



Nevada State Public Charter School Authority

2023 Academic and Demographic Needs Assessment

November 18, 2022

(Version 2.0)

Substantive updates are highlighted in yellow.

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I. Executive Summary

In 2019, the Nevada State Legislature voted to pass Assembly Bill (AB) 462. In part, this legislation directed the Nevada State Public Charter School Authority (SPCSA) to annually conduct and incorporate the findings of “an evaluation of demographic information of pupils, the academic needs of pupils and the needs of any pupils who are at risk of dropping out of school in this State” into its charter school authorizing decisions—requirements codified in Nevada Revised Statute (NRS) [388A.220](#) and [388A.249](#).

The deadline for the first evaluation was established as July 30, 2019, with a requirement that the evaluation be updated annually by January 31. To this end, the SPCSA conducted an Academic and Demographic Needs Assessment in collaboration with the Nevada Department of Education (NDE) as well as local school districts, and the Authority board approved the first Academic and Demographic Needs Assessment on July 26, 2019. During the fall of 2019, the NDE released updated Nevada School Performance Framework (NSPF) ratings and demographic data, and this information was incorporated into the December 2019 version of the Needs Assessment. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the NDE was granted 2019-20 and 2020-21 school year waivers from the U.S. Department of Education for certain school accountability requirements established under the federal Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA). Accordingly, the NDE did not calculate the annual NSPF school star ratings for either the 2019-20 or 2020-21 school years. For the 2021-22 school year, the NDE was granted a waiver from the U.S. Department of Education allowing the NDE to issue index scores, but not official star ratings. Therefore, the findings and reports associated with this January 2023 iteration of the Needs Assessment incorporates the 2018-19 school year NSPF star ratings, the 2021-22 school year state assessment data and index scores, and the 2021-22 school year enrollment rates.

This document details how the SPCSA has defined academic and demographic need, the findings of the Needs Assessment, and the implementation of the Needs Assessment.

The SPCSA worked in conjunction with local school districts and the NDE to establish definitions for demographic and academic needs that are transparent, grounded in student and school performance, and aligned to the Department’s school accountability system. While the identified needs remain largely the same, this iteration of the Academic and Demographic Needs Assessment incorporates recent feedback from representatives of school districts, representatives from the Nevada Department of Education, and Authority members regarding the definitions of need. Additional feedback may be incorporated in future iterations.

The SPCSA has defined demographic and academic needs as follows, with additional details provided in Section III:

A. Demographic Needs

- A. Student groups that consistently underperform on the 3rd-8th grade Smarter Balanced Assessment (Math and ELA) and the 11th grade ACT Assessment (Math and ELA) present a demographic need; these student groups may benefit from the creation of high-quality school options so long as those schools have credible plans to meet the needs of the student population. High-quality school options to serve student groups that have historically underperformed can be most impactful when the school works to alleviate barriers to access.

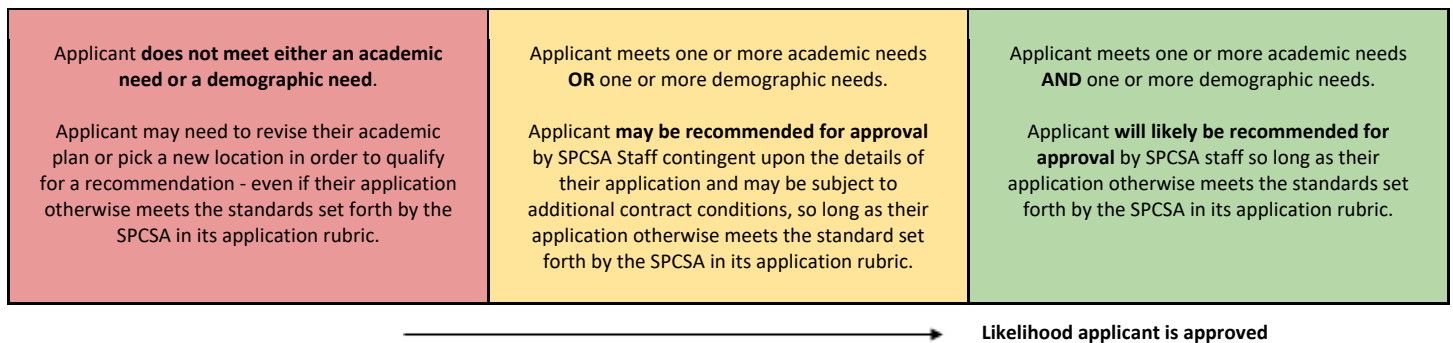
B. Academic Needs

- A. Geographies with 1- and 2-star schools that continue to have an index score below 50: In zip codes with one or more schools rated 1- or 2-stars on the Nevada School Performance Framework (NSPF) in the 2018-19 school year and which continue to have an NSPF index score below 50, students are enrolling in schools that have a history of not meeting or partially meeting state performance standards. When a significant number of students are enrolled in these schools the addition of a 3-, 4- or 5-star school can provide an alternative option for these students if the new school has a credible plan to meet the needs of the student population and the new school has strong partnerships within the community. Alternative 3-, 4- or 5-star options can be most impactful in communities that currently have limited or no public charter school

options available.

- B. Students at risk of dropping out: Despite a rapidly improving graduation rate, nearly one in five students does not graduate from high school in four years, with certain student groups persistently graduating at lower rates than their peers. Additional data show various student populations have historically had higher dropout rates than their peers. Public charter schools aimed at enrolling and preventing at-risk students from dropping out of school can be most impactful when they offer a unique academic experience for students and/or are closely aligned to Nevada’s priorities for workforce and economic development.

[NRS 388A.249](#) requires that approval of any charter application must include a determination that the proposed school meets one or more of the needs defined in the Academic and Demographic Needs Assessment. Therefore, the SPCSA must evaluate charter applications based upon the public charter school application rubric which includes evaluating the proposed school’s plans to meet statewide academic and demographic needs identified in the SPCSA’s Needs Assessment. SPCSA staff will make recommendations based on the approach outlined in the visual below. Ultimately, the Authority Board will vote to approve or deny an application.



The Needs Assessment is updated annually, in collaboration with the NDE and local school districts, to ensure that each charter application process is reflective of the state’s current academic and demographic needs. The SPCSA is most likely to approve high quality applications that address the needs identified in the Needs Assessment. In reviewing and approving charter applications, the SPCSA will solicit input and feedback from local school districts, municipalities, other key stakeholders, and the public at large.

II. Introduction to the Academic and Demographic Needs Assessment

Legislative context and purpose

In May of 2019, the Nevada State Legislature passed Assembly Bill (AB) 462, which was signed into law with an effective date of June 3, 2019. The legislation required public charter school sponsors to make several changes to their authorizing and accountability practices. These changes included the requirements—now found in [NRS 388A.220](#) and [388A.249](#)—that the SPCSA conduct an annual assessment of statewide academic and demographic needs which must inform SPCSA’s charter authorization planning and decisions.

AB 462 added language to [NRS 388A.220](#), which states that “On or before January 31 of each year, the State Public Charter School Authority shall prepare, in collaboration with the Nevada Department of Education and, to the extent practicable, the board of trustees of each school district in this State and any other sponsor of a public charter school in this State, an evaluation of demographic information of pupils, the academic needs of pupils, and the needs of any pupils who are at risk of dropping out of school in this state.”

For each charter application, SPCSA staff conducts an application review process and makes recommendations to the SPCSA board. Subsequently, the SPCSA board reviews each application, its accompanying staff recommendation, and votes to approve or deny the proposal. Prior to the passage of AB 462, this review process required that an application complied with applicable laws and regulations and that the applicant “demonstrated competence in accordance with the criteria for approval prescribed by the sponsor.” AB 462 amended [NRS 388A.249](#), stating that staff shall additionally “consider the degree to which the proposed public charter school will address the needs identified” and “solicit input from the board of trustees of the school district in which the proposed public charter school will be located” in determining their application recommendations to the board. Similarly, [NRS 388A.249](#) states the SPCSA board may approve applications that, in addition to previous requirements noted, meet at least one need identified in the Academic and Demographic Needs Assessment and have received sufficient public input.

This document addresses the following questions:

1. What are the standards and measures according to which the SPCSA assesses which specific demographics (student groups) may benefit from a public charter school option?
2. What are the standards and measures according to which the SPCSA assesses whether a geography has an academic need for a public charter school option?
3. What are the standards and measures according to which the SPCSA assesses the needs of students who are at risk of dropping out of school?
4. Based on the foregoing, which communities seem most likely to benefit from the strategic placement of a public charter school?
5. What are the implications of the foregoing for the SPCSA’s authorizing practices?

The objective of this document is to assess statewide academic and demographic needs as outlined in [NRS 388A.220](#). The specific measures outlined in this document are not, however, the only factors that the SPCSA will consider in authorizing new schools. [NRS 388A.220](#) also calls for public input in both this Needs Assessment and in the charter school authorizing process. In both processes, the SPCSA will consider many factors raised by the community, including evidence of demand for new schools, whether due to the need for additional facility capacity, students on public charter school waiting lists, or families desiring different educational options.

Furthermore, as the SPCSA develops new versions of the Academic and Demographic Needs Assessment in future years, the SPCSA will consider changes in Nevada’s educational landscape and may propose revisions in the way that academic and demographic needs are defined and measured, as appropriate. Additionally, the SPCSA will continue the practice of providing local school districts, municipalities, and other members of the public with the opportunity to provide input into and feedback on the definitions of academic and demographic needs, as well as the methodology of the Needs Assessment.

III. Definitions of Academic and Demographic Need

[NRS 388A.220](#) requires that the Academic and Demographic Needs Assessment evaluate the “demographic information of pupils, the academic needs of pupils, and the needs of any pupils who are at risk of dropping out of school in this state.”

Accordingly, the SPCSA has defined a set of needs that are:

- Supported by rationale and data;
- Accompanied by information, including maps, tables, and charts, that are useful for applicants seeking to open public charter schools, as well as SPCSA staff and Authority Board Members reviewing applications for alignment to need;
- Reflective of the current context of the SPCSA (demographic makeup, locations, density, and performance of schools); and
- Responsive to the statewide, district, and localized educational context.

While the definitions of needs are specific, charter applicants have the flexibility to determine how they would address one or more of the needs, if approved. This iteration of the Academic and Demographic Needs Assessment incorporates feedback from representatives of school districts and the Department of Education as well as Authority members. Additional feedback, particularly as it relates to how overcrowding of existing district schools should factor into the definitions of need, may be incorporated in future iterations. SPCSA staff continue to gather information regarding overcrowding in school districts in order to inform future revisions. In the meantime, the SPCSA will continue to include a request for information regarding capacity and overcrowding when soliciting input from local school districts.

1. Demographics

Applicants meeting this need will propose a school model that includes demonstrated capacity, credible plans, and thorough research and analysis in order to intentionally enroll and serve the following student groups, each of which has been identified as historically underperforming based on data provided by the NDE: Students qualifying for free or reduced-price lunch (FRL)¹, English Language Learners (ELLs), Students with Disabilities (those with an Individual Education Program, or IEP), Students in Foster Care, and Students Experiencing Homelessness. Successful applicants will demonstrate the capacity to support these student groups in making rapid academic growth and achieving academic performance above the state average. Applicants intending to enroll and serve student groups that have historically underperformed can be most impactful when they alleviate barriers to access, such as by providing meals through the National School Lunch Program, providing student transportation, proactively translating written communication to commonly spoken languages, and offering robust social work and counseling services.

Rationale: These student groups have consistently performed below the state average across various academic measures, including the 3rd-8th grade Smarter Balanced Assessment (in both Math and ELA) and the 11th grade ACT Assessment (in both Math and ELA) when reviewing data from the 2018-19 to 2021-22 school years.

2a. Academic Need: Geographies with 1- and 2-star schools that continue to have an index score below 50

Applicants meeting this need will propose a school model that includes demonstrated capacity, credible plans, and thorough research and analysis to intentionally provide access to 3-, 4- and 5-star schools in zip codes where a significant percentage of students are attending a school² that

- Received a 1- or 2-star NSPF rating for the 2018-19 school year, AND

¹ Enrollment rates of students qualifying for free and reduced-price lunch is often used as a proxy measure for students in poverty.

² Schools that are rated on the Alternative Performance Framework pursuant to NRS 385A.740, SPCSA-sponsored charter schools, and schools in the University and Correctional districts are excluded from this analysis.

- Continues to have an NSPF index score below 50 as of the 2021-22 school year³.

Successful applicants will demonstrate the capacity to effectively meet the needs of students who will transfer from 1- or 2- star schools that continue to have an index score below 50 in order to drive rapid academic growth and achieve academic performance above the state average. Additionally, applicants meeting this need will provide intentional plans for partnering with the community and building on identified community assets to meet the needs of students within the community. Simply adding a school option in a community with 1- or 2-star schools that continue to have an index score below 50 will not inherently lead to effectively meeting the community needs. Rather, schools must establish trust with the community by working in partnership to intentionally meet the needs of the students and community. Alternative 3-, 4- or 5-star school options in communities where a significant percentage of students are attending a 1- or 2-star school that continues to have an index score below 50 can be most impactful when there are limited or no public charter school options available in the community. The following resources are available:

- An Excel Workbook containing a) a list of zip codes that contain 1- and/or 2-star schools that continue to have an index score below 50, b) a list of 1- and/or 2-star schools that continue to have an index score below 50, and c) a list of existing SPCSA-sponsored charter schools by zip code: https://charterschools.nv.gov/uploadedFiles/CharterSchoolsnvgov/content/News/2022/2023_SPCSA_NeedsAssessment_DataFile.xlsx.
- An interactive map where users can view a) the location and basic information about 1- and 2-star schools that continue to have an index score below 50 and b) the location and basic information about existing SPCSA-sponsored charter schools: <https://bit.ly/NeedsAssessmentMap2023>.

Rationale: The Nevada School Performance Framework (NSPF) school star ratings were developed by the NDE with input from local school districts and other stakeholders across the state. The NSPF identifies 3-star performance as adequate, while 2-star schools are defined as partially meeting standards, and 1-star schools are defined as not meeting standards. In zip codes where a significant percentage of students are enrolled in 1- or 2-star schools, students are attending schools that are, by definition, inadequate, and the addition of a 3-, 4- or 5-star school would provide an alternative option for these students.

Given the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic, and the fact that the NDE released only index scores for the 2021-22 school year, relying solely on 2021-22 school year data would not account for the unique circumstances of the last few school years. Similarly, relying on the 2018-19 school year data would not account for any progress schools may have made in the last three years. Therefore, combining these two data sets allows the SPCSA to leverage historical star ratings while bringing in more recent context.

2b. Academic Need: Students at risk of dropping out of school

Applicants meeting this need will propose a public charter school model that includes demonstrated capacity, credible plans, and thorough research and analysis to enroll and prevent at-risk students from dropping out of school and put them on track for successful high school completion with concrete post-secondary plans that will put them on a trajectory toward economic success. Models may include but are not limited to programs designed for student groups that are most at-risk of dropping out or programs aimed at enabling credit-deficient students to get back on track to graduate. Applicants should demonstrate a strong understanding of grade-level appropriate indicators for successful high school completion, such as early literacy, attendance, and credit sufficiency and plans to enable students to successfully meet these milestones. Public charter schools aimed at enrolling and preventing at-risk students from dropping out of school can be most impactful when they offer a unique academic experience for students and/or are closely aligned to Nevada's priorities for workforce and economic development.

Rationale: Despite a rapidly improving graduation rate, nearly one in five Nevada students do not graduate from high

³ For the 2021-22 school year, the NDE released index scores for all Nevada Public Schools but did not issue star ratings. According to the NDE, an index score of 50 or below translates to a 1- or 2-star rating. Only schools that otherwise met the 2021-22 NSPF rating requirements are included.

school within four years, with certain student groups persistently graduating at lower rates than their peers. Additionally, various populations have historically had higher dropout rates than their peers. Furthermore, research has shown that there are early indicators for students at risk of dropping out of school that can be proactively addressed. According to [Attendance Works](#), chronic absenteeism is a critical factor in student academic success and in certain circumstances is associated with increased risk of dropping out of school. Other research by the [Annie E. Casey Foundation](#) found that students “who do not read proficiently by third grade are four times more likely to leave school without a diploma than proficient readers.”

[NRS 388A.249](#) requires that approval of any charter application must include a determination that the proposed school meets one or more of the needs identified in the Academic and Demographic Needs Assessment. The SPCSA has adjusted the charter application process such that both the SPCSA staff review of charter applications and Authority Board decisions on charter applications are both reflective of district input as well as the findings of the Needs Assessment. The SPCSA updates the Academic and Demographic Needs Assessment on an annual basis in order to ensure that each charter application process is reflective of the state’s current academic and demographic needs.

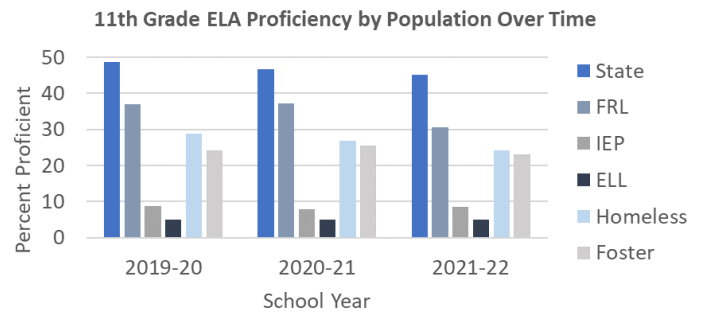
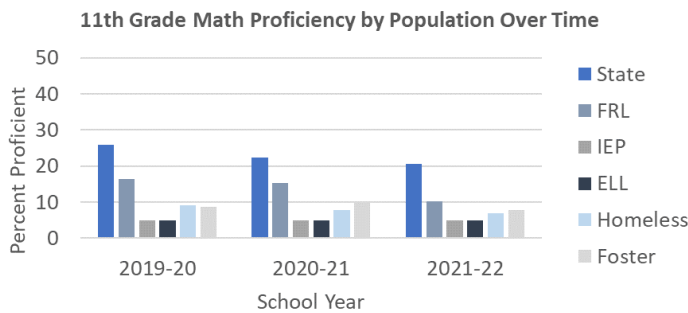
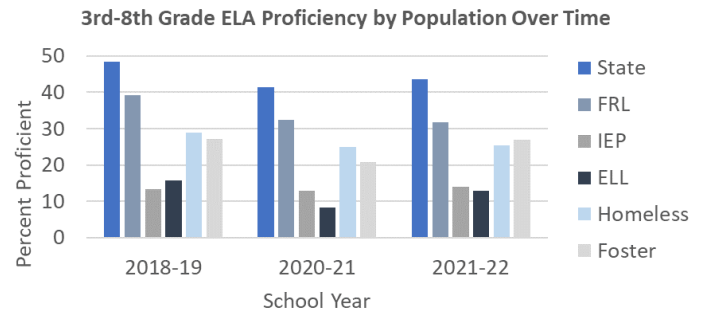
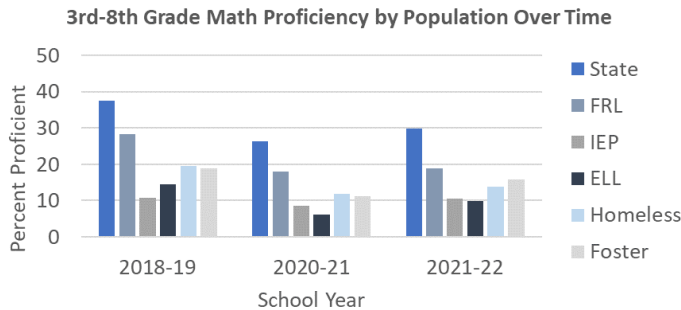
IV. Findings of the Academic and Demographic Needs Assessment

The SPCSA has collaborated with the NDE and local Nevada school districts to conduct the Academic and Demographic Needs Assessment. The SPCSA will review charter applications in consideration of the Needs Assessment findings and is most likely to approve high quality applications that address the needs identified in the Needs Assessment. In reviewing and approving charter applications, the SPCSA solicits input and feedback from local school districts, municipalities, other key stakeholders, and the public at large.

The information below provides a summary of current trends identified through this Needs Assessment. The SPCSA updates the Needs Assessment annually. As the educational landscape evolves, so too do the content and findings within the Needs Assessment.

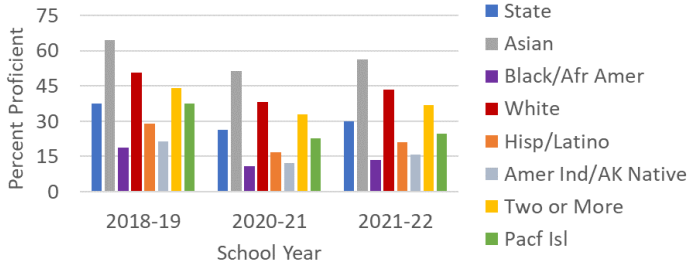
1. Demographics

The analysis found that Economically Disadvantaged Students (those qualifying for free or reduced-price lunch or FRL), English Language Learners (ELLs), Students with Disabilities (those with Individualized Education Programs or IEPs), students that are homeless, and students in foster care have historically underperformed relative to the average Nevada student across multiple academic measures, including the 3rd-8th grade Smarter Balanced Assessment in Math/ELA and the 11th grade ACT Assessment in Math/ELA. **The charts below** show the academic performance of the FRL, ELL, IEP, Homeless, and Foster populations compared to the state for the three most recent available years of assessment data.

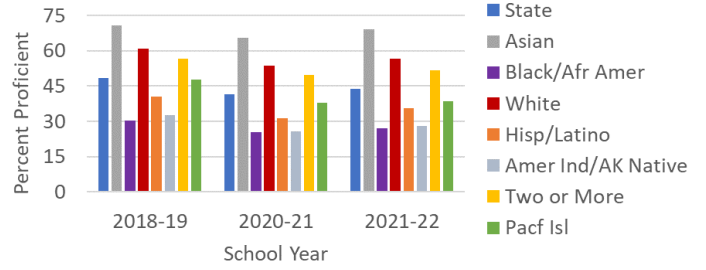


In addition, while the focus of this analysis was on the five aforementioned student groups (FRL, ELL, IEP, Homeless, and Foster populations), data from the Nevada Department of Education also showed that Black/African American, Hispanic/Latino, and American Indian/Alaskan Native students underperformed relative to the average Nevada student in the three most recent years of available data for the 3rd-8th grade Smarter Balanced Assessment in Math/ELA and the 11th grade ACT Assessment in Math/ELA.

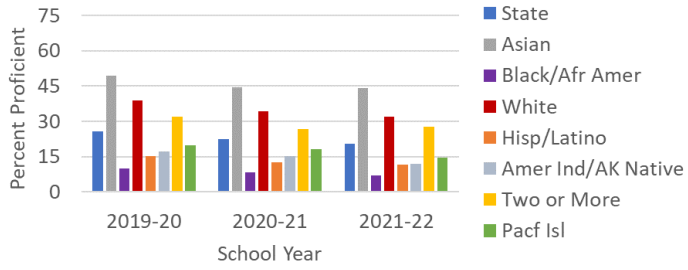
3rd-8th Grade Math Proficiency by Race/Ethnicity Over Time



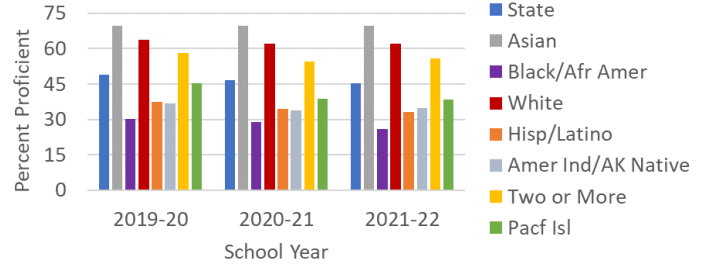
3rd-8th Grade ELA Proficiency by Race/Ethnicity Over Time



11th Grade Math Proficiency by Race/Ethnicity Over Time



11th Grade ELA Proficiency by Race/Ethnicity Over Time



2a. Academic Need: **Geographies with 1- and 2-star schools that continue to have an index score below 50**

The following analysis provides an overview of academic need, as measured by the existence of 1- and 2-star schools that continue to have an index score below 50, in Nevada as a whole and in each local school district. *These data do not include public charter schools authorized by the SPCSA, schools in the University and Correctional districts, or schools rated under the Nevada Alternative Performance Framework.* These analyses include: the 2018-19 school year Nevada School Performance Framework (NSPF) school star ratings, 2021-22 school year NSPF school index scores (for schools that met NSPF rating requirements), and 2021-22 school year enrollment data. NSPF star rating and index score data were retrieved from the [Nevada Accountability Portal](#), while enrollment data by NSPF school code were provided by the Nevada Department of Education.

- Statewide (does not include SPCSA-sponsored charter schools)
 - In the state of Nevada, 17 local school districts serve approximately 417,156 students in grades K-12 across 140 zip codes;
 - In the state of Nevada, there are 202 local district schools that were rated 1- or 2-stars for the 2018-19 school year and had an NSPF score under 50 for the 2021-22 school year across 77 zip codes that serve approximately 117,806 students, or 28.2% of students enrolled in local district schools.
- Carson City School District
 - The Carson City School District serves about 7,564 students in 13 schools across 3 zip codes; and
 - In the district, there is 1 school that was rated 1- or 2-stars for the 2018-19 school year and had an NSPF score under 50 for the 2021-22 school year in 1 zip code that serves 161 students, or 2.1% of students in the district.
- Churchill County School District
 - The Churchill County School District serves about 3,238 students in 5 schools across 1 zip code; and
 - In the district, there is 1 school that was rated 1- or 2-stars for the 2018-19 school year and had an NSPF score under 50 for the 2021-22 school year in 1 zip code that serves 801 students, or 24.7% of students in the district.
- Clark County School District
 - The Clark County School District serves about 304,778 students in 359 schools across 64 zip codes; and
 - In the district, there are 124 schools that were rated 1- or 2-stars for the 2018-19 school year and had an NSPF score under 50 for the 2021-22 school year across 36 zip codes that serve about 89,554 students, or 29.3% of students in the district.
- Douglas County School District
 - The Douglas County School District serves about 5,248 students in 17 schools across 6 zip codes; and
 - In the district, there are 2 schools that were rated 1- or 2-stars for the 2018-19 school year and had an NSPF score under 50 for the 2021-22 school year across 2 zip codes that serve about 139 students, or 2.6% of students in the district.
- Elko County School District
 - The Elko County School District serves about 9,705 students in 38 schools across 8 zip codes; and
 - In the district, there are 11 schools that were rated 1- or 2-stars for the 2018-19 school year and had an NSPF score under 50 for the 2021-22 school year across 7 zip codes that serve about 2,474 students, or 25.4% of students in the district.
- Esmeralda County School District
 - The Esmeralda County School District serves about 76 students in 7 schools across 3 zip codes; and
 - In the district, there are 0 schools that were rated 1- or 2-stars for the 2018-19 school year and had an NSPF score under 50 for the 2021-22 school year.
- Eureka County School District
 - The Eureka County School District serves about 336 students in 4 schools across 2 zip codes; and

- In the district, there are 0 schools that were rated 1- or 2-stars for the 2018-19 school year and had an NSPF score under 50 for the 2021-22 school year.
- Humboldt County School District
 - The Humboldt County School District serves about 3,244 students in 17 schools across 5 zip codes; and
 - In the district, there are 4 schools that were rated 1- or 2-stars for the 2018-19 school year and had an NSPF score under 50 for the 2021-22 school year across 2 zip codes that serve about 1,098 students, or 33.8% of students in the district.
- Lander County School District
 - The Lander County School District serves about 974 students in 5 schools across 2 zip codes; and
 - In the district, there is 1 school that was rated 1- or 2-stars for the 2018-19 school year and had an NSPF score under 50 for the 2021-22 school year in 1 zip code that serves 367 students, or 37.6% of students in the district.
- Lincoln County School District
 - The Lincoln County School District serves about 795 students in 8 schools across 4 zip codes; and
 - In the district, there are 0 schools that were rated 1- or 2-stars for the 2018-19 school year and had an NSPF score under 50 for the 2021-22 school year.
- Lyon County School District
 - The Lyon County School District serves about 8,812 students in 20 schools across 5 zip codes; and
 - In the district, there are 8 schools that were rated 1- or 2-stars for the 2018-19 school year and had an NSPF score under 50 for the 2021-22 school year across 5 zip codes that serve about 2,649 students, or 30% of students in the district.
- Mineral County School District
 - The Mineral County School District serves about 564 students in 4 schools across 2 zip codes; and
 - In the district, there are 2 schools that were rated 1- or 2-stars for the 2018-19 school year and had an NSPF score under 50 for the 2021-22 school year across 2 zip codes that serve about 151 students, or 26.7% of students in the district.
- Nye County School District
 - The Nye County School District serves about 5,104 students in 21 schools across 9 zip codes; and
 - In the district, there are 8 schools that were rated 1- or 2-stars for the 2018-19 school year and had an NSPF score under 50 for the 2021-22 school year across 6 zip codes that serve about 2,406 students, or 47.1% of students in the district.
- Pershing County School District
 - The Pershing County School District serves about 661 students in 4 schools across 2 zip codes; and
 - In the district, there are 2 schools that were rated 1- or 2-stars for the 2018-19 school year and had an NSPF score under 50 for the 2021-22 school year in 1 zip code that serve about 479 students, or 72.4% of students in the district.
- Storey County School District
 - The Storey County School District serves about 433 students in 4 schools across 2 zip codes; and
 - In the district, there are 0 schools that were rated 1- or 2-stars for the 2018-19 school year and had an NSPF score under 50 for the 2021-22 school year.
- Washoe County School District
 - The Washoe County School District serves about 64,418 students in 116 schools across 19 zip codes; and
 - In the district, there are 34 schools that were rated 1- or 2-stars for the 2018-19 school year and had an NSPF score under 50 for the 2021-22 school year across 10 zip codes that serve about 16,986 students, or 26.3% of students in the district.
- White Pine County School District
 - The White Pine County School District serves about 1,206 students in 9 schools across 4 zip codes; and

- o In the district, there are 4 schools that were rated 1- or 2-stars for the 2018-19 school year and had an NSPF score under 50 for the 2021-22 school year across 3 zip codes that serve about 541 students, or 44.8% of students in the district.

Details regarding 1- and 2-star schools that continue to have an index score below 50, as well as zip codes that contain 1- and 2- star schools that continue to have an index score below 50 can be found using the resources below:

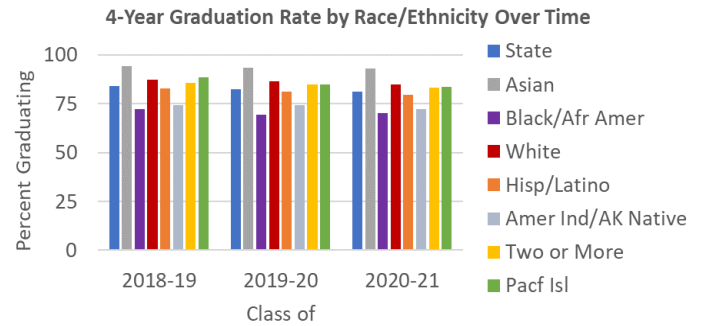
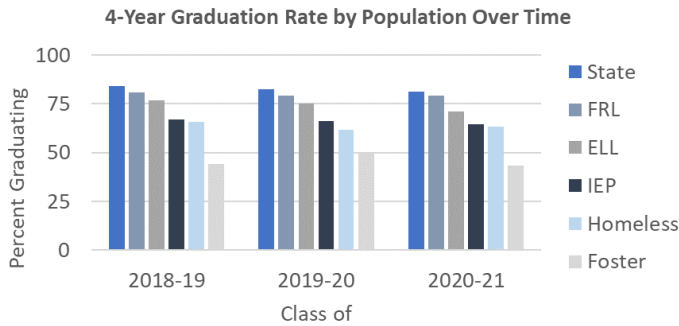
- An Excel Workbook containing a) a list of zip codes that contain 1- and/or 2-star schools that continue to have an index score below 50, b) a list of 1- and/or 2-star schools that continue to have an index score below 50, and c) a list of existing SPCSA-sponsored charter schools by zip code:

https://charterschools.nv.gov/uploadedFiles/CharterSchoolsnvgov/content/News/2022/2023_SPCSA_NeedsAssessment_DataFile.xlsx.

An interactive map where users can view a) the location and basic information about 1 and 2-star schools that continue to have an index score below 50 and b) the location and basic information about existing SPCSA-sponsored charter schools: <https://bit.ly/NeedsAssessmentMap2023>.

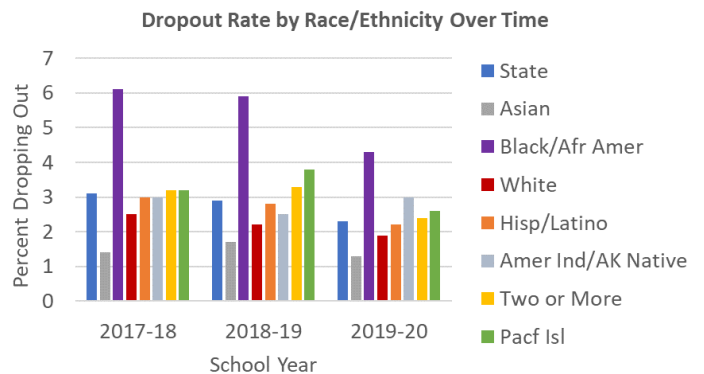
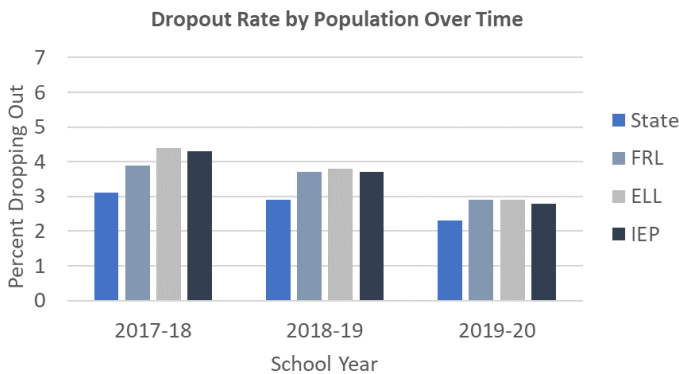
2b. Academic Need: Students at Risk of Dropping out of School

As seen in the charts below, certain Nevada student groups graduate from high school at lower rates than their peers, including Economically Disadvantaged Students (those qualifying for free or reduced-price lunch or FRL), English Language Learners (ELLs), Students with Disabilities (those with Individualized Education Programs or IEPs), students that are homeless, students in foster care, and students identifying as Black/African American, Hispanic/Latino, and American Indian/Alaskan Native.⁴



These graduation rate trends generally align with historical Nevada student dropout data for grades six to twelve. Although the Nevada Department of Education no longer presents dropout data in a format that allows comparison of dropout rates between student groups, historically, FRL, IEP, ELL, and various race/ethnicity populations have demonstrated higher dropout rates than their peers. As seen in the charts below, from 2017-18 to 2019-20:

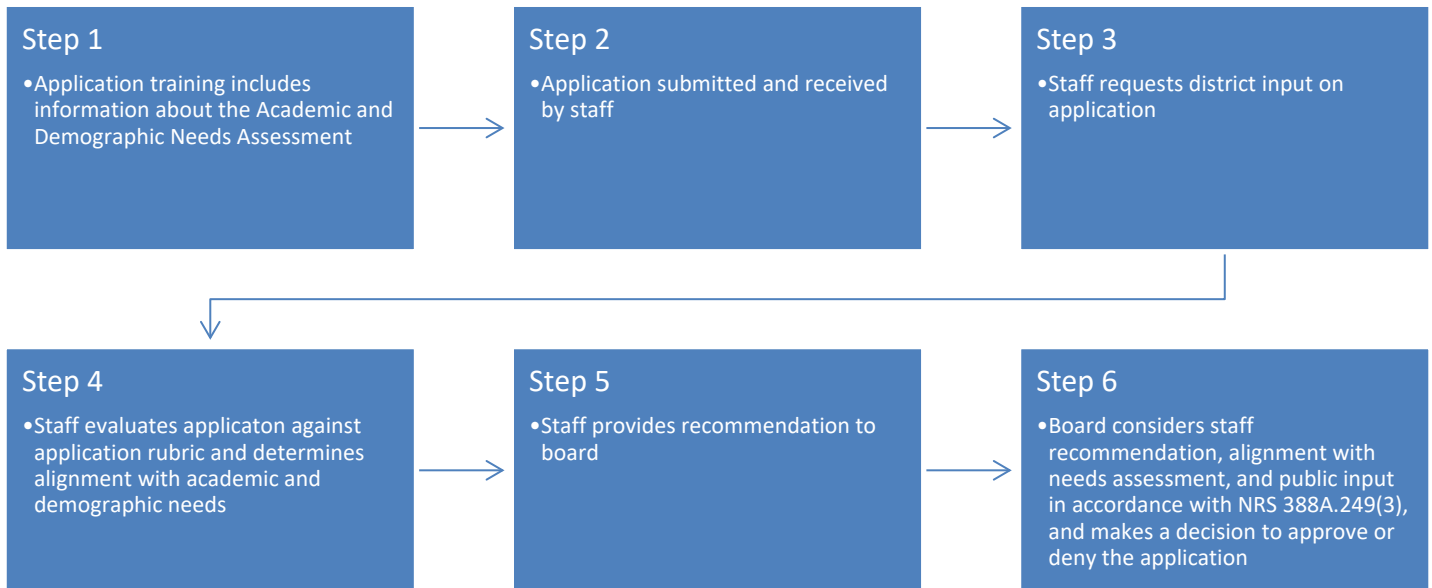
- Students belonging to the FRL, ELL, and IEP populations dropped out of school at higher rates than the average Nevada student.
- Students identifying as Black/African American, Two or More Races, or Pacific Islander dropped out of school at higher rates than the average Nevada student.
- Students identifying as Black/African American had the highest dropout rates of any population.



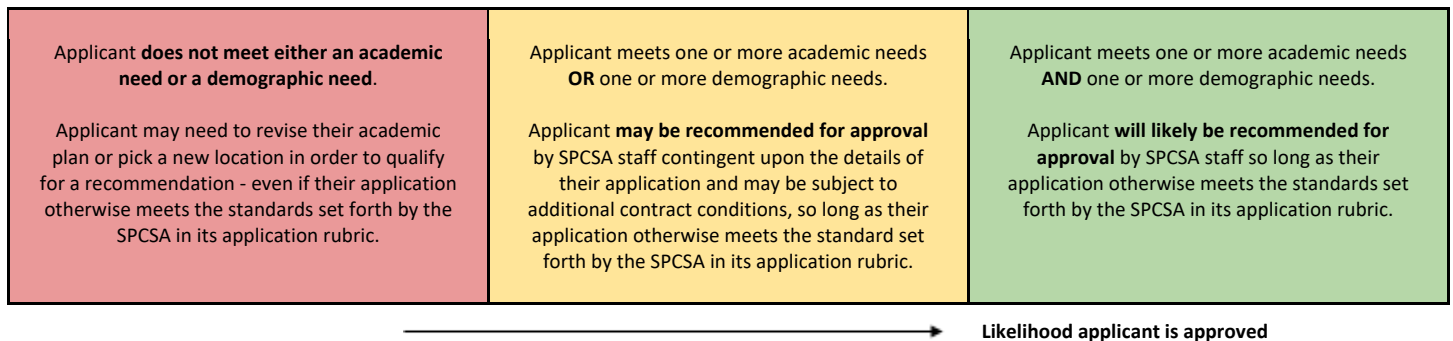
⁴ At the time of publishing, graduation rate data for the 2021-22 school year had not yet been released by the NDE. However, these graphs will be updated once this data is available.

VI. Implementation of the Academic and Demographic Needs Assessment

The SPCSA’s charter application process has always required that the charter applicant define the academic need the proposed school would serve as well as the school’s academic, operational, and financial plans. Based on the information provided, the SPCSA review team then evaluated applicants and recommended approval of those that addressed each section with “specific and accurate information that shows thorough preparation; presents a clear, realistic picture of how the school is expected to operate; and inspires confidence in the applicant’s capacity to carry out the plan effectively and result in a 4- or 5-star school.”⁵ The revisions to [NRS 388A.220](#) set forth in AB 462 did not contradict these historical practices, which are aligned to national best practices. However, [NRS 388A.220](#) requires that the SPCSA incorporate an additional component to the authorizing process as shown below.



In determining whether to approve a charter application, the SPCSA considers the findings of the Academic and Demographic Needs Assessment. SPCSA staff make recommendations based on the approach outlined in the visual below. Ultimately, the Authority Board will vote to approve or deny an application.

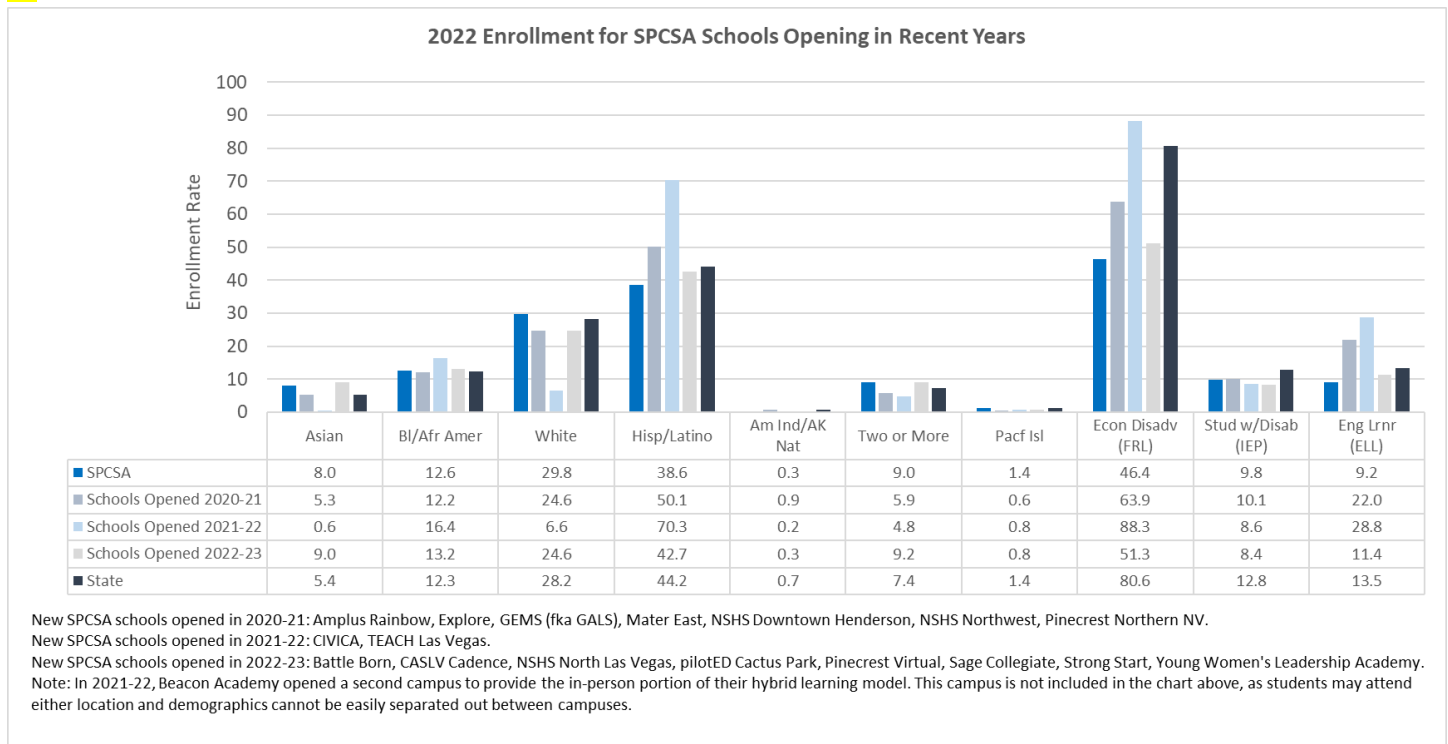


The implementation of the Needs Assessment, along with the adoption of the SPCSA’s five-year strategic plan in 2019 centered around the vision of *Equitable access to diverse, innovative, and high-quality public schools for every Nevada student*, has cemented the Authority’s focus on increasing enrollment diversity in order to serve a population that is representative of the state. While we understand that shifting the overall demographics of students will take time, the

⁵ SPCSA Application Rubric

SPCSA is closely monitoring the demographics of our new school campuses to understand the impacts of the Authority's actions. With this context in mind, we see noticeable progress toward our aim to serve a population that is representative of the state.

The graph below shows that in just **three** years, and even when including school campuses that were approved prior to the passage of AB 462, the **2022 demographics** of SPCSA-sponsored schools that opened in **2020-21, 2021-22, or 2022-23** are significantly more representative of the state's overall student population.



The table below provides **2022** demographics for each of the SPCSA school campuses that have opened since the fall of 2020. In addition, the statewide and local school district demographics are provided for reference.

Entity	Year Opened	2022 Enrollment	% Asian	% BI/Afr Amer	% White	% Hisp/Latino	% Amer Ind/AK Native	% Two or More	% Pacf Isl	% Econ Disadv (FRL)	% Stud w/Disab (IEP)	% Eng Lrnrr (ELL)
STATE	-	489597	5.4	12.3	28.2	44.2	0.7	7.4	1.4	80.6	12.8	13.5
SPCSA	-	59670	8.0	12.6	29.8	38.6	0.3	9.0	1.4	46.4	9.8	9.2
CLARK COUNTY	-	314372	5.9	16.0	20.6	47.6	0.3	7.6	1.6	95.7	12.8	15.2
Amplus Rainbow*	2020-21	626	25.2	29.3	20.9	14.8	0.4	7.9	1.1	41.6	<5	15.8
Explore Academy**	2020-21	289	2.4	23.1	26.6	37.0	0.3	10.3	0.0	54.6	15.9	<5
GEMS (fka GALS)	2020-21	92	2.1	26.0	2.1	56.5	0.0	10.8	2.1	>95	13.0	22.8
Mater Acad. East	2020-21	1903	0.8	10.2	3.8	81.4	0.1	2.8	0.5	>95	10.8	39.1
NSHS Dwtn. Henderson	2020-21	120	6.6	3.3	60.8	22.5	0.0	6.6	0.0	16.6	^	0.0
NSHS Northwest*	2020-21	130	6.9	10.0	33.8	32.3	0.7	14.6	1.5	27.6	^	^
Beacon Academy***	2021-22	552	1.0	27.8	12.3	47.4	0.3	8.5	2.3	77.3	21.0	14.6
CIVICA Academy	2021-22	767	0.5	13.8	3.2	77.8	0.1	4.0	0.3	>95	7.6	34.1
TEACH Las Vegas	2021-22	332	0.9	22.5	14.4	53.0	0.6	6.6	1.8	61.4	10.8	16.5
Battle Born Academy	2022-23	144	0.0	18.0	14.5	65.9	0.0	1.3	0.0	83.3	15.2	45.8
Coral Acad. - Cadence	2022-23	1346	12.8	8.6	26.5	40.0	0.3	10.7	0.8	40.2	7.5	7.6

Entity	Year Opened	2022 Enrollment	% Asian	% BI/Afr Amer	% White	% Hisp/Latino	% Amer Ind/AK Native	% Two or More	% Pacf Isl	% Econ Disadv (FRL)	% Stud w/Disab (IEP)	% Eng Lrn (ELL)
NSHS North Las Vegas	2022-23	67	2.9	28.3	16.4	44.7	1.4	5.9	0.0	50.7	^	^
pilotED Cactus Park	2022-23	114	0.0	35.0	4.3	52.6	0.0	7.8	0.0	100.0	8.7	20.1
Pinecrest Virtual Acad.	2022-23	78	5.1	5.1	29.4	32.0	1.2	21.7	5.1	24.3	12.8	0.0
Sage Collegiate	2022-23	205	3.4	17.5	43.4	33.6	0.0	0.9	0.9	66.8	9.2	10.2
Strong Start Acad.	2022-23	80	2.5	13.7	6.2	62.5	0.0	13.7	1.2	82.5	^	21.2
Young Women's Leadership Acad.	2022-23	62	1.6	40.3	8.0	45.1	0.0	4.8	0.0	70.9	^	^
WASHOE COUNTY	-	64990	4.3	2.7	41.4	42.5	1.1	6.3	1.4	54.3	14.1	14.1
Pinecrest Northern NV	2020-21	927	1.9	1.2	65.4	19.3	3.4	7.8	0.6	15.5	12.2	<5

^Rate is suppressed to protect student privacy, as the student group contains less than 10 students.

*Approved prior to passage of AB 462

**Approved by Achievement School District and transferred to SPCSA prior to opening per Section 80.75 of Assembly Bill 78 (2019)

***In addition to the original Flamingo location, Beacon Academy opened a second campus (Sahara) in Las Vegas to provide the in-person portion of their hybrid learning model. As students may attend either location, demographics displayed are across both Beacon campuses.

VII. Conclusion

The SPCSA approved the first iteration of the Academic and Demographic Needs Assessment on July 26, 2019. This fifth iteration of the Needs Assessment incorporates the 2018-19 NSPF school star ratings, the 2021-22 school year state assessment data and NSPF index scores, and the 2021-22 school year enrollment rates. Additionally, this iteration of the Academic and Demographic Needs Assessment incorporates feedback from, representatives of school districts and the Nevada Department of Education as well as Authority members regarding the definitions of need. Going forward, the SPCSA will continue to update the Needs Assessment annually.

The Needs Assessment provides up-to-date information about the demographics and academic needs of students across the state of Nevada. In addition, the Needs Assessment serves as a key driver in the development of the Growth Management Plan which is required under [NRS 388A.167](#) as amended by AB 462. While the Needs Assessment provides a snapshot in time of the needs of students in Nevada, the Growth Management Plan provides a preview of how new public charter schools will address the identified needs of students in Nevada.

Ultimately, AB 462 created a platform for the strategic and informed growth of public charter schools. Taken together, the Needs Assessment and the Growth Management Plan have and will continue to help the SPCSA to fulfill its responsibilities as an authorizer of public charter schools that are responsive to the needs of students and families throughout Nevada.

VIII. Glossary of Terms

Unless otherwise noted, all definitions are from the [Nevada Report Card Website](#).

American College Test (ACT) Assessment: A standardized assessment for high school students used as Nevada's college and career readiness assessment required by NRS 390.600.

Chronic Absenteeism: Chronic absenteeism is a school quality measure that captures the rate of students who are absent for 10% or more of their enrolled days.

Credit Deficiency: Not having enough credits to progress to the next grade or graduate.

Dropout: Any pupil who withdrew during the previous school year for any reason specified in subsection 3 of NAC 387.215.

English Language Learners: English Language Learners (ELLs) are students who are unable to communicate fluently or learn effectively in English, who typically require specialized or modified instruction in both the English language and in their academic courses. Previously referred to as LEP.

Free or Reduced-Price Lunch: Students who are from households that qualify by income to receive free or reduced-price lunch at their school.

Graduation Rate: The rate at which 9th graders graduate by the end of the 12th grade (the number of students who graduate in four years with a regular high school diploma divided by the number of students who form the adjusted cohort for the graduating class.)

Individualized Education Program (IEP): A written statement for each child with a disability that is receiving special education services that is developed and reviewed by the IEP Team.

Nevada Department of Education: The State of Nevada's educational agency.

Nevada Revised Statute: Codified laws of the State of Nevada.

Nevada School Performance Framework (NSPF): The Nevada school rating system, where each public school in the state is issued an annual index score and star rating from 1-5 based on that school's performance on specific Measures.

Nevada State Public Charter School Authority (SPCSA): A governmental agency of the state of Nevada and a statewide charter school sponsor.⁶

Proficiency: Students demonstrating the successful acquisition of knowledge and skills they are expected to learn, as determined by established levels or cut-scores of proficiency on State-approved tests, as they progress through their education.

Smarter Balanced Assessment: The Smarter Balanced assessments are a key part of measuring Nevada student progress in grades 3-8 towards success in college and career. The computer-adaptive format and online administration of the assessments provide meaningful feedback that teachers and parents can use to help students succeed. The assessments are aligned with the Nevada Academic Content Standards in ELA and mathematics. Results from SBAC are included on the Nevada Report Card.⁷

⁶ [https://charterschools.nv.gov/uploadedFiles/CharterSchoolsnvgov/content/Families/Strategic%20Plan%202019_FINAL_ADA\(1\).pdf](https://charterschools.nv.gov/uploadedFiles/CharterSchoolsnvgov/content/Families/Strategic%20Plan%202019_FINAL_ADA(1).pdf)

⁷ [http://www.doe.nv.gov/Assessments/Smarter_Balanced_Assessment_Consortium_\(SBAC\)/](http://www.doe.nv.gov/Assessments/Smarter_Balanced_Assessment_Consortium_(SBAC)/)

Appendix A: Definitions of Star Ratings

The following pages include definitions of each star rating level from the Nevada School Performance Framework.

Source: [2021-22 Nevada School Performance Framework Manual](#)

Elementary and Middle School NSPF Star Rating Descriptions

Category	Policy Descriptors
★ ★ ★ ★ ★	Recognizes a superior school that exceeds expectations for all students and subgroups on every indicator category with little or no exception. A five-star school demonstrates superior academic performance and growth with no opportunity gaps. The school does not fail to meet expectations for any group on any indicator. These schools are recognized for distinguished performance.
★ ★ ★ ★	Recognizes a commendable school that has performed well for all students and subgroups. A four-star school demonstrates satisfactory to strong academic performance for all students. Further, the school is successfully promoting academic progress for all student groups as reflected in closing opportunity gaps. The school does not fail to meet expectations for any group on any indicator. A school identified for targeted support and improvement is not eligible to be classified as a four-star school or higher.
★ ★ ★	Identifies an adequate school that has met the state’s standard for performance. The all-students group has met expectations for academic achievement or growth. Subgroups meet expectations for academic achievement or growth with little exception; however, no group is far below standard. The school must submit an improvement plan that identifies supports tailored to subgroups and indicators that are below standard. A school identified for comprehensive support and improvement is not eligible to be classified as a three-star school or higher. Schools identified for targeted support and improvement are eligible to be classified as three-star schools.
★ ★	Identifies a school that has partially met the state’s standard for performance. Students and subgroups often meet expectations for academic performance or growth but may have multiple areas that require improvement. Areas requiring significant improvement are uncommon. The school must submit an improvement plan that identifies supports tailored to subgroups and indicators that are below standard. A two-star school in consecutive years is subject to state intervention. A school identified for targeted support and improvement or comprehensive support and improvement is eligible to be classified as a two-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.

High School NSPF Star Rating Descriptions

Category	Policy Descriptors
★ ★ ★ ★ ★	Recognizes a superior school that exceeds expectations for all students and subgroups on every indicator category with little or no exception. A five-star school demonstrates superior academic performance and a superior graduation rate. The school does not fail to meet expectations for any group on any indicator. These schools are recognized for distinguished performance.
★ ★ ★ ★	Recognizes a commendable school that has performed well for all students and subgroups. A four-star school demonstrates satisfactory to strong academic performance for all students. Further, the school's graduation rate meets expectations. The school does not fail to meet expectations for any group on any indicator. A school identified for targeted support and improvement is not eligible to be classified as a four-star school or higher.
★ ★ ★	Identifies an adequate school that has met the state's standard for performance. The all-students group has met expectations for academic achievement. Subgroups meet expectations for academic achievement or show progress with little exception; however, no group is far below standard. The school must submit an improvement plan that identifies supports tailored to subgroups and indicators that are below standard. A school identified for comprehensive support and improvement is not eligible to be classified as a three-star school or higher. A school identified for targeted support and improvement is eligible to be classified as a three-star school.
★ ★	Identifies a school that has partially met the state's standard for performance. Students and subgroups often meet expectations for academic performance but may have multiple areas that require improvement. Areas requiring significant improvement are uncommon. The school must submit an improvement plan that identifies supports tailored to subgroups and indicators that are below standard. A two-star school in consecutive years is subject to state intervention. A school identified for targeted support and improvement or comprehensive support and improvement is eligible to be classified as a two-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.