



# Nevada State Public Charter School Authority

## Site Evaluation Report: Girls Athletic Leadership School Las Vegas (GALS)

Evaluation Date: 05/09/2022

Report Date: 7/11/2022

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

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## 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

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## INTRODUCTION

This Site Evaluation Report offers an analysis of evidence collected during the school evaluation that took place on May 09, 2022 at Girls Athletic Leadership School Las Vegas (GALS)<sup>1</sup>. The State Public Charter School Authority (SPCSA) conducts a comprehensive review of evidence related to all charters within the portfolio during the first, third, and fifth year of operation. This comprehensive analysis addresses the academic success of the school and the effectiveness and viability of the school organization.

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

Girls Athletic Leadership School Las Vegas (GALS) is located in Las Vegas, Nevada in a facility at 4220 S. Maryland Parkway, Building B. The school serves 103 students (as of the most recent Validation Day) in 6<sup>th</sup> - 8<sup>th</sup> grades. The mission of name of school is: "GALS Las Vegas fosters the academic excellence and personal development necessary for every girl to become a powerful advocate for herself and leaders in their community."

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<sup>1</sup> At the State Public Charter School Authority Board Meeting on June 27, 2022, the Authority approved a request from the Girls Athletic Leadership School Las Vegas (GALS) to change the school's name to Girls Empowerment Middle School (GEMS). Since this report was conducted prior to the Authority's approval to change the name, the school will be referred to throughout this report as GALS.

# ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE

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## Nevada School Performance Framework 2019

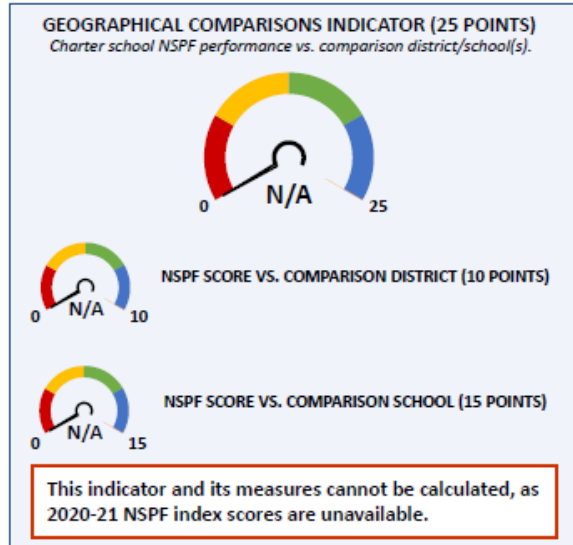
*GALS serves 103 students in 6<sup>th</sup> through 8<sup>th</sup> grades. As the school opened in the 2020 – 2021 school year, no summative academic performance data has been measured under the statewide accountability system.*

## Girls Athletic Leadership School Las Vegas Math and ELA Results Nevada School Performance Framework 2019

No Report Available

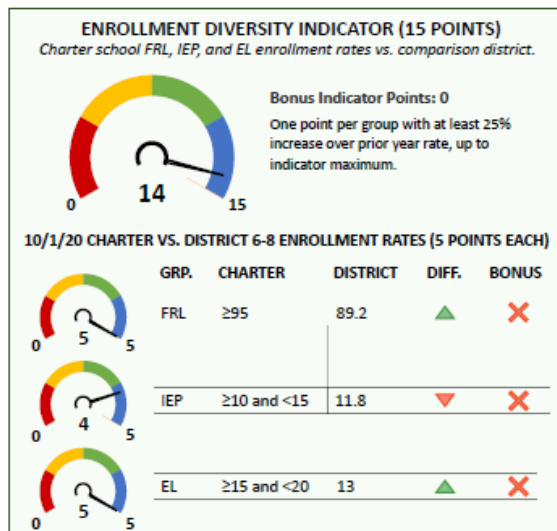
# SPCSA Academic Performance Framework Geographic Comparison Report

## Middle School



# SPCSA Academic Performance Framework Diversity Comparison Results

## Middle School



# FOCUS GROUP SUMMARIES

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## FOCUS GROUP SUMMARY

Group	Number of Participants	Duration of Focus Group
Governing Board <sup>2+</sup>	4	30 minutes
Parents/Families	3	30 minutes
Students	8	30 minutes
School Leadership	2	30 minutes
Staff	5	30 minutes

### Governing Board<sup>2</sup>:

1. Board members shared that they are satisfied with communication from the school leadership and stated that they are satisfied with the level of information they are provided. They acknowledged that the leadership works hard to keep board members informed about what is going on with students and teachers and stated that the board regularly receives updates on student assessment performance, including both aggregate data and anecdotal stories. Additionally, board members indicated that board participation in meetings is strong and that board members engage with the school in a variety of ways. One member shared that she regularly visits the school to volunteer and provide support.
2. Governing board members indicated that the recent separation from the Charter Management Organization (CMO), GALS Inc. was amicable and that while the board decided to finish out the school year under the GALS name, one of the immediate priorities is ensuring a smooth transition following the separation. A few specific action items were identified, including maintaining a school that provides a supportive environment for girls, ensuring strong enrollment numbers, fundraising, teacher recruitment and retention, professional development for staff, expanding the school facility, establishing board committees, and rebranding. While board members do not anticipate major changes to the school model, they indicated that they may make some adjustments going into next year. Additionally, board members acknowledged that this transition requires board members to be more involved in the coming months which includes dedicating 5-10 hours per week to supporting the school with the transition.
3. The governing board members shared that under the current structure, the board evaluates the Executive Director, who is responsible for evaluating the Head of School. While the board conducted an evaluation of the previous Executive Director, given the recent transition in this role they have not conducted an evaluation this year. Additionally, the board indicated that they anticipate upcoming discussions to ensure that the leadership structure meets the needs of the school now that they are no longer affiliated with the CMO.

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<sup>2</sup> Four members of the eleven member board participated. Quorum was not met, and Open Meeting Law was not violated.

# FOCUS GROUP SUMMARIES

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## FOCUS GROUP SUMMARY continued

### **Parents/Families:**

1. Parents and family members shared that they have had very positive experiences with GALS Las Vegas. Several themes emerged from this conversation, including that the school provided a safe environment for their students, that the teachers are very supportive and communicative, and that their children are very happy at the school. One parent shared that her child had experienced a lot of bullying at her prior school, had previously had low grades, and had hated going to school. At GALS, her child loves going to school, and any bullying issues are immediately addressed. Additionally, when asked about the focus on serving young women, parents indicated that this was one important factor in the decision to enroll in the school and that the environment and model have had positive impacts on their students.
2. Parents and family members indicated that they feel informed about their student's academic performance and regularly receive phone calls from teachers, automated phone calls regarding missing assignments, and have the opportunity to check student grades in Infinite Campus. Parents and family members reported that teachers are very accessible and available for phone calls or meetings. Additionally, parents and family members indicated that they feel welcome at the school and shared that staff is welcoming and supportive. One parent shared that when their family got COVID-19 earlier in the year that the school reached out to check on the family.
3. While parents and family members were highly complimentary of the school, when asked what the school could do to continue to improve two suggestions were shared. First, parents and family members expressed a desire for more extracurricular activities and/or for Friday clubs to occur more frequently. They did acknowledge that the school is working on expanding extracurricular activities currently. Second, one parent suggested that she would like to see more of a balance between paper and electronic work. She shared that most work is done on google and she would like to see more homework, including work that isn't on a computer.

# FOCUS GROUP SUMMARIES

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## FOCUS GROUP SUMMARY continued

### Students:

1. Students shared a several reasons why they enjoy going to GALS Las Vegas. Several students shared that they liked being in a smaller school with smaller class sizes and the opportunity to work in smaller groups. Several students also shared that they enjoy the fact that the school focuses on serving girls and that the school provides a supportive environment where they feel comfortable. Another thing that students highlighted was that they enjoy the opportunity to work on group projects and activities, and to participate in engaging and interactive classes that connect to real life.
2. Students shared that several factors help them to be successful academically. For example, one student shared that teachers remind them to get their assignments done and provide extensions when needed. Another student shared that she believed she learned better in-person compared to being online during the prior school year. Additionally, several students mentioned that small group learning and RTI were helpful. Some students indicated that they wish the school had sports such as basketball and soccer, especially since “Athletics” is in the school’s name.
3. When asked about what the school could improve, students shared that they did not like some of the school rules such as the protocol for cell phones, the dress code, the rules for bathroom use, rules that prohibit students from bringing junk food to school, and a recent rule that banned plushies (small stuffed animals). Students were asked whether they knew why the rules had been put in place and the response was somewhat mixed. Some students indicated they knew why the plushy ban had been implemented, but that they felt like all students were being punished for the actions of a small group of students.



# FOCUS GROUP SUMMARIES

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## FOCUS GROUP SUMMARY continued

### Leadership:

1. The leadership team stated that despite some challenges earlier in the year, the school has been able to fill all positions and has an invested and committed staff. In terms of curriculum, the school has seen inconsistent implementation of the current curricula, Illustrative Math and Actively Learn. Additionally, while the school has been using the Aleks and Achieve 3000 assessments to monitor students, they are considering shifting to using iReady next year. In addition, the school uses the MAP assessment three times per year and while the leadership is not confident in the validity of data from the fall assessment, they are looking forward to analyzing the spring data, particularly compared to the winter assessment to understand student growth.
2. The leadership team acknowledged that many students are significantly behind academically and that they are seeing lower attendance this year. The school leadership shared some of the strategies in place to support students including small class sizes, wellness teams, and the GALS series. The school has also developed partnerships in the community to provide a unique learning experience for their students. For example, the students from the UNLV engineering department worked with students to build solar cars.
3. The school leadership shared that another challenge is ensuring sufficient funding for the school. They shared a number of recruitment strategies for increasing student enrollment. In particular, they noted that face-to-face engagement with parents and outreach through community partners has been most successful. The leadership team reiterated that despite the emphasis on a model that meets the needs of young women, they are open to any student, regardless of gender identity.

### Staff:

1. Staff members shared that they have a very close-knit, cohesive, and collaborative team. This strong staff climate is one of the things that staff members indicated they appreciate most about working at GALS. In addition, staff shared that they have a strong relationship with the leadership team and believe their voices are heard in key decisions. Staff members also indicated that these strong relationships extend to students. Because of the small size of the student body, staff know each student and their family and are able to tailor supports and resources to meet their needs. One teacher indicated that students feel very comfortable talking with their teachers due to the close relationships and that students are very open in sharing issues and challenges they are facing.
2. Staff members acknowledged that many of their students are behind academically, and they believe that the pandemic has contributed to students falling further behind. A variety of strategies are used to support students including tutoring, printouts provided by teachers listing missing assignments, and use of the wellness teams to help students stay on top of missing assignments. For students with an IEP, the special education teacher provides each student's IEP to the general education teacher and works with the general education teacher to support students.

3. When asked about challenges, the staff members indicated that they wish they had more space for students which would also enable more extracurricular activities. Additionally, staff members shared that they hoped that next year they would have a more cohesive curriculum. In particular a few staff members indicated they wanted more curricular and instructional resources to pull from.

# CLASSROOM OBSERVATION TOTALS

A total of 7 classrooms were observed for approximately 20 minutes each on the day of the site evaluation.

I. Classroom Environment					
	Distinguished	Proficient	Basic	Unsatisfactory	Not Observed
<b>Areas 1 &amp; 2</b>  <b>Creating an Environment of Respect and Rapport</b>  <b>Establishing a Culture for Learning</b>	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.
	<b>Total: 1</b>	<b>Total: 4</b>	<b>Total: 2</b>	<b>Total: 0</b>	<b>Total: 0</b>
	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.
	<b>Total: 0</b>	<b>Total: 5</b>	<b>Total: 2</b>	<b>Total: 0</b>	<b>Total: 0</b>
	Distinguished	Proficient	Basic	Unsatisfactory	Not Observed
<b>Areas 3 &amp; 4</b>  <b>Managing Classroom Procedures</b>	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.	This criterion was not observed or rated.
	<b>Total: 0</b>	<b>Total: 6</b>	<b>Total: 1</b>	<b>Total: 0</b>	<b>Total: 0</b>
<b>Managing Student Behavior</b>	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.
	<b>Total: 1</b>	<b>Total: 5</b>	<b>Total: 1</b>	<b>Total: 0</b>	<b>Total: 0</b>

# CLASSROOM OBSERVATION TOTALS

II. Classroom Instruction					
	Distinguished	Proficient	Basic	Unsatisfactory	Not Observed
<b>Area 5</b> <b>Purpose and Explanation of Content, Lesson, Unit or Classroom Activity</b>	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.
	<b>Total: 0</b>	<b>Total: 0</b>	<b>Total: 2</b>	<b>Total: 1</b>	<b>Total: 4</b>
	Distinguished	Proficient	Basic	Unsatisfactory	Not Observed
<b>Area 6</b> <b>A</b> <b>Using Questioning and Discussion Techniques</b>	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.
	<b>Total: 0</b>	<b>Total: 4</b>	<b>Total: 3</b>	<b>Total: 0</b>	<b>Total: 0</b>
<b>B</b>	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. <b>1</b>	This criterion was not observed or rated.
	<b>Total: 0</b>	<b>Total: 4</b>	<b>Total: 2</b>	<b>Total: 1</b>	<b>Total: 0</b>

# CLASSROOM OBSERVATION TOTALS

II. Classroom Instruction (continued)					
	Distinguished	Proficient	Basic	Unsatisfactory	Not Observed
<b>Area 7</b>  <b>A</b>  <b>Engaging Students in Learning</b>	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.
	<b>Total: 0</b>	<b>Total: 5</b>	<b>Total: 2</b>	<b>Total: 0</b>	<b>Total: 0</b>
	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.
<b>B</b>					
	<b>Total: 0</b>	<b>Total: 6</b>	<b>Total: 1</b>	<b>Total: 0</b>	<b>Total: 0</b>
	Distinguished	Proficient	Basic	Unsatisfactory	Not Observed
<b>Area 8</b>  <b>A</b>	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.
	<b>Total: 0</b>	<b>Total: 2</b>	<b>Total: 5</b>	<b>Total: 0</b>	<b>Total: 0</b>
<b>Using Formative Assessment in Instruction</b>  <b>B</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.
	<b>Total: 0</b>	<b>Total: 4</b>	<b>Total: 3</b>	<b>Total: 0</b>	<b>Total: 0</b>

Additional information about the classroom observations shared here when applicable:

1. In one classroom, students were observed to be engaged in the whole group reading activity, following along with the individual reading the article out loud. The teacher moved around the room to monitor engagement and assist students as necessary.
2. In one classroom, students were provided with a writing prompt and then were then asked to share their statements verbally with their peers. Student were very engaged in the exercise and topic of debate. However, it was not clear that the writing and learning objectives were communicated and reinforced throughout the lesson and limited feedback was provided to students, at this stage of the activity.
3. At the beginning of a new lesson, the learning objective was posted for all students as they walked into the room and got settled for the day. Despite this being visible to all students, the instructor did not reference the objective or ground the lesson in this target verbally at the beginning of the period.
4. In one classroom, the lesson began with a warmup activity and then quickly transitioned to working on a packet. No information was shared as to the learning goal for the day.
5. Students in a classroom followed a teacher-directed lesson on volume as a whole group activity, before moving to independent practice using the formulas posted on the white board. Students were observed to follow classrooms expectations and most appeared to be able to complete the lesson as assigned.

# 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 also outline any questions or potential concerns.

Measure	Description	Evidence Collected
1a	<p>The school implements material terms of the education program. 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>The school implements Actively Learn (ELA) and Illustrative Mathematics. The school relies primarily on Achieve 3000 and ALEKS to assess student skills throughout the year. At the time of the site evaluation, the school relied on teachers using the Next Generation Science Standards to develop lessons for this core content area. GALS also shared that various elements are hallmarks of their program, including Wellness Teams, GALS Series, Movement, Small Class Sizes and Small School setting. Site evaluators confirmed both small class sizes, a small school setting, and observed a GALS Series classroom on the day of the site evaluation.</p>
1b	<p>The school complies with applicable education requirements. 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>SPCSA site evaluators observed that GALS Las Vegas is complying with general education requirements and the current charter contract. School leadership noted that the school provides pull-out support for students with disabilities and or those requiring</p>

		interventions. Additionally, the school provides co-teaching and support in the general education classroom setting, and this was observed in multiple classrooms by SPCSA evaluators.
1c	<p>The school protects the rights of students with disabilities.</p> <p>Examples:</p> <p>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>School leaders noted that the school works to ensure that all students with disabilities are provided appropriate education and supports. The staff is trained prior to the start of the school year. IEPs are shared with teachers at the beginning of the year, as new students enroll, and when new IEPs are written and implemented. School leadership noted that the GALS SPED teacher also provides teachers with a page of goals and objectives for each identified student. School leadership noted that the school contracts with Special Education Support Staff (SESS) to assist in providing required services.</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>School leadership shared that content teachers are trained in specific methodologies to support ELL students, including building background knowledge, using diagrams and pictures to support lessons, and leveraging other tools such as Google Translate when appropriate. Leadership also described how progress is monitored for ELL student in terms of listening, speaking, reading and writing.</p>



# ORGANIZATIONAL PERFORMANCE

Measure	Description	Evidence Collected
3a	<p>The school complies with governance requirements.</p> <p>Examples:            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.</p>	<p>School Leadership provided evidence that the governing body of the school is in compliance with requirements, noting that open meeting law is followed, agendas are appropriately posted, minutes are available, and that the board meets at least once per month except for the month of December.</p>
4a	<p>The school protects the rights of all students.</p> <p>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.</p>	<p>School leadership provided evidence of an enrollment policy, confirmation that the application window exceeds the 45-days, and reiterated that no student is denied admission should there be available seats. School leadership noted all recruitment is done in both English and Spanish.</p>
5b	<p>The school complies with health and safety requirements.</p> <p>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 service, and other health and safety services.</p>	<p>School leadership noted that monthly emergency drills are conducted at the school, the school has an identified evacuation site, and there is a designated health area on campus. SPCSA staff observed meals being served, and noted that the school has food appropriately stored at the facility.</p>

## 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.

<p>School staff ability to address previous recommendations</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Implementation of a comprehensive formative assessment system.</li> <li>2. Continue to build strong relationships with students, other stakeholders and community partners so that the effectiveness of the model can be maximized.</li> </ol>
<p>Evidence the school can provide to support the implementation of previous recommendations.</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. The school has implemented both Achieve 3000 and ALEKS as key elements of a schoolwide assessment system, but leadership noted that they have not been implemented consistently. Additionally, it was stated that there is limited expertise with these systems on-site. Leadership shared that there will be a complete transition from these tools to i-Ready and NWEA-MAP for the upcoming year.</li> <li>2. The school continues to seek out and build local partners in the community. School leadership noted that this work will continue and cited an example from this school year with the Women's Research Institute where a day was spent at UNLV.</li> </ol>
<p>The reasons school will require additional time to fully address the recommended items.</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Due to the new assessments to be implemented for the 2022 - 2023 school year, this work is ongoing and will require more time to address. School leadership shared that they are confident that both i-Ready and NWEA-MAP will be a more comprehensive evaluation system for students and staff next year.</li> <li>2. Building relationships, establishing community partnerships, and engaging with stakeholders, students and families is ongoing. It will be critical that the school keep all stakeholders informed throughout the rebranding process of the school so that current and potential partners remained engaged. Rebranding also presents an opportunity for the school to enact changes at the school based upon feedback from students and families since the 2022 - 2023 school year will be the first as an independent, non-affiliated public charter school.</li> </ol>

# SITE EVALUATION FINDINGS

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## STRENGTHS

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

1. As reported by school leadership, GALS has a positive staff culture and places a strong emphasis on sustaining a strong, conducive learning environment for students. During the staff focus group, participants shared that they have a very close-knit, cohesive, and collaborative team and that a strong staff climate is one of elements that they appreciate most about working at GALS. This sentiment was echoed by students and families, and SPCSA witnessed students being welcomed by staff with warm greetings at the start of the day at the entrance of the school.
2. GALS Las Vegas serves a student body that is diverse and representative of the community it primarily serves. Over 95% of students at the school qualify for free or reduced-price lunch, and the school serves a greater percentage of students with disabilities and students identified as English language learners than both the Clark County School District and the SPCSA. The school is to be commended for their efforts to diversify the student population, and should continue to make this priority for the remainder of the charter term so as to remain aligned with the SPCSA Academic and Demographic Needs Assessment.
3. Despite operating out of a non-traditional school building, the overall classroom space for students and staff is conducive to student learning. SPCSA evaluators noted that the hallways are decorated with student achievement in mind, there is plenty of light and space for all individuals, including during passing periods, and classrooms have appropriate materials posted. Further observations noted that most décor tied to the school's identity, mission, and vision.
4. Overall, SPCSA evaluators noted that classroom expectations were well established, and few behavior issues occurred on the day of the site evaluation. Students appeared to understand how to conduct themselves in class, and there were no instances of misbehavior detracting from content-area lessons.

## 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 discussed during the leadership focus group, student recruitment and sustained enrollment remain a challenge at GALS. The school opened during the COVID-19 pandemic, and is still recovering from being under-enrolled in its inaugural year. This has impacted the school's budget, and to a certain extent, available programming to students.
2. School leadership noted that attendance levels during the 2021 - 22 school year have been lower than anticipated, down from nearly 96% in the 2020 - 2021 school year to approximately 84% this current academic year. This significant decrease has created a multitude of challenges for the staff as well as students, most of whom are behind grade level.
3. As presented during the leadership focus group, the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic has resulted in greater instructional gaps for GALS students. Many students returning to the classroom are behind academically. The school is also serving students that may not have experienced any form of traditional schooling during the 2020 - 2021 academic year. Overall, these realities, coupled with a return to full-time in-person instruction this year and struggles with consistent attendance, have presented real challenges.

## 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. Staff, parents, and students are important assets in the GALS – Las Vegas community, and the school has made it a priority to leverage these stakeholders whenever possible. SPCSA staff recommend that the school continue to engage with these community stakeholders through and beyond the school's upcoming amendment process to redefine the school and what success looks like. This will help GALS ensure that the mission of the school is brought to life in all content areas and will assist in creating realistic expectations for the assessment systems, curricula, and common features of each classroom. By working with the community, GALS can continue to build its brand while also incorporating feedback from the community it serves.
2. Throughout classroom observations, SPCSA evaluators noted that learning objectives and targets were posted, but in most classrooms, these objectives were not referred to and/or emphasized while the teacher provided instruction. Additionally, SPCSA evaluators noted that it was not clear that most teachers had a prepared plan and/or questions to scaffold content to ensure the lesson was reaching all learners. SPCSA staff recommend that the school revisit these practices so as to help students internalize lesson goals and objectives each period, thus promoting stronger engagement. Additionally, SPCSA staff recommend that teachers consider developing preplanned, scaffolded questions to ensure that content is reaching all learners for each lesson.
3. Continue to think about ways to engage students in peer-to-peer learning. Students voiced that one aspect of GALS that they enjoy most is learning and collaborating with their peers in group work and projects. While student-to-student engagement was observed in a few classrooms, it was absent from many of the classrooms observed. In addition, in those classrooms where student collaboration was observed, it was not clear that this engagement was aligned to-with the standard. The school can use the summer break and professional development prior to the start of the school year to emphasize the importance of peer-to-peer learning and how it is well-received by students.
4. Board members should continue to assume active roles at the school by participating in regular board member training, facilitated by a third-party so as to enhance members' understanding of their roles and responsibilities. As the school undergoes a transition for the 2022 – 2023 school year, the importance of this work is magnified since the board will set the true vision for the school and will ensure goals are met. Additionally, board members should make it a priority to visit the school often and familiarize themselves with important documents such as the bylaws and charter contract with the SPCSA.
5. As noted in the school leader focus group, GALS remains under-enrolled for the second year in a row, creating significant strain on the annual budget. This problem is enhanced by low funding levels in Nevada. SPCSA staff recommend that the school develop a robust recruitment and enrollment plan so that the school can maximize revenues in the 2023 – 2024 school year and beyond. The school should continue to market in both English and Spanish, and is encouraged to develop recruitment and enrollment goals and plans for monitoring progress towards these goals throughout the fall and winter. Additionally, the school may wish to pursue an articulation agreement with one or more sponsored schools in the near vicinity as permitted under [NRS 388A.456\(1\)\(d\)](#). SPCSA staff is willing to provide further guidance on articulation agreements if requested as they would require approval by the Authority board prior to implementation.

6. Speak with other schools and boards regarding EMO/CMO separations and lessons learned. While the separation has occurred at the time of this report, the school would be well-served to reach out to other local public charter schools that have recently separated from their former EMO or CMO to help avoid potential problems during year one of operations as an independent public charter school. SPCSA staff would be happy to facilitate conversations with one or more schools that have experienced a similar transition if requested by the school or GALS board.

## **DEFICIENCIES**

There were no deficiencies identified for Girls Athletic Leadership School Las Vegas (GALS) during this site evaluation.