![Nevada State Public Charter School Authority]

Site Evaluation Report: Pinecrest Academy Virtual
Evaluation Date: 3/22/2023

State Public Charter School Authority
775-687-9174
1749 North Stewart Street Suite 40
Carson City, Nevada 89706
2080 East Flamingo Road, Suite 230
Las Vegas, NV 89119

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INTRODUCTION AND SCHOOL BACKGROUND

INTRODUCTION

This Site Evaluation Report offers an analysis of evidence collected during the school evaluation that took place on 3/22/2023 at Pinecrest Academy Virtual. The State Public Charter School Authority (SPCSA) conducts a comprehensive review of evidence related to all charters within the portfolio during the first, third, and fifth year of operation. This comprehensive analysis addresses the academic success of the school and the effectiveness and viability of the school organization. Pinecrest Academy-Virtual is in its first year of operations and this evaluation is comprehensive.

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 Organizational 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

Pinecrest Academy Virtual is located in Henderson, Nevada in a facility at 225 Grand Cadence. The virtual campus is located at the Pinecrest Cadence Campus. The school serves 78 students (as of the most recent Validation Day) in 6th through 10th grade. The mission of Pinecrest Academy Virtual is: "Pinecrest Academy Virtual unites the community to prepare students for college and career."

ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE

Nevada School Performance Framework
2022

This information is provided to assist in understanding the data sets impacted by the pandemic.

Newly opened school: Data Not Available

Math and ELA Results
Nevada School Performance Framework
2022

This information is provided to assist in understanding the data sets impacted by the pandemic.

Proficiency Rates

New School Data Not Available

SPCSA Academic Performance Framework
Geographic Comparison Report

New School /Data Not Available

SPCSA Academic Performance Framework
Diversity Comparison Results

New School/ Data Not Available

FOCUS GROUP SUMMARIES

FOCUS GROUP SUMMARY

Group	Number of Participants	Duration of Focus Group
Governing Board	3	45minutes
Parents/Families	5	30 minutes
Students	3	30 minutes
School Leadership	12	45minutes
Staff	4	30 minutes

Governing Board[1]:

- The Pinecrest Board has seven members. Board members reported that they meet about every six to eight weeks. One board member said, "We have had three people on our board term out and one has resigned. We filled these positions with a nice variety of folks with different areas of expertise. We have people on the board with backgrounds in finance and wealth management, education, business, and law." Board members said they review school policy on a routine basis throughout the school year.

- Board members said they follow an official procedure for the evaluation of each Pinecrest school principal. Board members conduct the evaluation and surveys at each school site to help guide these evaluations. One board member explained, "Principals report operational and academic campus-specific information to the board. Each school leader shares information about the status of absenteeism." Board members further explained that principals report about strategies they are implementing to improve overall attendance at their campus.

- According to board members, a person from Academica reports information about the state of academics at each board meeting. A projection of anticipated academic outcomes and growth are provided as well. In terms of financial updates, board members reported they receive and review a balance sheet, a budgeting statement, and a statement of activities at each board meeting.

- Board members were asked about the strengths at Pinecrest schools. One board member commented, "There is a great deal of pride across the Pinecrest school system." Another board member added, "We have a strong sense of community and an exceptional faculty. We grow our own leaders. Of course, academics is a strength as well." Another board member said, "Our school leaders help us focus on conversations about each campus and their own identity. Our board talks about specialized populations at every board meeting and we have done some targeted outreach to market to families who may not know there is a charter school in the area. We have a healthy wait list." Another board member said, "Our board continues to work to improve chronic absenteeism as well as the recruitment and enrollment of special populations."

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[1] Three members of the seven member board participated. Quorum was not met, and Open Meeting Law was not violated.

FOCUS GROUP SUMMARY continued

Parents/Families:

- Family members shared some of the reasons they decided to give Pinecrest Virtual a try this year. One parent said the family likes to travel and the more flexible school schedule is a good fit for their middle school student. Another person added, "My son likes working ahead in classes and enjoys the quiet atmosphere at home." A third parent said they are attending the virtual campus in hopes of being admitted to Pinecrest Cadence, so their child can attend school in person next year.

- In terms of quality of instruction offered through the Pinecrest virtual classes, families said the classes are self-paced. One family member added, "I don't think the virtual school setting is for everyone. I think it takes a student who has a good deal of self-control. I say this because the students have to keep up with assignments and motivate themselves to learn." Another parent in the group felt the staff were highly supportive of students when needed.

- Families felt the virtual campus leader and staff were highly communicative with parents. Parents were aware of the academic status of their students. Parents added that the staff who offer support to students are kind and seem to have the students' best interest at heart. One parent commented, "I have been in the room when my daughter was speaking with a teacher and he was highly supportive of my daughter. The teacher asked my daughter how she was prioritizing each of the assignments in terms of time frames and due dates. I could tell this was very helpful."

Students:

- Students spoke about their experiences attending the newly opened Pinecrest Virtual Academy. One student said, "It has been fun attending school on my own time. I like the opportunity to work ahead so that I can participate in other activities such as playing the piano." Another student said, "At times I get super stressed. I have a sense of being overwhelmed when I see all of my classes and corresponding assignments. I think to myself, I have too much to complete, and I don't want to fail." A third student said she enjoyed the opportunity to travel to Australia and see family while continuing to complete her studies. She commented, "It can be difficult to teach yourself all of the information. If I get stuck, I can email one of the teachers and ask questions."

- Students had mixed feelings as they spoke about academic successes and social events. One student said, "The virtual learning has been a great success for me because I'm less distracted when I'm on my own." Another student commented, "I honestly feel that being alone is distracting because I find myself not paying attention to the lesson. Sometimes I put off completing assignments." Students spoke about social opportunities. Some students reported attending social events the school sponsored, such as the Harvest Festival, and Spring Fling dance. Another student said, "I've been enrolled in the virtual school since the beginning of the 2022-2023 school year, and I haven't attended any events in person. For me, it is a matter of transportation. I like that I can go to social events, but I haven't been able to do so." One student said he has been on campus for testing and attended a field trip.

FOCUS GROUP SUMMARY continued

- Students in the focus group agreed that the teachers at the school are amazing. One student commented, "I feel like the teachers are nice and willing to help, especially when I have questions." Another student added, "During office hours, teachers are helpful. I went to the Cadence campus on two occasions and teachers were happy to see me in person."

- Students were asked to provide feedback about the mostly asynchronous[2] virtual program. One student suggested, "We could have some different options such as a study skills class because it may help us to attain better grades, levels in some of our more difficult classes. Another student commented, "I would like some of the assignments to offer alternative locations for real-world experiences. For example, one assignment directs us to go find a place with insects and may not be realistic at certain times. I believe assignments like this should be vetted and alternative options provided." A different student spoke about the possibility of having synchronous[3] online classes. She said, "I think it would be cool to have more synchronous classes offered because I like interacting with the teacher and other students."

Leadership:

- The school leaders shared information about the newly opened school. They said there were 88 virtual students in attendance as of the date of the site evaluation, an increase of ten students from the fall 2022 enrollment count. Leaders said school is for sixth grade through tenth graders. Next year, it will expand to offer virtual school for sixth through twelfth graders. School leaders said courses are self-paced asynchronously. Teachers offer set office hours a few times per week for support and students may make appointments with a teacher if office hours conflict with another course they are taking.

- The school principal serves a dual role as principal for both the K-12 Pinecrest Cadence campus as well as the 6-10 virtual campus. She commented, "The idea behind the virtual school is our Pinecrest Cadence campus offers multiple extracurricular opportunities including sports, music, theatre, and choir. These offerings are already built into our system for our virtual students to take part in everything. This is unique in that there is no need for students to have to contact their zoned school for this type of arrangement. Our virtual students are considered to be Cadence students [in our eyes]."

- Leaders spoke about other opportunities for virtual students, "An on-campus lab is available to virtual students if they want to come to school. There is a Teacher Assistant in the lab to support students with questions as well. We insist that students maintain two-way communication with their teachers. If they do not, they are marked absent for the week. The CTE[4] offerings are synchronously provided. We have two at this time, Cybersecurity and Graphic Design." Another leader spoke about the students with an IEP, (Individual Education Plan). She said, "We have a special education teacher dedicated only to our virtual students. There are currently 15 of the 88 enrolled virtual students who qualified for special needs services."

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[22] Asynchronous online learning allows students to view instructional materials at any time they choose. It does not include a live lecture or teacher component and is self-paced.
[3] Synchronous instruction takes place when students log in and participate in class at a specific time, often with an in- person teacher.
[4] CTE: Career and Technical Education classes

FOCUS GROUP SUMMARY continued

Staff:

- Pinecrest virtual staff members spoke about student success in the online setting. One instructor commented, "Students who are intrinsically motivated seem to do very well. Other less motivated students, seem to have failing grades and are less inclined to complete assignments." Another teacher pointed out, "Those with parental support at home do pretty well but those with less family support seem to fail to turn in work or get behind completing assignments."

- Staff explained there are some protocols in place to support student success with the program. One teacher said, "Students are required to attend office hours if they have a grade of a "D" or "F" in their classes. I've never had a student show up for office hours when forced or directed under these circumstances. The principal requires parent conference for students who are failing." Teachers reported they have mixed responses from families when they reach out to communicate when students are not doing well academically. One teacher explained, "I usually get more response and interest from parents when it gets closer to the end of the semester." Another teacher said, "Several students continue in the virtual program and become credit deficient. I've heard from one parent who has decided virtual learning is not conducive to her child and the student will be returning to traditional in-person learning."

- With a new school, and virtual program, teachers and staff were asked to share some ideas to improve the program. Teachers felt they would benefit by being able to open and close assignments and modules as students progress in class. A teacher suggested, "There are locks for not being able to copy/paste responses but we don't have these. The lock down tabs would help so that students cannot minimize a window and copy information from another window". One teacher suggested, "I think we should have an in-depth orientation and be fully transparent about the reality of online learning. Families and students may benefit from having a real conversation about the difficulties of online learning because it is not for everyone." Another teacher said, "I think that synchronous class offerings should be included in this program much more. I think a greater number of students would succeed if this were the case. There is a big difference between the two!"

CLASSROOM ENVIRONMENT AND INSTRUCTION OBSERVATION RUBRIC

A total of 6 classrooms were observed for approximately 15 minutes on the day of the evaluation.

Classroom Environment

	Distinguished	Proficient	Basic	Unsatisfactory	Not Observed
Classroom Learning Environment is Conducive to Learning	Students create and maintain a learning environment where students feel free to share their ideas and take risks in learning. Students take ownership in explaining, modeling, and reinforcing classroom routines. Learning experiences guide students to identify their strengths, interests, and needs; problem-solve; ask for support when appropriate; maximizing learning time.	The teacher creates and maintains a learning environment where students feel free to share their ideas and take risks in learning. Teachers explain, model, and reinforce classroom routines. Learning experiences guide students to identify their strengths, interests, and needs; problem-solve; ask for support when appropriate; maximizing learning time.	The teacher attempts to create and maintain a learning environment where students feel free to share their ideas and take risks in learning. Teachers attempt to explain, model, and reinforce classroom routines. Learning experiences try to guide students to identify their strengths, interests, and needs; problem-solve; ask for support when appropriate. Learning time is sometimes maximized.	The teacher does not create and maintain a learning environment where students feel free to share their ideas and take risks in learning. Teachers do not explain, model, and reinforce classroom routines. Learning experiences do not guide students to identify their strengths, interests, and needs; problem-solve; ask for support when appropriate. Learning time is seldom maximized.	This criterion was not observed or rated.
	Total: 0	Total: 3	Total: 0	Total: 2	Total: 1
Establishing a Culture for Learning	Students and teachers respond appropriately when conflicts arise and demonstrate respect for and affirm their own and others' differences related to background, identity, language, strengths, and challenges.	Teacher responds appropriately when conflicts arise and demonstrate respect for and affirm their own and others' differences related to background, identity, language, strengths, and challenges.	Teacher attempts to respond appropriately when conflicts arise and demonstrate respect for and affirm their own and others' differences related to background, identity, language, strengths, and challenges.	Teacher does not attempt to respond appropriately when conflicts arise and does not demonstrate respect for and affirm their own and others' differences related to background, identity, language, strengths, and challenges.	This criterion was not observed or rated.
	Total: 0	Total: 3	Total: 0	Total: 1	Total: 2

Classroom Instruction

	Distinguished	Proficient	Basic	Unsatisfactory	Not 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 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 is done skillfully, but other portions are difficult to follow.	The purpose of the lesson and learning activity is unclear. The teacher's explanation of the content is unclear, confusing, or uses inappropriate language.	This criterion was not observed or rated.
	Total: 0	Total: 3	Total: 0	Total: 2	Total: 1
Students' Cognitive Awareness of Learning Goals/Targets	Students can explain/demonstrate the goals/targets of the lesson, content, unit, or classroom activity during this instructional timeframe.	Most of the students can explain/ demonstrate the goals/targets of the lesson, content, unit, or classroom activity during this instructional timeframe.	Some of the students can explain/ demonstrate the goals/targets of the lesson, content, unit, or classroom activity during this instructional timeframe.	Students cannot explain/demonstrate the goals/targets of the lesson, content, unit, or classroom activity during this instructional time frame.	This criterion was not observed or rated.
	Total: 0	Total: 2	Total: 1	Total: 1	Total: 2
Quality and purpose of questions	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: 0	Total: 2	Total: 0	Total: 0	Total: 4
Opportunities for student discourse and student use of academic language	Students use academic language while participating in discourse. Students demonstrate mastery through reasoning and higher-order thinking.	Teachers encourage the use of academic language and provide students opportunities for discourse. Students are encouraged to demonstrate knowledge through reasoning and higher-order thinking.	There are some attempts by the teacher to encourage the use of academic language. Students are provided with limited opportunities for discourse. There are some attempts by the teacher to encourage students to demonstrate knowledge through reasoning and higher order thinking.	There is little to no opportunity for student discourse. There is little to no opportunity for students to demonstrate knowledge through reasoning and higher-order thinking.	This criterion was not observed or rated.
	Total: 0	Total: 2	Total: 0	Total: 0	Total: 4

Classroom Instruction (continued)

	Distinguished	Proficient	Basic	Unsatisfactory	Not Observed
Intellectual Engagement in Learning	Students are intellectually engaged throughout the lesson. The pacing and structure of the lesson is differentiated and 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 differentiated and adequate.	Students are partially intellectually engaged throughout the lesson. The pacing and structure of the lesson is somewhat differentiated and inconsistent.	Students are not at all intellectually engaged in significant learning. The pacing and structure of the lesson is not differentiated and inadequate.	This criterion was not observed or rated.
	Total: 1	**Total:** 2	**Total:** 0	**Total:** 0	**Total:** 3
Using Formative Assessment in Instruction	The teacher purposefully and consistently provides clear, descriptive feedback in regard to student's understanding of the learning goals/targets. The feedback is timely and is in a reasonable amount.	Most of the time, the teacher, provides clear, descriptive feedback regarding student's understanding of the learning goals/targets. The feedback is timely and is in a reasonable amount.	The teacher provides clear, descriptive feedback inconsistently regarding student's understanding of the learning goals/targets. The feedback is seldom timely and is in a reasonable amount.	The teacher does not provide clear, descriptive feedback regarding student's understanding of the learning goals/targets. The feedback is not timely and is not in a reasonable amount.	This criterion was not observed or rated.
	Total: 1	**Total:** 1	**Total:** 0	**Total:** 0	**Total:** 4

Additional information about the classroom observations shared here when applicable

- In one virtual office hour session, students signed on to the office hours session electronically and spoke with the teacher one-on-one. Students indicated completing multiple assignment per day in each classroom. For example, one student said she had 11 assignments every day for English language arts class and five to six in her elective Spanish class.

- One observation was of a synchronous, Career and Technical Education, high schoolcybersecurities class. Online students attended and participated with live teacher and students and met in real time. The online/virtual student saw only the same screen assignments as the in-person students. According to the CTE teacher, he provided instructions about the assignment about a week ago, and some students had finished while others continued to work, some together to finish the assignment.

- In trying to observe one synchronous CTE class in which attend virtually alongside students participating face-to-face there was a problem with the instructor letting people into the virtual classroom. SPCSA staff members waited in a queue to obtain access using one of the school leader's computersl, but it was not clear that individuals were admitted to the class electronically..

- The majority of the classes at Pinecrest Virtual are held asynchronously and students are not required to log in or interact with the teacher or their peers. There are a few synchronous classes offered at the high school level in conjunction with a few of the College Technical Education program/classes provided. Observations of students attending self-paced classes were not observed.

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, visual inspection 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.

Indicator	Measure Description	Evidence Collected
Indicator 1: Education Program	**Measures 1a and 1b:** The school implements the material terms of the education program. Ex: SPCSA site evaluations will confirm that the school is staying true to its approved application and programming, as well as review curricular materials and their alignment to Nevada Academic Content Standards. **Measures 1c and 1d:** The school protects the rights of students with disabilities and EL students. Ex: For example, classroom observations include examples of students with an IEP or those learning English as a language. Student support is provided within small groups or teachers using interventions and supports to provide students with special needs and EL learners with access to grade-level content and standards.	Pinecrest Virtual Academy provides students with a distance education program which has been approved by the Nevada Department of Education. Curricular materials align to Nevada Academic Content Standards (NVACS). Classroom observations in grades K-12 confirmed that the educational program conforms with the charter and that curricula aligns to NVACS. Pinecrest Academy Virtual uses a strategic approach to ensure all campus staff who work with students with disabilities, with an IEP or 504 are aware of all decisions, goals, accommodations, and modifications. Student World-Class Instructional Design and Assessment (WIDA) reports are accessed to determine levels of listening, speaking, reading, and writing.
Indicator 3: Governance and Reporting	**Measure 3a:** The school complies with governance requirements Ex: Board policies and oversight of Education Service Provider	The Pinecrest Academy governing board meets monthly for board meetings. Special meetings are scheduled as necessary. Per the governing board and leadership focus group sessions, the Pinecrest governing board follows board policies. Composition is aligned with Nevada state requirements
Indicator 4: Students and Employees	**Measure 4a:** Student records under lock and key/stored appropriately **Measure 4d:** Personnel files are under lock and key/stored appropriately	Student and faculty records are stored under lock and key in a secured office.
Indicator 5: School Environment	**Measure 5b:** • Evacuation plans are posted and the school has fire extinguishers which are tagged. There is an active permit for food service • Nurse requirements are met through visual check of health office, disposal of sharps, cot, refrigeration	The site evaluation team saw evacuation plans in classrooms, tagged fire extinguishers. An active food service permit, and a current elevator permit were observed at Pinecrest Cadence campus which is the campus in which the Pinecrest Virtual program is housed. The site evaluation team visually checked and located a cot, a refrigerator, and a receptacle for disposing of sharp objects in the nurse's area.

Measures of Progress from Previous Site Evaluations

The extent to which the school has been successful in maintaining areas of strength, removing challenges, and acting upon the recommended items made by the SPCSA during the school's previous evaluation.

Self-Assessment of the implementation of prior recommendations by school staff	The Pinecrest Virtual Academy is a new charter school, housed on the Cadence campus. This is the first site evaluation conducted.
Evidence the school can provide to support the implementation of previous recommendations.	The Pinecrest Virtual Academy is a new charter school, housed on the Cadence campus. This is the first site evaluation conducted.
Reason's school believes additional time will be needed to fully address the recommended items, if any.	The Pinecrest Virtual Academy is a new charter school, housed on the Cadence campus. This is the first site evaluation conducted.

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 Framework are described within the body of the report and summarized here.

Pinecrest Network Strengths:

- Pinecrest Academy Charter Schools maintain strong use of data to inform resource and curricular decisions. Pinecrest Academy Charter Schools effectively utilize data to inform instructional and curricular decisions. When asked how data was used to make curricular decisions the leadership teams said they look at WIDA for English language learners' needs and MAP for general population needs. Data is used for student placement, small group instruction, and targeted support. Administration data chats occur routinely with data analysts and consultants at K-12 Schools.

Pinecrest Virtual Strengths:

- Pinecrest Virtual has successfully opened and enrolled approximately 78 students in grades six through ten during the 2022-2023 school year. Pinecrest Virtual offers students an alternative to brick and mortar in person learning. This program is primarily self-paced, with asynchronous course offerings, and was chosen by school leaders because they have previously used it with success for students attending summer school. The distinctive and individual considerations of the program are strengths. Student safety is an important aspect of the Pinecrest Virtual program, and is a unique synchronous alternative program.

- The purpose of opening Pinecrest Virtual school along with the considerations of providing a unique structure is an additional strength. Founding members reported the Cadence campus already offered students a variety after school sports and extracurricular options. These same options are available to Pinecrest Virtual students. Several students in the virtual focus group spoke about their enjoyment in participating in sports and extracurricular activities. These included field trips, school dances, and carnivals such as the Harvest Festival.

- The slow-start model was implemented at Pinecrest Virtual Academy. With a student enrollment population between 78-88, the school leadership team has been able to make changes to the program as it unfolds. For example, communication with families and students was streamlined to create clarity. In addition, leaders removed some of the assignments from the program that they felt were not necessary so that students could better focus on other, more important assignments. The CTE (Career and Technical Education) classes began with a few options and school leaders will assess and consider adding more options in the future.

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.

- Academic success for some students attending in the virtual format has been challenging during this first year in operation. School leaders, students, and parents commented there seem to be two "types" of students in attendance. The first group are highly motivated, conscientious learners who excel with asynchronous self-paced learning. The second group consists of students who do not compete assignments in a timely manner and consequently perform poorly on assessments. One staff member commented, "What I've noticed about the virtual program in terms of academic success, is that we seem to have an inverted bell curve. Students are either doing very well, or they are failing."

- School leaders and staff commented that so far, it has been challenging to implement an effective system to proactively guide a greater number of students to succeed and create fewer instances of class failure and credit loss. School personnel reported that the virtual staff team contacts family members if students are not passing a given class, however the response rate varies. Some family members are able to respond and intervene. Other family members wait to get back to school staff until a time later in the semester. This loss of time makes it more difficult to remediate. One staff member commented, "I have one parent who has already reached out and wants to enroll her child into a brick and mortar in person learning."

- Virtual school staff are concerned about the possibility of cheating on assignments and assessments with online asynchronous learning. Teachers and school leaders report they continue to seek improved methods of checking for plagiarism and using other web sites to complete assignments.

- Study skills and time management are not a given set of skills that all students bring with them when they enroll in virtual learning, thus presenting a challenge and potential barrier to student success. For some students, these skills and the need to self-advocate and communicate have prevented the school from successfully guiding each student toward success. One staff member shared, "Even though students and parents are required to attend a parent conference if a student has either a grade of "F" or "D", there is no way to enforce this with online students at this time." The lack of accountable parent conference attendance has had a domino effect for many students who need credits to graduate from high school. One leader pointed out, "Some eighth graders who aren't passing, lack the credit to move on to high school."

- The current way the online platform presents information and due dates can be overwhelming to students. Students voiced that seeing every assignment for the semester listed when logging into a class can be highly stressful and induce anxiety. Some students said they can see over 500 assignments listed in some classes.

- Staff teaching virtual classes also teach in person at the brick-and-mortar Pinecrest Cadence campus. Teachers report the expectations can be a bit overwhelming even though they receive a stipend for their work. At times, the virtual teaching position is in addition to full-time teaching and is comparable to having a second job.

RECOMMENDATIONS

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

- In order to create greater levels of academic success for students at Pinecrest Virtual, the SPCSA recommends building upon current distance learning practices. We suggest using what has been learned in both face-to-face and distance learning environments to leverage what works best in both settings to impact student achievement levels. (Fisher, Frey & Hattie, 2020)

    a. Foster student self-regulation which is crucial for moving learning to deep and transfer levels. Consider time management and study skills classes within the initial enrollment of the program. Consider inserting benchmarks, or success levels to help students prioritize assignments, based on due dates and upcoming exams.

    b. Consider adding more diverse instructional approaches to accompany self-paced learning such as synchronous learning classes, classroom discussions, and small group projects and well-designed peer learning options. Consider creating options for students to partner with each other to learn from one another.

    c. Consider ways to integrate additional forms of feedback into the current self- paced program. Consider instituting a greater number of feedback opportunities for students including tutoring, individual check-in times with adults, and whole group discussions facilitated by an adult teacher. The Canvas learning management program that Pinecrest Virtual uses has numerous functions that can be quickly implemented by teachers. For example, teachers can record verbal responses to assignments so students can hear a voice offering feedback about specific assignments.

- SPCSA staff recommend Pinecrest Virtual Academy implement an effective system to proactively guide a greater number of students to succeed and lower instances of class failure or credit loss. Guide and support students, families, staff, and leaders to establish more definite and clearly defined warning signals to better anticipate and intervene when a student begins to be disengaged, struggles with course content, is unresponsive, or does not complete items in a consistent and timely manner.

    a. Consider creating a set of clearly defined academic tendencies or skills which must be learned and developed for a student to succeed in this type of learning environment. For example, expectations to routinely schedule a daily, weekly, monthly calendar to complete assignments, schedule study time and learn how to successfully balance school and home activities. These habits for success might be shared with families and students as part of the enrollment process.

    b. Consider ways to improve the frequency and quality of feedback students receive from instructors to include specific information about academic growth and progress. Perhaps more frequent required conferences or check-ins with school staff will assist in building rapport between the faculty and individual students. Feedback helps students realize where they are strong and where they need to improve. Focused commentary on student growth and mastery of content helps students move from misconceptions to a clearer understanding through targeted explanation of particular points and suggestions about what or how to study. Descriptive Feedback supports student motivation because students can begin to see that improvement is something they can control and helps them know what to do next.

- Consider making changes to the self-paced learning platform to prevent students from viewing a large number of assignments at one time. Because this may be overwhelming to students, consider placing barriers for this view or limit it to a few times per semester. Canvas has this capability for creating modules, setting dates and times for assignments to be opened and closed, recording capability for both voice responses to students, as well as video recording capability if teachers would like to narrate as they review a student's work. Consider providing target PD for faculty teaching in an online environment. There are specific techniques and best practices for building an online learning environment. Teachers having a foundational understanding of developing a learning environment for optimal learning will benefit both the faculty and the students.

- The SPCSA recommends Pinecrest Virtual review current staffing methods to address any perceptions that full-time Cadence staff are asked to do additional work without commensurate compensation. As Pinecrest virtual increases the number of grades it services and as the number of students enrolled increases it is suggested school leaders consider methods to allow virtual teaching staff the time and training to become highly effective teachers in the distance learning setting.

STRONG RECOMMENDATIONS

There were no strong recommendations identified for Pinecrest Virtual during this site evaluation.

DEFICIENCIES

There were no deficiencies identified for Pinecrest Virtual during this site evaluation.