

STATE PUBLIC CHARTER SCHOOL AUTHORITY



2019 Renewal Report for Nevada Connections Academy

Per [NRS 388A.285](#) and [NAC 388A.415](#)

Issued June 28, 2019

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1. **School Overview**

- a. Address:
 - i. 555 Double Eagle Court Suite 2000 Reno, NV 89521

- b. Campus Location:
 - i. Washoe County (Statewide Distance Education)

- c. Governing Board Members
 - i. President – Scott Harrington
 - ii. Member – Kevin Arnold
 - iii. Member – Mindi Dagerman
 - iv. Member – Naima Benjelloun
 - v. Member – Amelia Cook
 - vi. Member – Kelly McGlynn
 - vii. Member – Morgan Jackson

Board Member information based on Epicenter Board Center

d. Academic Data Overview¹

The following data was compiled from the ratings generated by the Nevada State Performance Framework (NSPF) during the current charter term.

Year	NSPF Rating
2015	Elementary: 2 Star (frozen from 2014) Middle School: 4 (frozen from 2014) High School: 2 Star (frozen from 2014)
2016	No star rating published by State
2017	Elementary: 1 Star Middle School: 3 Star High School: N/A
2018	Elementary: 1 Star Middle School: 1 Star High School: 1 Star

Year	Graduation Rate
2014 – 2015	35.63%
2015 – 2016	40.09%
2016 – 2017	45.04%
2017 – 2018	63.77%

¹ For schools applying for a second or third charter term, NAC 388A.415 provides that the State Public Charter School Authority will give the academic performance of pupils a greater weight than that assigned to it on the first renewal. SPCSA staff will include academic performance data for any previous charter term for the Authority's consideration.

e. Enrollment History

The following data was compiled from the Validation Day for the last five school years, or the years within the current charter contract.

Grade Level	Total Amount Across All Existing Campuses - Number of Students				
	2014-15	2015-16	2016-17	2017-18	2018-19
Pre-K	-	-	-	-	-
K	88	96	102	86	109
1	89	113	99	99	112
2	108	120	108	110	141
3	89	148	143	98	141
4	118	139	146	122	161
5	115	172	162	176	190
6	161	170	210	181	261
7	221	271	255	291	359
8	296	284	317	352	447
9	453	410	386	444	456
10	396	364	469	504	372
11	308	299	411	399	287
12	182	265	283	337	211
Total	2624	2851	3091	3199	3247

2. Summary of Issued Notices and Identified Deficiencies

a. Academic

The Authority has issued the following Academic Notices to Nevada Connections Academy:

- i. A Notice of Intent to Terminate the Charter Contract on September 30, 2016. This notice is attached as Appendix C.*
- ii. A Notice of Intent to Terminate the Charter Contract on February 10, 2017. This notice is attached as Appendix D.*
- iii. A Notice of Breach for academic underperformance on March 12, 2018. Specifically, this notice was issued due to the school receiving a 1 or 2 star rating for the elementary school for two consecutive years. This notice is attached as Appendix E.*
- iv. A Notice of Ongoing Breach for the Elementary school on October 19, 2018. This is attached as Appendix F.*
- v. A Notice of Concern for the Middle School on October 19, 2018. This is attached as Appendix G.*
- vi. A Notice of Concern for the High School on October 19, 2018. This is attached as Appendix H.*

b. Financial

The Authority has not issued any Financial Notices to Nevada Connections Academy during this charter term.

c. Organizational

The Authority has not issued any Organizational Notices to Nevada Connections Academy during this charter term.

3. Summary of the Overall Performance of Nevada Connections Academy

Nevada Connections Academy (NCA) has appeared before the Authority Board on a number of occasions in regard to the performance of the elementary, middle and high school programs. Most recently, the Authority issued a number of Notices as a result of the academic performance of all three programs during the 2017 – 2018 school year. The elementary, middle and high school programs all earned a 1 star rating according to the NSPF. Guidance documents for the NSPF identify a 1 star school as not meeting state standards for performance. Overall, students and subgroups are not achieving performance standards.

Prior to the 2017-2018 school year, performance ratings for Nevada Connections Academy were relatively similar. The elementary school program earned a 1 star rating during the 2016 – 2017 school year according to the NSPF, and the high school program was not rated. The middle school program earned a 3 star rating for that school year. According to NSPF guidance, a 3 star rating identifies an adequate school that has met the state's standard for performance.

The highest performance ratings according to the NSPF occurred during the 2014 – 2015 school year, when the elementary and high school programs garnered a 2 star rating and the middle school program earned a 4 star rating. NSPF guidance describes a 2 star school as one that has partially met the state's standard for performance while a 4 star school is described as commendable and has performed well for all students and subgroups.

In summary, the overall NSPF ratings for the academic program at Nevada Connections has trended downward over the course of the charter term. More information regarding the NSPF as well as the reports for Nevada Connections can be found in Appendix A.

When describing the overall performance of Nevada Connections Academy, it is important to note that NCA's high school entered into an agreement with the Authority in regard to its historically low-performing high school. This agreement can be found in Appendix I. The agreement with NCA limited enrollment in the high school to 1,500 students and froze enrollment in the 11th and 12th grades. Under the agreement, NCA was required to increase its high school graduation rate from 41% to 49%. The high school program has struggled to maintain an adequate four-year adjusted cohort graduation rate. Despite some modest increases, Nevada Connections had the lowest graduation rate in 2017 – 2018 of any SPCSA sponsored school that was open the following school year. The four-year adjusted cohort graduation rates for Nevada Connections Academy can be found on page 4 of this report.

With regards to the financial performance and viability of the school, SPCSA has some concerns about the overall health and viability of the school. SPCSA staff recommended a Notice of Concern be issued in 2018 due to continued financial concerns, but the Authority elected to table this agenda item on June 28, 2018².

Additionally, SPCSA staff has no concerns about the organizational health and performance of the school. The school has not received any notices regarding organizational performance.

² The Authority directed staff to overhaul the financial performance framework during the June 28, 2018 meeting.

Finally, SPCSA staff conducted a site evaluation of Nevada Connections on January 24, 2019. SPCSA staff found a few positive takeaways during the evaluation, including that the school provides students and families with another public education option. SPCSA staff also identified some areas of growth for the school to prioritize. These areas include a focus on the academic changes, interim and annual performance growth goals as outlined in the elementary school improvement plan as well as more intentional efforts to increase student discussion and student-centered learning. It should be noted that while site evaluations are important accountability tool, SPCSA staff places a stronger emphasis on student results and performance. A one-day site evaluation does not eclipse the annual performance rating for a school that captures the work of an entire academic year. See Appendix B for more details on the Nevada Connections Academy site evaluation.

4. Requirements for the Renewal Application

Applicants for renewal will receive an application template to populate and return to Authority staff between October 1 – October 15, 2019. This template will be provided to schools no later than July 31, 2019, and will align to the requirements set forth in [NRS 388A.285](#) and [NAC 388A.415](#).

Schools which are contemplating material amendments, e.g. changes to the mission statement, grade levels served, enrollment, facilities expansion, academic program, instructional delivery, management agreement, etc. will be permitted to submit such amendment requests in the event that the school is renewed. Schools are permitted to draft such amendment requests during the renewal process for filing immediately following the renewal decision but the SPCSA Board will not give weight to such materials or testimony related to any contemplated changes during the renewal process. The inclusion of amendment materials will result in the return of the renewal application and a request for resubmission of a compliant and complete application from SPCSA staff.

It is the responsibility of the school to ensure that the content is accurate and reflects information provided by NDE and the SPCSA. Any discrepancies between the data submitted and data previously provided by NDE or the SPCSA will result in a request for resubmission of a compliant and complete application from SPCSA staff.

Schools are required to submit the agenda and draft minutes for the meeting where the governing body voted to approve the submission of the renewal application into the appropriate areas in Epicenter prior to filing the renewal application. Failure to submit the agenda and draft minutes into the appropriate areas in Epicenter prior to filing the renewal application will result in the return of the renewal application and a request for resubmission of a compliant and complete application from SPCSA staff. The inclusion of the agenda and draft minutes with the renewal application will result in the return of the renewal application and a request for resubmission of a compliant and complete application from SPCSA staff.

5. Criteria to be used for Making a Renewal Decision

As stated on the previous page, renewal decisions for schools operating under written charters and or charter contracts are based on historic performance data as evidenced by both the Nevada State Performance Framework as well as the SPCSA Performance Framework. Historical anecdotes or unsolicited data, e.g. leadership changes or past programmatic adjustments, may be included in the report but will be given less weight when considered by the Authority in making renewal decisions. Additionally, renewal decisions will be based on the overall financial and organizational health of the public charter school. Evidence from both the financial framework and financial audits will be used to assess the overall financial health of a school. The Epicenter platform will be used to inform the assessment of the organizational health of a school, and to help determine whether or not the school is compliant under local, state and federal law. Finally, the SPCSA staff will examine the implementation of any formal improvement plans approved by the Authority in formulating a renewal recommendation. It bears repeating, however, that historical NSPF data will be given the greatest weight.

For schools applying for a third charter term, [NAC 388A.415](#) provides that the State Public Charter School Authority will give the academic performance of pupils a greater weight than that assigned to it on the first renewal. SPCSA staff will include academic performance data for any previous charter term for the Authority's consideration.

Appendix A



Rating From 2013-2014

School Overview Report

School Year: 2014-15

Nevada Connections Academy (18405.1)

Title I

2 Star School:

Based on 2013-2014 student achievement information, this school has been designated as a 2-Star School. A 2-Star School is a school that has room for improvement in whole school proficiency and growth. The required engagement of district leadership will support the school in improvement planning and implementation of specified and effective practices.

Whole School Demographics (N = 607)									
IEP	ELL	FRL	Am Indian/ AK Native	Asian	Black/ Afr American	Hispanic/ Latino	Pacific Islander	Two or More Races	White/ Caucasian
6.8%	nd	44.5%	nd	2.5%	9.2%	19.3%	nd	12.2%	55.0%

School Ratings

***Nevada's school rating system has been paused for the 2014-2015 school year. The rating displayed here reflects the schools rating from the 2013-2014 school year.**

School reports for prior years are available from the Nevada School Performance website (nspf.doe.nv.gov) by selecting a district, school and desired school year in the upper right hand corner.

Other information about this school 2014-2015 school year may be found on the [Nevada Report Card](#) website. New school performance ratings are expected be determined in September 2016

"nd" displays when a point value is not determined due to an insufficient number of students in the group.

**** displays when data is suppressed because there are less than 10 students in the applicable group.

"NA" displays when data is either not reported or not applicable.



Priority

Rating From 2013-2014

School Overview Report

School Year: 2014-15

Nevada Connections Academy

(18405.3)

Title I

Priority School: *Participation Warning

Based on 2013-2014 student achievement information, this school has been designated as a Priority School. A Priority School is a Title I-served school that has room for substantial improvement in whole school proficiency and growth. Intensive district and community assistance will provide this school with support necessary for improvement.

Schools where assessment participation rates are below 95% for the overall student group or any subgroup receive a *Participation Warning. Please see the FAQ page for further details.

Whole School Demographics (N = 1339)									
IEP	ELL	FRL	Am Indian/ AK Native	Asian	Black/ Afr American	Hispanic/ Latino	Pacific Islander	Two or More Races	White/ Caucasian
5.3%	nd	42.6%	0.9%	2.4%	9.3%	20.8%	1.0%	6.8%	58.7%

School Ratings

*Nevada's school rating system has been paused for the 2014-2015 school year. The rating displayed here reflects the schools rating from the 2013-2014 school year.

School reports for prior years are available from the Nevada School Performance website (nspf.doe.nv.gov) by selecting a district, school and desired school year in the upper right hand corner.

Other information about this school 2014-2015 school year may be found on the [Nevada Report Card](#) website. New school performance ratings are expected be determined in September 2016

"nd" displays when a point value is not determined due to an insufficient number of students in the group.

**** displays when data is suppressed because there are less than 10 students in the applicable group.

"NA" displays when data is either not reported or not applicable.



Rating From 2013-2014

School Overview Report

School Year: 2014-15

Nevada Connections Academy (18405.2)

Title I

4 Star School:

Based on 2013-2014 student achievement information, this school has been designated as a 4-Star School. A 4-Star School is among the higher performing schools in Nevada in student proficiency and/or student growth on the State assessments. The school is acknowledged for its achievement with public recognition and has some autonomy and/or flexibility in school planning and decision-making.

Whole School Demographics (N = 678)									
IEP	ELL	FRL	Am Indian/ AK Native	Asian	Black/ Afr American	Hispanic/ Latino	Pacific Islander	Two or More Races	White/ Caucasian
5.5%	nd	44.2%	nd	3.5%	9.1%	18.0%	nd	9.0%	58.6%

School Ratings

***Nevada's school rating system has been paused for the 2014-2015 school year. The rating displayed here reflects the schools rating from the 2013-2014 school year.**

School reports for prior years are available from the Nevada School Performance website (nspf.doe.nv.gov) by selecting a district, school and desired school year in the upper right hand corner.

Other information about this school 2014-2015 school year may be found on the [Nevada Report Card](#) website. New school performance ratings are expected be determined in September 2016

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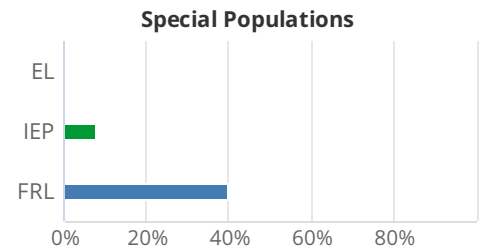
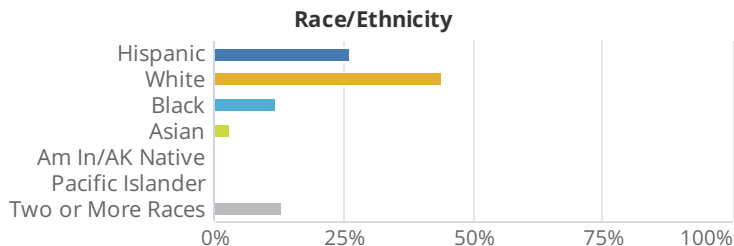
"NA" displays when data is either not reported or not applicable.

School Year 2017-2018 Nevada School Rating for Nevada Connections Academy



School Type: Charter SPCSA Virtual
School Level: Elementary School
Grade Levels: 0K-12
District: State Public Charter School Authority
Website: <http://www.connectionsacademy.com/>

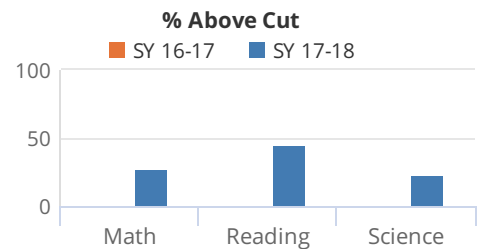
Total Index Score: 18.89
School Designation: CSI
555 Double Eagle Ct Ste 2000
Reno, NV 89521
Phone: 775-826-4200



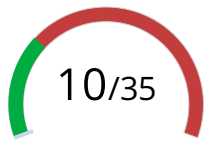
Academic Achievement



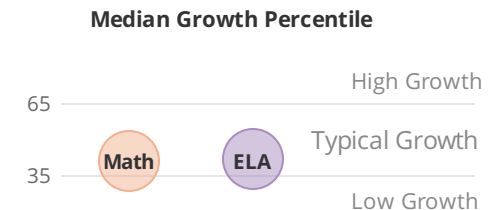
	% Above Cut	% District
Math CRT	27.8	52.8
ELA CRT	46.0	58.6
Science CRT	23.3	35.3
<i>Pooled Average</i>	34.4	52.9
Read by Grade 3	38.5	56.2



Student Growth



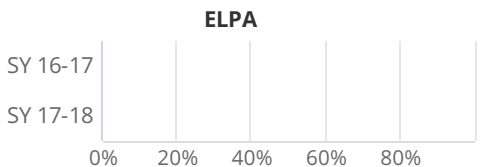
	% SY 17-18
Math CRT MGP	41.0
ELA CRT MGP	41.5
Math CRT AGP	25.9
ELA CRT AGP	43.6



English Language



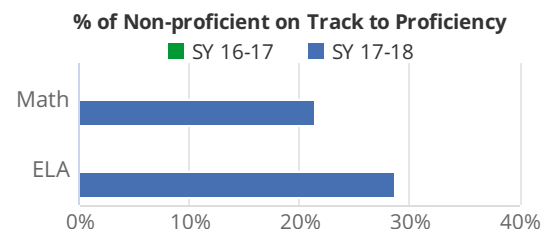
	% of EL Meeting AGP	% District
ELPA	-	42.5



Closing Opportunity Gaps



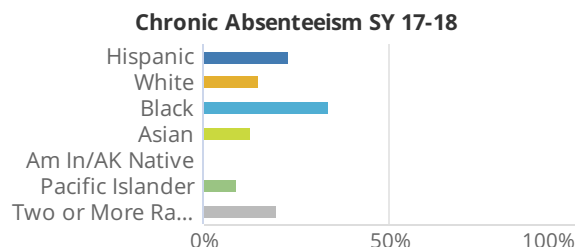
	% Non-proficient	% Meeting AGP
Math CRT	21.4	21.4
ELA CRT	28.7	28.7



Student Engagement



	% Chronically Absent	% District
Chronic Absenteeism	20.4	10.1
	% Participation	Met Target
Climate Survey	64.5	NO



Student CRT Proficiency

	% Above the Cut								
	% Math	% District	% 2018 Math MIP	% ELA	% District	% 2018 ELA MIP	% Science	% District	% 2018 Science MIP
American Indian/Alaska Native	-	44.8	30.9	-	58.3	39.5	-	9	N/A
Asian	45.4	75.2	67.2	54.5	76.2	74.1	-	49.2	N/A
Black/African American	5.5	30.6	28.8	38.8	40.5	39.6	5.8	14.6	N/A
Hispanic/Latino	32.4	40.2	36.5	44.5	48	45.5	21.2	22.5	N/A
Pacific Islander	-	48.3	45.6	-	52.6	55.7	-	32	N/A
Two or More Races	22.8	59	52.9	48.6	67.1	62.6	35.7	46.6	N/A
White/Caucasian	32.1	61.1	57.2	48.2	65	65.7	26	43.8	N/A
Special Education	10.7	29.2	24.8	17.8	29.3	26.3	6.2	19.4	N/A
English Learners Current + Former	-	37.4	32.4	-	38.9	38.4	-	15.2	N/A
English Learners Current	-	25.5		-	22.8		-	4.8	N/A
Economically Disadvantaged	22.1	33.1	35.7	45.1	40.4	44	22.2	17.3	N/A

Grade 3 ELA

	% Above the Cut	
	% ELA	% District
American Indian/Alaska Native	-	66.6
Asian	-	74.5
Black/African American	-	34.2
Hispanic/Latino	35	47.1
Pacific Islander	-	38.8
Two or More Races	-	64.3
White/Caucasian	44.8	62.6
Special Education	-	29.4
English Learners Current + Former	-	33
English Learners Current	-	21.8
Economically Disadvantaged	27.2	37.5

Student Growth

	Student Growth Percentile			
	Math MGP	ELA MGP	Math AGP	ELA AGP
American Indian/Alaska Native	-	-	-	-
Asian	46	42.5	30	40
Black/African American	25.5	45	9	54.5
Hispanic/Latino	51	41	34.7	47.8
Pacific Islander	-	-	-	-
Two or More Races	37	33	24	44
White/Caucasian	37.5	42	26	39.5
Special Education	48	38	16	24
English Learners Current + Former	-	-	-	-
English Learners Current	-	-	-	-
Economically Disadvantaged	31.5	45.5	21.7	46.1

Closing Opportunity Gap

	% of non-proficient Students meeting AGP	
	% Math AGP	% ELA AGP
American Indian/Alaska Native	-	-
Asian	-	-
Black/African American	6.2	30
Hispanic/Latino	24	23.5
Pacific Islander	-	-
Two or More Races	14.2	10
White/Caucasian	25.4	34
Special Education	11.7	12.5
English Learners Current + Former	-	-
English Learners Current	-	-
Economically Disadvantaged	14.5	22.9

Chronic Absenteeism

	% Chronically Absent	% District
American Indian/Alaska Native	-	14.5
Asian	12.9	4.9
Black/African American	34.1	14.5
Hispanic/Latino	22.9	11.5
Pacific Islander	9	12.6
Two or More Races	20	9
White/Caucasian	15.3	9
Special Education	26.9	11.3
English Learners Current + Former	N/A	N/A
English Learners Current	-	10.4
Economically Disadvantaged	26	15.9

What does my school rating mean?

Note: Some NSPF reports were updated on December 15, 2018 to reflect updated SBAC Mathematics scores.

1 Star school: Identifies a school that has **not met** the state's standard for performance. Students and subgroups are inconsistent in achieving performance standards. A one-star school has multiple areas that require improvement including an urgent need to address areas that are significantly below standard. The school must submit an improvement plan that identifies supports tailored to subgroups and indicators that are below standard. The school is subject to state interventions.

Participation Penalty: Schools where assessment participation rates are below 95% for the overall student group or any subgroup and failing to meet the weighted average calculated participation rate of 95 percent over the most recent two to three years for a second consecutive year are assessed a penalty of 9 index points off the total points earned for Academic Achievement. If the original points earned in AA was 9 or less, the school is credited zero points in AA.

Comprehensive Support and Improvement Designation (CSI): Low performing schools, schools with persistently low performing subgroups and high schools with graduation rates below 67% are designated to be CSI schools.

What do the performance indicators mean?

Academic Achievement--Student Proficiency

Academic Achievement is a measure of student performance based on a single administration of the State assessment. Cut scores are set that determine the achievement level needed to be proficient on the assessment.

Student Proficiency is determined by calculating the percent of students in the school who met (Level 3) and exceed standards (Level 4) on the State assessments.

Points are earned based on a pooled average (total number of students proficient on all three assessments divided by total number of students taking all three assessments).

English Language Proficiency

English Language Proficiency is a measure of English Learners achieving English Language proficiency on the State English Language Proficiency assessment, WIDA. The NSPF includes Adequate Growth Percentiles to determine if English Language Learners are meeting the goal toward English Language proficiency. Students meeting their growth targets should be on track to become English proficient and exit English language status in five years.

Student Engagement

Student Engagement is a measure of Chronic Absenteeism and Climate Survey Participation. Research shows that attendance matters and that chronic absenteeism places students at risk of failure. Chronic absenteeism is defined as missing 10 percent, or more, of school days for any reason, including excused, unexcused or disciplinary absences. Students who are absent due to school sponsored activities are not considered absent for the purposes of this calculation.

Climate Survey

The Climate Survey is a state survey administered to students in certain grades across the state. Schools meeting or exceeding the 75% participation threshold can receive bonus points. Two additional bonus points included within Student Engagement section.

Growth

Student growth is a measure of performance on the state assessments over time.

- Student Growth Percentile (SGP) is a measure of student achievement over time and compares the achievement of similar subgroups of students from one test administration to the next. An SGP from 35 to 65 is considered typical growth.
- Median Growth Percentile (MGP) is a summary of the student growth percentiles (SGP) in a school. A school's Median Growth Percentile (MGP) is determined by rank ordering all the SGPs in the school from lowest to highest and finding the median or middle number.
- Adequate Growth Percentile (AGP) describes the amount of growth a student needs to remain or become proficient on the State assessment in three years.

Closing Opportunity Gaps/Equity

Closing Opportunity Gaps is a measure of non-proficiency. This measure includes students who were non-proficient on the previous year's State assessment and determines if those students in the current assessment administration succeeded in meeting their Adequate Growth Percentile. This is a measure of gap between proficient and non-proficient students.

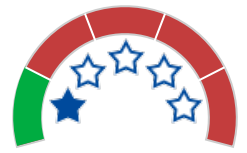
Star Rating



Index Score

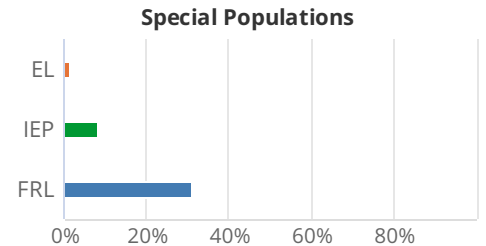
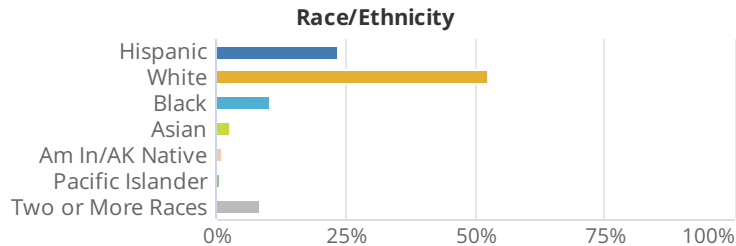
at or above 84
at or above 67, below 84
at or above 50, below 67
at or above 27, below 50
below 27

School Year 2017-2018 Nevada School Rating for Nevada Connections Academy

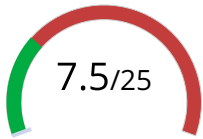


School Type: Charter SPCSA Virtual
School Level: High School
Grade Levels: 0K-12
District: State Public Charter School Authority
Website: <http://www.connectionsacademy.com/>

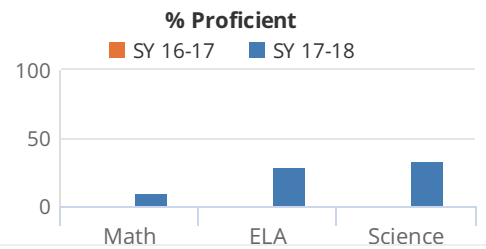
Total Index Score: 12.78
School Designation: CSI
555 Double Eagle Ct Ste 2000
Reno, NV 89521
Phone: 775-826-4200



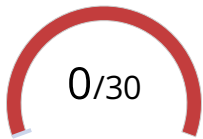
Academic Achievement



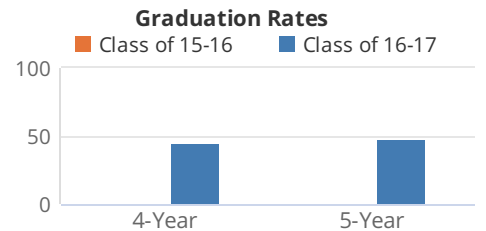
	% Proficient	% District
CCR Math	11	23.8
CCR ELA	28.7	44.5
Nevada High School Science	34.3	33.1



Graduation



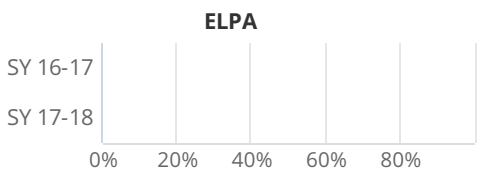
	Graduation Rate	% School	% District
4-Year	45	45	65.2
5-Year	49	49	66.9



English Language Proficiency



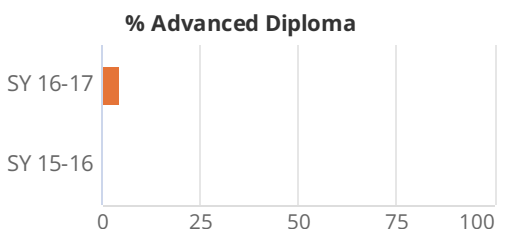
	% of EL Meeting AGP	% District
ELPA	-	26.8



College and Career Readiness



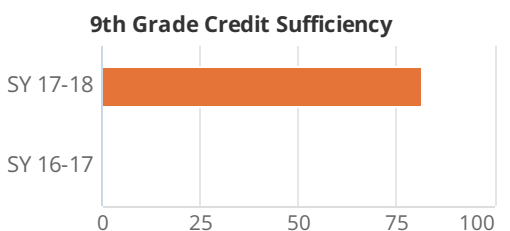
	% School	% District
Post-Secondary Preparation Participation	11.5	38.3
Post-Secondary Preparation Completion	0.5	24.7
Advanced Diploma	4.7	23.4



Student Engagement



	% School	% District
9th Grade Credit Sufficiency	81.7	87.3
Chronic Absenteeism	32.5	21.0
Climate Survey	64.4	NO



Academic Achievement

	% Above the Cut					
	Math	Math MIP	ELA	ELA MIP	Science	Science MIP
American Indian/Alaska Native	-	19.07	-	33.43	-	N/A
Asian	-	47.65	-	63.27	-	N/A
Black/African American	4.7	14.12	11.9	27.78	16.6	N/A
Hispanic/Latino	4.5	18.87	20.6	33.15	36.5	N/A
Pacific Islander	-	25.54	-	46.05	-	N/A
Two or More Races	10	33.64	30	55.86	40.8	N/A
White/Caucasian	15.8	41.31	34.1	60.26	35.3	N/A
Special Education	0	7.77	4.3	11.27	17.1	N/A
English Learners Current + Former	-	10.02	-	13.18	-	N/A
English Learners Current	-	6.96	-	6.9	-	N/A
Economically Disadvantaged	7.3	20.01	22	34.37	30.4	N/A

Graduation Rates

Graduation Measures	% 4-year	% 4-year MIP	% 5 year	% 5 year MIP
American Indian/Alaska Native	-	73.9	-	75.9
Asian	62.5	93.1	-	95.1
Black/African American	33.3	67.7	25	69.7
Hispanic/Latino	40.1	79.7	56.4	81.7
Pacific Islander	30.7	82.3	-	84.3
Two or More Races	37.8	81.3	37	83.3
White/Caucasian	49.6	84.2	52.2	86.2
Special Education	36	64.7	40.5	66.7
English Learners Current + Former	40.6	81.7	27.2	83.7
Economically Disadvantaged	36.1	76.8	38	78.8

College and Career Readiness

	Post-Secondary Preparation		Advanced Diploma	
	% Participation	% Completion	% School	% District
American Indian/Alaska Native	-	-	-	-
Asian	-	-	20	46.2
Black/African American	12.9	0	6.2	20
Hispanic/Latino	7.3	0	1.8	14.8
Pacific Islander	-	-	-	14.2
Two or More Races	13.3	0	7.1	27.9
White/Caucasian	12.1	0.4	4.5	24.5
Special Education	3.8	0	0	9.8
English Learners Current + Former	N/A	N/A	0	27.5
English Learners Current	-	-	0	27.5
Economically Disadvantaged	8.6	0	5.3	18.2

Student Engagement

	% 9 th Grade Credit Sufficiency Measure		% Chronically Absent	
	School	District	School	District
American Indian/Alaska Native	-	87.5	50	30
Asian	90.9	94.7	29.6	11.9
Black/African American	73.5	82.6	41.7	27
Hispanic/Latino	81.4	87	38.4	24.2
Pacific Islander	-	86.4	20	25
Two or More Races	80	88.6	31.2	20.7
White/Caucasian	83	87.8	28	18.3
Special Education	72.7	79	39.5	27.4
English Learners Current + Former	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
English Learners Current	77.7	82.4	50	29.3
Economically Disadvantaged	77.7	82.4	37.6	27.7

***95% Participation on State Assessments**

	% Math	% ELA
All Students	100	100
American Indian/Alaska Native	-	-
Asian	-	-
Black/African American	100	100
Hispanic/Latino	100	100
Pacific Islander	-	-
Two or More Races	100	100
White/Caucasian	100	100
Special Education	100	100
English Learners Current + Former	-	-
English Learners Current	-	-
Economically Disadvantaged	100	100

Post-Secondary Preparation Program Information

	Advanced Placement (AP)		Dual Credit/Dual Enrollment		International Baccalaureate		Career and Technical Education	
	Participation (%)	Completion (%)	Participation (%)	Completion (%)	Participation (%)	Completion (%)	Participation (%)	Completion (%)
American Indian/Alaska Native	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Asian	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Black/African American	12.9	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Hispanic/Latino	6	0	1.2	0	0	0	0	0
Pacific Islander	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Two or More Races	13.3	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
White/Caucasian	12.1	0.4	0	0	0	0	0	0
Special Education	3.8	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
English Learners Current + Former	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
English Learners Current	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Economically Disadvantaged	8.6	0	0	0	0	0	0	0

What does my school rating mean?

Note: Some NSPF reports were updated on December 15, 2018 to reflect updated SBAC Mathematics scores.

1 Star school: Identifies a school that has **not met** the state's standard for performance. Students and subgroups are inconsistent in achieving performance standards. A one-star school has multiple areas that require improvement including an urgent need to address areas that are significantly below standard. The school must submit an improvement plan that identifies supports tailored to subgroups and indicators that are below standard. The school is subject to state interventions.

Comprehensive Support and Improvement Designation (CSI): Low performing schools, schools with persistently low performing subgroups and high schools with graduation rates below 67% are designated to be CSI schools.

What do the performance indicators mean?

Academic Achievement-Student Proficiency

Academic Achievement is a measure of student performance based on a single administration of the State assessment. Cut scores are set to determine the achievement level needed to be proficient on the assessment.

Points are earned based on the percent of students proficient in the areas of English Language Arts (ELA), Math and Science based on assessment scores.

English Language Proficiency

English Language Proficiency is a measure of English Learners achieving English Language proficiency on the State English Language Proficiency assessment, WIDA.

The NSPF includes Adequate Growth Percentiles (AGP) to determine if English Language Learners are meeting the goal toward English Language Proficiency.

Students meeting their growth targets should be on track to become English proficient and exit English Language Learner status in five years.

Student Engagement

Student Engagement is a measure of 9th Grade Credit Sufficiency and Chronic Absenteeism.

Ninth-grade credit sufficiency represents the percent of students earning at least five (5) credits by the end of the first year of high school.

Research shows attendance matters and chronic absenteeism places students at risk of academic failure. Chronic absenteeism is defined as missing 10 percent, or more, of school days for any reason including excused, unexcused or disciplinary absences. Students who are absent due to school sponsored activities are not considered absent for the purposes of this calculation.

Climate Survey Bonus

The Climate Survey is a State Survey administered to students in certain grades across the State. Schools meeting or exceeding the 75% participation threshold can receive bonus points. Two additional bonus points are reflected in the Student Engagement section.

Graduation

The cohort graduation rate is determined through the adjusted cohort graduation rate (ACGR) process and follows federal guidelines for computing the rate. This process usually results in preliminary graduation rates in October, with disaggregated rates determined in December.

Because these dates are past the required State accountability reporting date of September 15th, the cohort rates used for this indicator lags one year behind the other accountability data in the school rating system.

College and Career Readiness

The college and career readiness indicator is made up of three measures. These include the percent of students:

- participating in post-secondary preparation programs
- completing post-secondary preparation programs
- earning an Advanced Diploma*

Post-secondary preparation programs includes Advanced Placement (AP), International Baccalaureate, Dual Credit/Dual Enrollment and Career and Technical Education.

Dates a for Advanced Diploma are past the required State accountability reporting date of September 15th, the cohort rates used for this indicator lags one year behind the other accountability data in the school rating system.

Star Rating



Index Score

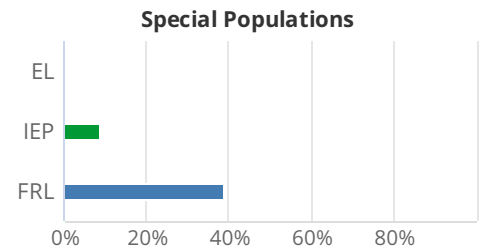
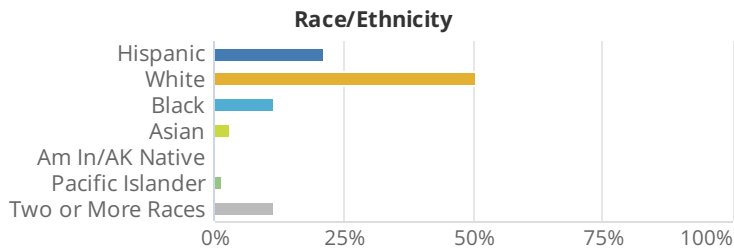
at or above 82
at or above 70, below 82
at or above 50, below 70
at or above 27, below 50
below 27

School Year 2017-2018 Nevada School Rating for Nevada Connections Academy



School Type: Charter SPCSA Virtual
School Level: Middle School
Grade Levels: 0K-12
District: State Public Charter School Authority
Website: <http://www.connectionsacademy.com/>

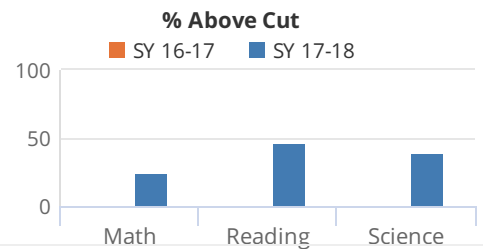
Total Index Score: 26.11
School Designation: CSI
555 Double Eagle Ct Ste 2000
Reno, NV 89521
Phone: 775-826-4200



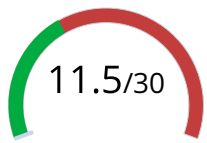
Academic Achievement



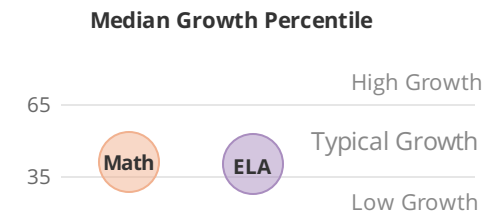
	% Above Cut	% District
% Math CRT	25.5	36.8
% ELA CRT	47.7	56.1
% Science CRT	39.2	45.2
% Pooled Average	37.1	46.3



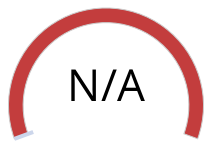
Student Growth



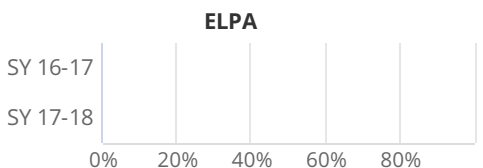
	% SY 17-18
Math CRT MGP	41.0
ELA CRT MGP	40.0
Math CRT AGP	27.8
ELA CRT AGP	46.9



English Language



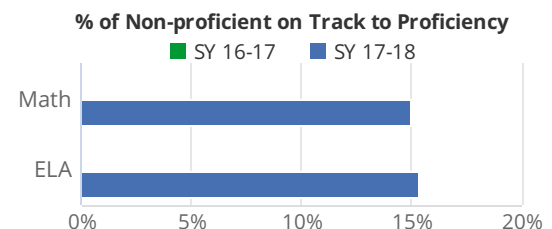
	% of EL Meeting AGP	% District
ELPA	N/A	32.4



Closing Opportunity Gaps



	% Non-proficient	% Meeting AGP
Math CRT	~15%	15
ELA CRT	~15%	15.4

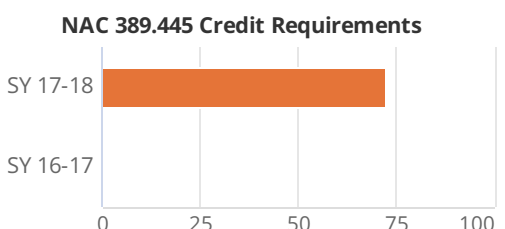


Student Engagement



	% School	% District
Chronic Absenteeism	29.7	11.1
Academic Learning Plans	91.1	97.5
NAC 389.445 Credit Requirements	72.7	91.5

	% Participation	Met Target
Climate Survey	69.0	NO



Student CRT Proficiency

	% Above the Cut								
	Math	District	2018 Math MIP	ELA	District	2018 ELA MIP	Science	District	2018 Science MIP
American Indian/Alaska Native	-	26.5	24.6	-	57.1	40.5	-	38.1	N/A
Asian	25	64.1	56.4	56.2	77.3	74.6	40	62.2	N/A
Black/African American	14	17.7	19.5	29.6	38.4	34.5	11.5	25	N/A
Hispanic/Latino	25.3	26.1	25.5	52.2	46.3	42.2	42.5	34.9	N/A
Pacific Islander	10	34.9	33.6	40	53.2	50.7	-	42.8	N/A
Two or More Races	15.2	41.5	37.5	48.6	61	59.2	39.3	51.6	N/A
White/Caucasian	30.8	44.4	44.4	49.3	63.5	64.6	42.9	54	N/A
Special Education	6.1	11.5	14.3	14.2	20.7	17.8	12	14.6	N/A
English Learners Current + Former	-	22.2	16	-	34.8	20.3	-	25.7	N/A
English Learners Current	-	8.5		-	15.8		-	9.3	N/A
Economically Disadvantaged	19.1	21.7	25.5	41.7	41.5	41.4	31.5	30.7	N/A

Student Growth

	Student Growth Percentile			
	Math MGP	ELA MGP	Math AGP	ELA AGP
American Indian/Alaska Native	-	-	-	-
Asian	37	32	26.6	60
Black/African American	39	34.5	15.6	30.7
Hispanic/Latino	50	44	30	49.5
Pacific Islander	30	27	20	50
Two or More Races	40	37	13.7	50.9
White/Caucasian	38.5	40.5	32.2	47.4
Special Education	35	37	4.6	11.3
English Learners Current + Former	-	-	-	-
English Learners Current	-	-	-	-
Economically Disadvantaged	41	35	21.7	39.3

Closing Opportunity Gap

	Percent of non-proficient Students meeting AGP	
	% Math AGP	% ELA AGP
American Indian/Alaska Native	-	-
Asian	-	-
Black/African American	5.7	16
Hispanic/Latino	18.3	14.5
Pacific Islander	-	-
Two or More Races	7.4	15.7
White/Caucasian	17.3	16
Special Education	0	6.9
English Learners Current + Former	0	-
English Learners Current	-	-
Economically Disadvantaged	6.7	12.1

Student Engagement

	% Chronically Absent		% Academic Learning Plans		% NAC 389.445 Credit Requirements	
	School	District	School	District	School	District
American Indian/Alaska Native	-	16.9	-	98	-	85
Asian	17.6	3.6	100	98.4	100	99.4
Black/African American	39	12.9	89.6	96.3	60.5	85.4
Hispanic/Latino	33.3	11.7	88.1	97.5	62.9	89.4
Pacific Islander	23.8	11.9	85.7	95.9	-	91
Two or More Races	30	12	94.2	97.3	72	91.7
White/Caucasian	26	10.9	92.2	97.8	77.3	93.4
Special Education	35.6	15.3	88.2	96.8	51.2	89
English Learners Current + Former	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
English Learners Current	-	8.5	93.9	98.2	62.7	85.6
Economically Disadvantaged	35.1	14.3	93.9	98.2	62.7	85.6

What does my school rating mean?

Note: Some NSPF reports were updated on December 15, 2018 to reflect updated SBAC Mathematics scores.

1 Star school: Identifies a school that has **not met** the state's standard for performance. Students and subgroups are inconsistent in achieving performance standards. A one-star school has multiple areas that require improvement including an urgent need to address areas that are significantly below standard. The school must submit an improvement plan that identifies supports tailored to subgroups and indicators that are below standard. The school is subject to state interventions.

Participation Penalty: Schools where assessment participation rates are below 95% for the overall student group or any subgroup and failing to meet the weighted average calculated participation rate of 95 percent over the most recent two to three years for a second consecutive year are assessed a penalty of 9 index points off the total points earned for Academic Achievement. If the original points earned in AA was 9 or less, the school is credited zero points in AA.

Comprehensive Support and Improvement Designation (CSI): Low performing schools, schools with persistently low performing subgroups and high schools with graduation rates below 67% are designated to be CSI schools.

What do the performance indicators mean?

Academic Achievement--Student Proficiency

Academic Achievement is a measure of student performance based on a single administration of the State assessment. Cut scores are set that determine the achievement level needed to be proficient on the assessment.

Student Proficiency is determined by calculating the percent of students in the school who met (Level 3) and exceed standards (Level 4) on the State assessments.

Points are earned based on a pooled average (total number of students proficient on all three assessments divided by total number of students taking all three assessments).

English Language Proficiency

English Language Proficiency is a measure of English Learners achieving English Language proficiency on the State English Language Proficiency assessment, WIDA. The NSPF includes Adequate Growth Percentiles to determine if English Language Learners are meeting the goal toward English Language proficiency. Students meeting their growth targets should be on track to become English proficient and exit English language status in five years.

Student Engagement

Student Engagement is a measure of Chronic Absenteeism, Academic Learning Plans, NAC 389.445 Credit Requirements and Climate Survey Participation.

Research shows that attendance matters and that chronic absenteeism places students at risk of failure. Chronic absenteeism is defined as missing 10 percent, or more, of school days for any reason, including excused, unexcused or disciplinary absences. Students who are absent due to school sponsored activities are not considered absent for the purposes of this calculation.

Academic Learning Plan reflects the percent of students at the school with an academic learning plan. Public schools, under NRS 388.165 and 388.205, are required to develop an academic learning plan for each student. Including this measure in the Nevada Accountability System signifies the state's commitment to college and career readiness for all students.

The NAC 389.445 Credit Requirements measure highlights the percent of grade eight students completing the required number of units for promotion to high school.

Climate Survey

The Climate Survey is a state survey administered to students in certain grades across the state. Schools meeting or exceeding the 75% participation threshold can receive bonus points. Two

Student Growth

Student growth is a measure of performance on the state assessments over time.

- Student Growth Percentile (SGP) is a measure of student achievement over time and compares the achievement of similar subgroups of students from one test administration to the next. An SGP from 35 to 65 is considered typical growth.
- Median Growth Percentile (MGP) is a summary of the student growth percentiles (SGP) in a school. A school's Median Growth Percentile (MGP) is determined by rank ordering all the SGPs in the school from lowest to highest and finding the median or middle number.
- Adequate Growth Percentile (AGP) describes the amount of growth a student needs to remain or become proficient on the State assessment in three years.

Closing Opportunity Gaps/Equity

Closing Opportunity Gaps is a measure of non-proficiency. This measure includes students who were non-proficient on the previous year's State assessment and determines if those students in the current assessment administration succeeded in meeting their Adequate Growth Percentile. This is a measure of gap between proficient and non-proficient students.

Star Rating



Index Score

at or above 80
at or above 70, below 80
at or above 50, below 70
at or above 29, below 50
below 29

additional bonus points included within Student Engagement section.

Appendix B

To: Chris McBride, Superintendent, Nevada Connections Academy
From: Selcuk Ozdemir, Education Programs Supervisor
CC: Jason Guinasso, SPCSA Board Chair
Scott Harrington, NCA Board Chair
Date: Friday, March 22, 2019
Re: Site Evaluation Report for Nevada Connections Academy

SITE EVALUATION REPORT NEVADA CONNECTIONS ACADEMY

Site Evaluations are a critical accountability component to the oversight of schools by the Nevada State Public Charter School Authority (SPCSA) and are fundamental to charter schools' autonomy. As approved by the Legislature [NRS-388A.150] the Authority is to *"provide oversight to the charter schools that it sponsors to ensure that those charter schools maintain high educational and operational standards, preserve autonomy and safeguard the interests of pupils and the community."*

Site Evaluations allow the SPCSA to assess schools' student achievement, progress to goals, and fulfillment of their mission, vision, and educational program outlined in their charter. Improving the learning of pupils, and, by extension, the public education system; increased opportunities for learning and access to quality education; and a more thorough and efficient system of accountability for student achievement in Nevada are all foundational elements of the SPCSA's mission, the legislative intent of charter schools and are central elements of the Authority's on-going evaluation of charter schools.

The SPCSA conducts multiple visits and evaluations throughout schools' charter terms. The cumulative evidence through multi-year oversight measures become part of the record that help inform recommendations put forth by SPCSA staff, specifically renewal recommendations to the Authority Board. The Board of the Nevada State Public Charter School Authority makes all final charter renewal decisions. Site Evaluations are just one criterion considered for renewal; student achievement, financial prudence, and fulfillment of the program outlined in the approved charter are also evaluated by the Authority when making renewal decisions.

Attached is the Site Evaluation Report for Nevada Connections Academy, which was conducted by myself and Daniel Peltier on Thursday, January 24, 2019 at Nevada Connections Academy, 555 Double Eagle Ct Ste 2000, Reno, NV 89521. The optional school response is also included. The school is currently operating under an amended charter contact, which it entered in 2017. The amended contract terminates on the last school day of 2020. The school leader is Chris McBride, and the board chair is Scott Harrington.

Please contact the Team Lead for this Site Evaluation, Selcuk Ozdemir, with any questions.

SITE EVALUATION REPORT

NEVADA CONNECTIONS ACADEMY

Campus Name: Nevada Connections Academy
Grade Levels: K-12
School Leader: Chris McBride, Superintendent
Purpose of Site Evaluation: Upcoming renewal
Date of Authorization: May 5, 2007, renewed July 1, 2013
Conducted Date: Thursday, Jan 24, 2019
Conducted By: Selcuk Ozdemir and Danny Peltier

SUMMARY OF SITE EVALUATION

The SPCSA conducts multiple visits and evaluations throughout schools' charter terms. The cumulative evidence through multi-year oversight measures become part of the record that help inform recommendations put forth by SPCSA staff, specifically renewal recommendations to the Authority Board. The Board of the Nevada State Public Charter School Authority makes all final charter renewal decisions. Site Evaluations do not trump end of year results and site evaluations are just one criterion considered for renewal; student achievement, financial prudence, and fulfilment of the program outlined in the approved charter are also evaluated by the Authority when making renewal decisions.

The mission of Nevada Connections Academy is to provide a high-tech virtual school environment that not only provides a data-driven, highly accountable virtual educational program, but also facilitates and fosters genuine connections among students, teachers, parents, and all members of the school community.

The work toward fulfilling this mission was noted in observations by the team, including:

- High-tech virtual school environment;
- Connects students and teachers from different geographical locations;
- Create virtual environment students asks question and access educational programs; and
- Fosters connections among students, teachers, parents via field trips.

The team conducted 9 classroom observations across various grade levels at Nevada Connections Academy. Team members observed grades 4, 6, 8, 9,11, 12, Honor roll, and special education classes. On average, the observation time in each classroom was 15 minutes. Observations ranged through the full cycle of class time, with some conducted in the beginning, middle, and end of the lesson.

Observers noted consistency in schoolwide expectations, procedures, and practices throughout the school, in communication with students and parents; the use of chat boxes during the live lessons, and virtual discussion rules.

Common trends from stakeholders were noted in focus groups, as well, including educational options provided by the school; support for the teachers; and the emphasis on

opportunity for students who do not fit a traditional program of academic achievement. Most of the stakeholders spoke positively of Nevada Connections Academy, and there was a sense of pride being a staff member of the school because of the work the school is doing.

The team identified technology that provided opportunity for students who do not fit traditional brick-and-mortar schools and that technology allowed students to work at their own pace. However, Nevada Connections Academy has opportunities for growth and to improve academic achievement, which would further their commitment to fulfilling their mission for all their students.

I. CLASSROOM ENVIRONMENT

Classroom Environment	Evidence Observed	School-wide Rating
Creating an Environment of Respect and Rapport	In multiple observations, the team noted that teachers try to apply discussion techniques to engage students and create discussion. However, there was minimal student participation in relevant topic discussions. While the conversations that took place were grade-level appropriate in tone and behaviors, an increase in student-led discourse should be prioritized.	Distinguished Proficient Basic Unsatisfactory Not Observed
Establishing a Culture for Learning	In general, there were not any behavior management concerns observed by team members. On the other hand, observers noted some students engaged in off-task conversation and discussion of unrelated issues in the chat boxes during live lessons.	Distinguished Proficient Basic Unsatisfactory Not Observed
Managing Classroom Procedures	In general, there were rules and procedures evident through virtual classroom observations and across grade levels. However, there was inconsistent implementation of school wide procedures observed across all classes.	Distinguished Proficient Basic Unsatisfactory Not Observed
Managing Student Behavior	Teachers demonstrated proficiency with management of student behavior. There was some evidence of positive reinforcement, and limited evidence of corrective or negative reinforcement, particularly with the off-task commentary in the chat box.	Distinguished Proficient Basic Unsatisfactory Not Observed

II. INSTRUCTIONAL OBSERVATION

Instructional Observation	Evidence Observed	School-wide Rating
Communicating with Students	Observers found the communication to students during instruction to be inconsistent. In general, observers noted that instruction was generally not well differentiated. A wide range of instructional strategies was not observed nor was higher-level questioning (as noted in recommendations to consider).	Distinguished Proficient Basic Unsatisfactory Not Observed

	Communication by teachers during the live lessons was positive.	
Using Questioning and Discussion Techniques	Teachers generally led questions and answers, rather than facilitate discussions among students. Many of the questions observed by both teammates were low-level, basic questions soliciting yes/no or recall responses. Given the grade levels observed, evaluators would expect to see much more analysis and application questions leveraged during instruction to promote higher-level thinking.	Distinguished Proficient Basic Unsatisfactory Not Observed
Engaging Students in Learning	In lower grade levels, there was consistent proficient engagement by students. In upper grades, however, students were disengaged – not participating in either whole group or small group discussion and off-task, as evidenced by chat box commentary.	Distinguished Proficient Basic Unsatisfactory Not Observed
Using Assessment in Instruction	In multiple observations, the team noted teachers were not using assessment in instruction. When it was noted, it was only recall responses (DOK Level 1, Bloom's levels 1 and 2).	Distinguished Proficient Basic Unsatisfactory Not Observed

III. OPERATIONS

Observations	Evidence Observed	School-wide Rating
Mission driven operations	In general, there seems to be designed or implemented school-wide procedures that are mission-aligned. However, there was limited evidence that fostered connections among students, parents, and all members of the school community existed.	Distinguished Proficient Basic Unsatisfactory Not Observed
Managing Schoolwide Procedures	Observers noted that while there was evidence of school-wide processes or procedures they were generally inconsistently implemented and/or vary from teacher to teacher. There was not a uniformity to the degree one would expect.	Distinguished Proficient Basic Unsatisfactory Not Observed
Maintaining a Safe Environment	Given the online nature of the program and the current description for this criterion, the team did not evaluate this area in its observations.	Distinguished Proficient Basic Unsatisfactory Not Observed

IV. FOCUS GROUP SUMMARY

Group	No. of Participants	Duration
Governing Board	2	55 minutes
Parents/Families	5	50 minutes
Students	3	45 minutes
Staff	16	55 minutes
School Leadership	9	45 minutes

Site Evaluation team members conducted five Focus Groups, one each with the following groups: Governing Board, Parents/Families, Students, Staff, and School Leadership. Participants were asked a series of questions, including common questions across all Focus Groups, with a range of 8 -15 questions, depending on the group. Only a few grade levels were represented for the Parents/Families and Students Focus Group due to not logging into the system via internet. One parent preferred to join in-person while other parents joined the focus group via online.

Both instructional and non-instructional/support staff were present for the Staff Focus Group. Some staff joined the focus group via online tool.

In general, the common theme threaded throughout all Focus Groups was the sense of community and ‘family feel’ of Nevada Connections Academy. All stakeholders, particularly board, staff, and school leadership, commented on the maximizing student potential based on student needs, educational opportunity and equitable experience to all students in Nevada.

Governing Board

- Nevada Connections Academy is in a unique situation as compared to a traditional brick-and-mortar school in the way that there is a high transiency rate that other schools do not have. Students who are at NCA for more than 1 year perform better than those with less than 1 year at the school. This year, the board completed a survey that was based on the overall impressions of the principal at the school.
- The board said the principal’s goals were to increase enrollment, increase the school’s star rating, and improve student proficiency. The achievement of these goals is measured by a mid-year and end-of-year principal evaluation and the principal’s bonus is tied to those evaluations. The board said the principal was doing a good job furthering the goals and expected continued improvement in years ahead.
- Nevada Connections Academy has an accountant that attends the board meetings every month, and the account and board members go through the financials. The board gets updates a week prior to the meeting, and then they discuss the information during the meeting. This ensures that the Board is always aware of the school’s fiscal health.
- There is an annual survey that goes to parents and it is sent out to all NCA schools nationally. It asks the parents to rate NCA. The Board is not aware of any unresolved parent concerns; members understand parents to be quite satisfied with their choice of Nevada Connections Academy.

Parents/Families

- Parents expressed appreciation with the school’s flexibility and school staff communication. Said one parent, “Brick and mortar school was not working for us. We live in a remote location. I am very comfortable with technology and this school gives us flexibility.”
- There was general appreciation for the option that the virtual school serves and provides parents with a choice. Parents can also monitor their kids learning “If there was no online option, they might be separated because husband is working in the military,” said one parent.

- Parents and family members said they feel their child is somewhat challenged in class. Said one parent, "...More challenged in some subjects than others. One-on-one interactions with teachers are helpful."
- Parents also expressed appreciation for the teachers. "She has a close relationship with her math teacher and has had the same English teacher for 2 years," said one parent.

Teachers/Staff

- Staff was very positive about the working environment and professional development opportunities. Staff shared opportunities for professional development, citing the attention to the level of support they receive. Said one staff, "There are a number of professional development programs in place. Teachers can continue to take ongoing training and in-person staff training. Staff met two weeks ago and met physically for training. In addition, Pearson has a number of resources on their level for continuing education of teachers." Said another, "Being in a virtual school, I did not think there would be as much professional development but there actually was. I recently attended a conference and it provided good information. If she finds a conference on her own, the school supports the teacher attending the conference and she brings back lessons to the teachers for further learning at the school site."
- Staff was generally positive about the leadership. Staff mentioned there are number of ways which leadership solicit feedback, including weekly check in with direct managers, multiple staff surveys at school and corporate levels.
- Staff shared specific notes from using data to inform instruction. "Working online has the unique caveat that any amount of data can be pulled at any time. Real time assignments come in and they go through gradebooks very often. Nice thing is they can look at gradebooks to adapt lessons for one on one lessons based on the grades. They can narrow down to subgroups with the data to help those subs get caught up and get back on track" said one staff member.
- Staff consistently cited and spoke highly of the staff retention. "The people are great, and the interactions are great as well" said one staff member.

Students

- Overwhelmingly, students expressed how they enjoy and spoke favorably of the field trips and mentioned they want more. Said one student, "My favorite thing about school is field trips."
- Students echoed some of the comments from other stakeholders, including brick and mortar school was not working for them. Virtual classrooms gives them flexibility.
- Students expressed appreciation of their teachers and one-on-one lessons. This signals that most teachers are effective in reaching their students and building relationships.
- Students felt safe and supported. Said one student, "I like my English teacher, she helps me when I struggle."

V. OVERALL STRENGTHS OF PROGRAM

1. Emphasis on providing options

All stakeholders – board members, parents, staff – spoke highly and passionately about providing educational opportunity for students who do not fit the traditional

program. Parents praised being at Nevada Connections, and the opportunity given to students who work at their own pace and how Nevada Connection Academy was helping students reach their goals.

2. Strong appreciation for school

Staff identified the working environment and professional development opportunities as reasons for their continued retention, and they praised the ‘family feel’ of the school. Board members and staff all spoke positively of the school and the school’s leader, with both board members and some staff mentioning he was doing a great job at Nevada Connections Academy.

VI. RECOMMENDATIONS/ACTION ITEMS

1. Focus on academic changes, interim and annual performance growth goals as outlined in the submitted Elementary School Improvement plan

To support the academic goals and benchmarks presented in the Elementary School Improvement plan and approved by the Authority, the rigor in classroom instructions and learning needs to be elevated. The rigor will stimulate the students intellectually and enhance their academic growth. Due to the underperformance of the elementary school program Nevada Connections Academy and the Authority entered into a mutually agreed to address the academic deficiencies. Addressing these academic deficiencies can be provided via high-level DOK and Bloom’s questioning which will allow analysis, application, and extending thinking. The team observed low-level questioning featuring recall and basic skill/concept questions in most classrooms.

2. Increase student discussion and student-centered learning

In most classrooms the team observed the teacher-led questioning of students rather than facilitating a discussion between students. Teachers tended to contribute more ‘teacher talk’ and draw conclusions for students. Additionally, the off-task conversations by students in the chat boxes, indicated a lack of engagement and a need for more challenging, rigorous opportunities for learning. During the live lesson observations teachers were reluctant to turn over the discussion to students and present them with evidence.

ACTION ITEM

Provide specific professional development to teachers which they will receive how they can incorporate higher order thinking without overextending their lessons. Collectively review the DOK levels and/or Blooms’ Taxonomy to push for higher-level and more rigorous questioning throughout all grade levels. In addition, the school should spend time retraining all teachers on multi-tiered instructional approaches and the RtI to ensure that teachers are aware of all strategies and available resources to help students. Nevada Connections Academy should continue to focus on implementing it’s Academic Improvement Plan as Approved by the Authority in 2018.

Note

SPCSA School Support Team members will follow up on each of these recommendations during their next site visit, unless otherwise noted.

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Nevada Connections Academy Site Evaluation Response

Nevada Connections Academy (NCA) appreciates the Site Evaluation Report for the SPCSA. We view this document as an additional data source that will be useful as we continually drive to improve student outcomes and school operations. We do have concern that several tools used in the Authority's site evaluation have been designed for use in brick and mortar schools (i.e. classroom environment, and instructional observation) and should not be applied in the same manner to a virtual education environment.

We also see that we may not have sufficiently informed the conductors of the site evaluation how, exactly, instruction and learning take place for our students. The Live Lessons that were observed are optional, supplemental Tier I instruction. The majority of learning takes place between a combination of direct virtual learning and 1-to-1 instruction. The evaluators did not have the opportunity to observe either virtual learning or 1 to 1 instruction, and these are the core of our instruction. While Live Lessons are optional for students, direct virtual instruction and 1-to-1 instruction are mandatory. In consideration of the misalignment between the evaluation tool and the instructional model, NCA proposes that a new site visit be conducted using a tool aligned with our virtual instructional model.

Despite the misalignment of the Authority's evaluation tool with our virtual instructional model, NCA is appreciative of the opportunity to learn from the feedback provided, and notes its response to portions of the site evaluation report below.

Regarding the Instructional Observation component "Questioning and Discussion Techniques," we note that NCA's internal processes also revealed opportunities for improvement with some aspects of our Live Lessons. While we disagree with the 'unsatisfactory' rating, we certainly recognize the opportunity for improvement. Again, it should be noted that Live Lessons are typically generalized instruction that is planned based on the needs of a group of students determined by assessment data. Further, NCA is already undertaking measures to improve Live Lessons. NCA will implement the action item to "provide specific professional development to teachers regarding how they can incorporate higher order thinking without overextending their lessons."

Regarding the Instructional Observation component "Using Assessment in Instruction," NCA contends any rating should take into account discussion with

the teachers. While assessment during instruction can often be used to help guide a lesson as it is happening, the majority of the benefit of using assessment in instruction occurs when the teacher utilizes assessment data to plan instruction. As such, NCA does not agree that a school-wide rating is appropriate absent a meeting with teachers.

NCA would like to also address the 'basic' rating for the Classroom Environment component "Creating an Environment of Respect and Rapport." The evidence comment that "there was minimal student participation in relevant topic discussions" should also note that the Live Lessons are optional, supplementary instruction for students. Student to student discussion in the virtual setting also occurs on discussion boards, however this was not observed by the evaluators.

While NCA's response to the three ratings above does not represent all of our points of concern, these are the areas we focused on in our response. NCA takes pride that the strengths of our program were apparent from the meetings with the focus groups. NCA also appreciates the professional manner and general demeanor of the evaluators while they were visiting with us. We would welcome the opportunity to participate in another site evaluation conducted utilizing an evaluation tool that takes into account the virtual nature of e our academic program. NCA would volunteer to participate in a working group to assist in the development of an evaluation tool for virtual schools if the SPCSA decides to take that approach. NCA looks forward to further demonstrating our commitment to improve our academic performance and serving our diverse student population.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Chris McBride".

Chris McBride, Ph.D.
Superintendent
Nevada Connections Academy

Appendix C

BRIAN SANDOVAL
Governor

STATE OF NEVADA

PATRICK GAVIN
Executive Director



STATE PUBLIC CHARTER SCHOOL AUTHORITY

1749 North Stewart Street Suite 40
Carson City, Nevada 89706-2543
(775) 687 - 9174 · Fax: (775) 687 - 9113

September 30, 2016

Ms. Jafeth Sanchez, Board President
Nevada Connections Academy
555 Double Eagle Ct., #2000
Reno, NV 89521

VIA Electronic Mail and Certified Mail
Return Receipt Requested

Re: Notice of Intent to Revoke Written Charter

Dear Ms. Sanchez,

At the September 23, 2016 meeting of the State Public Charter School Authority Board, the Board received an update regarding the proposed charter contract with terms previously approved by the Authority. After update and discussion, the Board directed staff to issue this Notice of Intent to Revoke the Written Charter of Nevada Connections Academy ("Notice of Intent") based on having a graduation rate for the preceding school year that is less than sixty (60) percent. This Notice of Intent is issued pursuant to NRS 388A.330(2).

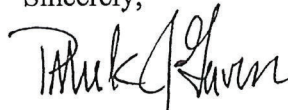
- 1) The deficiencies or reason upon which the action of the sponsor is based is Nevada Connections Academy's graduation rate for immediately preceding year being below sixty (60) percent as required by NRS 388A.330(1)(e). The graduating cohort of 2015 as defined by NAC 389.0246 is 35.63%.
- 2) Pursuant to NRS 388A.330(2)(b), the school has at least thirty (30) days within which to correct the deficiencies. The first day of this period is October 3, 2016. The date by which the school must have completed all efforts to correct these deficiencies is December 2, 2016.
- 3) At its December 16, 2016 meeting, the SPCSA Board will make a determination regarding whether Nevada Connections Academy has corrected the deficiencies. The Board will make this determination during a public hearing held pursuant to subsection 3 of NRS 388A.330.
- 4) At its December 16, 2016 meeting, the SPCSA Board will hold a public hearing to consider whether to reconstitute the governing body, or revoke the written charter. The SPCSA Board will make this determination during a public hearing held pursuant to subsection 3 of NRS 388A.330.
- 5) Any action revoking the written charter, if approved by the SPCSA Board, would be effective no sooner than the end of the 2016-17 academic year.

Jafeth Sanchez
Page 2
September 30, 2016

- 6) Any action reconstituting the governing body, if approved by the SPCSA Board, could be effective immediately.

This letter serves as the school's formal Notice of Intent under NRS 388A.330(2). Nevada Connections Academy and the Authority staff must exchange any written or documentary evidence they wish to be considered by the Authority by no later than 5 pm Pacific Time on December 2, 2016. Nevada Connections Academy should submit its documentation to the Authority via Epicenter. Pursuant to applicable law, the school will have the opportunity during the statutorily mandated periods as stated herein to correct the issues state in this Notice of Intent which have prompted this action.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Patrick J. Gavin". The signature is stylized with a large, looped "P" and a cursive "Gavin".

Patrick J. Gavin
Executive Director

Appendix D

BRIAN SANDOVAL
Governor

STATE OF NEVADA

PATRICK GAVIN
Executive Director



STATE PUBLIC CHARTER SCHOOL AUTHORITY

1749 North Stewart Street Suite 40
Carson City, Nevada 89706-2543
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VIA CERTIFIED MAIL
RETURN RECEIPT REQUESTED AND ELECTRONIC MAIL

February 10, 2017

Ms. Jafeth Sanchez, Board President
Nevada Connections Academy
555 Double Eagle Court #2000
Reno, NV 89521

Dear Ms. Sanchez,

At the January 27, 2017 meeting of the State Public Charter School Authority Board, the Authority Board received information regarding the 2015-2016 graduation rate of Nevada Connections Academy. The Authority Board then directed staff to issue this Notice pursuant to NRS 388A.330(1)(e) ("Notice of Intent") based on having a graduation rate for the preceding school year that is less than sixty (60) percent. This Notice of Intent is issued pursuant to NRS 388A.330(2).

- 1) The deficiencies or reason upon which the action of the sponsor is based is Nevada Connections Academy's graduation rate for immediately preceding year being below 60% as required by NRS 388A.330(1)(e). The graduating cohort of 2016 as defined by NAC 389.0246 is 40.09%.
- 2) Pursuant to NRS 388A.330(2)(b), the school has at least 30 days within which to correct the deficiencies. The first day of this period is February 13, 2017. The date by which the school must have completed all efforts to correct these deficiencies is March, 24, 2017.
- 3) At its 9:00 AM March 30, 2017 meeting (continuing on to March 31 and April 1 if necessary), the Authority Board will make a determination regarding whether Nevada Connections Academy has corrected the deficiencies. The SPCSA Board will make this determination during a public hearing held pursuant to subsection 3 of NRS 388A.330.
- 4) At its 9:00 AM March 30, 2017 meeting (continuing on to March 31 and April 1 if necessary), the Authority Board will hold a public hearing to consider whether to reconstitute the governing body or revoke the written charter. The SPCSA Board will make this determination during a public hearing held pursuant to subsection 3 of NRS 388A.330.
- 5) Any action revoking the written charter, if approved by the Authority Board, would be effective no sooner than the end of the ~~2015-16~~ 2016-17 academic year.

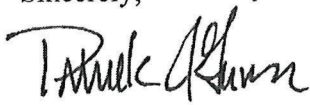
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- 6) Any action reconstituting the governing body, if approved by the Authority Board, could be effective immediately

This letter serves as the school's formal Notice of Intent under NRS 388A.330(2). Nevada Connections Academy and the Authority staff must exchange any written or documentary evidence they wish to be considered by the Authority Board by no later than 5 PM Pacific Time on March 24, 2017. Nevada Connections Academy should submit its documentation to the Authority exclusively via Epicenter. The Authority Board chair may, through his power as chair, issue a separate scheduling order requiring staff and Nevada Connections Academy to disclose witnesses or submit pre-hearing statements in a timely manner.

Pursuant to applicable law, the school will have the opportunity during the statutorily mandated periods as stated herein to correct the issues state in this Notice of Intent which have prompted this action.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Patrick J. Gavin". The signature is stylized with a large initial "P" and a long, sweeping underline.

Patrick J. Gavin
Executive Director

Appendix E

BRIAN SANDOVAL
Governor

STATE OF NEVADA

PATRICK GAVIN
Executive Director



STATE PUBLIC CHARTER SCHOOL AUTHORITY

**1749 North Stewart Street Suite 40
Carson City, Nevada 89706-2543
(775) 687 - 9174 · Fax: (775) 687 - 9113**

VIA ELECTRONIC MAIL AND EPICENTER

March 12, 2018

Chris McBride
Superintendent
Nevada Connections Academy
555 Double Eagle Ct., Suite 2000
Reno, Nevada 89521
cmcbride@nca.connectionsacademy.org

Re: Notice of Breach

Mr. McBride,

As you are aware, Nevada Connections Academy's elementary school has received a 1 or 2 Star rating under the Department of Education's Nevada School Performance Framework for two consecutive ratings periods. Per the memorandum presented to the SPCSA Board on February 16, 2018, a 1 or 2 Star rating for the 2017-2018 school year would make the school eligible to have its charter contract terminated by the Authority.

This Notice of Breach serves as a reminder that the Charter School Performance Framework, which is incorporated into NVA's Charter School Contract, is meant to provide charter school leaders with clear expectations, fact-based oversight, and timely feedback while at the same time ensuring charter school autonomy. Under the Performance Framework, the failure to meet basic levels of academic performance as measured by the Department may result in Notice of Breach being issued from the Authority, as well as a determination by the Authority that the charter school is no longer a charter school in Good Standing as defined in the Performance Framework.

As a result of the above-referenced academic performance, the Authority is issuing this Notice of Breach to NVA, and requiring that the school submit the following information to the SPCSA staff:

- 1) Articulate the most essential features of the proposed academic change(s) to the education program NCA plans to implement to correct the level of underperformance. This may include programs (e.g., curriculum, PD, afterschool programming, parent program),

principles (e.g. no excuses, individualized learning, learn at your own pace) and structures (blended learning, small learning communities, small class sizes). Please be sure to include:

- a. A thorough description why these approaches were chosen, and how NCA data supports these selections;
- b. How these approaches are different from those previously implemented;
- c. A thorough description of how these approaches will effectively serve all students across achievement levels, including those that are not proficient; and
- d. Strong evidence from independent research that meets the strong evidence standard set forth in section 8101(21)(A) of the ESEA.

2) Outline the clearly measurable interim and annual performance and growth goals that the school proposes in order to meet or exceed SPCSA performance expectations under the Nevada School Performance Framework in the chart below. Be sure to include the following information for context:

- a. Describe how the baseline performance was set
- b. Articulate how the organization will measure and evaluate academic progress throughout the school year, at the end of the academic year, and the entire school year. This includes the performance of individual students, student cohorts, subgroups and the entire school; and

Goal	NSPF or SPCSA-based Evaluation Tool	Baseline	2018 – 2019	2019 – 2020

- c. In addition to mandatory state and Authority testing, identify the primary interim academic assessments the school will use for internal purposes to analyze student learning needs and ensure progress towards SPCSA and state proficiency targets. Please describe how these will be used and provide independent statistical evidence that the instrument is strongly correlated with and predictive of results no either the Smarter Balanced Assessment or the ACT.

3) To support the academic goals and benchmarks outlined above, please describe the following:

- a. How teachers and school leadership will be supported in developing capacity around these benchmarks and assessments; and
- b. Should the school fall short of the benchmarks highlighted above, explain what steps the school will take school-wide and/or at the classroom level. To address this level

of underperformance, please detail what would trigger such corrective actions and who would be responsible for implementation.

Additionally, SPCSA staff firmly believes that issuing a Notice of Breach necessitates a higher level of oversight. Due to its current breach status, NCA is directed to provide the following information to SPCSA staff:

- To ensure that NCA students are meeting enrollment and attendance requirements under NAC 387.193. NCA is directed to provide individual student attendance information to authority staff for the 2015-2016 and 2016-2017 school years.
- Minutes of each public NCA Board meeting during since July 1, 2015 through the present date.

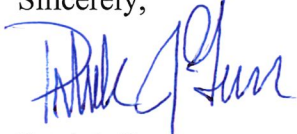
Upon receipt of this letter, SPCSA staff proposes meeting with NCA staff to determine the format of the attendance logs and Board meeting recordings

Once NCA submits proposed changes to the academic program, individual student attendance information, and recorded Board meetings, SPCSA staff will review this information to determine if NCA may be classified as in Good Standing. Failure to meet the requirements specified above will result in a recommendation to issue a Notice of Intent to Terminate the NCA Charter for Persistent Underperformance.

The SPCSA believes strongly in a quality public school of choice for every Nevada child. We hope that NCA will join us by improving its academic performance, thereby increasing the number of high-quality SPCSA-sponsored charter schools.

As always, please feel free to contact me with any questions or concerns.

Sincerely,



Patrick Gavin
Executive Director

cc: Jason Guinasso, Chair (*via email*)

Appendix F

BRIAN SANDOVAL
Governor

STATE OF NEVADA

PATRICK GAVIN
Executive Director



STATE PUBLIC CHARTER SCHOOL AUTHORITY

**1749 North Stewart Street Suite 40
Carson City, Nevada 89706-2543
(775) 687 - 9174 · Fax: (775) 687 - 9113**

**VIA UNITED STATES POSTAL SERVICE
AND ELECTRONIC MAIL**

October 19, 2018

Scott Harrington, Board President
Nevada Connections Academy
555 Double Eagle Court Suite 2000
Reno, Nevada 89521
scottharrington@nca.connectionsacademy.org

Re: Notices Due to Academic Underperformance

Dear Dr. Harrington:

As you are aware, Nevada Connections Academy's elementary, middle, and high school programs each received one-star ratings under the Nevada Department of Education's Nevada School Performance Framework for the 2017-2018 school year. As you are also aware, the State Public Charter School Authority voted at its September 28, 2018 Board meeting to issue a number of notices to Nevada Connections Academy based on the foregoing academic underperformance.

First, in regard to Nevada Connections Academy's elementary school program, this correspondence serves as a notice of continuing breach due to Nevada Connections Academy's elementary school's one-star rating under the NSPF for the 2017-2018 school year. You will recall that the State Public Charter School Authority previously issued a Notice of Breach in regard to Nevada Connections Academy's elementary school program due to it being rated as a one-star school under the NSPF for the 2016-2017 school year. We note here that Nevada Academy's elementary school program rating under the NSPF has actually declined since the issuance of the Notice of Breach.

Second, in regard to Nevada Connections Academy's middle school program, this correspondence serves as a Notice of Concern due to Nevada Connections Academy's middle school program receiving a one-star rating under the NSPF for the 2017-2018 school year.

Third, in regard to Nevada Connections Academy's high school program, this correspondence serves as a notification that the school received a one-star rating under the NSPF for the 2017-2018 school year. In regard to Nevada Connections Academy's high school program, please note that the school's amended Charter School Contract and the previously-agreed-to settlement related to Nevada Connections Academy's high school program, NCA's high school program must achieve a graduation rate of 49% or greater for the 2017-2018 school year or else face additional enrollment caps. Nevada's Department of Education will release the 2017-2018 graduation rates in December of 2018, and we expect to bring this issue to the State Public Charter School Authority Board in early 2019.


Please note that at this time, no specific actions on the part of Nevada Connections Academy are being requested by the Authority. However, we note here that both the SPCSA and the Department will closely scrutinize the annual School Performance Plan that Nevada Connections Academy is required to submit.

Finally, please note that Nevada Connections Academy's Charter School Contract will expire at the end of the 2019-2020 school year. As a result, Nevada Connections Academy will be eligible to apply for renewal of its Charter School Contract in the Fall of 2019. Note that continued academic underperformance may result in a recommendation from the State Public Charter School Authority staff not to renew Nevada Connections Academy's Charter School Contract, or a decision by the State Public Charter School Authority Board not to renew Nevada Connections Academy's Charter School Contract.

The SPCSA believes strongly in a quality public school of choice for every Nevada child. We hope that Nevada Connections Academy will join us by improving its academic performance, thereby increasing the number of high-quality SPCSA-sponsored charter schools.

Please confirm receipt of this Notice, and feel free to contact me with any questions or concerns.

Sincerely,



Ryan Herrick
General Counsel, State Public Charter School Authority

cc: Chris McBride, Superintendent, Nevada Connections Academy
Jason Guinasso, Chair, State Public Charter School Authority
Patrick Gavin, Executive Director, State Public Charter School Authority
Mark Modrcin, Director of Authorizing, State Public Charter School Authority
(via electronic mail)

Appendix G

BRIAN SANDOVAL
Governor

STATE OF NEVADA

PATRICK GAVIN
Executive Director



STATE PUBLIC CHARTER SCHOOL AUTHORITY

**1749 North Stewart Street Suite 40
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**VIA UNITED STATES POSTAL SERVICE
AND ELECTRONIC MAIL**

October 19, 2018

Scott Harrington, Board President
Nevada Connections Academy
555 Double Eagle Court Suite 2000
Reno, Nevada 89521
scottharrington@nca.connectionsacademy.org

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Please note that at this time, no specific actions on the part of Nevada Connections Academy are being requested by the Authority. However, we note here that both the SPCSA and the Department will closely scrutinize the annual School Performance Plan that Nevada Connections Academy is required to submit.

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Please confirm receipt of this Notice, and feel free to contact me with any questions or concerns.

Sincerely,



Ryan Herrick
General Counsel, State Public Charter School Authority

cc: Chris McBride, Superintendent, Nevada Connections Academy
Jason Guinasso, Chair, State Public Charter School Authority
Patrick Gavin, Executive Director, State Public Charter School Authority
Mark Modrcin, Director of Authorizing, State Public Charter School Authority
(via electronic mail)

Appendix H

BRIAN SANDOVAL
Governor

STATE OF NEVADA

PATRICK GAVIN
Executive Director



STATE PUBLIC CHARTER SCHOOL AUTHORITY

**1749 North Stewart Street Suite 40
Carson City, Nevada 89706-2543
(775) 687 - 9174 · Fax: (775) 687 - 9113**

**VIA UNITED STATES POSTAL SERVICE
AND ELECTRONIC MAIL**

October 19, 2018

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scottharrington@nca.connectionsacademy.org

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Third, in regard to Nevada Connections Academy's high school program, this correspondence serves as a notification that the school received a one-star rating under the NSPF for the 2017-2018 school year. In regard to Nevada Connections Academy's high school program, please note that the school's amended Charter School Contract and the previously-agreed-to settlement related to Nevada Connections Academy's high school program, NCA's high school program must achieve a graduation rate of 49% or greater for the 2017-2018 school year or else face additional enrollment caps. Nevada's Department of Education will release the 2017-2018 graduation rates in December of 2018, and we expect to bring this issue to the State Public Charter School Authority Board in early 2019.

Please note that at this time, no specific actions on the part of Nevada Connections Academy are being requested by the Authority. However, we note here that both the SPCSA and the Department will closely scrutinize the annual School Performance Plan that Nevada Connections Academy is required to submit.

Finally, please note that Nevada Connections Academy's Charter School Contract will expire at the end of the 2019-2020 school year. As a result, Nevada Connections Academy will be eligible to apply for renewal of its Charter School Contract in the Fall of 2019. Note that continued academic underperformance may result in a recommendation from the State Public Charter School Authority staff not to renew Nevada Connections Academy's Charter School Contract, or a decision by the State Public Charter School Authority Board not to renew Nevada Connections Academy's Charter School Contract.

The SPCSA believes strongly in a quality public school of choice for every Nevada child. We hope that Nevada Connections Academy will join us by improving its academic performance, thereby increasing the number of high-quality SPCSA-sponsored charter schools.

Please confirm receipt of this Notice, and feel free to contact me with any questions or concerns.

Sincerely,



Ryan Herrick
General Counsel, State Public Charter School Authority

cc: Chris McBride, Superintendent, Nevada Connections Academy
Jason Guinasso, Chair, State Public Charter School Authority
Patrick Gavin, Executive Director, State Public Charter School Authority
Mark Modrcin, Director of Authorizing, State Public Charter School Authority
(via electronic mail)

Appendix I

**NCA's Amendment to Proposed Cure for Alleged Deficiency in
Four Year Cohort Graduation Rate**

In accordance with the permission of the Authority during the August 23, 2017, hearing, NCA submits the following additional proposal to cure the alleged deficiency in the high school's four year adjusted cohort graduation rate.

1. Judicial and Agency Review Waiver - Shall be included in Settlement Stipulation as provided in NCA's proposed cure submitted August 23, 2017

2. Enrollment Cap & Immediate Enrollment Freeze for 11th & 12th Grade Cohorts -Have been incorporated into Charter Contract agreed upon by the Authority and NCA

- NCA's high school enrollment as of 11/2/17 was 1,813 students
- - NCA's high school program will not grow beyond 1500 and enrollment will immediately stop in the 12th and 11th grade cohorts. This is a decrease of 300 students from current levels. This will still accommodate returning students and no currently enrolled NCA students shall be withdrawn solely based on this cap.
 -

3. Annual Reporting, Benchmarks & Consequences

The following operational provisions shall not be rigidly required if the school identifies that certain proposed changes to operations are not having the desired effect of helping increase the graduation rate and, even if completed, will not be considered to satisfy the school's obligation to increase the graduation rate if the graduation rate does not increase. The school shall complete the promised reporting to both the NCA board and the Authority board on a quarterly basis beginning in April 2018. With its first report, NCA will provide a schedule for reporting the remaining quarters for the upcoming year.

The reporting shall include subgroups of students similar to those presented by NCA at the Phase I hearing through the testimony of Matt Wicks and shall include students who are 2 or more years behind in credits in high school as well as students who are not credit deficient. The reports shall focus on how these students are doing once they arrive at NCA.

Both NCA and its academy to serve credit deficient students (currently the Every Student Succeeds Academy, ES2) will submit annual (by January 30 following the close of the preceding Academic Year) reports to the Authority tracking school performance (all data will be validated by a third party mutually agreed upon with the Authority and the school) in the following areas:

- a. for each credit deficient student (using only a Connexus ID not name, to avoid PII issues – and, at the Authority's request, a state issued ID), the grade student entered the high school, credits deficient at time of enrollment, credits earned during year under review, total credits earned to date, expected graduation date if student remains at that school
- b. school state required test scores compared to state averages; ACT and other college prep scores compared to state average—track improvement of ACT scores based on cohort
- c. students who transfer out (ID's by Connexus ID); where that student transferred to or entered GED or Alternative ED program; NCA students being accepted into college or career tech. school
- d. grad rate - students all 4 years at NCA or Alternative School; of those continuing in school after 4th year, numbers graduated (or %) at conclusion of 5th year (measured as of 9/30 in year following close of 5th academic year); at conclusion of 6th year (measured as of 9/30 in year following close of 6th academic year)

Clear benchmarks for improvement and consequences if those benchmarks are not met: certain Authority board members suggested at the August hearing that the school needed to provide benchmarks and consequences if those benchmarks were not met. The school did so in the propose charter contract included as part of the cure and hereby incorporates those provisions which require a 49% graduation rate for 2017-18 and a 60% graduation rate for 2018-19 Whether NCA achieves or fails to achieve these benchmarks shall be a consideration in any renewal proceeding for NCA in 2020. In addition, if NCA does not achieve the 49% benchmark, enrollment for 11th and 12th grade shall remain frozen for the 2018-19 school year and the maximum enrollment for the high school will decrease to 1,200 students.

4. *Implement Best Practices for Tracking Mobile Students*

NCA's graduation rate is impacted significantly by students who transfer out to pursue other educational programs without informing the school of their plans. As students withdraw, some are coded by default as drop-outs due to lack of data about where those students end up. In conferring with other charter schools in Nevada, some schools have developed best-practices and processes to track these students in ways that yield significant increases in graduation rates. Accordingly, NCA proposes to implement best practices for tracking these students:

- NCA is actively collecting information on these approaches and will continue to implement improvements to how they track and counsel students during the withdrawal process.

- As part of NCA's ongoing efforts to improve graduation rates, the school will continue to provide training to all staff emphasizing the importance of asking for next school or program information when a caretaker initiates withdrawal. Unfortunately, many of the caretakers still do not provide this information. When a withdrawal is initiated without next school information, an NCA homeroom teacher and an administrative assistant both contact the family through phone calls and emails in order to obtain information. If the information is still not provided, the student's name is placed on a list and a team from Connections Academy works to contact the family and obtain a verification of enrollment.
- Multiple strategies are used to obtain next school information including searching for students in Bighorn and Infinite Campus, searching social media, reaching out to caretakers via personal email addresses, multiple phone call and text attempts, and the use of a people finder tool online. When information is acquired, a Verification of Enrollment form is sent to the new school or program in order to obtain proof of enrollment. If no information is found and the area in which the student moved to or is currently living is known, a Verification of Enrollment form is sent to possible schools the student is zoned for in that area. Attempts to verify enrollment are continued until verification is received, or the end of the validation period for the cohort.

5. Quarterly Metrics

Every quarter in the school year, NCA and the Board will review the Quarterly Metrics to see where the school is doing well and where the school can improve.

The Quarterly Metrics are a useful starting point for school improvement planning and any needed action plans and ensure that school performance is being monitored on a regular basis against key metrics that have been shown to contribute to school and student success. The Figures below show the name of the metric and the Quarters in which that metric will be reported. The School Leader will be given access to ongoing calculations for these metrics in order to "progress monitor" the metrics.

Figure 1. Personalize & Monitor Student Learning

Metric	Quarter(s) Reported
% 1 st Semester "core" courses successfully completed for ELA, Math, Science & SS	Q1 - Reported as % on track for successful completion (earning a passing score) Q2 – Reported as % successfully completing course (earning a passing score)
% 2 nd Semester "core" courses successfully completed for ELA, Math, Science & SS	Q3 - Reported as % on track for successful completion (earning a passing score) Q4 – Reported as % successfully completing course (earning a passing score)
% of High School Students with cohort status "graduate on time"	Q1, Q3
% of High School Students within 1.5 credits of cohort status "graduate on time"	Q2, Q4
% completing Scantron Formative Assessment Pre, Mid and Post Test	Q1 – Pre-test Q3 – Mid-Test Q4 – Post-Test

Metric	Quarter(s) Reported
% of students assigned by RTI Tier	Q1, 2, 3, 4 – Reported as % assigned Tier 1, Tier 2, and Tier 3
% students with Compliant IEPs	Q1, 2, 3, 4 – Reported as average of annual and triennial required reviews.

Figure 2. Ensure High Levels of Student Engagement

Metric	Quarter(s) Reported
% on-time Welcome Calls	Q1, 2, 3, 4 – Reported as % of welcome calls completed within 7 days of enrollment
% completed Welcome Calls	Q1, 2, 3, 4 – Reported as % of welcome calls complete
% Start Up Tasks completed on-time	Q1, 3 – Reported as % start up tasks completed within 21 days of enrollment
% Curriculum Based Assessments (CBA) Target Met	Q1, 2, 3, 4
% Student Contacts Met	Q1, 2, 3, 4 – Reported as % of students with status “contacts met” indicating a successful synchronous contact
% Learning Coach Contacts Met	Q1, 2, 3, 4 – Reported as % receiving at least: -1 successful call by Q1 -2 successful calls by Q2 -3 successful calls by Q4
% completed notification of Preliminary Retention status	Q3 – Reported as % of students marked “retain or unsure” with a successful retention contact during the Preliminary Promotion/Retention period
% completed End of Year contact	Q4 – Reported as % of students successfully receiving an End of Year call
% “On Track” escalation status	Q1, 2, 3, 4 – Reported as % of students meeting school-determined participation thresholds to demonstrate active engagement in a virtual school.
% During School Year Withdrawals	Q1, 2, 3, 4 – Reported as % of students who withdraw during the school year (after meeting “engagement” criteria)

Figure 3. Develop and Collaborate Professionally

Metric	Quarter(s) Reported
% of Teachers in a Professional Learning Community (PLC)	Q1 – Reported as % of teachers reporting a PLC IA number in their Staff Profile data view
% of PLCs in a school with a SMART goal	Q2 – Reported as % of PLCs with a school leader approved SMART goal for the 2017-2018 school year
% of PLCs in a school making progress towards SMART goal	Q3 – Reported as % of PLCs within a school with documented progress towards attaining SMART goal, as acknowledged by school leader
% of PLCs in a school with end of year SMART goal attainment	Q4 - Reported as % of PLCs within a school with documented attainment of SMART goal, as acknowledged by school leader
% of teachers completing Connections-led Professional Learning sessions (100, 200, 300-level)	Q1, 2, 3, 4 – Reported as % of teachers with a participation date listed for each monthly session that falls within a reporting quarter

Figure 4. School Operations

Metric	Quarter(s) Reported
% of open teaching positions filled by the student first day of school	Q1
% of teachers with Teacher Orientation course complete	Q1
% of Students Enrolled "On Time"	Q1 – Reported as % of students enrolled on or before the first student day of school
% of eligible "Returning" students enrolled	Q1 – Reported as % of students eligible to return the following school year who enrolled by 9/25
% of open teaching positions filled by June	Q4
% Teachers Returning	Q4 – Reported as % of teachers not indicating they wouldn't not returning via the Teacher Intent to Return process
% eligible Students Returning	Q4 – Reported as % of students indicating they would returning via the Student Intent to Return process

6. *Adult Advocates for students at-risk for dropping out*

As recommended by the National Center for Education Evaluation and Regional Assistance, Institute of Education Sciences' (ICS) Dropout Prevention Practice Guide¹, the school will assign adult advocates to serve students at-risk of dropping out to serve as mentors/advisors. As noted in the Practice Guide, "research suggests that students who have ongoing relationships with adults feel a greater sense of school membership, attachment, and involvement" and that additional benefits of these relationships include "reduced risky behaviors, reduced absentee rates, improved grades, and improved communication and social skills. Recognizing that these are all areas that are key indicators of school success, the school's adult advocates will mentor, build relationships, and engage with students in the following ways:

- Small group LiveLesson Advisory Sessions
- Advisory Teachers/Designated Counselors
- Student Engagement Team (SET)
- Teacher and staff Professional Development (guidance and training on support to at-risk students and dropout prevention)
- Learning Coach Support

SMALL GROUP LIVELESSON ADVISORY SESSIONS

The ICS Dropout Prevention Practice Guide provides specific suggestions regarding the types of responsibilities adult advocates should undertake, including that regular time in the school day or week should be established for students to meet with the adult. This will be accomplished through weekly small group LiveLesson advisory sessions.

¹ https://ies.ed.gov/ncee/wwc/Docs/PracticeGuide/dp_pg_090308.pdf

ADVISORY TEACHERS/DESIGNATED COUNSELORS

The Advisory Teacher/Counselor will be the key person within the high school team who is responsible for keeping a comprehensive view on all students they are assigned. These will be synchronous small group (15 students or fewer) advisory sessions conducted 1-2x per week with the Advisory Teacher/Counselor to support student engagement, academic success, and career readiness.

The advisory teacher/counselor will watch for gaps in learning as well as the most likely gaps in positive learning habits in order to support student success in the online environment. They will use the data systems outlined in section 2.1 to support the identification and support of students at-risk for dropping out.

COUNSELING PROGRAM

The counseling program will offer individual and group counseling, as needed, and will focus on academic development, personal and social growth, and college and career readiness activities through a variety of communication tools (LiveLesson sessions, phone calls, message boards, Virtual Library, newsletters, and face-to-face field trips and events that will take place throughout the state).

The counseling team will have an established system for early identification of students who are behind in earning high school credits, or those who are off track for graduation. Once identified, counselors will work with these students to identify support needed to be successful in earning credits, and a plan to get back on track to graduate with his/her cohort. Specifically, school counselors will be working directly with students to identify a course of study that works to get the student back to graduating with his or her cohort. Potential options include credit recovery courses, additional credits each semester, block scheduling, and summer school. Counselors will work with students and families individually to identify what is best for the needs of each student. Further, counselors will work with students individually and in groups to instruct students on the mindsets and behaviors necessary to be a successful virtual school student. Students will learn about organizational and time management skills, assertiveness in working with teachers, and the skills necessary to become a self-regulated learner. Finally, school counselors will also collaborate with special educators to support students with IEPs transition plans.

The technology available in Connexus will allow for teachers and counselors to monitor students' participation and performance in course work to identify students who are behind in lessons or performing poorly in current courses. Teachers and counselors will assist these students in successfully completing courses through frequent calls and access to additional resources, as needed.

Counselors will help monitor students' performance against drop out and on-track indicators and prepare students for college, career, and/or employability with

- College and career readiness data view focusing on steps needed to meet post-

graduation goals;

- Interactive LiveLesson sessions connecting families with real-time information on financial aid and scholarships, college application processes, entrance requirements, and more;
- College test preparation courses for the SAT/ACT;
- Early identification of students who may be off track for graduating on time; and
- 1-to-1 counseling with students as needed to provide resources and assistance with post-secondary planning, including career options, vocational training, and selecting the right college.

In addition, there will be additional supports and activities available to support a student's college and career goals including the following:

- Counseling LiveLesson sessions each Friday for high school students (including Career Fireside Chats on the fourth Friday of each month);
- College admissions LiveLesson sessions;
- Career and vocational options LiveLesson sessions;
- College newsletters sent to high school students each month;
- Chat-with-a-Grad sessions; and
- Connexus tools such as the Progression Plan Manager.

Students will have access to the national counseling LiveLesson session program, which delivers weekly guidance curriculum lessons and national college admissions sessions throughout the school year. The sessions include the Career Fireside Chats on the fourth Friday of each month. Previous sessions have covered such topics as Teen Dating Violence Awareness, Educational/Training Opportunities After High School, Why School Matters: Navigating Your Educational Development Plan, How to Develop a Growth Mindset, Aligning Individual Goals & Abilities, and ACT & SAT Overview. A college newsletter is sent to high school students each month.

Students will be encouraged to enroll in College and Career Focused clubs. Each club includes regular LiveLesson sessions with a career and college counselor. There are several clubs focused on post-secondary planning including: College Planning Club, First Generation Club, High School Career Club, and Middle School Career Club.

The counselors will also plan additional LiveLesson sessions, and small group advisory sessions, for students which will address specific student needs. The counselor will be a resource to students, families, and staff in ensuring that all students are safe.

7. Targeted Professional Development and Changes

TEACHERS

Teachers and Staff at NCA will participate in additional training, and have access to on-demand resources, to support them with:

- motivating and engaging at-risk students;
- recognizing potential drop-outs and implementing strategies for dropout prevention;
- recognizing and supporting students in distress;
- determining appropriate instructional and behavioral supports;
- identifying on-track indicators for high school graduation;
- creating a college-going culture; and
- providing guidance and support to students who may choose to go to work after graduation.

NCA BOARD MEMBERS

In addition to the professional development for the teachers and staff, the Board will also receive training throughout the year. A sample of a training schedule is included in Figure 6.

Figure 5. Board Professional Development

Month	Training	Description
August	<i>What is the Monthly School Report? What does it mean?</i>	The monthly school report is provided to the board at each month's board meeting. This report contains enrollment data (by grade band), student demographics (including FARM eligibility and Special Population numbers), contacts between teachers and students, and performance metrics (attendance, participation and overall performance). After the training, the board should be able to interpret the data on the monthly school report and see trends and issues at the school.
September	<i>What are the Quarterly Metrics and what do they mean for the School?</i>	At the end of each Quarter (October, January, April, and July) Connections Academy will report to the Board on operational metrics related to the School Focus Goals, Core Model & Standards and School Year Cycle. These are metrics that Connections expects will help drive Efficacy as measured by the School Focus Goals. These metrics are either in addition to those shared on the Monthly School Report, or are sharing comparative results across the schools for what is shared on the Monthly School Report. The training will explain each metric that will be used, what it means, how it is calculated.
October	<i>What are our school goals and how are they calculated?</i>	This training will go over the school goals (as the School Leader goes over his state of the school report). The school goals will be discussed/explained in terms of how they will be measured, monitored, and what actions the school will be taking to meet them.
November	<i>What were the key takeaways of the Leadership team from the 2017 National Dropout Prevention Network Conference?</i>	The conference is to be held October 22-25, 2017 and is put on by the National Dropout Prevention Center/Network at Clemson University. Key members of the leadership team plan to attend the conference. Conference strands include credit and recovery opportunities, parent and family engagement, alternative educational contexts, strategies for specific populations, civic/community engagement, leadership and administration issues, and chronic absenteeism. The attendees at the

Month	Training	Description
		conference will be prepared to share their takeaways with the board.
January	<i>How is NCA doing on Quarter 2 Metrics?</i>	This session would highlight the outcomes of the metrics that are reported in Quarter 2. The board should be able to gauge how successful the school is on implementing the school improvement plan and whether at the half-way point in the school year, the school is on track to make its goals.
February	<i>How is NCA preparing for state assessments?</i>	Throughout the school year NCA has been preparing its students to take the state assessments. This month the school leader (or designee) will explain all the work that has been done to prepare students academically to succeed on these important assessments. The school leader (or designee) will also talk about the logistics/planning that went into finding test sites and scheduling students – this is an important part of reaching that 95% attendance threshold.
April	<i>How is NCA doing on Quarter 3 metrics?</i>	This session would highlight the outcomes of the metrics that are reported in Quarter 3. The board should be able to gauge how successful the school is on implementing the school improvement plan and whether with three quarters of the school year completed, the school is on track to make its goals.
May/June	<i>What have we learned? Strategic Planning for next year?</i>	This session would be more of a discussion of the board and school leader. It would be a reflection on the school year as a whole – what they learned, what worked, and where the school is now. The board may consider going through a strategic planning process as they prepare for the 18-19 school year. This planning could be facilitated by an outside consultant who would help the board set new goals for the school for the coming school year.

NCA LEADERSHIP

NCA has implemented promising leadership changes. NCA's new school leader as of November 1, 2017, Dr. Chris McBride, has an impressive track record in terms of raising student achievement throughout various public schools in Washoe County School District and beyond. For example, as the director of Mariposa Academy Charter School in Reno, Mr. McBride had extensive experience managing school budgets, ensuring academic success of students, and successfully overseeing school operations, both academic and financial. Likewise, as Dean of Smithridge S.T.E.M. Academy, he successfully implemented improved student achievement measures and led implementation of several committees and programs dedicated to that success and he also served an important role in building the school improvement plan as Associate Dean of Students (alternative education) at Pine Middle School.

8. Academic support and enrichment to improve academic performance

As indicated by the ICS Dropout Prevention Practice Guide, "research shows that low academic performance, absenteeism, and grade retention are related to dropping out" and that the provision of appropriate academic supports that helps address skills gaps, can offset a cycle of

frustration, and can enrich the academic experience for students who may be disengaged.² In support of this recommendation and to improve student academic performance, NCA will continue to provide and add further academic supports beyond the standard high school course offerings and instructional supports:

- GradPoint Credit Recovery Courses (already being provided as part of Grad Rate Improvement Plan)
- Success Academy Courses - Freshman and Senior Success courses (already part of Grad Rate Improvement Plan)
- Supplemental Instructional Support Programs (e.g., Reading Plus, Imagine Math, Math XL)
- Career Technical Education (CTE) course offerings and college, career, employability supports
- Summer School (already offered and expanded through Grad Rate Improvement Plan)

CREDIT RECOVERY/GRADPOINT

To support high school students on their path to graduation and college and career, NCA is providing credit recovery course offerings during the summer and school year as a resource to help students recover credits and achieve and maintain on track status.

GradPoint credit recovery courses offer a diagnostic-prescriptive virtual learning solution. The student-centered philosophy behind GradPoint's courses includes the necessary support features to facilitate and guide customized credit recovery:

1. Prescriptive-diagnostic assessment and instructional sequencing tools that automatically tailor and deliver personalized learning for every student.
2. Engaging content and interactive, collaborative learning elements to re-engage at-risk students.
3. Instruction, activities, and assessments that address diverse learning modalities and enable students to demonstrate content mastery in a variety of ways.
4. Robust progress monitoring tools.

GradPoint's prescriptive courses provide a personalized pathway through the course based on needs, saving valuable learning time and increasing student motivation. Unlike other programs, GradPoint automatically diagnoses and prescribes content for a truly personalized learning experience. Students take a pre-test and a post-test with every module. Based on their results, they are assigned lessons in areas in which they did not demonstrate mastery and are exempted from other lessons they have already mastered.

SUCCESS ACADEMY COURSES

To further support students' success and engagement in school, NCA has been offering and will expand on two Success Academy courses: Freshman Focus and Senior Success.

² Page 22, https://ies.ed.gov/ncee/wwc/Docs/PracticeGuide/dp_pg_090308.pdf

The Freshman Focus course will orient students to resources available to them, introduce strategies for success in high school course-level work, emphasize the importance of academic integrity and producing authentic work, and build college, work, and career readiness.

Based on the positive results of the Freshman Focus Course, NCA will also offer a course that addresses needs specific to seniors, Senior Success. The Senior Success course exposes students to tools and resources designed to best prepare them for life after high school. Students will gain exposure to information about financial aid, the college application process, résumé writing, graduation information, and post-secondary options. This course also provides students the opportunity to reflect on their high school experience.

SUPPLEMENTAL INSTRUCTIONAL SUPPORT PROGRAMS

Supplemental instructional support programs (SISPs) are assigned to students who need additional practice and/or support with the foundational skills required to be successful with grade level standards. Teachers are trained in the implementation of these programs, including analyzing and evaluating student progress using the data provided by each program. As a standard part of the SISP review process, the Connections Academy Curriculum and Instruction team evaluates programs for:

- Evidence of research
- Alignment to standards
- Ability to customize
- Feedback to students
- Direct instruction
- Teacher/Student user experience
- Diagnostic/prescriptive component
- Motivation feature
- Data and reporting, including data on discrete skills

Some of the additional SISP resources that the school will provide students will include Imagine Math,³ Math XL,⁴ and Reading Plus.

CAREER TECHNICAL EDUCATION (CTE)

As indicated in the ICS Dropout Prevention Practice Guide, students at risk for dropping out should be provided relevant instruction to better engage them in learning and to better serve them after they complete school, with a specific focus on helping students discover the purpose for completing school by incorporating career-related curricula.⁵ NCA fully supports this recommendation and will offer CTE courses that provide students the opportunity to take courses in many of the 16 nationally recognized career clusters. The courses expose students to a wide variety of career areas and help prepare them for career and college success by giving them a solid academic foundation, technical knowledge, and skills training in a wide

³ <https://www.thinkthroughmath.com/resources/case-studies/>

⁴ [http://www.pearsonmylabandmastering.com/northamerica/mathxl/educators/results/results-library.php?product\[\]=MyStatLab&hpd](http://www.pearsonmylabandmastering.com/northamerica/mathxl/educators/results/results-library.php?product[]=MyStatLab&hpd)

⁵ Page 34, https://ies.ed.gov/ncee/wwc/Docs/PracticeGuide/dp_pg_090308.pdf

variety of fields. The courses include interactive presentations, real-world activities and assignments, career connections, and an online study guide to help students obtain the skills and competencies of their chosen career pathway. NCA will explore adding additional CTE courses and certifications associated with the selected career pathways.

In addition, students will be encouraged to enroll in College and Career Focused clubs. Each club includes regular LiveLesson sessions with a career and college counselor. There are several clubs focused on post-secondary planning including: College Planning Club, First Generation Club, and High School Career Club.

SUMMER SCHOOL

Summer school provides an opportunity for many students to “catch up” and be on track for graduation. In addition, research has shown that by enrolling in academic courses in the summer months, “summer slide” is reduced and can help students achieve academically. In support of this research finding, GradPoint and targeted Connections Academy courses will continue to be offered to NCA students during the summer.

As part of students’ PLP, students in NCA’s summer school program will be closely monitored by certified teachers and counselors who will provide targeted, supplemental instruction and maintain regular contact to keep them focused on their goal of graduation. Teachers will work to ensure that students complete pre- and post-tests, progress at a pace that enables successful course completion, and participate in daily instructional and intervention activities. Students who are credit deficient will take GradPoint courses.

Summer school staff will be chosen based on their familiarity with effective instructional and motivational strategies. They will be focused on student success and already have relationships with many of the students, a foundation on which to build academic success. When students know that there is an adult that cares about their success, then they are more motivated to be successful.⁶

Every student who is behind as indicated by the On Track Indicator and Progression Plan will be encouraged and provided support to continue their school year into the summer, whether it is realistic for them to move up a grade by the end of summer or not.

1)

⁶ Hattie, J. (2009). *Visible Learning: A Synthesis of over 800 Meta-Analyses Relating to Achievement*. Routledge: New York, p. 72.