

Nevada Virtual Academy Executive Summary August 2016

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## Nevada Virtual Academy

## **1. OVERVIEW**

This report was compiled to inform the State Public Charter School Authority staff and board members on the progress Nevada Virtual Academy ("NVVA") has made since its charter renewal in 2013. Since that time, the school has worked diligently and made great strides to improve and enhance the services it provides to students across the State of Nevada.

#### I. Background

- NVVA serves students in K-12 grade and had 2,212 students enrolled for the 2015-2016 • school year.
- The average yearly Free and Reduced Lunch (FRL) student population at NVVA is 53.2%.
- NVVA enrolls a large proportion of academically disadvantaged<sup>1</sup> students annually. In 2015:
  - $\circ$  68% of new 3<sup>rd</sup> grade students were 1-2 grade levels below in Reading.
  - $\circ$  73% of new 3<sup>rd</sup> grade students were 1-2 grade levels below in Math.
  - 54% of new 4<sup>th</sup>-8<sup>th</sup> grade students were 1-2 grade levels below in Reading.
    61% of new 4<sup>th</sup>-8<sup>th</sup> grade students were 1-2 grade levels below in Math.
- The average yearly population of students with an IEP served by NVVA is 9.93%.
- In 2015, Nevada Virtual Academy's FRL population represented 31% of the entire FRL population in the SPCSA school portfolio.
- NVVA has created differentiated programs to serve its unique student population and in so • doing has made substantial progress in closing the gap to better serve its students.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup> "Economically disadvantaged" is defined as below proficient on prior year's state test scores and below the 50<sup>th</sup> percentile on norm-referenced assessments, including Renaissance STAR and iReady.

### II. School Highlights and Substantial Changes

- The High School Graduation Rate increased from 36.56% in 2012 to 63.53% in 2015.
- The High School Proficiency Rates have increased in every content area each year since 2012.
- In 2015, NVVA's 11<sup>th</sup> grade students outperformed the state average ACT Scores in English, Reading, Science, and Overall Composite Score.
- The number of high school students receiving Advanced Placement and/or college dual credit increased from 2.10% in 2013 to 11.76% in 2015.
- The High School received the second year of a five year School Improvement Grant and has been working closely with *McREL International* to evaluate and improve the school.
- NVVA ranked 11<sup>th</sup> out of 126 Nevada Middle Schools in terms of growth between the 2013 and 2014 Nevada School Performance Frameworks (16 point improvement).
- The Middle School made substantial increases in ELA and Math achievement since 2012.
- The Elementary School closed the gap percentages in Reading among its student with IEP population from 24.4% meeting the Reading AGP benchmark, to 28.6%.
- The Elementary School refined its academic plan and restructured the leadership team to align to a more rigorous approach.
- NVVA has instituted a blended learning option for students in grades K-12 that has benefitted students in all grade levels by providing face to face instruction, individual tutoring, and homework support.
- The NVVA Board has made significant changes including bringing on new Board members committed to improve the school since the 2013 charter renewal.

#### III. New Programs and Next Steps

NVVA's blended learning programs<sup>2</sup> have helped students in all grade levels achieve greater academic success by incorporating the best instructional practices for virtual and oncampus learning. NVVA will continue professional development with its staff to fine-tune the instructional and engagement skills necessary to provide all students a unique opportunity to participate in a personalized, blended educational experience that will help to close every academic achievement gap.

In the 2016-17 school year, NVVA will launch an enhanced Family Academic Support Team (FAST). The primary goals of the enhanced FAST program is to help students stay on track through early interventions, wrap-around supports and engagement strategies. This FAST Program will provide students expanded resources, and provide more opportunities for families to participate in the school community.

Another important tool for change in 2016-17 is the new support from four federal grants that will help support school improvement at all levels. These three federal grants are the School Improvement Grant (SIG), the Nevada College and Career Readiness Grant (*Read by 3*), and the Great Teachers and Leaders Fund Grant.

NVVA High School was the only high school in the State of Nevada to receive the SIG. As part of this grant, the school has committed to increasing quality, direct instruction time for students and providing teachers with increased opportunity for targeted professional development. All of these enhancements are focused on producing higher academic results for students and further increasing the graduation rate.

NVVA also received a \$172,000 award as part of the Nevada College and Career Readiness Grant. This grant will allow the school to support its robust extra-curricular STEM program by expanding STEM education exposure across content areas in all grades.

Nevada Virtual Academy Elementary School is setting a high standard for educators and student growth having made significant changes in leadership and staff. Standards and metrics for student achievement are driven towards surpassing Nevada *Read by 3* literacy benchmarks and ACT Aspire preparedness centered on innovative instructional practices, school culture and data driven instruction. To help support these changes, NVVA Elementary School was awarded funding as part of the *Read By 3* grant. This will enhance support systems for students who have struggled with reading and increase the number of students reading on grade level (proficiency) by the end of third grade.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup> In July 2015, the SPCSA Board approved NVVA's innovative Pathways program to provide additional learning options to its students in Clark County. Students outside of Clark County can receive additional tutoring outside of the virtual learning environment. The minutes for this SPCSA Board meeting are attached as Appendix B.

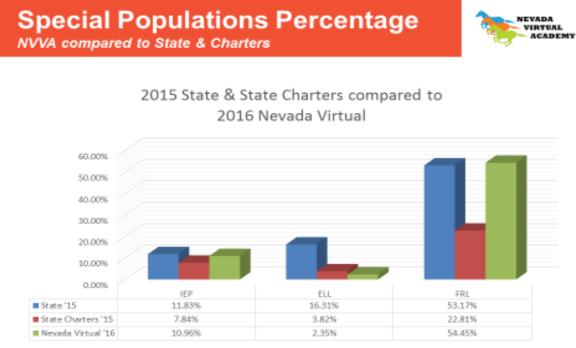
## Nevada Virtual Academy

## **2. DEMOGRAPHICS**

Since the renewal of its charter in 2013, the NVVA Board of Directors, with the school's administrative team have worked to improve academic outcomes for students and provide families with a viable, high-quality, alternative education. NVVA's mission is to promote student achievement by preparing EVERY student for college and career readiness EVERY day.

Since opening its doors in 2008, NVVA has prided itself on being inclusive of every student. In order to serve every child, the school must look like the state it serves. NVVA has traditionally attracted students who are in need of additional support, and/or who have been unsuccessful in their previous schooling experiences. These academically disadvantaged students and their families are in search of a program that can fill a deficiency from what they felt was lacking in their previous institution. As the table below details, NVVA's students who qualify for Free Reduced Lunch ("FRL"), make up a large portion of the school's total population.

#### **Figure 1: Special Populations Percentage**





As shown in Figure 1, more than half of NVVA students qualified for FRL in 2015-16. This is about on par with the state but more than double that of State Charters. <sup>3</sup> While NVVA's student population mirrors that of the state, it is clearly unique among other Nevada charter schools. NVVA's population of FRL students is 31.64% higher than the other represented charter schools; in short, as seen in Figure 2, NVVA alone served almost one third of the entire FRL population in the State Charter Authority portfolio of schools in 2015.

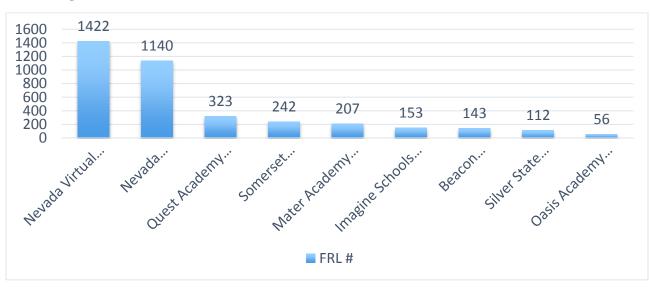


Figure 2. 2015 FRL Student Numbers

## **3. NEVADA VIRTUAL ACADEMY PATHWAYS**

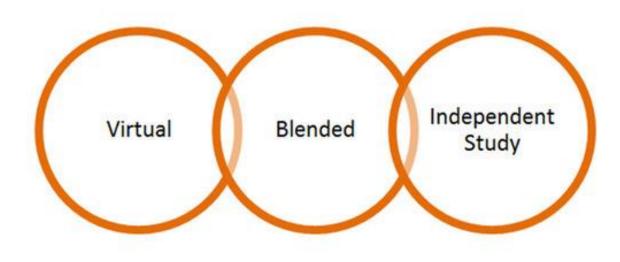
In July 2015, the SPCSA Board approved launch of the NVVA Pathways Initiative<sup>4</sup>. The Pathways Initiative was born from the observation that Students typically prefer one of 3 different learning environments: **virtual**, with every instructional support offered online; **blended**, a combination of face to face instruction and peer association; and a completely self-paced, **independent** learning experience.

Each pathway affords students a unique opportunity to participate in an individualized, educational experience. Our academic team, in partnership with the student and parent, will determine which pathway best serves the individual student's needs. Pathway placements are determined by, but not limited to: state assessment scores, school diagnostic assessment scores, interim assessments, transcript evaluation, area of residence, and student and parent input.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>3</sup> 2015-2016 data are not available on Nevada Report Card.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>4</sup> SPCSA approved blended instruction for students in Clark County <u>only</u>.

## A. K-8 Pathways



#### Virtual

The Virtual Pathway is designed for the student that will benefit from teacher guided instruction and support. Students attend 90 minute classes daily in both Math and English, in addition to a 60 min weekly class in Science & History. Students move through additional coursework using their own personalized curriculum.

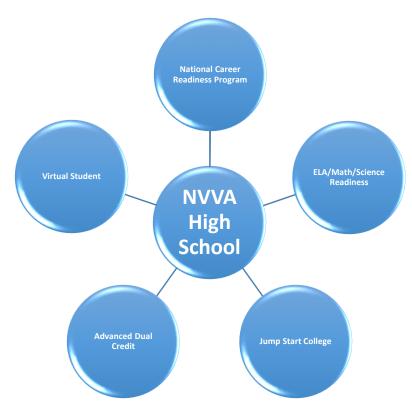
#### Blended

The Blended Pathway is an option designed for students who would benefit from additional face to face teacher and/or peer support. Students attend the same daily classes online as virtual students, but also receive additional face to face instruction from NVVA teachers one day a week at the Blended Learning Center to support targeted learning goals.

#### Independent

The Independent Study Pathway is an option designed for students who have shown success in the virtual environment for at least a minimum of one year with strong Learning Coach support. Students work daily to complete lessons and assignments in the virtual platform. Students submit assignments to the teacher and are required to meet weekly with their teacher for support and assessment.

## **B. High School Pathways**



#### National Career Readiness Program

This pathway is a partnership with ACT whereby students complete coursework that aligns to the ACT Work Readiness System. It consists of a series of mini-courses that help students gain knowledge and skills important for on-the-job success. They include Customer Service, Interpersonal and Business Communication, Problem Solving and Critical Thinking, Working in Teams, and Work Discipline. Upon completion of the coursework and ACT Work Keys assessments, students will have the opportunity to earn a nationally recognized and portable ACT National Career Readiness Certificate.

#### Readiness Pathway

Building a solid foundation of Mathematics, English and Science skills is critically important. The NVVA-HS Readiness Pathway allows students who are deficient in Mathematics, English and/or Science skills the opportunity to receive additional, face-to-face instruction a minimum of 3.5 hours a week. Students who have demonstrated a need for support in these areas through state test results or credit deficiencies will be recommended for this pathway. Students who are college-bound, but may be required to take a remedial Math or English courses at the college level will have the opportunity to receive this additional instruction in high school, to avoid the cost of these courses at the higher education institution.

#### Jump Start College

Jump Start College is collaboration with Western Nevada College to provide transferrable college courses to high school students. NVVA-HS is one of 15 high schools in Nevada to participate in this program. One of the primary goals of the Jump Start College program is to increase college degree attainment for Nevada students. College courses are taught by a WNC professor, and facilitated by a NVVA advisor, in-person, 4 days a week at either the NVVA Blended Learning Center, or any of the WNC campuses across the state. Each semester course at Western Nevada College will count as a full year's credit towards a high school diploma in that subject area. Nevada Virtual Academy will incur all costs for this program.

#### Advanced Dual Credit

University-bound students will have the opportunity to participate in the Advanced Dual Credit Pathway, which allows Nevada Virtual Academy students to enroll as non-degreed students at University of Nevada-Las Vegas, University of Nevada-Reno, College of Southern Nevada, or Great Basin College. Students are eligible to take up to 24 credits that will transfer to a degreed program of their choice when they enroll as a full-time college student. Students are eligible to enroll in online or on-campus courses. Nevada Virtual Academy will cover the cost of all course fees for students who participate in the program.

#### Virtual

For students who live in remote areas, Nevada Virtual Academy will provide a rigorous educational experience with a robust curriculum. Students will have 24/7 access to course materials and will have the opportunity to collaborate with teachers and peers in a virtual setting. Currently enrolled students who have shown an ability to thrive in a completely virtual setting will have the opportunity to continue their alternative education experience. "Thrive" is determined by, but not limited to: state assessment proficiency, credit/grade-level sufficiency, diagnostic/interim assessment scores indicating at or above grade level standing.

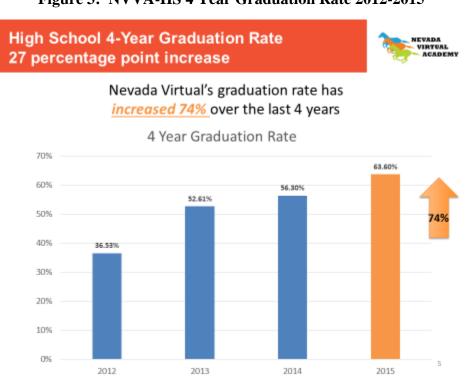
## **3. PERFORMANCE OVERVIEW SINCE 2013**

## **A. High School**

Nevada Virtual High School (NVVA-HS) has demonstrated significant growth in all academic achievement measures since the 2013-2014 school year. NVVA-HS's graduation rate, high school proficiency exam achievement, and ACT scores have all consistently increased.

## **Graduation Rate**

The NVVA-HS graduation rate has nearly doubled, from 36.56% in 2012 to 63.53% in 2015.

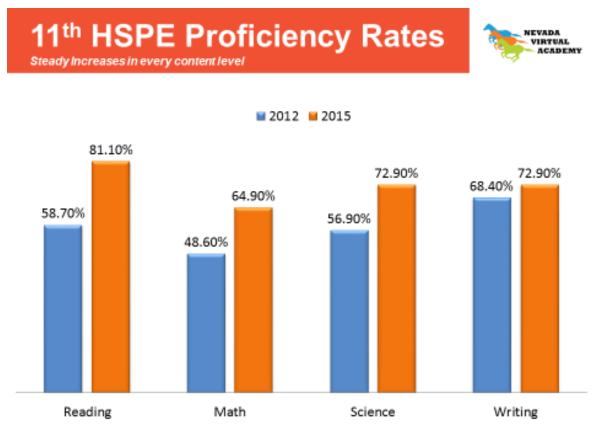


#### Figure 3: NVVA-HS 4 Year Graduation Rate 2012-2015

### **Proficiency Increase**

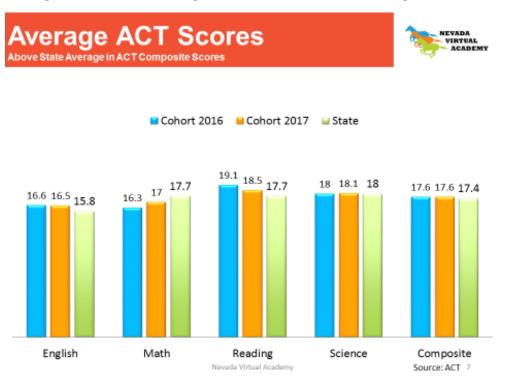
Until 2016, in order to graduate with a standard diploma, students in Nevada must earn 22.5 credits, as well as pass the four High School Proficiency Exams (HSPE) in Reading, Math, Writing, and Science. With targeted intervention in the four HSPE areas, as well as an intensive credit recovery program, the high school was able to catch up a large portion of the credit deficient student population and increased its HSPE passing rates.

## Figure 4: 11<sup>th</sup> Grade HSPE Proficiency Rates 2012-2015



#### **ACT Averages**

In the 2014-2015 School year, all 11<sup>th</sup> grade students across the state of Nevada participated in the ACT assessment. Nevada Virtual Academy Juniors outperformed the State average in English, Reading, Science, and Overall Composite Score.



#### Figure 5: NVVA Average ACT Scores VS State Average

It was the High School's goal was to increase its ACT average in Math from 16.3 to above the state average of 17.7 during the 2015-2016 school year.

#### **Options for Advanced Learners**

Since 2013, NVVA-HS has substantially increased options for advanced learners. This is evident in the 500% increase in the percentage of students earning a 3 or better on an Advanced Placement Exam, or earning college dual credit. Although NVVA-HS has partnerships with 7 of the 8 Nevada System of Higher Education institutions, its partnership with Western Nevada College has been particularly fruitful. In the Fall of 2015, NVVA-HS started its first cohort of the Western Nevada College Jump Start College Program. A second cohort of the Jump Start Program is set to begin in the Fall of 2016.

#### **Partnership with McREL International**

By working closely with McREL International in NVVA's first year of receiving a School Improvement Grant, there is great optimism for the continued improvement in the high school. (The data compiled by McREL is attached as Appendix A.) McREL's expertise is in providing proven, research-based solutions aimed at school improvement. McREL has also provided quality professional development for school leaders in the areas of Professional Learning Communities, change management, and sustaining positive change. (Appendices C and D contain further research and analysis by McREL in the areas of blended education, overall SIG effectiveness in facilitating significant school change and a comparison of NVVA's school improvement to like-school across the country.)

#### **B. Middle School**

Nevada Virtual Academy Middle School (NVVA-MS) has demonstrated significant growth since the 2012-2013 school year. The school ranked 11<sup>th</sup> out of 126 Nevada middle schools in growth on the Nevada School Performance Framework (16 points)<sup>5</sup>. This growth is attributed to the increase in highly qualified math instructors, newly implemented reading strategist program, and the increased accountability for both teachers and students.

#### Figure 6: NVVA Middle School NSPF Growth





Of the 126 Nevada Middle Schools, NVVA ranked tied for 11<sup>th</sup> in terms of NSPF growth between 2013 & 2014.

	School Name	Difference in Index Score from 2013-2014
1	Indian Springs MS (n-size= 44)	31
2	Whittell MS (n-size= 80)	30
3	Carlin MS (n-size= 60)	28
4	Silverland MS (n-size= 529)	25
5	Virginia City MS (n-size= 88)	22.5
6	Beatty MS (n-size= 22)	20
7	Expl Knowledge MS (n-size= 212)	19.33
8	Faiss MS (n-size= 1419)	18.67
9	Coral Acad LV MS (n-size= 466)	17
10	Pershing MS (n-size= 179)	16.33
11	Nevada Virtual MS (n-size= 1195)	16
11	Pinecrest MS (n-size= 264)	16

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>5</sup> Data from 2013 and 2014 Nevada School Performance Framework. This is the most recent state data available.

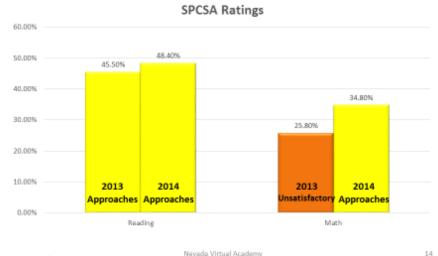
Nevada Virtual Academy's substantial growth on the NSPF was due in large part to the Growth and Gap Measures from the school's special populations during the state testing. However, the school as a whole made significant growth as well. Students demonstrated substantial growth in *all* of the following areas on the state assessments from 2013:

- Math: Median Growth Percentiles (MGP)
- Reading: MGP
- Math: Adequate Growth Percentiles (AGP)
- Reading: AGP
- GAP Subgroup Math: AGP and MGP
- GAP Subgroup Reading: AGP and MGP

Overall proficiency rates in Math (+9%) and ELA (+4%) have grown since 2013 as well. NVVA's focus on providing supplemental curriculum, small group interventions and individual student data tracking have all contributed to these growth measures.



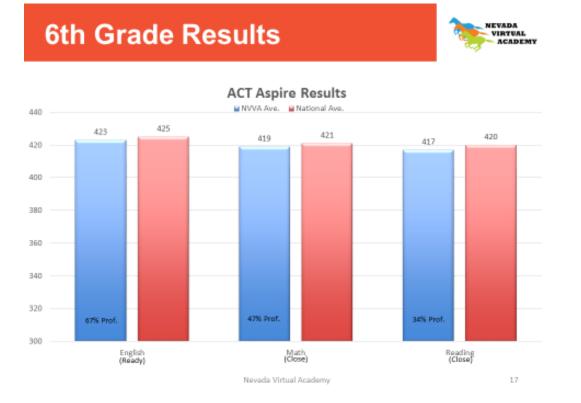




\* No data for 2015

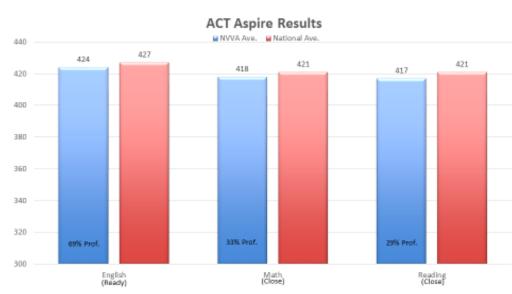
## **ACT Aspire**

The Spring of 2016 was the first year for NVVA students participating in the SPCSAmandated ACT Aspire summative assessment. This data will serve as baseline for school improvement goals. The results are below:



### Figure 8: 2016 ACT Aspire Results - 6<sup>th</sup> Grade





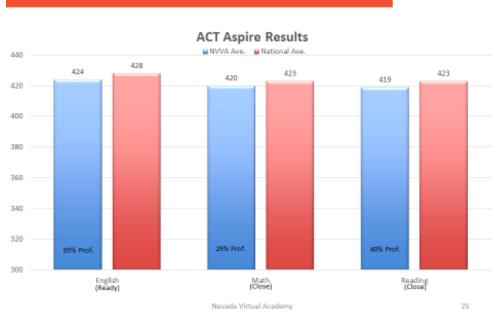
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### Figure 9: 2016 ACT Aspire Results - 7<sup>th</sup> Grade

## Figure 10: 2016 ACT Aspire Results - 8th Grade



## 8th Grade Results

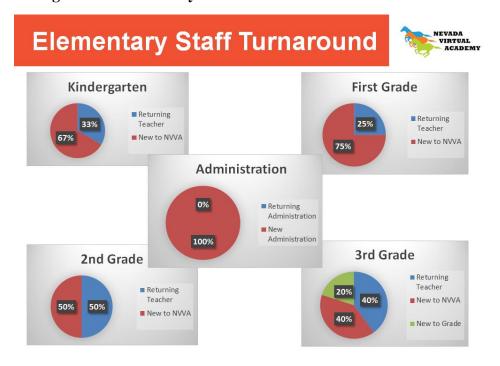
As illustrated in Figures 8, 9 and 10, NVVA Middle School was not designated "In Need of Support" in any area on the 2016 ACT Aspire assessments. The school averaged "Proficient" on the English assessment in grades 6-8. The primary objective for NVVA-MS in 2016-17 will be to move the average score in Math and Reading from "Close" to "Ready."

#### **C. Elementary School**

Nevada Virtual Academy Elementary School (NVVA-ES) has undergone a dramatic shift since the 2013 charter renewal. The increased rigor of the Nevada Academic Standards, along with increased accountability measures approved in the last legislative session, have made academic achievement at the lower grade levels a priority.

#### **Turnaround Implementation**

In order to increase academic achievement at NVVA-ES, staffing and administrative changes were necessary, as NVVA-ES was designated a Focus School for 2015-2016. These changes focused on meeting the needs of the diverse learners in the early grades. However, it is important to recognize that this designation is based on NSPF data from the 2013-2014 school year.



#### Figure 11: Elementary Staff Turnaround 2015-16

The intentional staffing adjustments noted in Figure 11 were made with the following goals in mind:

- Growing student achievement for all students;
- Improving the literacy and achievement levels in core content areas;
- Ensuring students are educated by effective teachers;
- Supporting innovative programs to improve learning; and
- Lowering student teacher ratios.

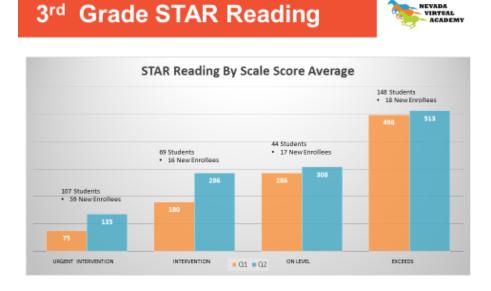
The current administrative and instructional staff understand the task ahead, and expect this year's summative assessment results will reflect the hard work that continues to occur.

#### Progress

The freeze in data for the 2014-2015 school year affected NVVA-ES more than the other NVVA schools. However, NVVA-ES continues to close the gap in reading for its most disadvantaged students.

In evaluating the students it serves, NVVA learned that especially at the elementary school level, students enroll already below grade level. The data in Figure 12, below illustrates that majority of new students are behind grade level in reading. Nearly 68% of new elementary school students in school year 2015-2016 required "Urgent Intervention" or "Intervention" in reading.





Nevada Virtual Academy

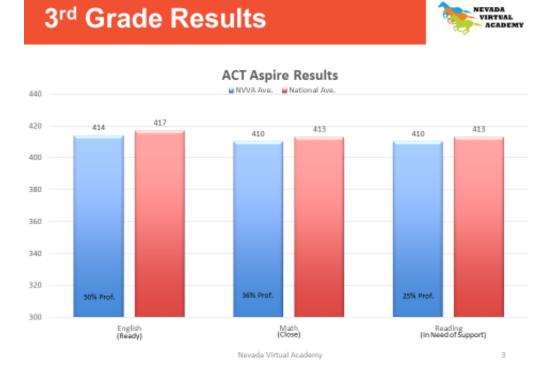
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NVVA-ES developed its Elementary School Wide Literacy Plan as a response to the high number of deficient new students. The school's Literacy Plan aligns to the four elements of the *Read By 3* guidelines and the nine guiding principles of the Nevada State Literacy Plan (NSLP).

## **ACT Aspire**

The Spring of 2016 was the first year for NVVA students participating in the SPCSAmandated ACT Aspire summative assessment. These data will serve as baseline for school improvement goals. The results are below:

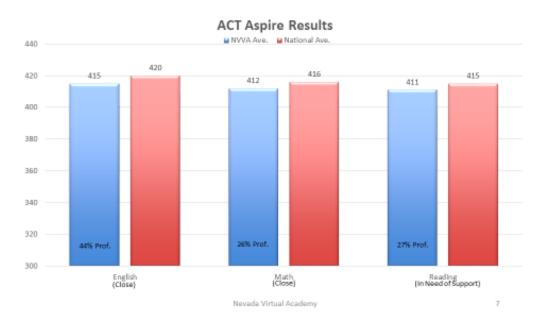
Figure 13: 2016 ACT Aspire Results – 3<sup>rd</sup> Grade



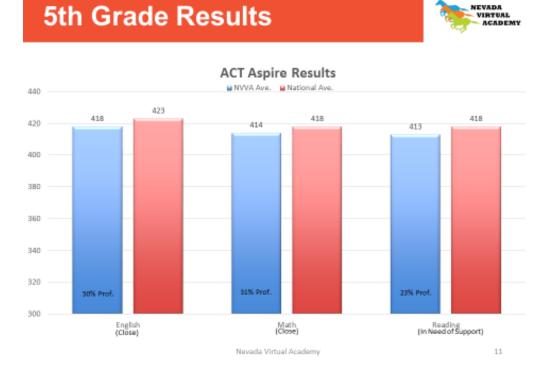
# 4th Grade Results

Figure 14: 2016 ACT Aspire Results –4<sup>th</sup> Grade





## Figure 15: 2016 ACT Aspire Results – 5<sup>th</sup> Grade



Figures 13, 14 and 15 show that NVVA-ES English scores closely mirror that of the national average, with 3<sup>rd</sup> grade designated as "Ready." The data also shows some clear opportunities, the most apparent of which is a need for intense focus on Reading in grades 3-5. Remediating this will be a top priority in 2016-2017. However, it is worth noting that there may be some factors that influenced the data. First, we believe that many students experienced testing fatigue. Our youngest students were asked to perform on as many as 8 state-mandated exams in a short time frame. Furthermore, all students were counted in this data, regardless of their enrollment date. This is much different that the accountability measures of previous years in which only students enrolled in the school on Count Day were validated.

## 4. NEXT STEPS

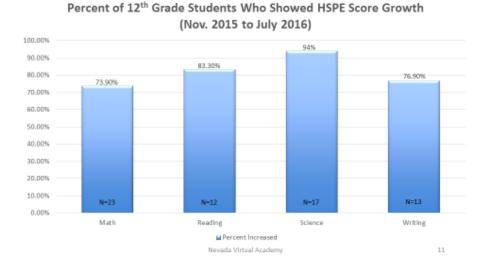
#### A. Pathways Evaluation and Expansion

In July 2015, the SPCSA Board approved Nevada Virtual Academy's implementation of a blended learning program for NVVA's students in Clark County. Early assessment of data indicate that the NVVA Pathways approach to incorporate the best instructional practices for virtual and on-campus learning has helped students in all grade levels achieve greater academic success. It is important to note here that students outside of Clark County have benefitted from increased exposure to remedial and supplemental instruction, and all three schools continue to explore ways to increase instructional opportunities for all students.

#### Figure 16: HSPE Improvement for Students Attending Blended Programs.

HSPE Blended Improvement November 2015 to July 2016





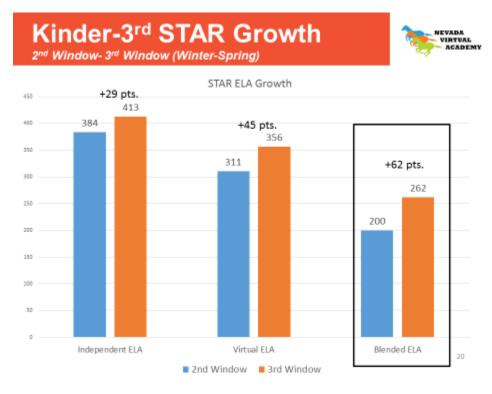
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Figure 16 shows improvement was seen at all content levels on the HSPE, by students in the Class of 2016. NVVA will continue providing professional development to fine-tune the instructional and engagement skills necessary to afford all students a unique opportunity to participate in an individualized, blended educational experience that will help to close every academic achievement gap.

2016-2017 will also usher in an expansion of the ACT National Career Readiness (ACT-NCRC) program pathway. There has been much debate among education experts in recent months about the lack of alignment that exists between the ACT and Clark County students. Graduation rates are increasing state-wide, yet student proficiency on the ACT is not. Only 10% of 11<sup>th</sup> graders on the ACT in 2016 performed well enough to be considered college-ready in reading, math, English and science<sup>6</sup>. The data in Figure 5 of this document show that NVVA-HS was clearly ahead of this curve. However, in response to this disturbing trend, NVVA-HS will be expanding ACT readiness for students. In addition to exposing more students to the ACT-NCRC, it will also engage all 11<sup>th</sup> graders in an ACT readiness program as part of a partnership with Nevada State College. The true value of the ACT is that it has the opportunity to allow students who test well to being their college career without having to take remedial classes. NVVA recognizes this and is excited to be a leader in the State in this regard.

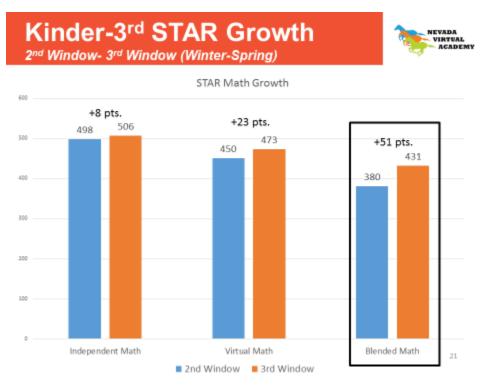
NVVA-ES has also seen a significant return as a result of the overall impact of blended learning on student growth. The interactions that take place allow teachers to engage families and parents further developing connections and a collaborative commitment to supporting students both on and off site. Figures 17 and 18 show the significant increase in interim assessment scores for all NVVA-ES students as demonstrated by performance in the Nevada Department of Education-approved STAR diagnostic assessment. Students who participated in the blended program showed significantly greater growth on the average scale score from the first to the second administration of the STAR in both ELA and Math.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>6</sup> "ACT Test Scores Put Clark County College-Ready Students at Less Than 10 Percent." Las Vegas Review Journal. 11 July, 2016.



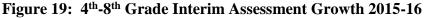
### Figure 17: Kindergarten-3<sup>rd</sup> Grade ELA Growth 2015-16

Figure 18: Kindergarten-3<sup>rd</sup> Grade Math Growth 2015-16



NVVA-MS has seen strong growth in its blended program results based on increases in interim assessment scores. As seen in Figure 19, out of 52 students in the blended learning program testing between window 2 and 3 of iReady, the average increase in scale scores in Math was 28 points, versus the schoolwide average gain of 21. The average increase in blended scale scores in Reading was 34 points, versus the schoolwide average gain of 30.





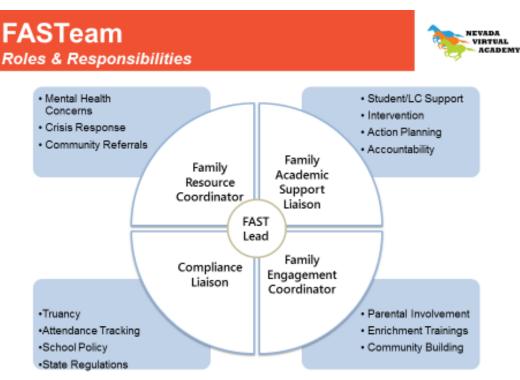
More data analysis needs to be done to completely evaluate the first year of the blended initiative, but given such promising preliminary results, NVVA would like to explore the possibility to expanding its direct instruction services to students in Washoe County.

#### **B.** Family Academic Support Team (FAST)

The 2016-17 school year will also see the fine-tuning of student wrap-around services at NVVA. Up to this point, NVVA had an 11 person team responsible for providing additional support services for students, over and above the instructional staff. In 2016-17, NVVA will have a 14 member team which will see the addition of a Family Resource Coordinator, a Family Compliance Liaison and a Family Engagement Administrator. The goals of FAST are as follows:

• Develop the capacity of students and families from a strength-based perspective

- Help students **stay on track** through early interventions, wrap-around supports and engagement strategies
- Work through non-academic issues with students and families in order to remove barriers to school success
- Create a **positive**, welcoming and supportive school climate during Strong Start and throughout the year that allow a range of opportunities for parental involvement
- Develop **community partnerships** in order to better support students and families with social, emotional, and medical issues
- Foster student connectedness and nurture student motivation
- Improve student **retention** to **promote** students to the next grade level and achieve on time **graduation**



#### Figure 20: Family Academic Support Team

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#### **C. School Goals**

In the absence of reliable state data to evaluate our progress towards school, State and Authority expectations, NVVA has integrated its progress monitoring and fashioned its school goals for the next 3 years with other State-approved measurement tools in mind.

#### K-8 Goals

#### ACT Aspire

Goal 1: Close the Gap in the Average ACT Aspire Scores in Elementary School For Areas Designated "In Needs of Support" to "Close."

Goal 2: Close the Gap in the Average ACT Aspire Math Scores in Middle School from "Close" to "Ready."

#### **Goals Using Other State-Approved Metrics**

Goal 1: Increase the reading proficiency rates in grades K-3 by 12% in each grade level by 2018-2019, as measured by Measures of Academic Progress (MAP).<sup>7</sup>

Goal 2: Increase reading achievement gap as measured by i-Ready diagnostic by 9% by 2019.

Goal 3: Increase math achievement gaps as measured by i-Ready diagnostic by 9% by 2019.

## **High School Goals<sup>8</sup>**

Goal 1: Increase graduation rate to 75% by 2019.

Goal 2: Increase 9<sup>th</sup> grade credit sufficiency rate to 87% by 2019.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>7</sup> STAR was a state-approved interim assessment in 2015-2016; it is not for 2016-2017. NVVA will use MAP for 2016-2017.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>8</sup> HS Goals are articulated in the SIG.

### **D.** Commitment to STEM

For several years, NVVA has made a commitment to improving the STEM exposure for its students. For 2 years, the school has had a very robust extra-curricular program that includes competitive robotics and First Lego League teams. To further this development and help support its continuous school improvement, NVVA was also fortunate to have received the State of Nevada College and Career Readiness Grant for the 2016-17 school year.

The anticipated outcomes are:

- Expand STEM education lessons and activities across content areas. Ten-member STEM teacher leader team will develop lessons and implement them across grades 7-12 as measured by student attendance.
- Deepen student engagement across content areas with STEM centered lessons as measured by engagement observations and surveys.
- Increase student enrollment in high school STEM elective courses.
- Broaden student exposure to STEM professionals and related careers

## **5. CONCLUSION**

The consistent academic growth of Nevada Virtual Academy students combined with the schools' ability to sustain this achievement demonstrates that NVVA has made substantial progress in closing achievement gaps since 2013. The school increased its overall rating on the SPCSA Framework by 16.18 points from SY 2012/2013 to SY2013/2014.<sup>9</sup> In addition, significant achievement gains have been made in key areas: high school graduation rate, state proficiency exams, and ACT scores. Further, NVVA has closed achievement gaps in populations of educationally disadvantaged students and continues to serve the largest FRL student population in the SPCSA portfolio of schools.

Nevada Virtual Academy promotes student achievement by preparing every student every day for college and career readiness. The school has articulated its researched-based plan to continue its current growth and sustain its achievement gains. NVVA-HS was the only school in Nevada to receive a School Improvement Grant which demonstrates its sound plan for improvement. The school's blended initiative, while only completing its inaugural year, has increased both student engagement and achievement. NVVA's administration, teachers, and staff will continue to use data-driven decisions to drive school improvement and refine instructional practices.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>9</sup> Data is not available for the 2014/2015 and 2015/2016 school years.