



Nevada State Public Charter School Authority

Site Evaluation Report: Democracy Prep
Evaluation Date: 1/25/2022
Report Date: 3/23/2022

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Appendices

A: Nevada State Performance Framework

<http://www.doe.nv.gov/Accountability/NSPF/>

B: SPCSA Academic Framework

<http://charterschools.nv.gov/uploadedFiles/CharterSchoolsnvgov/content/News/2019/190628-Academic-Performance-Framework-Guidance-Document.pdf>

C: SPCSA Organizational Framework

<http://charterschools.nv.gov/uploadedFiles/CharterSchoolsnvgov/content/News/2019/190628-OPF-Att-1-Ratings-Scorecard.pdf>

INTRODUCTION AND SCHOOL BACKGROUND



INTRODUCTION

This Site Evaluation Report offers an analysis of evidence collected during the school evaluation that took place on January 25, 2022, at Democracy Prep (DPAC). This site evaluation occurred during the Omicron wave of the COVID-19 pandemic which presented unique challenges to all school communities, including Democracy Prep. The State Public Charter School Authority (SPCSA) conducts a comprehensive review of evidence related to all charters within the portfolio during the first, third, and fifth year of operation. During the 2021-2022 school year, the SPCSA will differentiate levels of oversight. The schools identified as having a rating of a two-star or below according to the Nevada School Performance Framework (NSPF), and those schools with a Notice of Concern Notice of Breach or Notice of Termination will have a differentiated procedure for their site evaluation. Democracy Prep Elementary meets this criterion and has been scheduled for a full site evaluation. The purpose of the site evaluation in this instance is to provide follow-up and documented progress toward improvement.

This comprehensive analysis addresses the academic success of the school and the effectiveness and viability of the school organization. An analysis of the school's academic and operational success is undertaken by reviewing the most current versions of the Nevada State Performance Framework (Appendix A) and the State Public Charter School Authority Academic Framework (Appendix B) as well as the Organizational Framework (Appendix C). In addition, the Site Evaluation Team conducts classroom observations within the areas of classroom environment and instruction. The purpose of these observations is to collect evidence using a rubric which has been normed by our team. All classroom rating outcomes will be displayed within this report so that school leaders have an overall idea of what is happening in general, at any time, in any classroom. The overall numbers will provide information about the school outcomes on this one day.

SPCSA staff will track "best practices", using a checklist and a summary of best practices observed, and will be contained within the report. Using information from focus groups of students, parents, staff, school leaders and the school's board, the SPCSA team will conduct focus groups and summarize results for schools within the report. The operational portion of the evaluation will be observed and take-aways recorded using a checklist and observing all aspects of the school's operational components as outlined in the SPCSA Organizational Framework. This evaluation has been designed to focus on teaching and learning (e.g. curriculum, instruction, assessment, and services for at-risk students) as well as leadership, organizational capacity, and board oversight. The SPCSA uses the established criteria on a regular basis to provide schools with a consistent set of expectations leading up to renewal.

SCHOOL BACKGROUND

Democracy Prep is in Las Vegas, Nevada in a facility at 1201 W. Lake Mead. The school serves 1,147 students (as of the most recent Validation Day) in kindergarten through 12th grade. The mission of name of school is: "The mission of Democracy Prep Public Schools is to educate responsible citizen-scholars for success in the college of their choice and a life of active citizenship."

ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE

Nevada School Performance Framework 2019

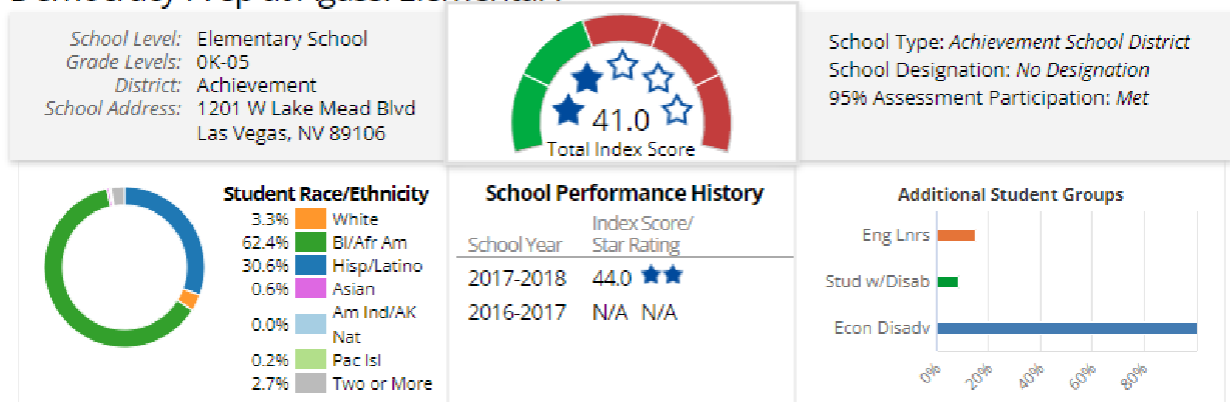
This information is provided to assist in understanding the data sets impacted by the pandemic.

Democracy Prep serves 1,147 students in grades Kindergarten through 12th grade.

Elementary School

Democracy Prep at Agassi Elementary

School Year 2018-2019 Nevada School Rating



Democracy Prep
Math and ELA Results
Nevada School Performance Framework
2019

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

Proficiency Rates

Elementary School

Math Proficient

Groups	2019 %	2019 % District	2019 % MIP	2018 %	2018 % District	2018 % MIP
All Students	35.0	36.1	48.5	38.1	38.1	45.8
American Indian/Alaska Native	-	-	34.3	-	-	30.9
Asian	-	-	68.8	-	-	67.2
Black/African American	30.0	29.2	32.3	32.6	32.6	28.8
Hispanic/Latino	41.3	42.8	39.6	42.0	42.0	36.5
Pacific Islander	-	-	48.3	-	-	45.6
Two or More Races	-	-	55.3	-	-	52.9
White/Caucasian	36.3	40.0	59.3	-	-	57.2
Special Education	14.2	16.0	28.6	9.0	9.0	24.8
English Learners Current + Former	42.4	44.7	35.8	39.5	39.5	32.4
English Learners Current	26.3	25.5	-	31.4	31.4	-
Economically Disadvantaged	35.0	35.7	39	-	-	35.7

ELA Proficient

Groups	2019 %	2019 % District	2019 % MIP	2018 %	2018 % District	2018 % MIP
All Students	39.9	39.9	57	43.8	43.8	54.7
American Indian/Alaska Native	-	-	42.5	-	-	39.5
Asian	-	-	75.4	-	-	74.1
Black/African American	34.6	33.5	42.6	38.9	38.9	39.6
Hispanic/Latino	45.3	45.9	48.2	49.2	49.2	45.5
Pacific Islander	-	-	57.9	-	-	55.7
Two or More Races	-	-	64.4	-	-	62.6
White/Caucasian	63.6	53.3	67.4	-	-	65.7
Special Education	14.2	12.0	30	20.0	20.0	26.3
English Learners Current + Former	44.3	44.7	41.4	45.8	45.8	38.4
English Learners Current	23.6	20.9	-	34.2	34.2	-
Economically Disadvantaged	39.9	39.6	46.8	-	-	44

Nevada School Performance Framework 2019

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

Proficiency Rates

Middle School

ELA Proficient

Groups	2019 %	2019 % District	2019 % MIP	2018 %	2018 % District	2018 % MIP
All Students	53.3	52.4	54.1	50.2	50.2	51.7
American Indian/Alaska Native	-	-	43.4	-	-	40.5
Asian	-	-	75.9	-	-	74.6
Black/African American	50.2	49.7	37.8	46.7	46.7	34.5
Hispanic/Latino	58.2	55.7	45.1	57.6	57.6	42.2
Pacific Islander	-	-	53.2	-	-	50.7
Two or More Races	-	-	61.3	30.0	30.0	59.2
White/Caucasian	-	40.0	66.3	-	-	64.6
Special Education	27.2	23.5	21.9	9.5	9.5	17.8
English Learners Current + Former	59.1	51.7	24.3	62.9	62.9	20.3
English Learners Current	28.0	20.0	-	37.5	37.5	-
Economically Disadvantaged	53.5	52.0	44.4	-	-	41.4

Math Proficient

Groups	2019 %	2019 % District	2019 % MIP	2018 %	2018 % District	2018 % MIP
All Students	42.7	42.7	36.5	40.4	40.4	33.2
American Indian/Alaska Native	-	-	28.4	-	-	24.6
Asian	-	-	58.6	-	-	56.4
Black/African American	35.9	35.5	23.5	33.8	33.8	19.5
Hispanic/Latino	52.3	50.0	29.3	50.0	50.0	25.5
Pacific Islander	-	-	36.9	-	-	33.6
Two or More Races	-	-	40.6	30.0	30.0	37.5
White/Caucasian	-	30.0	47.1	-	-	44.4
Special Education	9.0	5.8	18.6	4.7	4.7	14.3
English Learners Current + Former	49.0	43.8	20.2	51.8	51.8	16
English Learners Current	23.3	17.0	-	25.0	25.0	-
Economically Disadvantaged	42.9	42.4	29.2	-	-	25.5

Nevada School Performance Framework 2019

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

Proficiency Rates

High School

Math Proficient

Math Proficient Points Earned: 1/10

Groups	2019 %	2019 % District	2019 % MIP	2018 %	2018 % District	2018 % MIP
All Students	6.9	6.9	32.83	12.0	12.0	29.29
American Indian/Alaska Native	-	-	23.12	-	-	19.07
Asian	-	-	50.27	-	-	47.65
Black/African American	7.1	7.1	18.42	13.3	13.3	14.12
Hispanic/Latino	8.3	8.3	22.93	10.0	10.0	18.87
Pacific Islander	-	-	29.26	-	-	25.54
Two or More Races	-	-	36.96	-	-	33.64
White/Caucasian	-	-	44.25	-	-	41.31
Special Education	-	-	12.38	-	-	7.77
English Learners Current + Former	-	-	14.52	-	-	10.02
English Learners Current	-	-	-	-	-	6.96
Economically Disadvantaged	6.9	6.9	24	15.3	15.3	20.01

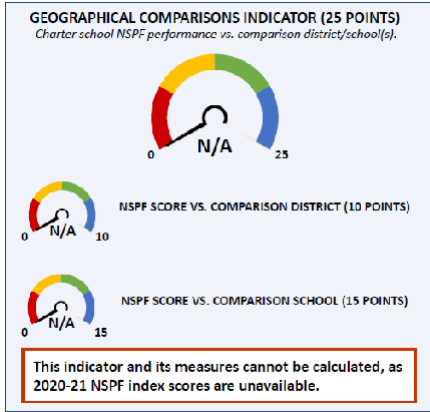
ELA Proficient

ELA Proficient Points Earned: 4.5/10

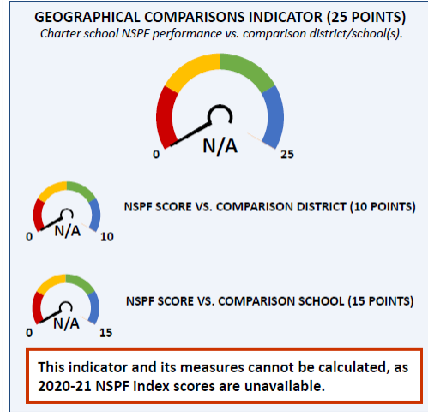
Groups	2019 %	2019 % District	2019 % MIP	2018 %	2018 % District	2018 % MIP
All Students	43.9	43.9	48.54	48.2	48.2	45.83
American Indian/Alaska Native	-	-	36.76	-	-	33.43
Asian	-	-	65.11	-	-	63.27
Black/African American	33.3	33.3	31.39	42.2	42.2	27.78
Hispanic/Latino	58.3	58.3	36.5	60.0	60.0	33.15
Pacific Islander	-	-	48.75	-	-	46.05
Two or More Races	-	-	58.07	-	-	55.86
White/Caucasian	-	-	62.25	-	-	60.26
Special Education	-	-	15.71	-	-	11.27
English Learners Current + Former	-	-	17.52	-	-	13.18
English Learners Current	-	-	-	-	-	6.9
Economically Disadvantaged	43.9	43.9	37.66	51.2	51.2	34.37

SPCSA Academic Performance Framework Geographic Comparison Report

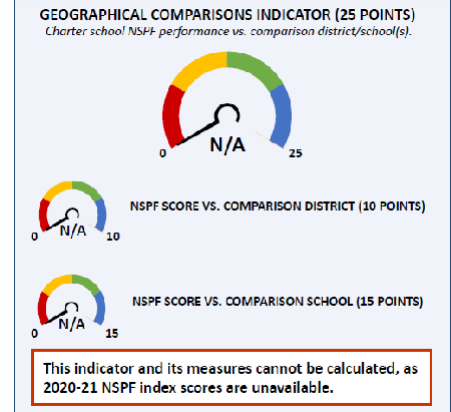
Elementary School



Middle School

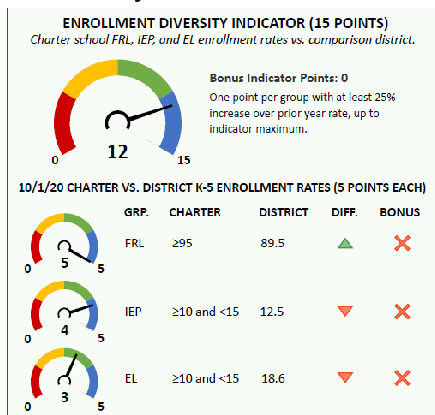


High School

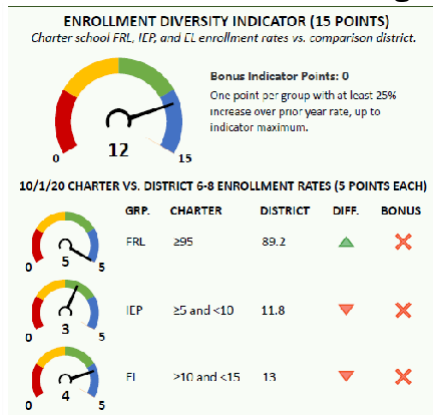


SPCSA Academic Performance Framework Diversity Comparison Results

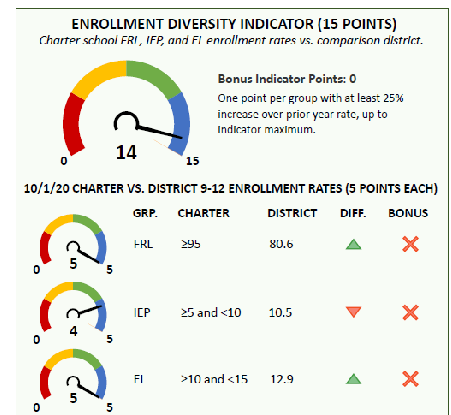
Elementary School



Middle School



High School



FOCUS GROUP SUMMARIES

FOCUS GROUP SUMMARY

Group	Number of Participants	Duration of Focus Group
Governing Board	4	30 minutes
Parents/Families	5	30 minutes
Students	9	30 minutes
School Leadership	6	30 minutes
Staff	7	30 minutes

Governing Board¹:

1. The board was asked to describe the process of evaluating the school leader. Board members shared they do not have a formal evaluation process. Rather, the board works with the national network who assesses and evaluates the site school leader. The local board provides information to the CMO in the form of a standardized survey created by the national organization. The survey contains items regarding leadership, partnership services, and CMO supports. The leader is an employee of the national network, not the school, therefore, leadership is evaluated at the national network level. Board members reported this evaluation process is part of the contract with the national organization.
2. Board members of the focus group were asked how they were informed about student academic success and how they view the current state of academics at DPAC. It was reported that DPAC has hired an extra data consultant. Focus group members shared curriculum leaders present information at board meetings regarding innovative programming for students to meet learning goals. Board members said they have been shown data that there is progress over time and that students have been rising in star status. Focus board members said, "Schools and students are on target." One focus group member said the current "Academic focus has been on closing gaps that have occurred during COVID-19." The board member president said, "DPAC has added additional interventions for academics and attendance. This population is different and based upon the population served that should be considered."

Board members shared they were concerned about the metrics used to determine statewide star ratings for schools. One board member said, "The rating system for charter schools at the state level does not take into account the poverty levels of the student population. The charter school metric compares students to charter schools in the suburbs, and that is not comparable. We know we have work to do, but we do serve populations that other schools do not." One board member stated they were concerned that the measures that contribute to the star rating operate from a deficit model and do not take into consideration the school's support of feeding the families as well as the students.

3. Board members reported they currently have three sub committees. One person explained, "We have three committees, academic, finance, and community engagement. We established this right before COVID and have not been able to get them as active as we would have liked with other priorities. We

¹ Four members of the nine member board participated. Quorum was not met, and Open Meeting Law was not violated.

established mission and vision of these committees and have used them in a few ways to further governance structures.”

4. Members of the governing board communicated they have completed a few trainings. One board member commented, “I know when we first came into the SPCSA we trained our new board members on expectations of boards in the State of Nevada, role of board members, and making decisions. We have also received training on board partnerships with schools and received a training from a financial firm on board decisions regarding money decisions. We have discussed additional training opportunities to ensure we are all on the same page and this is something the board wants to explore more of.”
5. The board was asked about areas of board member expertise. One board member explained, “In my opinion, we have a pretty solid expertise in instruction and data driven decision making to support students through tiered intensification frameworks. We have active and connected community partners serving on our board from a variety of spaces and places (e.g., private sector, government). I would say that our gaps are probably focused on Human Resource Administration within a school as much of our expertise is in the classroom instructional arena and legal aspects of board governance as we had a member in that area step down.”

FOCUS GROUP SUMMARIES

FOCUS GROUP SUMMARY continued

Parents/Families:

1. Generally, there was a sense from focus group members that communication could be improved at DPAC. One family member commented communication from DPAC is inconsistent, stating, “Some teachers communicate but other staff members do not communicate consistently.” Other parents said they often do not know what is going on at the school in general. Family members shared they would like to be kept more up to date and current regarding events taking place at the school. Focus group participants said parent involvement is minimal. One parent stated they see the same parents at all the school events. Two parents stated they would like more communication regarding academic work from teachers. One parent said, “When my child is not doing well there is no communication with the parent as to what the student did that was incorrect or what he needs to do to improve.”
2. Despite the aforementioned communication challenges, parents expressed their gratitude for teachers on other fronts. One parent appreciated teachers’ assistance transitioning her son to DPAC. Teachers helped him obtain uniforms, understand his class schedule, and get familiar with the campus. “The teachers assisted a great deal in helping my son take ownership for his education.” One parent of a high-school student said school leadership was responsive and supportive in testing their child for academic placement. “Staff also considered my child’s emotional” peer needs. Another high-school parent reported her high-achieving child was thriving saying, “I like they teach a growth mindset. My child knows how to manage failure or being uncomfortable. She has the tools and skills to be resilient.”
3. One parent said they would like to see the school focus on trade options for students beyond high school graduation and not just college. Other parents commented they have seen green energy vendors during the trunk-or-treat event as well as maker spaces exposing students to trade options.
4. Families were asked to share their thoughts regarding math instruction at DPAC. Three parents reported remote learning instruction during COVID felt very fast. One parent of an elementary school student said, “I watched my son’s class during remote learning because his math grade was suffering. Teachers did not slow down or revisit concepts. How do they know if students were learning?” One parent of a second grader said, “Math is going to increase in rigor and difficulty as students get into higher grades. Students need to understand why or how to do something now.” One parent of a middle-school student reported her child also struggles in math. Families said they would like to receive assistance or step-by-step processes to help when their child struggling with content. Several parents nodded in agreement. Students’ ability to build on mathematical conceptual knowledge was a concern shared by four of the five parents in the focus group.
5. Family members shared concerns regarding teacher turnover. One parent remarked, “Teacher turnover is very high at this school and with teacher turnover there is inconsistent instruction, and a variety of teaching styles.” One parent commented, “My daughter struggles with the continual changes in teachers for classes such as Korean and history.” Another family member said they felt the teachers are often not prepared to teach the demographic represented at the school.

FOCUS GROUP SUMMARIES

FOCUS GROUP SUMMARY continued

Students:

1. Students were asked to explain how they know what they are supposed to be learning during a lesson. One middle-school student shared, "Usually there is a theme stated in the PowerPoint listing the lesson name and aims. Sometimes there is a video or guiding directions." Another middle schooler said, "We work in small groups and then we revisit the theme at the end of the lesson." Another student said there are "do-now's" to complete at the beginning of each class, and teachers share these on the whiteboard the lesson and what students are to complete. Students stated teachers make sure students feel comfortable asking questions and asking for help. One middle school student shared they felt teachers went out of their way to make it okay and comfortable to fail so as to build confidence the next time.

Elementary school students report they follow a posted classroom schedule to know what subject they are working on at what time. Worksheet packet titles also inform students of the directions. One elementary school student stated, "When people don't understand, the teacher works with the students in small groups. This happens depending on how many people understand or don't understand the lesson."

High school students said students know the learning objective as teachers use the format SWBAT (Student Will Be Able To) to know what learning should take place in a lesson. High School students reported they work in small groups or with a partner, go to the board and work problems out with help, and complete independent practice worksheets. Teachers also walk around during independent practice and assist according to students, who noted they have access to a Google Calendar document at any time.

2. Students shared their concern for their learning and an awareness of not having enough teachers stating, "There have been numerous times where teachers covered class periods during their break or planning time." One student reported having multiple teachers for one class has been frustrating. "Often there is miscommunication with multiple substitute teachers and there is confusion for students to know what they are supposed to be doing or when things are due. Sometimes we complete an assignment, and the substitute or teacher doesn't want that assignment. They ask us to do something else or do it in a different way." Another student remarked, "Sometimes the teacher covering the class doesn't know the subject and that's hard." One student said, "When we get a new teacher in the middle of the year students have to adjust to the new teacher and how this teacher would like to oversee the class." Another student said, "It is hard to build rapport with a new teacher because we don't know them. We can be behind in content and now we are trying to build rapport and routines and that's hard." Another student felt discouraged "When we have a substitute. They go through packets or just worksheets and when we get the 'real teacher' we get different goals, activities, and lessons." Students were appreciative of a new history teacher hire. "He was easy to get along with and we were amazed at how quickly and easily he began teaching." One student commented, "The teachers here are doing their best and they are working long hard hours." Several students nodded in agreement.

“We have had a few fights. We have had class times where the students are wild in the class. This affects learning. I wish someone was watching to calm people down,” one student said. Another stated, “When a class has a substitute teacher, it is uncomfortable. The school leaders do come and check-in, but they don’t stay in the room.” Another student reported when there was a substitute in his class, students were anxious and “wild.” Several students reached out to the teacher via text. The teacher video-called into the class to calm the class down and focus the learning.

One student commented, “From a senior perspective, it was a bit of a mess during the first half of the year. We had no counselor for four months, and this resulted in seniors not applying to college in a timely manner and ended up with pressure to apply to colleges at the very last moment. Some deadlines for some of the colleges had passed and seniors such as me and others missed out on some of these opportunities.”

3. Students shared the return to full in-person instruction brought safety concerns. Many said they are anxious about contracting COVID and it made them uncomfortable when students take their masks down or don’t wear them properly.

FOCUS GROUP SUMMARIES

FOCUS GROUP SUMMARY continued

Leadership:

1. Leadership was asked how the school uses assessment data to make instructional and curricular decisions. The leadership team shared curricular audits happen three to four times per year. The team strives to ensure the curriculum is used with fidelity by meeting bi-monthly, reviewing the data and discussing specific emerging concerns or patterns. After the curriculum team meets, coaching occurs with the teachers and strategies are created to meet learner's needs. Daily assessments activities as well as end of the week or unit measures are built into the curriculum. Student learning gaps from daily, weekly or end of unit measurements can be revisited by teachers. One member of the leadership team explained, "Adjusting instruction daily and for each class period is within our control. We strive to control what we can for student achievement." Leaders shared parent conferences are offered in person or virtually with elementary and middle school parents have a high participating at a rate. One school leader commented, "Parents are invested in their students' success." Leaders further spoke about engaging students: "We use the metaphor of a teacher toolbox to build teacher capacity. This ties into the question 'how does what I am learning today tie into my prior knowledge and how will I use this learning in the future?'"
2. Leadership was asked what assessments are used for elementary, middle school, and high school. The team reported elementary grades use *Into Reading* as a baseline assessment at the beginning of the year. In autumn a Measures of Academic Progress (MAP) reading fluency diagnostic for kindergarten through grades five is conducted. MAP is also used for English language arts and math. "Winter MAP scores drive small group instruction," one member of the leadership team explained. The *Smarter Balanced Assessment Consortium* (SBAC) standardized practice tests are provided in March. One member of the leadership team said, "Diagnostics are completed three times a year, but we are concerned with testing fatigue as students also take external exams." There are also curricular benchmark assessments after students complete a unit.
3. The leadership team was asked how math instruction is differentiated within each grade level to meet the needs of all learners. One leader explained, "Differentiation comes from teachers, and they use i-Ready or Eureka curricular platforms to pull out supplemental materials and create small groups, and activities. Teachers use these methods for a six-week period and then re-assess." Elementary school leadership reported, "In Kindergarten through fifth grade math scores have dropped network wide. We are re-thinking what our professional development looks like, and we are re-evaluating focused professional development." According to school leaders, DPAC is considering focused professional development that shows teachers how to break down the curriculum to ensure strong instruction and align to addressing what the data is showing. School leaders, including curricular specialists meet once a month for professional development, looking across the local, state, and regional data. One member of the leadership team said, "Re-investing in the teachers as well as the students is a strong push. We ask, 'What does it mean to be successful?' 'What are power standards and how do they emerge in the classroom?'" The principal reported DPAC specifically scrutinizes a number of things, stating, "Math fluency, but math is intertwined with English language arts at the Las Vegas school. Fourth and fifth graders are supported with a

curriculum specialist looking at lesson plans and providing guidance on how to unpack the content for the teacher and the students in conjunction with the student data. Teachers receive assistance on how to internalize the lesson and receive training from Eureka as well.” Kindergarten also receives special attention as students in kindergarten and first grade spent their first year of schooling online due to COVID according to school leaders.

4. School leadership stated their goal for academic year 21-22 is to move the elementary school to 3-star status and the middle school to 4-star status. One school leader stated, “COVID hit our population hard. Students did not show up on-line in physical or mental space. Growth occurs when the students are in-person.” Leaders said there has been a concerted effort at DPAC on transitioning students back to in-person learning and supporting students acclimating to the in-person schooling environment.
5. Leadership was asked about the drop-in graduation rate. The team reported small classes really highlight when a few students do not complete graduation requirements. One person said, “We have not made any specific plans regarding graduation rates. We have targeted how to retain our K-12 students; rather than the known that when students leave us, they do not enroll anywhere else.” It was also shared with the site evaluation team that two students left school and cannot be reached. There are presently thirty-five seniors set to graduate the 21-22 year.

FOCUS GROUP SUMMARIES

FOCUS GROUP SUMMARY continued

Staff:

1. Several teachers shared they are concerned about student behaviors, safety, and the lack of follow through with school wide consistent policies and procedures. One said, "There is little to no acknowledgement or support for teachers." One teacher provided the example of a student misbehaving during class. "The parent came to school and sat with the student in class. The child behaved with the parent present. It didn't resolve the issue and was not a solution. The systemic root cause of the behavior is not being addressed." Another teacher remarked, "Most of the staff is new to the school this year and it is like a revolving door." Six out of the seven focus group members reported being new hires this year and it was their first year of teaching. One teacher had been at DPAC prior to the 21-22 academic year. All seven of the focus group participants shared they are exhausted; they are aware teacher retention is a serious concern. The teachers shared there are professional development opportunities, however there are no standard expectations. Staff report they are not given thirty minutes for lunch and have ten minutes on most days.
2. Teachers were asked how they differentiate instruction for special populations. For English language learners, staff members replied they unpack math vocabulary with the whole class. Teachers also shared they place emergent English learners in heterogenous groupings so students can practice oral language and specific vocabulary with peers. Another teacher reported an English support paraprofessional assists with classroom instruction daily. One teacher explained many native speakers of Spanish help their peers. Teachers said they have several strategies in place for students who have an Individualized Education Plan (IEP) on file. One teacher shared a specific example of teaching fractions. "Some students can add and subtract fractions. Some special needs students may not be at the level to add and subtract fraction Instruction is scaffolded visually where students are asked to color in portions of the picture. They are exposed to fractions but are not working with the symbolic language of math just yet." Another teacher explained checklists and steps are used quite frequently to assist students. One teacher said, "Making students feel comfortable and calm and communicating with the family is important while adhering to the IEP." Another teacher reported a student in her class needs daily at-home reinforcement of concepts, sharing this student works on a packet of materials every evening and brings that work to school the next day. This teacher shared that, in their opinion, the school-to-home extension helps this student academically.
3. Faculty were asked what kinds of assessments they used and how they used the assessment data to make plan lessons. Teachers reported the SBAC is used for diagnostic purposes in grades three through eight, but i-Ready is also used at DPAC. Eureka Math is implemented schoolwide and contains mid-module assessments, and final assessments as reported by teachers. One teacher shared she creates a review assessment for the students that they go over together prior to completing a Eureka assessment. One teacher said they conducted formative assessments with their class periodically in a lesson "to decide if the class is ready to move forward to the next step." One teacher answered she helps students learn by playing a game on the whiteboard to check for a student's mastery of the content. Another teacher stated, "Interim assessments are used to create small groups. Many students like working in small groups and with their friends." One person commented, "I remind students we all want to succeed and in order to do that, we all help each other."

Elementary teachers shared in the focus group that they print curricular packets weekly from a *Know it, Show it* book. Packets for math, reading, writing, and social studies are photocopied for students' daily use. Once the packets are completed the teacher collects and scores them. One teacher commented that this practice leads to very large stacks of paper at the end of the week. Other teachers agreed, expressing they are not fond of the volume of paper being printed, or carried home for scoring. Every photocopied lesson has the components "I do, we do, you do" at each level of the lesson. Formative checks for understanding and summative assessments, such as exit tickets, are provided by the curriculum. Teachers stated they do not deviate from the curriculum. One teacher said, "Those assessments are geared toward the ideal setting. They do not really fit with our students or where they are in their learning." According to teachers, there is discussion to implement backwards design and design instruction for what DPAC students need but nothing has been formalized.

CLASSROOM OBSERVATION TOTALS

A total of 34 classrooms were observed for approximately 15 minutes on the day of the evaluation. 20 of these classrooms were at the elementary school.

I. Classroom Environment					
	Distinguished	Proficient	Basic	Unsatisfactory	Not Observed
Areas 1 & 2 Creating an Environment of Respect and Rapport Establishing a Culture for Learning	Classroom interactions are highly respectful, and the teacher demonstrates a passionate commitment to the subject.	Classroom interactions reflect general warmth and caring and a genuine culture for learning.	Classroom interactions are generally appropriate and free from conflict with a minimal culture for learning.	Classroom interactions between the teacher and students are negative and do not represent a culture for learning.	This criterion was not observed or rated.
	Total: 4	Total: 15	Total: 15	Total: 0	Total: 0
	Students ensure maintenance of high levels of civility among classmates and assume much of the responsibility for establishing a culture for learning.	Interactions reflect cultural and developmental differences of students. Teacher and students are committed to the subject.	Interactions may be characterized by occasional displays of insensitivity and inconsistent expectations for student achievement.	Interactions are characterized by sarcasm, put-downs, and/or conflict. There is a low teacher commitment to the subject and few instances of students taking pride in their work.	This criterion was not observed or rated.
	Total: 4	Total: 18	Total: 12	Total: 0	Total: 0
	Distinguished	Proficient	Basic	Unsatisfactory	Not Observed
Areas 3 & 4 Managing Classroom Procedures	Classroom routines and procedures appear seamless and student behavior is entirely appropriate.	Classroom routines and procedures have been established and the teacher ensures smooth functioning with little loss of instruction time.	Classroom routines and procedures have been established but function inconsistently, with some loss of instruction time	Classroom routines and procedures are nonexistent or inefficient, resulting in the loss of much instruction time. ³²	This criterion was not observed or rated.
	Total: 6	Total: 17	Total: 11	Total: 0	Total: 0
Managing Student Behavior	There appears to be no misbehavior during the observation. The teacher monitoring of student behavior is subtle and/or preventative.	Teacher responds to student misbehavior in ways that are appropriate and respectful of the students.	Teacher tries to establish standards of conduct for students and monitor behavior. These efforts are not always successful.	Teacher is unsuccessful in monitoring student behavior.	This criterion was not observed or rated.
	Total: 7	Total: 14	Total: 13	Total: 0	Total: 0

CLASSROOM OBSERVATION TOTALS

II. Classroom Instruction					
	Distinguished	Proficient	Basic	Unsatisfactory	Not Observed
<p>Area 5</p> <p>Purpose and Explanation of Content, Lesson, Unit or Classroom Activity</p>	The purpose of the lesson or unit is clear and connects with student's real-life experiences. The explanation of content is imaginative, and students contribute to the lesson by participating and or explaining concepts to their peers.	The purpose for the lesson or learning activity is clear. The teacher's explanation of content is appropriate. and connects with students.	The teacher attempts to explain the instructional purpose, with limited success. The explanation of the content is uneven; some is done skillfully, but other portions are difficult to follow.	The purpose for the lesson, learning activity is unclear. Teacher's explanation of the content is unclear, confusing or uses inappropriate language.	This criterion was not observed or rated.
	Total: 4	Total: 13	Total: 15	Total: 2	Total: 0
	Distinguished	Proficient	Basic	Unsatisfactory	Not Observed
<p>Area 6</p> <p>A</p> <p>Using Questioning and Discussion Techniques</p>	Students formulate and ask high-level questions.	Teacher formulates and asks several high-level questions.	Teacher questioning and discussion techniques are uneven with some high-level questions.	Teacher makes poor use of questioning and discussion techniques, with low level questions, limited student participation and little true discussion.	This criterion was not observed or rated.
	Total: 3	Total: 13	Total: 14	Total: 2	Total: 2
<p>B</p>	Students assume responsibility for the participation of most students in the discussion.	Teachers assumes responsibility for the discussion which includes most students.	There is some attempt by the teacher to initiate student discussion and student participation.	There is little to no student discussion even though the opportunity is there.	This criterion was not observed or rated.
	Total: 3	Total: 13	Total: 10	Total: 4	Total: 4

CLASSROOM OBSERVATION TOTALS

II. Classroom Instruction (continued)					
	Distinguished	Proficient	Basic	Unsatisfactory	Not Observed
Area 7 A Engaging Students in Learning	Students are highly engaged throughout the lesson. The pacing and structure of the lesson allows high levels of student engagement.	Students appear to be intellectually engaged throughout most of the lesson. The pacing and structure of the lesson is suitable for this group of students.	Students are partially engaged throughout the lesson.	Students are not at all intellectually engaged in significant learning.	This criterion was not observed or rated.
	Total: 4	Total: 13	Total: 15	Total: 2	Total: 0
	Students make contributions to the representation of content.	There are appropriate activities, and instructive representations of content.	The representation of content or structure/pacing is uneven.	There are inappropriate activities or materials, poor representations of content, or lack of lesson structure/pacing.	This criterion was not observed or rated.
	Total: 4	Total: 11	Total: 17	Total: 2	Total: 0
	Distinguished	Proficient	Basic	Unsatisfactory	Not Observed
Area 8 A	Students are aware of the learning goals/targets for themselves during this instructional timeframe.	Most of the students are aware of the learning goals/targets for themselves during this instructional timeframe.	Some of the students are aware of the learning goals/targets for themselves during this instructional timeframe.	Students are not aware of the learning goals/learning target during this instructional time frame	This criterion was not observed or rated.
	Total: 5	Total: 14	Total: 13	Total: 2	Total: 0
Using Formative Assessment in Instruction B	The teacher purposefully and consistently provides clear, descriptive feedback in regard to student's demonstration/understanding of the learning goal/target. The feedback is timely and is in a reasonable amount.	Much of the time, the teacher, provides clear, descriptive feedback regarding student's understanding/ demonstration of learning goal/target. The feedback is timely and is in a reasonable amount.	At times, the teacher provides clear, descriptive feedback but not in a consistent manner regarding learning goal/target. Observing where the work was meeting and where it was not. The feedback is timely and is in a reasonable amount.	The teacher does not provide clear, descriptive feedback regarding learning goal/target and does not observe where the work is and where it is not meeting. The feedback is not timely and is not in a reasonable amount	This criterion was not observed or rated. 32
	Total: 5	Total: 14	Total: 15	Total: 0	Total: 0

Additional information about the classroom observations shared here when applicable.

1. In one middle school classroom, students were observed to be off task. Students were drawing and looking up pictures instead of engaging in the lesson. The teacher did not walk around the classroom. The teacher taught the lesson sitting down from the back of the classroom.
2. In one 2nd grade classroom students worked on a social studies packet with heavy emphasis on teacher directed instruction and filling in the blank with the teacher's answer. The teacher asked a question and students raised their hands and were called upon by the teacher. There was no peer-to-peer discussion.
3. In one elementary classroom, the students watched a video. The video could not be seen as the lights were on. Students advocated for themselves and stated they could not see the screen or the video, which contained the content. The teacher did not adjust the lighting nor respond to student requests. The teacher sat on a chair in the front of the classroom and could not see students in the back of the room.
4. In one middle school classroom, the teacher reviewed the vocabulary for the lesson and connected this prior learning to new learning.
5. In one middle school classroom, the teacher facilitated a midterm review by utilizing Nearpod.
6. Of the 20 elementary classrooms observed, class materials consisted primarily of photocopied packets. Students worked exclusively on the photocopied worksheets and copied down responses on the worksheet as a whole class so every student had the same answer recorded. SPCSA staff did not observe a diversity of instructional approaches.
7. In seven of the twenty observed elementary classrooms, teachers taught from their desk and students completed worksheets with very limited student discourse.
8. In one middle school classroom, the teacher used the Total Physical Response (TPR) strategy to teach vocabulary for a history lesson. The teacher asked higher-order questions throughout the lesson. Students used accountable talk strategies and had meaningful discourse.
9. In one middle school classroom, the teacher posted the classroom expectations on the wall and referred to them when correcting student behavior.
10. In one lower elementary classroom, the teacher focused primarily on students being compliant, sitting quietly, remaining quiet, and tracking with eyes. When the instructor wrote on the white board, the writing was very small and could not be seen by the back of the classroom. Many students were observed to be off task, reading a book, or playing with desk objects, or writing on blank sheets of paper. The teacher focused on the front "t-zone" of the room. Much instructional time appeared to be lost by repeatedly asking students to get into "star zone," and bring voice levels to zero. Students were very eager to discuss the topic at their table. The teacher was observed to be more focused on compliance of behavioral procedures rather than the lesson.
11. In one middle school classroom students were asked to make text to self and text to world connections.
12. In one middle school classroom, the teacher used attention grabbers to refocus students.
13. In one high school classroom, students worked on their Chromebook to complete classwork on google classroom. The teacher and students reviewed the answers together.
14. In one high school classroom, students engaged in the lesson and participated throughout the lesson.
15. In one high school classroom, students came to the board to share their math strategies.
16. In one high school classroom, the teacher taught students how to use details from the text to provide evidence in their written response. Students had discourse on how they connected to the text.
17. In one high school classroom, the teacher stated the purpose of the lesson and asked questions to ensure students understanding.

ORGANIZATIONAL PERFORMANCE

The SPCSA uses the Organizational Performance Framework to collect evidence of performance and evaluate schools, at least annually, to monitor schools throughout their charter terms, to report to schools and the public annually, to intervene in schools that do not meet expectations and to make high-stakes decisions, including renewal, non-renewal, possible revocation, expansion, or replication. Most of this work is done through routine submissions by the school to the SPCSA.

A limited number of measures within the organizational performance framework may be at least partially evaluated during the site evaluation process. Measures are partially evaluated based upon evidence from school focus groups, school observations, documents reviewed and information from the school presentation portion of the evaluation. SPCSA staff will note the evidence provided by the school and will outline any questions or potential concerns.

Measure	Description	Evidence Collected
1a	<p>The school implements material terms of the education program.</p> <p>Examples of evidence: The scope and sequence of curricular materials have been vetted to align with the Nevada Academic Content Standards and a plan has been mapped by date to ensure the completion of each standard within the grade or content area.</p> <p>The educational program offered by the school is consistent with the program proposed within the charter application. Ex: math science focus, extended day, arts integrated.</p>	<p>DPAC conducts a new curriculum review using Ed Reports. The curriculum undergoes a review process by which they create working groups to review. Part of the review process is standards alignment. The school reports that they employ a curriculum specialist who has vetted final materials to NVACS.</p>
1b	<p>The school complies with applicable education requirements.</p> <p>Examples: Completing the submission of required items to epicenter in a complete and timely manner. (Licensing of staff, Special Education and ELL Handbook and all others) Assessments/Data requirements</p>	<p>School staff submits information to SPCSA regarding the school handbook, licensing of staff and completes assessments and data requirements.</p>
1c	<p>The school protects the rights of students with disabilities.</p> <p>Examples: A narrative of processes in place to ensure decisions made by the IEP Team are communicated to all staff who work with the student.</p> <p>A narrative of how the school/campus documents the delivery of service and progress toward achieving the IEP goals.</p>	<p>The school reported that SPED managers/coordinators support teachers and school leaders through scheduling and professional development.</p>

1d	<p>The school protects the rights of ELL students.</p> <p>Examples:</p> <p>A narrative explaining how content teachers are trained in specific methodologies to provide EL students with meaningful access to content.</p> <p>A description of how EL students are acquiring English language skills in all four domains (e.g. listening, speaking, reading, and writing)</p> <p>A description of how EL student progress within the four domains is monitored.</p>	<p>During the DPAC presentation, the school leader shared that DPAC has coordinators who support classroom teachers by providing ELL content professional development which they receive from the Nevada Department of Education.</p>
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ORGANIZATIONAL PERFORMANCE

Measure	Description	Evidence Collected
3a	Examples of how board policies, including those related to oversight of an Education Service Provider, state open meeting law, code of ethics, conflicts of interest, board composition, routine meetings.	The DPAC Board members meet monthly and complete an annual evaluation of the effectiveness of the CMO's support across a series of metrics each year. The board complies with Open Meeting Law.
4a	The school protects the rights of all students. Examples: Admissions, waiting lists, fair and open recruitment, enrollment, due process protections, conduct of discipline- (discipline hearings, suspension and expulsion policies and practices, protects student information.	The school has an open application time and holds the lottery in early March Any Scholars not accepted are placed on the waiting list. A tiered behavior system was reported to be in place. The school has a Discipline Handbook.
5b	The school complies with health and safety requirements. Examples: Timely and accurate submission of epicenter documents: (Crisis/Emergency Response Plan Emergency Operation Plan Certificate of Occupancy Appropriate nursing services and dispensing of pharmaceuticals, food health service, and other and safety services.	Emergency procedures are posted in each room and staff review them with students each year. Routine safety drills are schedule to take place during the year and the emergency operations plan is reviewed each year and revised as necessary. Students have access to Safe Voice, as well as to DPAC's five social workers for mental health supports as needed.

Measures of Progress from Previous Site Evaluations

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

NOTE: The DPAC Leadership team has reported within the Site Evaluation Data collection form that: "Given the enormous challenges of the past year that continue into the present school year, the recommendations given after the 2021 site evaluation were not the school's primary focus. In the second half of 20-21, school staff were focused on a return to in-person instruction, the end of year focus was on strong instructional delivery, and the beginning of the year focus for SY 21-22 was reacclimating staff and scholars to in person school as well as implementing a strong instructional program while still navigating ongoing and ever-shifting COVID related challenges."

<p>School staff ability to address previous recommendations</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. At the network level, an emphasis has been placed on expanding pathways targeting post- secondary career opportunities. 2. The school expanded the number of staff dedicated to operational compliance to be set up for success to meet SPCSA deadlines in a timely manner. There are still times when on-time submissions to the SPCSA are not on time. 3. Per the school's admission, the recommendation regarding improved instructional design was not addressed.
<p>Evidence the school can provide to support the implementation of previous recommendations.</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Every DPAC senior high student meets multiple times with a college counselor to discuss post-secondary options framed around a student's interests, academic profile, and financial situation. These are discussed during DPACS's College Readiness Class. DPAC counselors work with seniors who are interested in entering a specific career immediately after high school to complete applications to local vocational programs and or degree to employment programs at local schools such as Nevada State College of Southern Nevada. 2. School has streamlined communication regarding SPCSA compliance deadlines to calendars upcoming compliance deadlines.
<p>The reasons school will require additional time to fully address the recommended items.</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The school will require time to implement the previous recommendation from the 20-21 school year site evaluation. (see more within the Strong Recommendation of this report.)

SITE EVALUATION FINDINGS

STRENGTHS

Summary of strengths: Academic, Classroom, Focus Groups, and Organizational Performance Evidence.

1. DPAC is placing an emphasis post-secondary vocational career options in addition to college pathways. DPAC seniors enroll and complete a college readiness class. Students meet multiple times with a college counselor throughout the year to discuss post-secondary options framed around a student's interests, academic profile, and financial situation. Assistance for students is provided for completing college applications, such as Nevada State College of Southern Nevada. Student support for completing vocational program applications is also provided.
2. Democracy Prep has a diverse student population that aligns with the spirit of the SPSCA Academic and Demographic Needs Assessment. Validation day information indicates that over 90% of currently enrolled students qualify for Free or Reduced-Price lunch. This is well above the SPSCA average. Additionally, the school serves a fair number of students qualifying for special education services, and students qualifying for English language services and supports.
3. Students stated they are happy attending DPAC. Positive interactions between teachers and students within classrooms and in common areas was evident. Teachers and students engaged in eye contact and conversations easily. Students spoke highly of their teachers and recognize their hard work. Students complimented teachers on the multiple roles they assume on a day-to-day basis, including substituting for a class during their preparation. Students reported they feel comfortable with staff because staff have taken time to build relationships and trust with students.

CHALLENGES

A summary of challenges as observed through academic achievement indicators, classroom observations, focus group feedback and portions of the Organizational Performance Framework Evidence are described within the body of the report and summarized here.

1. As reported during the site evaluation process, curriculum has changed at the elementary grade level several times in the past few years, leading to inconsistency in understanding how curricular materials align with student needs and targeted learning goals and Nevada State Standards. Research indicates implementing new curriculum is time intensive. Repeated changes in curriculum may not provide teachers opportunities for deep reflection on curricular successes and student growth. When teachers and specialists have a strong understanding of curricular content they are more able to co-plan and horizontally and vertically align the instruction to support students' learning success.
2. DPAC continues to be challenged in utilizing assessment data to monitor and respond to the needs of students. The need, and leadership stated goal, to move the elementary grades from a 2-Star NSPF rating to a 3-star or higher is critical for elementary long-term school success. Through the site

evaluation process, it is clear this work is still a challenge, and that DPAC still has work to do in terms of effectively analyzing the results of elementary school student assessment results, (MAP, i-Ready) to guide instructional changes, remediation, and interventions for continued student success. Implementing changes for student progress was a recommendation from the previous site evaluation report dated 1-28-2021.

3. School leadership report the return to in-person learning during the 21-22 school year has accentuated achievement level gaps due to in-person learning loss. Classroom management and behavioral issues have also arisen as students were removed from the structure and routine of the in-person school day. Leadership, family, and student focus groups report some families are gravely concerned about contracting COVID and are reluctant to send their children back to in-person learning. The DPAC Leadership team reported, "Given the enormous challenges of the past year that continue into the present school year, the focus for SY 21-22 was reacclimating staff and scholars to in person school while still navigating ongoing and ever-shifting COVID related challenges." SPCSA staff recognizes the ongoing challenges and difficulties presented by the pandemic.
4. Differentiated instruction to meet individual student needs at the elementary level is a challenge as teachers follow a prescribed curriculum. As stated during the focus group, teachers do not plan lessons that differentiate learning targets, or tiered questioning and discussion techniques for the specific individual student needs at DPAC. The weekly printed worksheet packets contain preformatted assessments built into the curriculum. Prescribed photocopied curricular packets may not allow teachers to easily adapt daily plans for cultural and developmental differences of students or connect to students' individual lived experience, thus presenting possible challenges.
5. School leaders, family members, students, and staff report that the school has undergone significant staff turnover. Many staff members are new to the teaching profession. As reported by school leadership, there have been limited opportunities for coaching to take place due to staffing shortages. As reported by the staff, the teaching staff need support with behavior management, classroom instruction, and tracking of student achievement.

RECOMMENDATIONS

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

1. SPCSA staff recommend Democracy Prep pursue Multi-Tiered Systems of Support, (MTSS) opportunities through the SPCSA. These have the potential to provide the staff access to Tier 1,2,and 3 training resources to address these challenges. Members of the Democracy Prep leadership team mentioned there were behavioral and loss of learning challenges due to the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic. Staff also indicated the return to in-person learning has illustrated student difficulty in self-regulation within the classroom environment. Staff and students suggested an increase in support and visibility by the leadership team in classrooms with a substitute. According to participants in the family and student focus group, when a teacher position becomes open during the middle of a school year, the impact to students and families is challenging as students must adapt to the ways a new teacher conducts the classroom. The teaching staff reported they are saddled with managing challenging student behavior, addressing learning gaps, and trying to provide support to several new teachers. Teachers reported being exhausted and having high levels of stress. Staff reported they are not given thirty minutes for lunch and have ten minutes on most days. Several teachers shared they were concerned about student behaviors, safety, and the lack of follow through with school wide consistent policies and procedures. Addressing teacher

attrition is critical to school improvement. Teachers are the number one in school influence on student achievement (Terida, 2019). Teacher job satisfaction and turnover were communicated as items of high concern as noted in the focus group interviews.

For these reasons, it is recommended that the leadership team, board members, and families support the staff to be healthier and have more well-balanced positive energy. Support can come in many forms and may include eating healthy foods, opportunities to get some light exercise, and the use of mindfulness and or calming techniques. A positive sense of belonging is fundamental for teachers, and it is important that staff have conversations to build positive connections. Leadership should prioritize inspiring teachers by highlighting some of the best practices that have been tried and have been found to work with student engagement and boosting learning levels

STRONG RECOMMENDATIONS

Strong recommendations are provided for DPAC Elementary School. In accordance with the Site Evaluation Handbook (pg. 6) the school will be required to create a plan. A Site Evaluation Response Plan must be created and approved by the SPCSA and together the plan will be reviewed and monitored until the strong recommendation requirement has been fully implemented and sufficient evidence has been provided.

1. It is strongly recommended elementary school staff become more purposeful and intentional with in-person instructional best practices. This was a recommendation during the previous site evaluation report published in January 2021. Implementing intentional instructional best practices applies to both in-person and distance learning.
2. Establish a clearly defined formative assessment process to generate powerful learning outcomes. It is strongly recommended that DPAC elementary focus on three elements within the formative assessment process. First, establish clear learning targets and criteria for success. Second, improve the use and frequency of feedback to students. Third, foster student goal setting as an integral part of classroom practice. Integrate the feedback throughout the learning cycle (Fisher et al., 2020).
3. SPCSA staff strongly recommend the pacing of the lesson is: a) grade and age appropriate, b) includes differentiated instructional approaches, and c) intellectually engages all students. See 7A of the Classroom Observation Totals Rubric. SPCSA staff believe that this will help improve instruction, particularly at the elementary level.
4. SPCSA staff strongly recommend providing focused professional development opportunities for teachers on current student performance data, so teachers utilize the data when making curricular and instructional decisions to meet student learning needs in a culturally responsive manner for academic growth. DPAC faculty should be familiar with the curricula and standards alignment across grade level bands. DPAC may want to consider providing professional development time in which teachers can align the curriculum, creating a curriculum map for each grade level and subject area. Faculty can then refer to the other grade level curriculum maps to set learning goals.

DEFICIENCIES

There were no deficiencies identified during the Democracy Prep site evaluation.