Nevada State Public Charter School Authority

Site Evaluation Report:
Nevada Connections Academy
Evaluation Date: 9/27/2022
Initial Draft Report Date: 11/10/2022

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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 9/27/2022 at Nevada Connections Academy (NCA). 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. Schools identified as having a rating of a two-star or below, and those schools with a Notice of Concern, Notice of Breach, or Notice of Termination, will have a differentiated procedure for their site evaluation. Nevada Connections Academy is in year three of its charter contract and operating under a Notice of Breach, thus meeting the criteria for a comprehensive site evaluation.

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.

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

NCA is located in Reno, Nevada in a facility at 555 Double Eagle Court, Suite 2000, but serves students statewide as a full-time virtual charter school. The school serves 1,114 students (as of the most recent Validation Day) in 9th through 12th grade[1]. The mission of NCA is: "NCA will produce college/career ready graduates equipped with the social and emotional skills necessary to contribute positively to society."

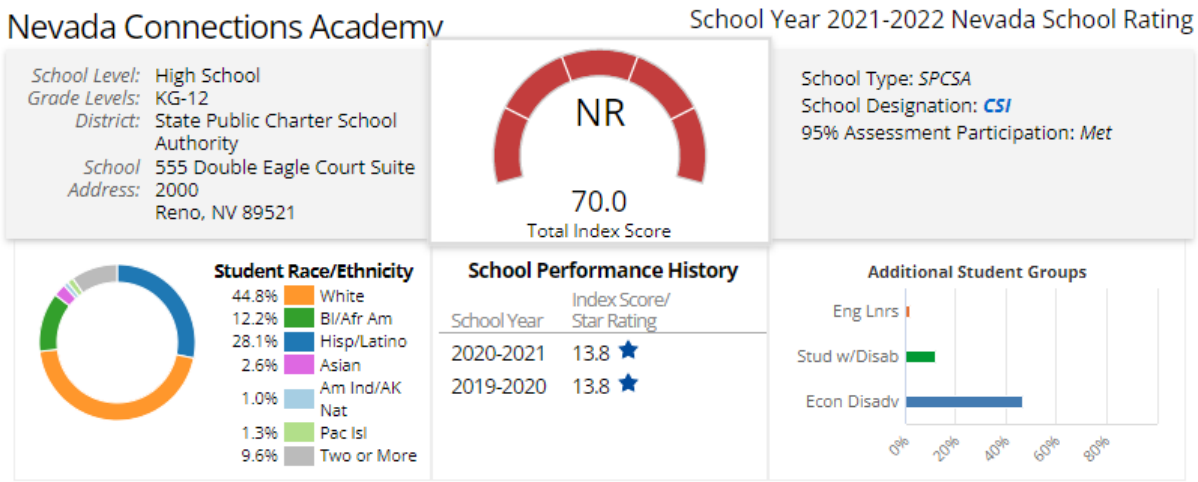
[1] Because the NCA site evaluation occurred before the enrollment count for 2022 – 2023 was finalized, this information may be dated at the time this report is released.

ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE

Nevada School Performance Framework
2022

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

High School



Math and ELA Results
Nevada School Performance Framework
2022

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: 2/10**

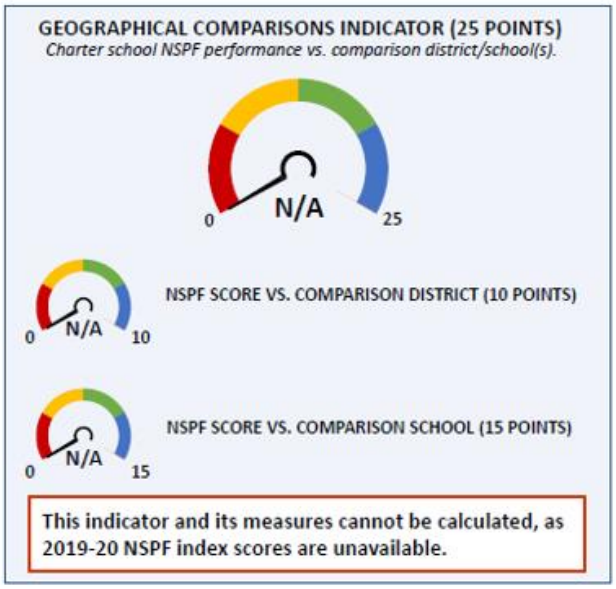
Groups	2022 %	2022 % District	2022 % MIP	2021 %	2021 % District	2021 % MIP
All Students	11.3	25.2	36.19			
American Indian/Alaska Native	-	-	26.96			
Asian	-	55.1	52.76			
Black/African American	9.3	10.2	22.5			
Hispanic/Latino	7.1	14.2	26.78			
Pacific Islander	-	23.0	32.8			
Two or More Races	23.5	31.9	40.11			
White/Caucasian	12.3	33.8	47.04			
Special Education	8.0	6.6	16.76			
English Learners Current + Former	-	<5	18.8			
English Learners Current	-	<5	16.04			
Economically Disadvantaged	8.1	14.6	27.8			

ELA Proficient — **ELA Proficient Points Earned: 6.5/10**

Groups	2022 %	2022 % District	2022 % MIP	2021 %	2021 % District	2021 % MIP
All Students	49.3	54.3	51.11			
American Indian/Alaska Native	-	-	39.92			
Asian	-	78.7	66.85			
Black/African American	43.7	40.6	34.82			
Hispanic/Latino	47.8	42.3	39.67			
Pacific Islander	-	35.8	51.31			
Two or More Races	41.1	60.5	60.16			
White/Caucasian	52.9	65.7	64.14			
Special Education	12.5	16.5	19.92			
English Learners Current + Former	-	12.5	21.64			
English Learners Current	-	9.2	15.98			
Economically Disadvantaged	45.4	43.4	40.77			

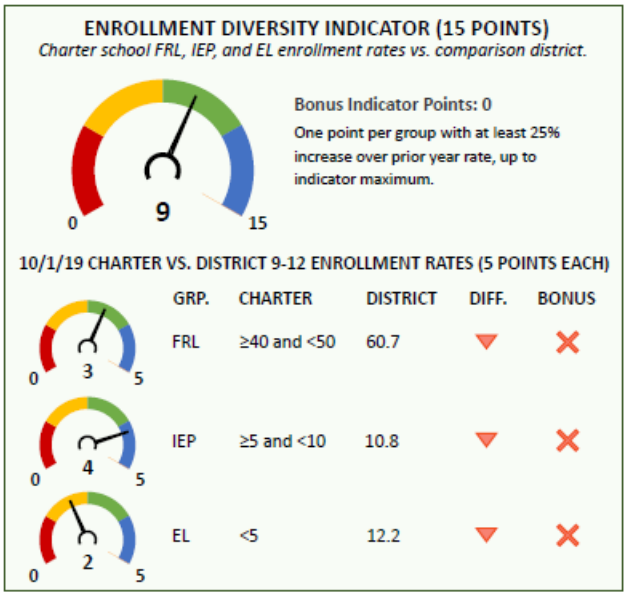
SPCSA Academic Performance Framework[2]
Geographic Comparison Report

High School



SPCSA Academic Performance Framework
Diversity Comparison Results

High School



[2] Because the NCA site evaluation occurred before the adoption of 2021 – 2022 academic performance results by Authority, this may be dated at the time this report is released

FOCUS GROUP SUMMARIES

FOCUS GROUP SUMMARY

Group	Number of Participants	Duration of Focus Group
Governing Board	2	30 minutes
Parents/Families	7	30 minutes
Students	5	30 minutes
School Leadership	8	30 minutes
Staff	10	30 minutes

Governing Board[3]:

- Board members shared details about the NCA's governing board. One board member stated, "Currently, we have five board members. According to our charter, we are a nine-seat board." Members of the board shared the board members bring expertise in education and finance but would like to add members with expertise in governance and legal. Currently the board has a financial subcommittee. The board plans to add more subcommittees in the future.

- The board explained ways they monitor the school's success in welcoming all types of students and their families to NCA. Board members reported they collect data and keep track every month of the demographics. One board member stated, "We discuss ways to make improvements during board meetings."

- Members of the board shared several strengths at NCA. One board member said, "Dr. McBride is a strong leader for the school. The classes that we offer are really good." Another board member said, "Data have significantly improved. The graduation rate has increased. Data shows that we have turned the school around."

Parents/Families:

- Several families shared their appreciation for NCA working with students to create short-term and long-term goals. One parent said, "My senior in high school's goal is to do well academically. His goal was to keep his grades up!" Another parent stated, "My child's short-term goal is to join the honor society and her long-term goal is to attend college."

- Families shared how the student-led opportunities are going for their children. One parent stated, "I like the student portfolios because it teaches them time management." Families agreed that it would be nice if there were fewer portfolios. Families stated, "In some classes, there are portfolios after each unit. The enthusiasm changes depending on the subject matter."

- Families agreed that NCA staff provides high-quality instruction. One parent said, "I know that I can find resources in multiple areas" Another parent stated, "The content in the lessons is not lacking. There's a lot of information. If I need something, the staff is always available. Sometimes it can be overwhelming. We have to manage our time."

[3] Two members of the nine-member board participated. Quorum was not met, and Open Meeting Law was not violated.

FOCUS GROUP SUMMARIES

FOCUS GROUP SUMMARY continued

Students:

- Students shared various student-led opportunities they are able to participate in, such as, student portfolios, student-led study sessions, and goal setting. One student said, “Setting short-term and long-term goals helped me to figure out what I want to be when I grow up.” Another student explained that some student-led opportunities are new this year and some students may not have had an opportunity to participate yet.

- Students shared how they feel about NCA’s school environment. One student said, “I love this school because I can work at my own pace. I have ADHD and I can't really learn verbally, I'm more of a visual learner, so having the ability to work visually helps a lot.” Several students agreed that NCA has a good school environment. Another student said, “I think it’s all great. Online school is so much different. The teachers are more engaged. I can talk to the principal if I need anything.”

- Students shared several things they have learned this year. One student said, “I’m learning about art history.” Another student stated, “I’m taking a hospitality class. The workload is a little much, but it is one of my favorites.” Students also shared their love for the marketing class offered at NCA.

Leadership:

- Leadership shared how the implementation of short- and long-term goal setting is going for students. Leadership explained that goal setting takes place during onboarding for families. While onboarding families, they discuss short-term and long-term goals. Leadership explained, “For some families, it is the first time anyone has asked about future goals. For families that have a child with an Individualized Education Plan (IEP), the idea of goals is not new. However, we enhance it to include personal future goals.”

- Leadership elaborated on their goal to increase by two percent from an overall score of 397 on the Nevada School Climate and Social Emotional Learning Survey by the end of the 2022-2023 School Year. Leadership reported that they’ve put several things in place to achieve this goal. A member of leadership said, “We’ve been focusing on the culture and community of the school after closing the elementary and middle school. We have conversations with the students to ensure needs are met.” Leadership shared their belief that diversity, equity, and inclusion is not a separate thing. Leadership stated, “Our staff has had training to better engage and connect with students regardless of the student’s background”. Leadership reported they are focused on curriculum design, providing feedback to students, and communication with students and families.

- Leadership elaborated on the utilization of Data Views to track student progress. Data Views is used as a system to track student performance and monitor student progress. One member of leadership explained, “When I contact a student for a check-in, I let the student know that we will be talking about short-term goals and long-term goals. I explain the difference between short-term and long-term goals. We let them know that it can be personal and academic. I encourage them to tell me about their dreams. I ask what they dream of. For some of the

students that don't have one, I help to guide them through." Another member of leadership stated, "I talk to students to help them find out what they are good at. I help them drill down and let them know that these are qualities you have to help you in life."

Staff:

- Staff shared various ways they are implementing student voice by providing student-led opportunities for all students. Staff shared they provide student-led opportunities through student portfolios, student-led study sessions, and goal setting. One staff member said, "We modify the portfolio to meet the needs of students. They respond more to the options we provide when we give them more choices."

- Staff members spoke about the positive school environment. Several staff members agreed that they have never had the support they've had at NCA. One staff member said, "I have worked in multiple districts, and I have never had this level of support." Another staff member stated, "We have built a community. We are a family." Staff also shared they feel overwhelmed by the high level of tasks asked of them. Staff reported that in addition to the career ladder positions, they have a lot of additional work that takes them from working with students. One staff member said, "I have to work on the weekend to get all tasks completed."

- Staff shared different types of formative assessments used to inform instructional decisions. Staff reported they utilize forms of sample work, daily quick checks, unit tests, portfolio projects, and quizzes within the embedded curriculum. Staff explained that the various assessments help them to adjust their instruction and assignments for students.

CLASSROOM ENVIRONMENT AND INSTRUCTION OBSERVATION RUBRIC

A total of **18** classrooms were observed for approximately 15 minutes on the day of the evaluation.

Classroom Environment					
	Distinguished	**Proficient**	**Basic**	**Unsatisfactory**	**Not Observed**
Classroom Learning Environment is Conducive to Learning	Students create and maintain a learning environment where students feel free to share their ideas and take risks in learning. Students take ownership in explaining, modeling, and reinforcing classroom routines. Learning experiences guide students to identify their strengths, interests, and needs; problem-solve; ask for support when appropriate; maximizing learning time.	The teacher creates and maintains a learning environment where students feel free to share their ideas and take risks in learning. Teachers explain, model, and reinforce classroom routines. Learning experiences guide students to identify their strengths, interests, and needs; problem-solve; ask for support when appropriate; maximizing learning time.	The teacher attempts to create and maintain a learning environment where students feel free to share their ideas and take risks in learning. Teachers attempt to explain, model, and reinforce classroom routines. Learning experiences make an effort to guide students to identify their strengths, interests, and needs; problem-solve; ask for support when appropriate. Learning time is sometimes maximized.	The teacher does not create and maintain a learning environment where students feel free to share their ideas and take risks in learning. Teachers do not explain, model, and reinforce classroom routines. Learning experiences do not guide students to identify their strengths, interests, and needs; problem-solve; ask for support when appropriate. Learning time is seldom maximized.	This criterion was not observed or rated.
	Total: 5	**Total:** 12	**Total:** 1	**Total:** 0	**Total:** 0
Establishing a Culture for Learning	Students and teachers respond appropriately when conflicts arise and demonstrate respect for and affirm their own and others' differences related to background, identity, language, strengths, and challenges.	Teacher responds appropriately when conflicts arise and demonstrate respect for and affirm their own and others' differences related to background, identity, language, strengths, and challenges.	Teacher attempts to respond appropriately when conflicts arise and demonstrate respect for and affirm their own and others' differences related to background, identity, language, strengths, and challenges.	Teacher does not attempt to respond appropriately when conflicts arise and does not demonstrate respect for and affirm their own and others' differences related to background, identity, language, strengths, and challenges.	This criterion was not observed or rated.
	Total: 5	**Total:** 12	**Total:** 0	**Total:** 0	**Total:** 1

Classroom Instruction					
	Distinguished	**Proficient**	**Basic**	**Unsatisfactory**	**Not Observed**
Purpose and Explanation of Content, Lesson, Unit or Classroom Activity	The purpose of the lesson or unit is clear and connects with student's 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 of the lesson and learning activity is unclear. The teacher's explanation of the content is unclear, confusing, or uses inappropriate language.	This criterion was not observed or rated.
	Total: 1	**Total:** 17	**Total:** 0	**Total:** 0	**Total:** 0
Students' Cognitive Awareness of Learning Goals/Targets	Students can explain/demonstrate the goals/targets of the lesson, content, unit, or classroom activity during this instructional timeframe.	Most of the students can explain/ demonstrate the goals/targets of the lesson, content, unit, or classroom activity during this instructional timeframe.	Some of the students can explain/ demonstrate the goals/targets of the lesson, content, unit, or classroom activity during this instructional timeframe.	Students cannot explain/demonstrate the goals/targets of the lesson, content, unit, or classroom activity during this instructional time frame.	This criterion was not observed or rated.
	Total: 0	**Total:** 17	**Total:** 1	**Total:** 0	**Total:** 0
Quality and purpose of questions	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: 0	**Total:** 16	**Total:** 1	**Total:** 0	**Total:** 1
Opportunities for student discourse and student use of academic language	Students use academic language while participating in discourse. Students demonstrate mastery through reasoning and higher-order thinking.	Teachers encourage the use of academic language and provide students opportunities for discourse. Students are encouraged to demonstrate knowledge through reasoning and higher-order thinking.	There is some attempt by the teacher to encourage the use of academic language. Students are provided limited opportunities for discourse. There is some attempt by the teacher to encourage students to demonstrate knowledge through reasoning and higher order thinking.	There is little to no opportunity for student discourse. There is little to no opportunity for students to demonstrate knowledge through reasoning and higher-order thinking.	This criterion was not observed or rated.
	Total: 0	**Total:** 14	**Total:** 3	**Total:** 0	**Total:** 1

Classroom Instruction (continued)					
	Distinguished	**Proficient**	**Basic**	**Unsatisfactory**	**Not Observed**
Intellectual Engagement in Learning	Students are intellectually engaged throughout the lesson. The pacing and structure of the lesson is differentiated and 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 differentiated and adequate.	Students are partially intellectually engaged throughout the lesson. The pacing and structure of the lesson is somewhat differentiated and inconsistent.	Students are not at all intellectually engaged in significant learning. The pacing and structure of the lesson is not differentiated and inadequate.	This criterion was not observed or rated.
	Total: 0	**Total:** 17	**Total:** 0	**Total:** 0	**Total:** 1
Using Formative Assessment in Instruction	The teacher purposefully and consistently provides clear, descriptive feedback in regard to student's understanding of the learning goals/targets. The feedback is timely and is in a reasonable amount.	Most of the time, the teacher, provides clear, descriptive feedback regarding student's understanding of the learning goals/targets. The feedback is timely and is in a reasonable amount.	The teacher provides clear, descriptive feedback inconsistently regarding student's understanding of the learning goals/targets. The feedback is seldom timely and is in a reasonable amount.	The teacher does not provide clear, descriptive feedback regarding student's understanding of the learning goals/targets. The feedback is not timely and is not in a reasonable amount.	This criterion was not observed or rated.
	Total: 1	**Total:** 11	**Total:** 2	**Total:** 0	**Total:** 4

Additional information about the classroom observations shared here when applicable:

1. In one English learners (EL) and Special Education (SPED) classroom, the teacher provided targeted interventions to an EL student.
2. In one high school classroom, a chef guest speaker presented. The teacher led discussions in alignment with the chef's lesson. The chef made real-life connections to the lesson.
3. In one business and marketing classroom, students learned about economics. The teacher posed questions and students answered in the chat online.
4. In one EL classroom, students completed an interactive lesson to determine indicators of a good thesis.
5. In one geometry classroom, the teacher provided small group instruction on strategies for solving equations. The teacher asked questions and gave feedback to students.
6. In one small group support class, the teacher provided targeted interventions to three students.
7. In one HS classroom, the teacher provided targeted intervention to EL and SPED students. The teacher provided scaffolds for paragraph writing.
8. In one English classroom, the teacher provided targeted interventions in a small group setting on thesis writing strategies.
9. In one high school classroom, students worked on reading, writing, and how to say things to another person in a positive way.
10. In one HS classroom, students worked in a small group setting on essay writing.

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, visual inspection 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.

Indicator	Measure Description	Evidence Collected
Indicator 1: Education Program	**Measures 1a and 1b**: The school implements the material terms of the education program. Ex: SPCSA site evaluations will confirm that the school is staying true to its approved application and programming, as well as review curricular materials and their alignment to Nevada Academic Content Standards. **Measures 1c and 1d:** The school protects the rights of students with disabilities and EL students. Ex: For example, classroom observations include examples of students with an IEP or those learning English as a language. Student support is provided within small groups or teachers using interventions and supports to provide students with special needs and EL learners with meaningful access to grade-level content and standards.	NCA is a statewide virtual public charter school. NCA's mission is to produce college and career-ready graduates equipped with the social and emotional skills necessary to contribute positively to society. As observed during the site evaluation, all curriculum at NCA appears to align with the Nevada Academic Content Standards within English language arts, mathematics, science, social studies, health, and physical education, fine arts, computer science, and world language through approval with the Nevada Department of Education. NCA utilizes a multi-layered approach to ensuring all staff is incorporated into both, the development of a student's IEP, as well as ensuring the decisions and supports determined by the IEP team are implemented with fidelity.
Indicator 3: Governance and Reporting	**Measure 3a:** The school complies with governance requirements. Ex: Board policies and oversight of Education Service Provider.	Governance requirements are monitored by the superintendent, the governing board, and the NCA attorney to ensure compliance.
Indicator 4: Students and Employees	**Measure 4a:** Student records under lock and key/stored appropriately. **Measure 4d:** Personnel files are under lock and key/stored appropriately.	Student and faculty records are stored under lock and key in secured offices.
Indicator 5: School Environment	**Measure 5b:** • Evacuation plans for classrooms are posted. • The school has fire extinguishers on all floors which are tagged. • Active permit for food service (if applicable) • Nurse requirements are met through visual check of the health office, disposal of sharps, cot, and refrigeration.	The site evaluation team saw evacuation plans onsite and tagged fire extinguishers throughout the building. Since NCA is an online charter school, an active food service permit and nurse requirements are not applicable.

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.	
Summary of strong recommendations from most recent site evaluation	• Foster student self-regulation. This is crucial for moving learning to deep and transfer levels. Learning accelerates when the student, not the teacher, is taught to be in control of learning. • Employ a diversity of instructional approaches (not just some direct instruction and then some offline independent work). • Add options for students to take part in well-designed peer learning. • Offer multiple forms of feedback to students within a high-trust environment. Integrate the feedback throughout the learning cycle. (Fisher et al.,2020) • Continue to build "communal" social capital and "relational trust" for students in the school setting. This bonding of youth to classroom teachers, peers, and school activities through trusting and sustained relationships provides protective factors to students from academic failure. • Continue to research ways to build or bridge troubled and "at risk" youth to less "at-risk" youth, families and members of the community. This intentional broadening of student perspective, building relationships outside of the school and providing connections to those with necessary resources may foster ownership, autonomy, confidence, and capability for those unengaged, credit-deficient students. • It is recommended that school leaders and staff strengthen the implementation levels in each of these areas and continue to prioritize as you move forward. To this end, continue to track and improve Nevada Connections chronic absenteeism, and retention rates. The What Works Clearinghouse recommendations include a strong data tracking system, adult advocates, additional academic supports, a personalized learning environment and rigorous/ relevant instruction for students. • Guide and support school leaders, teachers, and students to join forces in establishing a clearly defined formative assessment process to generate powerful learning outcomes and change the culture from assessment of learning to assessment for learning. The purpose is to raise standards of achievement, improve teacher quality and control over teaching, and vastly improve students' ability to learn more and become self-aware learners and raise levels of student resilience. It is recommended that the Nevada Connections team 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, and third, foster student goal setting as an integral part of classroom practice.
School assessment of progress made against recommendations and evidence provided, or reasons school believes additional time may be necessary to fully address past recommendations	• NCA implemented short-term & long-term goal setting for students. • NCA provided staff with essential standards identification training. • NCA provided staff with continued grading alignment training through the use of Grading for Equity. A survey was sent to staff for feedback. • NCA is making course modifications. • NCA is providing additional onboarding support. • NCA has added attendance monitors and an additional attendance position. • NCA provides continual professional development (PD) for staff and sends out a staff survey for feedback.
SPCSA staff assessment based upon findings during site evaluation	Strong recommendations from the 2021- 2022 Site Evaluation have been addressed. The board, leadership team, and staff continue to diligently address the academic and social-emotional needs of students using data to inform decisions.

*As part of the site evaluation process for full-time virtual public charter schools, the SPCSA site evaluation team received a copy of NCA's distance education application. The Nevada Department of Education granted contingent approval for the 2022 - 23 school year, with additional information required from the school by May 1, 2023 for future academic years. For details please see: Site Evaluation Handbook Appendix H.

SITE EVALUATION FINDINGS

STRENGTHS

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

- Communication and individualized instruction are strengths at Nevada Connections Academy. Leadership reported, "Communication is vital to ensure student success no matter what type of classroom or age of the student. NCA ensures students are always able to communicate with their instructors through discussions, targeted small group meetings, as well as individual phone calls, teachers are able to provide flexibility as well as rigor to each student's learning experience."

- The site evaluation team observed strong leadership as they developed a clear and shared focus for Nevada Connections Academy. Leadership reported, "Student success is only possible if all staff members have a clear understanding of the indicators for both student and school success. Through ongoing internal training and collaborative meetings, NCA staff understands each indicator on the Nevada State Performance Framework, and how each indicator impacts student as well as school success. By understanding these indicators, the school has created a school mission along with goals in the School Improvement Plan, and these goals will reinforce improving student achievement as well." The NSPF has been a clear focus in Back-to-School Meetings and on the School Improvement Plan. Leadership shared that staff is well aware of what each indicator means and what is needed to improve, and continual discussions are held throughout the year. According to this year's unofficial NSPF star rating, Nevada Connections Academy High School has an index score of 70.

- NCA excels at providing course adjustments to meet the needs of all learning styles. Staff reported they continue to adjust their course to not only align with the Nevada State Standards but with the different learning styles that are present in their classes. Staff explained, "We have an increase of choice on assignments." NCA continues to focus on feedback provided to students to widen their understanding.

- The site evaluation team recognizes NCA's College and Career Readiness Program to be a strength as it continues to improve each year. Leadership reported that all teachers in the CTE department are veteran teachers, which helps with the delivery of instruction. NCA has created a new partnership with the College of Southern Nevada. Advanced Placement courses continue to be offered and supported for students that are interested. NCA's graduation rate has increased from 50% to 86%. Members of leadership stated, "Data shows that we have turned the school around."

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.

- Leadership reported that engagement of credit-deficient students continues to be an ongoing challenge. Leadership explained, "Credit-deficient students tend to be less engaged in their work, lesson completion, and communication with school staff. Students' loss of motivation increases the more credit deficient they are. Students become hard to reach no matter what mode of communication is used. Students struggle to meet the weekly lesson requirements because of the number of overdue lessons they have and would rather click through their lessons to mark them complete than reach out for help for further explanation. Though different strategies are utilized, this has been an ongoing challenge throughout the years."

- Members of leadership communicated challenges with family unresponsiveness. Communication was repeatedly stated to be an essential piece to being successful at NCA. Leadership stated, "Communication efforts are made by phone, webmail (equivalent to email), and text. Because our high school students have 6 or more courses, they are receiving communication from 6 or more teachers. This can be overwhelming and hard to keep up with. We are finding that important webmails aren't being read and students aren't up to date on important course information because of this."

- Chronic absenteeism continues to be a problem at NCA. Leadership shared that they have developed comprehensive ways to address this challenge. Members of leadership reported that all NCA students are assigned to an Attendance Monitoring section as well as appear on a monthly call rotation. Attendance is monitored on a weekly basis. Students and Caretakers are contacted if attendance is not complete for the week. Leadership explained, "The minimum contact requirement is once per month; however, students often speak to staff through other methods via webmail, live lessons, and text."

RECOMMENDATIONS

Recommended items are provided so charters may increase their school-wide ratings as well as their overall success. Authorizing Team members and NCA leadership agreed to meet at the end of the 22-23 school year to follow up on evidence regarding the listed recommendations below.

- Continue to research ways to increase student voice within the school. This should also be reflected in the classroom to provide students with multiple opportunities to participate in student-led activities.

- Continue to research ways to build or bridge troubled and "at-risk" youth to less "at-risk" youth, families, and members of the community. This intentional broadening of the student perspective, building relationships outside of the school, and providing connections to those with necessary resources may foster ownership, autonomy, confidence, and capability for those unengaged, credit-deficient students.

- Continue to track and prioritize improving NCA's chronic absenteeism and retention rates. The What Works Clearinghouse recommendations include a strong data tracking system, adult advocates, additional academic support, a personalized learning environment, and rigorous/ relevant instruction for students.

- Continue to guide and support school leaders, teachers, and students to join forces in establishing a clearly defined formative assessment process to generate powerful learning outcomes.

- During the board focus group, participants indicated that the board had plans to increase membership in an effort to decrease the number of vacancies since the bylaws permit up to nine members. SPCSA staff recommend that the NCA governing board work to fill these vacancies as quickly as possible to ensure that the school continues to meet statutory requirements for governing bodies while also enhancing its ability to provide ongoing oversight. Four vacant seats represent nearly half of the total seats, and any new vacancies in the short term could be highly problematic. SPCSA staff urges the current NCA governing board to fill at least two of these four vacant seats by March 1, 2023. Additionally, the board should prioritize developing a list of interested board members moving forward so as to fill future vacancies in short order. A pool of qualified, vetted candidates can eliminate delays in filling vacancies while upholding the board's core responsibilities.

STRONG RECOMMENDATIONS

There were no strong recommendations identified for NCA during this site evaluation.

DEFICIENCIES

There were no deficiencies identified for NCA during this site evaluation.