



Nevada State Public Charter School Authority

Site Evaluation Report
Somerset Academy – North Las Vegas
Evaluation Date: 3/4/2021
Report Date: 4/15/2021

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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_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 4, 2021 at Somerset Academy - North Las Vegas. 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 – North Las Vegas is located in North Las Vegas, Nevada in a facility at 385 W. Centennial Parkway. The school serves 1,189 students as of October 2020, in Kindergarten through 8th grade. The mission of Somerset Academy – North Las Vegas is: "We will create an engaging environment where all are committed to lifelong learning, leadership, and excellence."

ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE

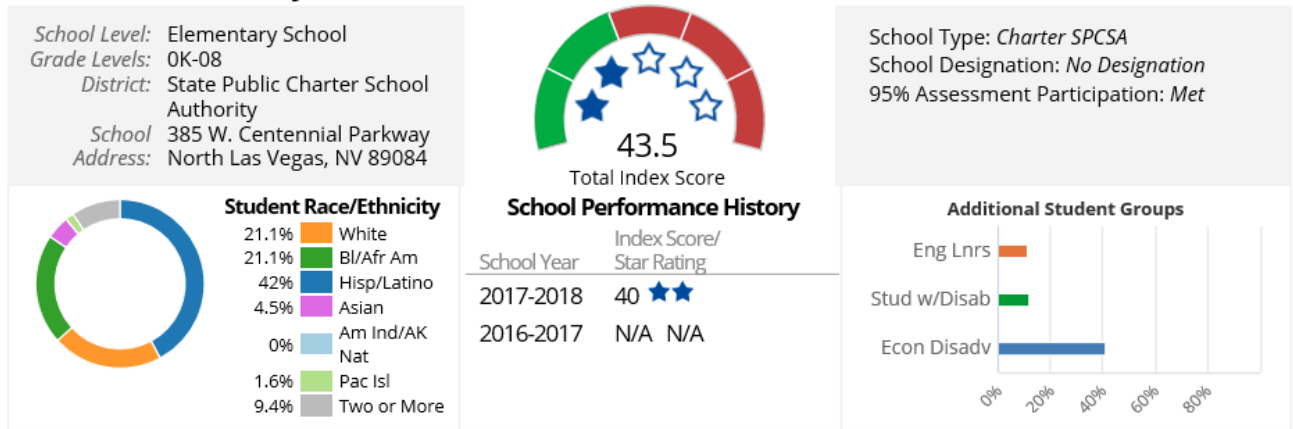
Somerset Academy – North Las Vegas Nevada School Performance Framework 2019

Somerset Academy - North Las Vegas serves 1,189 students in grades Kindergarten through 8th grade

Elementary School

Somerset Academy North Las Vegas

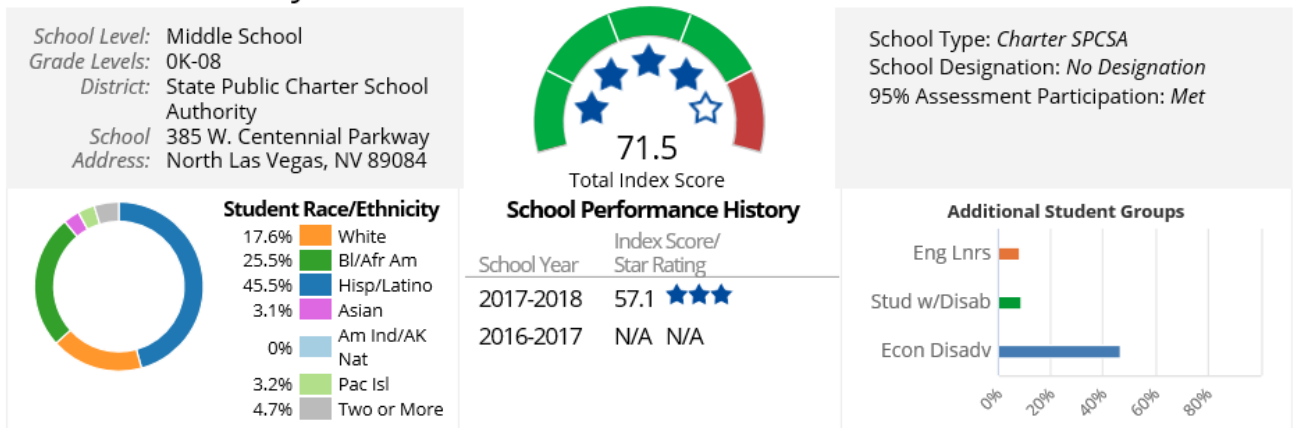
School Year 2018-2019 Nevada School Rating



Middle School

Somerset Academy North Las Vegas

School Year 2018-2019 Nevada School Rating



Somerset Academy of North – Las Vegas
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	42.5	54.5	48.5	35.9	52.8	45.8
American Indian/Alaska Native	-	45.7	34.3	-	44.8	30.9
Asian	77.7	75.5	68.8	76.9	75.2	67.2
Black/African American	27.5	31.3	32.3	14.5	30.6	28.8
Hispanic/Latino	39.7	44.6	39.6	27.9	40.2	36.5
Pacific Islander	-	48.7	48.3	-	48.3	45.6
Two or More Races	48.2	58.2	55.3	46.4	59	52.9
White/Caucasian	50.5	62.2	59.3	47.8	61.1	57.2
Special Education	37.2	27.3	28.6	27.5	29.2	24.8
English Learners Current + Former	35	42.2	35.8	7.8	37.4	32.4
English Learners Current	28.1	32.3		8.3	25.5	
Economically Disadvantaged	34.7	39.7	39	25	33.1	35.7

ELA Proficient

Groups	2019 %	2019 % District	2019 % MIP	2018 %	2018 % District	2018 % MIP
All Students	46.3	60.1	57	42.5	58.6	54.7
American Indian/Alaska Native	-	62.5	42.5	-	58.3	39.5
Asian	72.2	78.5	75.4	76.9	76.2	74.1
Black/African American	31.8	40.8	42.6	21.8	40.5	39.6
Hispanic/Latino	43.8	51.1	48.2	41.8	48	45.5
Pacific Islander	-	51.7	57.9	-	52.6	55.7
Two or More Races	51.6	63.7	64.4	46.3	67.1	62.6
White/Caucasian	57.1	66.7	67.4	47.8	65	65.7
Special Education	27.8	26.6	30	20	29.3	26.3
English Learners Current + Former	33.1	42.2	41.4	13.1	38.9	38.4
English Learners Current	23.8	29.3		11.1	22.8	
Economically Disadvantaged	35.5	45.3	46.8	28.1	40.4	44

Middle School

Math Proficient

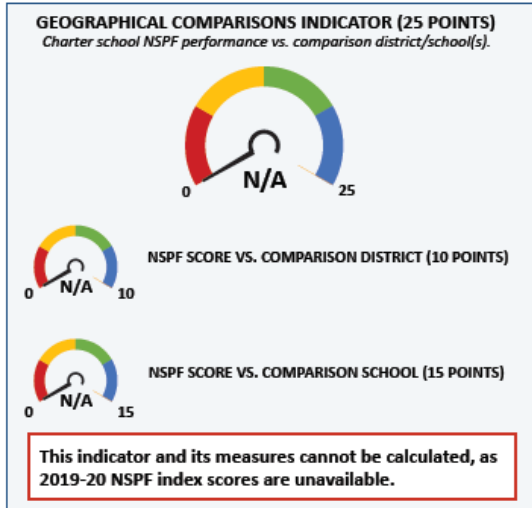
Groups	2019 %	2019 % District	2019 % MIP	2018 %	2018 % District	2018 % MIP
All Students	40.2	42.6	36.5	30.4	36.8	33.2
American Indian/Alaska Native	-	22.6	28.4	-	26.5	24.6
Asian	66.5	66.2	58.6	53.3	64.1	56.4
Black/African American	21.6	24.1	23.5	15.4	17.7	19.5
Hispanic/Latino	41.7	31.8	29.3	22.5	26.1	25.5
Pacific Islander	45.3	44.8	36.9	50	34.9	33.6
Two or More Races	43.3	47.2	40.6	38.8	41.5	37.5
White/Caucasian	59	51.2	47.1	46.9	44.4	44.4
Special Education	7.7	12	18.6	14.7	11.5	14.3
English Learners Current + Former	36.8	26.8	20.2	17.6	22.2	16
English Learners Current	29	12.5		18.3	8.5	
Economically Disadvantaged	26.8	29	29.2	24.2	21.7	25.5

ELA Proficient

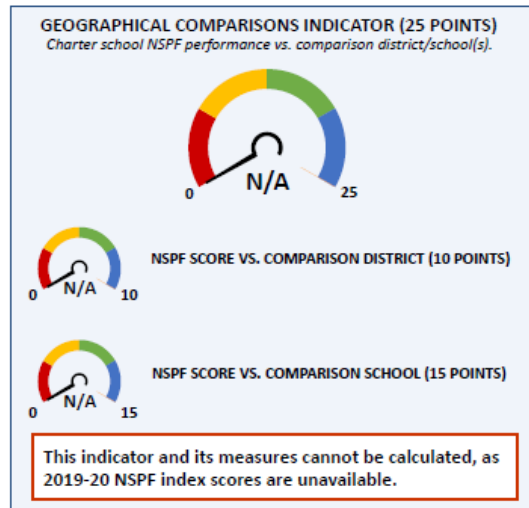
Groups	2019 %	2019 % District	2019 % MIP	2018 %	2018 % District	2018 % MIP
All Students	48.5	59.6	54.1	43.3	56.1	51.7
American Indian/Alaska Native	-	61.2	43.4	-	57.1	40.5
Asian	83.2	78.4	75.9	73.3	77.3	74.6
Black/African American	31.1	40.1	37.8	32.1	38.4	34.5
Hispanic/Latino	48.2	50.2	45.1	33.7	46.3	42.2
Pacific Islander	63.6	61.1	53.2	60	53.2	50.7
Two or More Races	60.7	66.7	61.3	47.2	61	59.2
White/Caucasian	63.6	67.7	66.3	60.2	63.5	64.6
Special Education	10.5	19.8	21.9	17.6	20.7	17.8
English Learners Current + Former	44.2	42.7	24.3	19.6	34.8	20.3
English Learners Current	25.8	22		20.4	15.8	
Economically Disadvantaged	37.2	46.3	44.4	34.3	41.5	41.4

SPCSA Academic Performance Framework Geographic Comparison Report

Elementary School

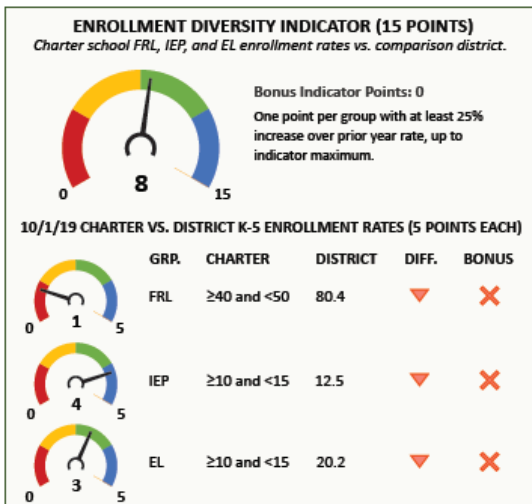


Middle School

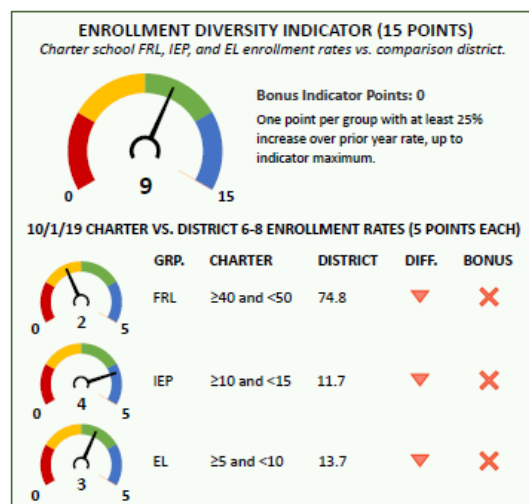


SPCSA Academic Performance Framework Diversity Comparison Results

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	10	30 minutes
Students	10	30 minutes
School Leadership	5	30 minutes
Staff	8	45 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 Academica 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 Academica 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 Academica 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 7-member board participated. Quorum was not met, and Open Meeting Law was not violated.

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:

- Family members shared that they have many reasons for choosing Somerset, including differentiated learning strategies, a challenging curriculum, and small class sizes. One parent commented, "Over time, it seems like the North Las Vegas school has overcome and been able to adapt continuously make the instruction at a higher learning level." Some families were told about the school through their relatives. Others shared that they appreciate the tutoring when students struggle. Focus group members expressed that they especially appreciate the family setting of the school and the fact that staff know their children by name. Parents commented that the family newsletter is very helpful, and it is sent on a weekly basis. Family members said they feel like the teachers know their children, even since the transition to distance learning. One parent shared that a teacher went out of her way to make sure students felt comfortable and know that the teacher cares about them. Family members said that teachers have good classroom management skills and expect students to sit up straight, not slouch, and wear the uniform. A parent of a lower elementary student said that one of the teachers deserves special recognition because she responds to questions, the discipline is unbelievable and positive, students raise their hands to speak, go to the restroom, and are all on mute. According to this parent, the students respect this teacher and the teacher has an entire routine to keep the first graders engaged and learning.

Parents/Families:

- Family members shared that academic progress is an important issue at the school. One parent explained that her young first grader was having some reading difficulties, but now he attends tutoring and the reading is improving. Another parent loves the Infinite Campus portal, receives timely information, and the group greatly appreciates the communication with the teachers and school. One person remarked, "It helps so much as a parent to make sure my children are on track. The parent portal is like gold to me, especially with four kids. I have multiple teachers, multiple assignments, and the communication is outstanding!" Parents said that the academic interventions have been helpful, and that they like having access to Google Classrooms and the ability to see what students are doing.
- Focus group participants shared that they like attending several school events including the dances such as the mother son dance. The fall festival and the book fair are other favorite events that parents shared. Parents also said they feel so involved and this makes school more exciting. Another parent likes the Buffalo Wild Wings and Panda Express nights as well as the musical performances. Another family said that the sports, like soccer, and the clubs are fun and meaningful. One parent appreciated the in-class events where the teacher invites parents to come see a presentation. One parent commented, "I like to volunteer and I want to do it again once I am able."
- The families in the group had several requests, compliments, and suggestions for the school. One person asked that the school keep the 7 habits and the Parent University, explaining that she grew up in Mexico and the Parent University classes have helped her to help her child. She was taught about ways to help her child at home to become a better reader. Family members shared that attendance at the Parent University is good with about ten parents in the classes. A parent suggested that the school add a Gifted and Talented (GATE) program to the school. Another parent suggested the school add a theatre program for students. Other suggestions offered by parents include a request to keep the Lego Club and to expand the North Las Vegas campus to include a high school.

Students:

- Students shared that there are some positives to online learning. They explained that, for one thing, it is safer and there is no worry about forgetting to bring an assignment back to school. Students commented that they are more organized at home. But students also said there are definite down sides to distance learning. For example, students do not have the added impact of learning from and with other students as much. Students said they miss out on team projects and social learning. Students said that they monitor their academic progress through Infinite Campus, i-Ready, and by talking to their teachers. In terms of using i-Ready, students said they would do a lesson, the system tells a student the percent they got correct and if they wanted to, they could use the tutorial to learn and try again.
- Regarding feelings of respect, students said that at times other students like it when students respond to one another in break out rooms but, at other times, some students do not. Students added that typically they do not talk over one another in the virtual setting. Students said the teachers are supportive and the students feel comfortable asking questions. The students expressed appreciation knowing that teachers will help them to improve or understand a concept if need be. With regard to classroom discussions, students said that when it comes to middle school, the teachers give plenty of opportunity to discuss but at times students don't speak up. Students added that this could be because it is virtual and hard to speak up when you do not know the other students.

Students:

- Students shared that they are challenged but there is not always enough help during distance learning. One student shared that taking Algebra in a virtual setting is challenging, and it is difficult to get the necessary help right then and there. Students explained that with Algebra, students are taught whole group and can attend office hours, but there could be other students attending office hours who are not in Algebra. When it comes to teacher expectations, students said the CHAMPS is always on the board or screen.
- Students said that they really like how most teachers explain the content. Students said they prefer a small class size and enjoy the science and math classes where they have the opportunity to get one-on-one interactions with each other. Students also commented that they love extra-curricular clubs. Students shared that the Somerset Learning Broadcast (SNLV TV) makes it fun to go to school. Middle schoolers commented that they like the business and marketing classes and it is encouraging to think about their future. One student commented, “I like robotics and you can do stuff online and if you have an assignment you can work at your own pace.” Another student shared that school staff provides students the chance to be leaders by participating in the SNLV TV and Student Council. Students suggested that it would be good to provide the elementary students a chance to be leaders as well. One student commented, “It would be good to get the voices out there to recognize other ideas. There are some voices that are large and some are small but those small voices have big ideas for the school.”

Leadership:

- School leaders shared that they work to engage students and diversify learning by taking brain breaks, and by implementing several types of online learning platforms. One leader remarked that, even during the pandemic, the counseling team hosts lunches, lunch bunch, and the entire staff continues to operate within a “house system.” The House system is a common method of dividing students into houses, somewhat like the book series, Harry Potter. Throughout the school year, students earn points for their houses for good behavior, special accomplishments and more. Since each house includes students from every grade level it fosters a sense of community throughout the school. According to leaders at the school, the staff has hosted a Literacy Night, Multi-Cultural Night, and the families value these events. The leaders explained that they are working on being more proactive with standards-based instruction, using priority standards, and talking about alignment within Professional Learning Communities and at grade level meetings. In addition, the i-Ready component within the curriculum and diagnostic testing assists with alignment to the standards because i-Ready provides a way to measure mastery per student and tracks progress as well according to the leadership team.
- School leaders said that when they observe classes, they use a coaching cycle. In this cycle observers look for strong instruction, check lesson plans, and look for how the plans are standards based. School leaders provide positive feedback and tips for instruction throughout the school year. Teachers plan the instruction to be aligned to the standards, but leaders indicated that they are focused on what teachers want to see and listen to how the students are doing. Each administrator and coach walks through 20 classes per week and this process ongoing.

Leadership:

- When it comes to using data to drive instruction, MAP is used in grades K-5. i-Ready is a big part of the assessment according to school leaders. School leaders stated that at least three diagnostics are measured on the i-Ready system that takes place every school year and a growth monitoring plan is put into place. The instructional staff forms small groups and monitors the growth of each individual student. In terms of the professional development offered at the school, the school leaders shared that they want to make it matter. Leaders explained that they give choices such as choice boards, Kagen strategies like Think Pair-Share, and Vocabulary. In this way, teachers have several choices in what they feel they should attend with regard to new learning. One leader explained that a highlight from the professional development this year is observing teachers using lessons, planning together, and having teachers get to observe in one another's classrooms.
- School leaders said that there were about twenty teacher openings on campus prior to the start of the 20-21 school year, but for the upcoming 21-22 school year there are only about four. One of the activities that leaders feel is helpful is starting with the 'why'. During the interview process, leaders shared that it is important to find out about why a potential candidate would want to teach at this school. The house system, now in place for two years, creates leaders within the school. In terms of a positive school culture, the house system not only offers leadership opportunities, but there are rallies and group activities as well as the house swag. Leaders went on to say that staff tend to enjoy this type of atmosphere as do students.

Staff:

- Staff shared that with regard to online learning they have adapted teaching in many ways. One teacher said she is using Google docs, Zoom, and break out rooms. Others shared that they have their students engage in conversations and talk amongst themselves by using Peardeck and Kahoot (two different on-line software tools) to help guide online teaching and student discussions. Teachers commented that there is such a big difference from in person classrooms, where students enter the room wanting to talk, and online where students don't necessarily want to speak up and have conversations. One teacher that is brand new to the profession shared that she has realized that she obviously can't set up centers, but her young students can have access to things at home in place of centers. Another teacher which has been at the school for two years and shared that she has made several adaptations this year, stated that she does her best to create a high level of synergy by having some music going on as well as movement to assist with student engagement.
- Staff said that school leaders provide staff surveys to understand how the school is progressing and how they are doing in their jobs. Staff indicated that school leaders have personally asked the teachers if there is anything else they can do to support them. One teacher explained that this year the leaders offered to cover classes and have supported all staff by keeping everyone informed about changes. Staff shared that there is a staff newsletter published weekly which helps all employees know how to be prepared ahead of time. The staff explained that improvement in levels of achievement is a bit of a competition at the school, but in a friendly way. For example, one teacher's class goal this month is to pass several sections within the i-Ready system to earn a prize. Teachers said that for struggling students, the i-Ready system is easy to read and analyze the student data, which helps teachers to quickly create small groups and an instructional plan.

Staff:

- When asked about high-quality instruction, one teacher said that her curriculum is mapped out and includes the standards and objectives and, by using Google slides, the objective/essential question is communicated to students. She said that her challenge is making sure that students understand the main concept, adding that it is important for students to know what they are supposed to do and what they are learning. When the teaching staff was asked about student discussion and having students create questions, the staff commented that they have been having an “expert group” of students conduct research and have the expert group present information to the remainder of the class. Then the students ask each other questions and are required to listen to one another. One teacher commented, “I have discussion prompts and use DOK (Depth of Knowledge) questions to encourage discussions. I used a technique called, “ Fish Bowl” so the students can see a model of how the discussion would be conducted. It doesn’t come naturally to students and they don’t want to feel like they are on display.”
- Teachers said that it has been helpful to have their school instructional coaches post a coaches corner with opportunities for learning about ways to improve instruction. Staff explained that the school offers a bonus for teachers if they return year after year. In addition, staff explained that the administrative team has been more positive and many of the staff want to come back. The school does try to grow their own teachers as well according to focus group participants. One member of the group started as a Boys and Girls club employee, then became a school aide, and is now a first-year teacher. The staff explained the school has an action team and will be conducting a career week for the middle school students.

CLASSROOM OBSERVATION TOTALS

A total of 19 classrooms were observed for approximately 20 minutes each 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: 6	Total: 10	Total:	Total: 1	Total: 2
	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: 15	Total:	Total: 1	Total: 2
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: 2	Total: 16	Total: 1	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: 5	Total: 10	Total:	Total: 1	Total: 3

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: 2	Total: 13	Total:	Total: 2	Total: 2
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: 2	Total: 13	Total:	Total: 2	Total: 2
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: 13	Total: 1	Total: 2	Total: 3

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:	Total: 14	Total: 2	Total:	Total: 3
	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: 3	Total: 12	Total: 3	Total:	Total: 1
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:	Total: 15	Total: 2	Total:	Total: 2
	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:	Total: 14	Total:	Total: 3	Total: 2

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: 4
- The explanation of the content is imaginative: 4

Evidence of questioning and discussion techniques: Area #6

- Questions are planned ahead of time and tied to learning target(s): 3
- Teacher questions are open ended: 3
- 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: 2
- Teacher purposefully signals to entire group of students to wait/think before volunteering a response: 2
- Teacher provides the opportunity for all students to answer the question (think, pair, share, written response): 4

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: 2
- The lesson is rigorous and includes cognitively complex tasks: 4
- Students engage in several types of activities during the lesson including:
 - Speaking Writing Reading Listening Discussing Creating Problem Solving
- Cooperative groups: (#)
- Student-led classroom: (#)
- Technology is integrated into learning/outcomes: 5
- 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: 3
- Students incorporate the feedback by revising their work: 2
- Students receive frequent and meaningful feedback regarding their work: 3
- A wide range of instructional practices that are likely to motivate and engage most students are used during the lesson: 2

Other:

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	The school's curriculum is found on a curriculum map, broken down by semester and in alignment with the NVACS. This is applicable to ELA and Math.
1b	The school complies with applicable education requirements.	School Presentation Classroom Observations	Somerset complies with attendance, graduation rates, student assessments and data as well as fiscal management as stated in their charter application.
1c	The school protects the rights of students with disabilities.	School Presentation Classroom Observations	Each child receiving special education services has an individualized plan that addresses their unique needs. New families with students with special needs receive a "Welcome Meeting" to ensure a smooth transition to the campus. Students are offered i-Ready assessment, ULS (Unique Learning System (a standards-based program designed for special needs students) to better access the general education curriculum, embedded Power Hour, and After School Tutoring. The Special Education Policy and Procedure Manual is available in full in an online format.

1d	The school protects the rights of ELL students.	School Presentation Classroom Observations	With the use of Expeditionary Learning, Brain POP EL and focused intervention groupings 3 times per week, Second Language Learners are provided opportunities for growth. The school has the English Language Learner program procedures and Protocols Handbook that is reviewed on a regular basis and is available in an online format for easy access by all.
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Measure	Description	Evidence Collected Through	Takeaways
3a	The school complies with governance requirements.	School Presentation Classroom Observations	Student achievement drives decision making at all levels of Somerset Academy. The school has implemented the <i>Leader in Me</i> program which focuses on growing students that are engaged and accountable for their learning.
3b	The school holds management accountable.	School Presentation	All Somerset staff and teachers are evaluated annually by a school administrator. Teacher evaluations are completed using the Danielson Framework. Assistant Principals are evaluated by the Principal. Principals are evaluated by the Somerset Board of Directors.
4a	The school protects the rights of all students.	School Presentation Classroom Observations	The school has implemented several culturally responsive practices including restorative justice, <i>Leader In Me</i> , CHAMPS, a house system, multicultural week, Home visits, teacher mentor program, MTSS Team, a therapeutic based playroom, parent University, SEL in the classroom and a focus on self-care for staff.

5b	The school complies with health and safety requirements.	School Presentation Classroom Observations	School safety procedures are reviewed with staff at the beginning of each school year. A crisis plan team meets and practices safety procedures as needed per the guidelines in the Emergency Operations Plan of the school. SafeVoice is used and monitored at the school. Signs of Suicide Training is offered to middle school classroom teachers and lessons are given. A climate and culture survey is conducted each year. An MTSS team, in conjunction with SPCSA and the University of Reno, has been implemented.
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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. There is a positive culture that exists throughout the school. SPCSA staff identified evidence of enthusiasm within the classrooms observed, several examples of teachers using student's first names, and saying "please" and "thank-you" when speaking to students. The staff worked cooperatively to combine efforts in response to distance learning. For example, there was a combined effort among instructional staff to see students on the camera in online learning formats. During the staff focus group, staff explained that they shared a variety of ways to engage students, among themselves, in order to offer the best possible learning experience to students this school year despite the on-going pandemic.
2. A strong leadership team exists at the school as evidenced by families, students, and staff speaking about strong communication, flexibility, putting students first, and developing supportive relationships with stakeholders. The school implements the following to provide these relationships and to secure expectations at the school: CHAMPS, Parent University, school events, school clubs such as Legos and Robotics, Power Hour, and a variety of small group learning options.
3. The professional development and career pathways at the school show that leaders and staff work together to develop teachers from within. The professional learning offered internally is reflected in the classroom instruction at the school and includes Kagan Strategies and use of higher level depth of knowledge questions. The experienced teachers are often called upon to share their expertise in the form of training, mentoring, or sharing ideas on improving instruction.

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. Somerset – North Las Vegas, like schools across the country, has been called upon to persevere during the COVID-19 pandemic since March of 2020. The entire school community including staff, school leaders, teachers, specialists, families, and students have watched as education as it was once known has changed. The staff at Somerset North Las Vegas campus has been called upon to revise and change physical distancing, clarified that the school uses strategies to clean and maintain healthy facilities, and included the members of the school community to best mitigate transmission levels and communicate clearly with regard to unforeseen changes. Most recently the school has made several decisions and provided prevention strategies to safely open for in-person instruction. This has presented several challenges including the ability to be flexible, respond calmly to unexpected changes and continue to put students first while communicating the status and changes to all stakeholders during this time. Although this is a challenge, the school has worked diligently to overcome these obstacles and to continue with the on-going business of educating all students.
2. Chronic Absenteeism rates are above average at this school. Student attendance rates continue to be a struggle and it is important to note that leaders are working to improve attendance rates. They have collaborated with other leaders at Somerset schools and continue to work to increase the rates of student daily attendance.
3. Teacher turnover has been well above average at this campus as noted in the site evaluation data collection form. Records indicate that there were 58 teachers on the roster at the end of the 2019-2020 school year, and just 38 teachers returned to the school for the 2020-2021 school year. When teachers leave, especially midyear, the continuity of a child's learning experience is disrupted. The current school leaders are working to improve school working conditions and help guide all staff to positive career paths where a positive working environment exists.
4. This campus is operating under a Notice of Breach. The Somerset-North Las Vegas Campus was observed to have several instances of classroom interactions within the proficient to distinguished categories as noted on the rubric section of the report, pages 13-15. The data show that the instances of proficient to distinguished interactions are higher than those in the basic and unsatisfactory areas. The rubric shows that the instances (related to the classroom environment and classroom instruction) marked Distinguished are 21, and 145 instances of Proficient. The variability of the classroom experiences as recorded on the day of the evaluation was concerning. There were, conversely, 9 instances of Basic and 12 instances of Unsatisfactory noted within the same two areas. However, because there were several variations in the teacher performance, as noted in the observational rubric, a challenge at this campus is to work toward a much lower level of variation and increase levels of Distinguished and Proficient while decreasing other lower ratings as noted. In the recommendation section this is addressed. Some of the largest factors related to student achievement according to Hattie, 2020, are collective teacher efficacy (1.57), teacher credibility (0.90), classroom discussion (0.82), and teacher clarity (0.75).

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. Because this school is under a Notice of Breach, it is recommended that the school leaders and staff take strong action to improve academic achievement. One researched based way of doing this is by supporting teachers in becoming more skilled and nuanced with their selection and implementation of effective approaches in the classroom. To ensure that learning occurs on a more consistent basis, consider a school-wide look at each element in the formative assessment process. As teachers become more effective, students become more actively engaged, and they both become intentional learners. (Moss & Brookhart, 2019).

Elements:

- Shared Learning Targets and Criteria for Success
- Feedback that feeds forward
- Student goal setting
- Strategic teacher questioning
- Student engagement in asking effective questions

Teacher quality has a greater influence on student achievement than any other factor in education. No other factor even comes close (Darling-Hammond, 1999; Hanushek, Kain, O'Brien, & Rivkin, 2005; Thompson and William, 2007). By engaging in the formative assessment process, which is not the same as conducting formative assessments in the classroom, teachers learn about effective teaching by studying the effectiveness of their own instructional decisions. The authors Connie M. Moss and Susan M. Brookhart provide a guide for school leaders and teachers to use to begin the conversation about formative assessment as a process. *Advancing Formative Assessment in Every Classroom: A guide for Instructional Leaders, 2nd Ed.* is one resource available for this purpose. The emphasis is on the way that the formative assessment process enables students to use the workings of their own thoughts to become intentional skilled learners.

Recommended improvements under the umbrella of the formative assessment process:

- More clear and understandable learning targets and more buy-in from students with attainment of the learning target.
 - Providing feedback to students about their work and learning that is used by the student to leverage their own learning.
 - Students becoming more aware and in tune with what they know about a topic and what they want to learn in order to both engage students and become more motivated and active participants in their own learning.
 - Higher levels of student voice, discussion, and participation in the classrooms.
 - Increased numbers of students with self-efficacy.
2. Continue to focus school efforts to improve overall chronic absenteeism at the school. Chronic absenteeism is defined as students missing 10 percent or more of school days. Those students who are absent are more likely to lack reading skills, have lower test scores, and receive exclusionary school discipline. They are in higher jeopardy of not graduating. This school, according to the most recent data, has the following numbers:

Somerset NLV Elementary School = 15.8%
Somerset NLV Middle School = 16.1%

SPCSA Portfolio = 8%
SPCSA Portfolio = 7.9%

It has been noted that school leaders have spoken to other charters with similar demographics to determine a path to improvement. The school leaders have explained that they identify students who are chronically absent and sometimes conditions that lead to absenteeism have more to do with family circumstances than student motivation. Although this is important context and getting a student to return to the school and get back on track with school attendance critical, available research outlines the importance of fostering a positive school climate so that students want to stay in school once they return. Somerset – North Las Vegas should work to ensure that students feel as if the school is their welcoming safe environment or second home.

Somerset – North Las Vegas should consider working specifically to improve the consistency of teaching, learning as well as engagement within the school, increase levels of high quality classroom environment, and decrease the number of negative comments, and threats in classrooms. The Social-Emotional Learning Alliance for New Jersey has worked to identify and develop some of the key elements of a positive school climate (Inspiring, Supportive, Safe and Healthy, Respectful and Engaging).

<https://www.edutopia.org/article/two-step-process-reducing-chronic-absenteeism>

3. Consider making changes to current math structural and teaching practices with regard to Algebra. Algebra is an important step in student success to progress to higher levels of math. By using effective, self-assessment practices students may be offered the option of engaging in reflective metacognitive strategies and determine whether they would benefit from small group support in Algebra. Rather than making this a mandatory expectation, consider offering students the opportunity to engage in an Algebra Challenge where students meet to tackle a challenge which, in turn, leads them to ask questions and try out problems with each other. In this case, students could be given an increased opportunity to both practice and verbalize the language of Algebra.

During the student focus group at this campus, students suggested that students taking Algebra be offered an Algebra small group tutoring class. Students explained that they could attend the “office hours” provided by their Algebra teacher, however this time is set aside, not for Algebra students, but for any math pupil the teacher may have.

Structural considerations: Consider ways to support students by helping them catch up. This includes differentiated supports and carefully thought-out interventions and reworking school schedules to create more time for math.

Teaching practices: It’s important for teaching to use strategies that lend themselves to formative assessment to see how well students are doing as they go, posing purposeful questions and eliciting students’ thinking and discussion of the topic.

4. Prioritize improving student diversity to be more representative of the local district and the SPCSA. With regard to particular demographics, the school should pay particular attention to targeted marketing efforts so as to increase the likelihood of enrolling more special education and English Language Learners. The validation day numbers indicate that the school serves 7.9% English Language Learners this school year, which is a decrease from the previous year of 9.2% and well below the averages for Clark County School District. In addition, the students with an Individual Education Plan (IEP) went up this school year 20-21 to 11.4% from 11.1% in the previous school year. This is a step in the right direction, but still below district and agency averages.

5. As the school leaders and staff continue to establish and maintain a school atmosphere of strong leadership, career pathways, and a positive culture as listed in the “strengths” section of this report, it is recommended that these strong foundational strengths be built upon by increasing levels of teacher collective efficacy. This in turn may lead to greater levels of teacher retention and at the same time, have a strong impact on improving student achievement. Continue to empower teacher teams to know they have the ability to make a difference at the school. Models for collective efficacy in schools have been tested and refined, with researchers finding that as successes and support strengthen teachers' confidence in their teams, student achievement increases.(Goddard, Hoy, & Woolfolk Hoy, 2004; Adams & Forsyth, 2006). John Hattie (2016) positioned collective efficacy at the top of the list of factors that influence student achievement. According to Hattie’s Visible Learning research, based on a synthesis of more than 1,500 meta-analyses, collective teacher efficacy is greater than three times more powerful and predictive of student achievement than socioeconomic status. It is more than double the effect of prior achievement and more than triple the effect of home environment and parental involvement.

Build conditions at the school to nurture and grow levels of collective teacher efficacy because teachers beliefs that they “collectively can make an educational difference to their students over and above the educational impact of their homes and communities” (Tschannen-Moran & Barr, 2004, p. 190) are more likely to take place in a consistent manner. According to a 2017 article, by Jenni Donahoo, school leaders may want to consider increasing the likelihood that teacher collective efficacy will increase by proving three enabling conditions. These are (1) Advanced Teacher Influence, (2) Goal Consensus, and (3) Responsiveness of Leadership. The article is attached here for further consideration.

<https://www.jennidonohoo.com/post/fostering-collective-teacher-efficacy-three-enabling-conditions>

6. It is recommended that the Somerset Board examine their current method of evaluating the EMO, Academics. 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.

DEFICIENCIES

There were no deficiencies identified for the Somerset – North Las Vegas during this site evaluation.