even when students are back in-person full time. Student engagement has also been an ongoing challenge according to staff since there are exterior circumstances that differ from student to student. Other teachers mentioned communication both with students and parents has been really important in handling the online learning. Teachers also spoke about communication with one another and appreciated the school's willingness to allow them to teach with each other. The specialists have had unique challenges due to the students they are engaged with and they spoke about coming together as a team to address some of the challenges and come up with solutions to everyone's benefit.
- The staff members were then asked to discuss the change in leadership and how that has impacted the culture of the faculty. Staff members explained that the new school leader took the time to set up one on one meetings to establish a foundation with each staff member and to better understand each staff member's concerns or needs. Some staff members had experience at other Somerset schools and found that the transition at Aliante did not positively or negatively impact the culture of the school.

FOCUS GROUP SUMMARY continued

Staff:

- The staff was also asked how they monitor student learning and their understanding of what that monitoring should entail. Staff members described having students “write their learning” so teachers could see in the student’s own words how they understood subject matter. This approach has helped staff members get a better idea of the level of the student’s mastery. The middle school has used exit tickets to obtain information at the conclusion of a lesson about the students overall understanding of the content. Some staff have also used the “poll” function in Zoom to gauge understanding of students in their class. Some of the improvements the staff have made for content implementation have included taking more time with each lesson unit when needed, and not rushing to the next unit before students understand. Elementary staff shared that they have been using more data to identify standards students may be struggling with and adapting their education delivery to address these shortfalls. The staff provided a specific example where students had difficulty counting money and they identified this problem while using data from the “standards based learning” to go back and reteach that aspect of the lesson. Staff said that new “Math Practices” through common core have had an effect on how they choose to teach lessons.
- Staff members were asked how they felt about the incentives the school offers for high-performing teachers. Staff said the school has done a great job advocating for the staff and have taken staff concerns into account when making decisions. Staff members described how the school has helped them with their mental health and allowing them to provide feedback on different aspects of the school and classrooms before implementing changes. The school leaders also deliver ice cream and treats on Fridays to all of the staff, which is appreciated. The school also provided information and resources for mental health help that was available, and covered, through the staff’s insurance. Staff members also feel that the leadership team supports them and “has their back” when decisions are being made at the Somerset governing board level. They shared an appreciation because they like they are being heard and know the school leaders are truly listening to the challenges they face.

CLASSROOM OBSERVATION TOTALS

A total of 12 classrooms were observed for approximately 25 minutes on the day of the evaluation.

I. CLASSROOM ENVIRONMENT					
Areas 1 & 2 Creating an Environment of Respect and Rapport Establishing a Culture for Learning	Distinguished	Proficient	Basic	Unsatisfactory	Not Observed
	Classroom interactions are highly respectful and the teacher demonstrates a passionate commitment to the subject.	Classroom interactions reflect general warmth and caring and a genuine culture for learning.	Classroom interactions are generally appropriate and free from conflict with a minimal culture for learning.	Classroom interactions between the teacher and students are negative and do not represent a culture for learning.	This criterion was not observed or rated.
	Total: 5	Total: 7	Total:	Total:	Total:
	Students ensure maintenance of high levels of civility among classmates and assume much of the responsibility for establishing a culture for learning.	Interactions reflect cultural and developmental differences of students. Teacher and students are committed to the subject.	Interactions may be characterized by occasional displays of insensitivity and inconsistent expectations for student achievement.	Interactions are characterized by sarcasm, put-downs, and/or conflict. There is a low teacher commitment to the subject and few instances of students taking pride in their work.	This criterion was not observed or rated.
	Total: 1	Total: 11	Total:	Total:	Total:
Areas 3 & 4 Managing Classroom Procedures Managing Student Behavior	Distinguished	Proficient	Basic	Unsatisfactory	Not Observed
	Classroom routines and procedures appear seamless and student behavior is entirely appropriate.	Classroom routines and procedures have been established and the teacher ensures smooth functioning with little loss of instruction time.	Classroom routines and procedures have been established but function inconsistently, with some loss of instruction time.	Classroom routines and procedures are nonexistent or inefficient, resulting in the loss of much instruction time.	This criterion was not observed or rated.
	Total:	Total: 12	Total:	Total:	Total:
	There appears to be no misbehavior during the observation. The teacher monitoring of student behavior is subtle and/or preventative.	Teacher responds to student misbehavior in ways that are appropriate and respectful of the students.	Teacher tries to establish standards of conduct for students and monitor behavior. These efforts are not always successful.	Teacher is unsuccessful in monitoring student behavior.	This criterion was not observed or rated.
	Total:	Total: 12	Total:	Total:	Total:

II. CLASSROOM INSTRUCTION

Area 5					Not
	Distinguished	Proficient	Basic	Unsatisfactory	Observed
Purpose and Explanation of Content, Lesson, Unit or Classroom Activity	The purpose of the lesson or unit is clear and connects with student's real- life experiences. The explanation of content is imaginative, and students contribute to the lesson by participating and/or explaining concepts to their peers.	The purpose for the lesson or learning activity is clear. The teacher's explanation of content is appropriate and connects with students.	The teacher attempts to explain the instructional purpose with limited success. The explanation of the content is uneven. Some explanations are done skillfully, but other portions are difficult to follow.	The purpose for the lesson learning activity is unclear. Teacher's explanation of the content is unclear, confusing or uses inappropriate language.	This criterion was not observed or rated.
	Total: 3	Total: 8	Total: 1	Total:	Total:
Area 6	Distinguished	Proficient	Basic	Unsatisfactory	Not Observed
A Using Questioning and Discussion Techniques	Students formulate and ask high-level questions.	Teacher formulates and asks several high-level questions.	Teacher questioning and discussion techniques are uneven with some high-level questions.	Teacher makes poor use of questioning and discussion techniques, with low level questions, limited student participation and little true discussion.	This criterion was not observed or rated.
	Total:	Total: 6	Total: 2	Total:	Total: 4
B	Students assume responsibility for the participation of most students in the discussion.	Teachers assumes responsibility for the discussion which includes most students.	There is some attempt by the teacher to initiate student discussion and student participation.	There is little to no student discussion even though the opportunity is there.	This criterion was not observed or rated.
	Total:	Total: 6	Total: 1	Total:	Total: 5

II. CLASSROOM INSTRUCTION (continued)

II. CLASSROOM INSTRUCTION (continued)					
Area 7 A Engaging Students in Learning	Distinguished	Proficient	Basic	Unsatisfactory	Not Observed
	Students are highly engaged throughout the lesson. The pacing and structure of the lesson allows high levels of student engagement.	Students appear to be intellectually engaged throughout most of the lesson. The pacing and structure of the lesson is suitable for this group of students.	Students are partially engaged throughout the lesson.	Students are not at all intellectually engaged in significant learning.	This criterion was not observed or rated.
	Total: 3	Total: 7	Total: 2	Total:	Total:
	Students make contributions to the representation of content.	There are appropriate activities and materials and instructive representations of content.	The representation of content or structure/pacing is uneven.	There are inappropriate activities or materials, poor representations of content or lack of lesson structure/pacing.	This criterion was not observed or rated.
Total: 5	Total: 6	Total: 1	Total:	Total:	
Area 8 A Using Formative Assessment in Instruction	Distinguished	Proficient	Basic	Unsatisfactory	Not Observed
	Students are aware of the learning goals/targets for themselves during this instructional timeframe.	Most of the students are aware of the learning goals/targets for themselves during this instructional timeframe.	Some of the students are aware of the learning goals/targets for themselves during this instructional timeframe.	Students are not aware of the learning goals/learning target during this instructional time frame.	This criterion was not observed or rated.
	Total: 4	Total: 8	Total:	Total:	Total:
	The teacher purposefully and consistently provides clear, descriptive feedback in regard to student's demonstration/understanding of the learning goal/target. The feedback is timely and is in a reasonable amount.	Much of the time, the teacher, provides clear, descriptive feedback regarding student's understanding/ demonstration of learning goal/target. The feedback is timely and is in a reasonable amount.	At times, the teacher provides clear, descriptive feedback but not in a consistent manner regarding learning goal/target. Observing where the work was meeting and where it was not. The feedback is timely and is in a reasonable amount.	The teacher does not provide clear, descriptive feedback regarding learning goal/target and does not observing where the work is and where it is not meeting. The feedback is not timely and is not in a reasonable amount.	This criterion was not observed or rated.
Total: 6	Total: 6	Total:	Total:	Total:	

The purpose of this portion of the report is to provide a numerical value to the total number of best practices seen during the classroom observational portion as a whole. This number is indicated at the end of each best practice descriptor/line.

Evidence of adapted materials/assessments: Area #5

- Lessons are designed to encourage student curiosity and learning beyond classroom time: 6
- The explanation of the content is imaginative: 6

Evidence of questioning and discussion techniques: Area #6

- Questions are planned ahead of time and tied to learning target(s): 5
- Teacher questions are open ended: 4
- Teacher allows time for students to answer – 3 seconds or more: 5
- Teacher extends the thinking and discussion by encouraging students to say more, restate or summarize: 3
- Teacher purposefully signals to entire group of students to wait/think before volunteering a response:
- Teacher provides the opportunity for all students to answer the question (think, pair, share, written response): 5

Evidence of engaging students in learning area: Area #7

- Active learning is taking place (rather than just listening or viewing): 5
- Students are using reasoning and critical thinking: 3
- The lesson is rigorous and includes cognitively complex tasks: 3
- Students engage in several types of activities during the lesson including:
 - Speaking 5
 - Writing 4
 - Reading 5
 - Listening 12
 - Discussing 4
 - Creating 2
 - Problem Solving 2
- Cooperative groups: 2
- Student-led classroom: 2
- Technology is integrated into learning/outcomes: 12
- Project-based learning:

Evidence of Formative Assessment During Instruction: Area #8

- Teachers provide the students feedback about their learning referring to examples taking anecdotal notes: 6
- Students incorporate the feedback by revising their work: 4
- Students receive frequent and meaningful feedback regarding their work: 6
- A wide range of instructional practices that are likely to motivate and engage most students are used during the lesson: 5

ORGANIZATIONAL PERFORMANCE

The SPCSA uses the Organizational Performance Framework to collect evidence of performance and evaluate schools, at least annually, to monitor schools throughout their charter terms, to report to schools and the public annually, to intervene in schools that do not meet expectations and to make high-stakes decisions, including: renewal, non-renewal, possible revocation, expansion, or replication. Most of this work is done through routine submissions by the school to the SPCSA.

A limited number of measures within the organizational performance framework may be at least partially evaluated during the site evaluation process. Measures are partially evaluated based upon evidence from school focus groups, school observations, documents reviewed and information from the school presentation portion of the evaluation. SPCSA staff will note the evidence provided by the school and also outline any questions or potential concerns.

Measure	Description	Evidence Collected Through	Takeaways
1a	The school implements material terms of the education program.	School Presentation Classroom Observations	Student achievement drives decision making at all levels. School board of directors meets no less than once every other month and as often as needed to execute its role of the Governing Board of Somerset. Aliante campus administers MAP K-5 and uses i-Ready to diagnose and monitor student growth and achievement.
1b	The school complies with applicable education requirements.	School Presentation Classroom Observations	School curriculum is aligned to NVACS: Use Wonders K-5 and Collections 6-8 for ELA and Being A Writer-K-8, and Go Math K-8 and for Science -Stem Scopes - K-8
1c	The school protects the rights of students with disabilities.	School Presentation Classroom Observations	Students with special needs receive additional supports in their regular education classroom as needed. These students have access to additional adult support, accommodations, modifications, and other remediation strategies.

			For families coming to Aliante, with students with special needs, the school offers “Welcome Meetings” to ensure the transition of the child to the campus goes smoothly. This helps build a foundation for a strong collaborative relationship with the family as soon as possible.
1d	The school protects the rights of ELL students.	School Presentation Classroom Observations	The school maintains an English Language Learner Policy Manual, tracks growth using i-ready and is providing ELL students differentiated instruction in small groups. A specific professional development to address effective strategies teachers could use virtually with their ELL students was offered in October of 2020.

Measure	Description	Evidence Collected Through	Takeaways
3a	The school complies with governance requirements.	School Presentation Classroom Observations	The day to day operations are aligned to the mission statement. School attendance, student assessment and data are reviewed routinely by school leaders and the school board.
3b	The school holds management accountable.	School Presentation	All staff and teachers are evaluated on an annual basis using the Danielson framework. Assistant Principals are evaluated by the school principal and the Principal is evaluated by the Somerset Board.
4a	The school protects the rights of all students.	School Presentation Classroom Observations	Counseling services are provided for all students/staff by a full - time licensed and Safe School Professional. The school has taken initial steps in implementing Restorative Justice practices. Safe Voice is utilized to encourage reporting of student/parent concerns.
5b	The school complies with health and safety requirements.	School Presentation Classroom Observations	There is an Emergency Operation Plan to ensure the physical safety of all student and staff. All K-6 attend a PE class and 8 th graders attend a Health class.

SITE EVALUATION FINDINGS

STRENGTHS

A summary of strengths as observed through academic achievement indicators, classroom observations, focus group feedback and portions of the Organizational Performance Evidence are found within the body of the report and summarized here.

1. The Aliante campus has established a school culture and climate that is highly supportive of teaching, and learning.
 - A teacher mentorship program supports teachers in working together to break down barriers to student learning and each other. It has helped to provide a system for teachers to ask questions and share ideas with one another in order to overcome barriers to learning. The mentoring program is especially helpful to new and less experienced teachers and may be helpful in overcoming challenges common for those in their early years of their teaching profession. The mentors learn how to build trusting relationships and try out coaching techniques including guiding and self-reflection for actionable feedback, thereby helping mentors to improve their own instructional pedagogy.
 - A co-teaching model has been implemented at the school and teachers have found this to be helpful during virtual learning. With larger classes, there are two teachers to provide feedback, check for understanding, and trade off teaching with one another. There are advantages to co-teaching which include increased adult attention to students, shared expertise among teachers, provide students a diversity of instructional styles, and teachers sharing the responsibility for instruction and management.
 - The new school leader held one on one meetings with each staff member during her first few months at the school. Staff members explained that these meetings helped to establish a foundation of trust with each staff member and to better understand each staff member's concerns or needs. Getting to know what is important to team members at the school shows that the leader believes in the team and cares about "who" each staff member is and not just "what" they do. This is an important first step in establishing a positive school culture and provides a base for open communication between staff and the school leader.
 - The members of the staff focus group commented that the leadership team at the school has done a great job of advocating for them. During this unprecedented year in education, as school personnel across the country responded to the unforeseen changes, it is particularly meaningful that school leaders at this campus have taken staff concerns into account when making decisions. Staff members described how the school leaders provided information and resources for mental health help that was available, and covered, through the staff's insurance. In addition, the staff shared that school leaders have invited the staff to provide their feedback regarding possible changes prior to the changes taking place. One member in the staff focus group commented, "The school leaders also deliver ice cream and treats on Fridays to all of the staff and the staff really appreciates the gesture."

STRENGTHS continued

2. The Somerset Aliante Middle School has been rated a 5-star school according to the NSPF Star system using the 2019-2020 most recent data. The index score was 82.7 out of 100 possible points. A 5-star rating, as defined by the Nevada School Performance Framework, is considered “Exemplary”.
3. There were several “Distinguished” practices observed during the classroom observational portion of the site evaluation according to the summary of observations on pages 13 - 15. Specifically, in the category of Classroom Environment (Areas 1,2,3,4), there were no unsatisfactory or basic classrooms noted. A total of six “Distinguished” ratings were recorded. In the category of Classroom Instruction (Areas 5,6,7,8) there were no unsatisfactory and 7 basic noted. A definite strength at this school is the very large number of “Distinguished” practices (21) observed and recorded in the area of Classroom Instruction. This is something to be celebrated school-wide! A few of the best practices included Writer’s Workshop, Author’s Chair, Students using dry erase boards to hold up answers, small student groups discussing the completed assignment, and the acknowledgement of student answers one by one in the chat so that students and teacher would immediately know the level of understanding.

In addition, the teachers were observed to be extremely positive to students. For example, one teacher said, “You guys are killing it, you got it, good job!” Another teacher said, “In 3,2,1, tell how you did in the chat and how you feel about the learning today.” Another teacher commented, “Good, I like the confidence you are showing here!” Overall, teachers used please and thank you, student’s first names, and provided an abundance of positive reinforcement.

CHALLENGES

A summary of challenges as observed through academic achievement indicators, classroom observations, focus group feedback and portions of the Organizational Performance Framework Evidence are described within the body of the report and summarized here.

1. The school leaders, teachers, students, and parents have been challenged with adjusting to the ever-changing instructional model due to COVID guidelines and restrictions.
2. According to the most recent NSPF, the elementary school has been rated a 2-star with a total index score of 49 out of 100. The data indicates that the 4th and 5th grade students struggled the most. In response the school has offered an intervention/extension time for these cohorts.
3. Tier 1 differentiated math instruction has been acknowledged as a challenge by school leaders during the presentation portion of this evaluation. The math instructional block was extended from 70-100 minutes each day for the current fifth grade students. A 25 minute intervention/extension time for the Middle School was added to the schedule.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Recommended items are provided so charters may increase their school-wide ratings as well as their overall success. SPCSA School Support Team members will follow up on each listed recommendation.

1. Continue to increase the number of students enrolled and considered a member of the special population category as Free and Reduced Lunch (FRL). Although the IEP student population above the comparative schools in the district, the FRL number, in particular, remains very low in both the Elementary and Middle School settings at Somerset Aliante campus. This can be done through targeted marketing and outreach as well as well as making the model more accessible to students and families.
2. Because students learn best when they are actively and intentionally engaged in their own learning, work as collaborative instructional leaders to include skill development in goal setting as a fundamental part of classroom practice. Weave student goal setting into the day-to-day, minute-by-minute procedures of the classroom. To be clear, the recommendation here is not a planned event to help students prepare for the next unit, report card, or part of the school year. It is not meant as a way for students to describe their aspirations for the next month or semester. Instead, include goal setting as a process with regard to what it is the student is trying to learn or achieve on a daily basis. When a learning objective or learning target is set, in addition to verbally stating the learning intention, have students learn to describe a specific, short term learning goal that is just right in terms of challenge or attainment for themselves. There are multiple research based methods of doing this. One recommended resource comes from the book, *Advancing Formative Assessment in Every Classroom: A Guide for Instruction Leaders* by Connie M. Moss and Susan Brookhart (2019).
3. It is recommended that instructional leaders and teachers at the school take time to review several aspects of math instruction and outcomes. School leaders acknowledged that Tier 1 Math instruction at the school is an area that needs improvement.
 - Since the math curriculum at the school is Go Math, and this is a comprehensive program developed to support the Common Core State Standards for Math, be open to discussing any “gaps” in concepts that have been noted by teachers of math at the school. There may also be value in talking about the importance of flexibility within the program. For example, spending more time on one concept if the majority of students have not reached mastery.
 - To best implement Tier 1 instruction within the Response to Intervention (RTI), make sure that math teachers work collaboratively to increase the consistency and quality of classroom management and classroom instructional methods.

Classroom Environments across the school and in math classes can be improved by using an inclusive classroom management plan that lays the ground work for high expectations, risk taking, and a safe space for students to navigate their learning. Discover if it is possible to expand on methods of differentiated instruction in which students feel that their individual learning needs are being met regardless of their variety of academic experiences, skill sets and ways that they learn best. Try to expand ways of offering students choices by giving students control over how they show they’ve learned. Encourage students to reflect on ways that they learn best. Some ways of accomplishing this without having to re-write instruction would be to include math centers, culminating projects, and opportunities to use math vocabulary and language in discussion settings and in reflective math journals. Teach from an “asset model” and look for the things students did “right” within the math lesson. This helps students know they are part of a safe learning environment where mistakes are indicators that they’re trying and that their prior knowledge is valued. Celebrate student achievements

and create a set of norms around communication in the classroom.

Classroom Instruction overall can be improved by taking four discrete steps to create a comprehensive formative assessment system within the math classes. According to John Hattie’s “*Visible Learning*”, Hattie found the average effect size of all interventions he studied was 0.40. Therefore, his ‘hinge point’ is any effect size over 40 and is considered effective. The larger the effect, the more statistically likely the intervention is to succeed. Nancy Frey and Douglas Fisher published a book titled “*The Formative Assessment Action Plan*”². The book explains how four discrete steps work in tandem to create a seamless, comprehensive, formative assessment system school wide. The table below provides a framework of how the research and steps may be used together to create an outcome of increased levels of student achievement in math classes at this school.

Steps 1 - 4 Student question	What it does	Effect Size from Hattie³
1. Feed-up <i>Where am I going?</i>	Ensures that students understand the purpose of an assignment, task, or lesson, including how they will be assessed.	Teacher clarity: 0.75 Learning goals vs.no goals: 0.68
2. Checking for understanding <i>Where am I now?</i>	Guides instruction and helps determine if students are making progress toward their goals.	Meta-cognitive strategies: 0.60 Reciprocal teaching: 0.74 Classroom Discussion: 0.82
3. Feedback <i>How am I doing?</i>	Provides students with valuable and constructive information about their successes and needs.	Feedback: 0.70 Strategy Monitoring: 0.50 Help Seeking: 0.72
4. Feed-forward <i>Where am I going next?</i>	Builds on the feedback from step 3 and uses performance data to facilitate student achievement.	Evaluation and Reflection: 0.75 Self-verbalization and questioning: 0.55

- It is recommended that the Somerset Board examine their current method of evaluating the EMO, *Academica*. Although the survey method provides information regarding the perception of effectiveness, a more comprehensive and objective evaluation tool has the potential to guide the board in assessing achievements, improving upon effectiveness, and ensuring that the EMO functions as effectively as possible. SPCSA staff would be happy to work with the Somerset Board regarding this recommendation to ensure that the current evaluative method is enhanced.

² <http://www.ascd.org/Publications/Books/Overview/The-Formative-Assessment-Action-Plan.aspx>

³ <https://visible-learning.org/hattie-ranking-influences-effect-sizes-learning-achievement/>

DEFICIENCIES

There were no deficiencies identified for Somerset Academy - Aliante during this site evaluation.