Nevada State Public Charter School Authority

Site Evaluation Report: **Sage Collegiate**
Evaluation Date: 12/13/2022
Initial Draft Report Date: 1/13/2023

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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INTRODUCTION AND SCHOOL BACKGROUND

INTRODUCTION

This Site Evaluation Report offers an analysis of evidence collected during the school evaluation that took place on 12/13/2022 at Sage Collegiate (SC). 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. 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. Sage Collegiate is in year one of their charter contract, 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.

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

Sage Collegiate (SC) is located in Las Vegas, Nevada in a facility at 4100 W. Charleston Blvd. The school serves 205 students (as of the most recent Validation Day) in kindergarten through 5th grade. The mission of name of school is: "Driven by excellence for all in a supportive, rigorous, and ambitious school community, Sage Collegiate Public Charter School educates K-8 students for academic achievement, college success, and a life of opportunity."

ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE

Nevada School Performance Framework
2022

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

N/A

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

N/A

SPCSA Academic Performance Framework
Geographic Comparison Report

Elementary School

Not Available

SPCSA Academic Performance Framework
Diversity Comparison Results

Elementary School

Not Available

FOCUS GROUP SUMMARIES

FOCUS GROUP SUMMARY

Group	Number of Participants	Duration of Focus Group
Governing Board	2	30 minutes
Parents/Families	6	30 minutes
Students	11	30 minutes
School Leadership	3	30 minutes
Staff	7	30 minutes

Governing Board[1]:

- Members of the governing board indicated the board would like to expand to nine seats prior to year two of operations. Currently, seven seats comprise the governing board with one vacant seat. "We had an unexpected resignation due to a family emergency. The seat has been a bit of a challenge to fill. We don't want just a warm body. We do review applicants and have phone conversations before making a decision. Our attention has been very focused on getting into the new building. Now that has happened, we can give more intention to vetting board members," one board member explained.

- Board members shared their attention to enrollment and recruitment. One board member said, "Now that we're in our permanent building we feel we will have more success in enrollment. We did have a little bit of a drop when we were in modules and in a temporary place." Board members in the focus group explained they surveyed families who were going to attend SC and then chose to enroll elsewhere. "The main reason seemed to be we were in modulars and not in our permanent facility. We had some families share they were admitted to another school." SC is now offering building tours for interested families and the school continues to enroll students. One board member said, "Third grade has a waitlist. The other grades do not." The focus group participants reported an increase in inquiries since moving to their permanent facility.

- The board shared that they feel financial expertise is a strength. One board member explained, "We would like to be better prepared, and we understand funds are tied to enrollment, we are okay financially, but we would like to do better. For example, we would like to have cash on hand to buy a fence." There is a current effort to pursue grant monies to install a fence for security reasons. "We have had some homeless folks wander onto the property and we need to provide safety for our students and families. Charleston is a busy street, and we want to protect our families." Board members also said the timing of grant reimbursements is challenging. "Timing is tricky and a consideration when we plan. We get the balance sheet ahead of each board meeting. We are paying more and more attention to finances. For example, how faculty salaries impact PERS."

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

FOCUS GROUP SUMMARIES

FOCUS GROUP SUMMARY continued

Parents/Families:

- Families said they participated in several school events prior to the opening of the school year. There was an event at Springs Preserve[2], a park game day, a library event, a Memorial Day parade, and community center game nights offered for the families and the students to become acquainted. One family member said, "Lots of parent turned out. We got to know each other. The kids got to meet each other."

- Parents indicated there has been some bumpiness in transitioning to the permanent facility with records and paperwork. One family member said, "I have submitted the same paperwork several times. I am not sure why and I don't like having to share my personal information." Another parent agreed, sharing, "My child's inoculation records were not updated, and my paperwork was missing even though I submitted them numerous times."

- Families reported email communication between the schools and families is strong. "The school is good at communicating through email. They are good at letting me know about my child's behaviors. We get communication whether it's good or bad. I never had that before. Before I just got a report card." Several parents in the focus group appreciated parent teacher conferences scheduled after four in the afternoon. "I appreciated being able to schedule a conference after my workday." While email communication is robust and appreciated, family members in the focus group relayed face-to-face communication needs work. One parent said, "Sometimes the tone is inappropriate in the way in which communication is conveyed to parents. I should be able to ask questions because I am entrusting my child with the school. I don't care if I have asked the same question four times. It is not helpful to tell me to refer to an email or the handbook." Many parents agreed, with one parent saying. "If I come to the school I can never speak to a person or see someone face-to-face." Another parent said, "I don't know what number to call to tell the school if my child is sick or if I am having someone else pick my child up, or if I need to get a message to my child. Infinite campus is available, but I am not on it." Many parents said they do not know how to log onto Infinite Campus.

- Families shared their children talk about what they are learning at school with their families at home. One parent said their child is very shy at home but comes home and excited to share what he learned that day. "Students say the teacher tells them to 'zip it up, lock it up, throw away the key.'" Another parent said moving from the modulars to the permanent building has increased learning for her children. Another parent said she was impressed with the school's protocols. "My child knows the protocols. She knows how to act if there's a fire."

Students:

- Students said they have been able to choose what they want to do during physical education class. Students said they attend physical education (P.E) Monday through Thursday with enrichment and P.E. varying every other Friday. Students said they have played four-square, hopscotch, and flip the cones during their P.E. time. Students report writing activities are varied depending upon the grade. One student said, "Sometimes we listen to music, and we find the similes and metaphors in the lyrics. Sometimes we write stories with prompts like hyperbole." Another student said they participate in timed writing, "like we write for thirty minutes." Other students said they no longer participate in timed writing activities.

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[2] The Springs Preserve is a 180-acre attraction featuring botanical gardens, museums, galleries, traveling exhibits, hands-on activities, traveling exhibits, and an interpretive trail system.

FOCUS GROUP SUMMARIES

FOCUS GROUP SUMMARY continued

Students said they learned about the behavioral expectations at the beginning of the year from school leadership. Students said they watch videos on the core values of the school. Students reported teachers take away recess time when a student or several students do not follow the rules. Many students said they would prefer the teacher speak directly with the person causing problems rather than the whole class being punished.

- Students in the focus group shared they would appreciate a time when older students can assist younger grade students with any academic challenges they may be having. "If the older kids could tutor or explain things, I would like that," one student said. Another student said they had older siblings at home and when their older brothers and sisters explained things it helped them understand. "I feel comfortable asking older students for help and sometimes I don't think the teacher likes when I ask her for help." Other students said interacting with older students helped them understand the expectations for higher grades as well.

Leadership:
- Leadership reported SC families are actively involved in the life of the school. "There was almost one-hundred percent turnout for parent-teacher conferences. And two-thirds of our families participated in the fall survey." The leadership team said faculty and administrative staff completed "about 60 home visits during the summer" prior to the school's inaugural opening. "We also did community visits at the library for families that might have been concerned about COVID." Leadership also held a car line practice session and "a goodly number of parents participated." The leadership team said family members also volunteered to assemble furniture prior to moving to the permanent facility. The educational director offers a monthly *Cafecito* (Cuban coffee) session with administration. Twelve parents participated in the most recent Cafecito.

- One of the cornerstones of SC's offerings, as mentioned in their charter application, "is that students will engage in standards-aligned and instructional-based field studies. At a minimum, scholars will participate in two to three content-driven field studies each year and an end-of-year field study that provides them with exposure to cultural, historical, and/or regional experiences they would otherwise not have and provide a better understanding of their world." During the leadership focus group, the executive director (ED) shared the school has "not been able to execute any field studies in the fall. It is a planning priority. Fiscally, transportation has been cost prohibitive and as an individual charter, we have been stretched thin, so we haven't been able to plan." The ED said there was a process in June for developing the field studies opportunities, and this still remains a goal moving forward. There was an abrupt departure of the community engagement position, and a search is ongoing to fill that position. "That role came open at the beginning of the year. We want to maintain community partnerships. It is a critical role. Leadership reported the physical move to the permanent building was primary and the school has not had capacity to plan or execute field studies during the fall 2022 semester. The school had been in the permanent building for three weeks on the date of the site evaluation.

- Leadership said they are actively working with the governing board to obtain grant money to install a fence around the school's property. "Safety is a priority at Sage Collegiate. We want to protect our families. Charleston is a busy street." Leadership reported a few homeless persons had wandered onto school property. Having a fence would ensure persons not affiliated with the school or conducting

school business would not have access to the grounds or building. "We need to provide safety for our students and families."

FOCUS GROUP SUMMARIES

FOCUS GROUP SUMMARY continued

Staff:
- Math and writing are curricular priorities at SC. Faculty and staff focus group participants indicated "the math curriculum is not our favorite". Teachers said the "math curricula scaffolding is not happening because the standards are grade-based." One teacher reported, "The math sequence is not as on point as I would like. We scaffold down due to COVID learning loss." Many in the focus group said students are still working on foundational skills due to loss of learning during COVID. Teachers shared students participate in "interactive phonics notebooks, spelling lists, and lots of word work."

- Faculty and staff focus group participants said there are different levels of Response to Intervention (RTI)[3] at SC. Students may participate in a whole class community circle. One teacher described the whole class community circle "as a space where an individual student who is having an issue can speak to the whole class without naming students by name." Some teachers reported implementing small group RTI's in their classes. There is a school-wide RTI structure in place for academics as well as one for social-emotional-learning (SEL). Teachers said they completed professional development (PD) on how to complete documentation for RTI intervention for specific academic needs.

- Faculty and staff focus group participants reported participating in community engagement and SEL PD during the summer. Teachers said they incorporate community circles in their classrooms and discuss what "people may be going through." Students also "complete an SEL journal entry every morning and many teachers have calming corners in their classroom."

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[3] Response to Intervention (RTI) is a proactive approach to identifying struggling students early on and providing them the supports they need to thrive in school.

CLASSROOM ENVIRONMENT AND INSTRUCTION OBSERVATION RUBRIC

A total of 22 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: 2	Total: 11	Total: 6	Total: 2	Total: 1
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: 1	Total: 14	Total: 5	Total: 1	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: 2	Total: 13	Total: 2	Total: 1	Total: 4
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: 13	Total: 3	Total: 2	Total: 4
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: 10	Total: 5	Total: 4	Total: 3
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: 7	Total: 6	Total: 5	Total: 4

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: 1	Total: 11	Total: 8	Total: 1	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: 0	Total: 13	Total: 5	Total: 2	Total: 2

Additional information about the classroom observations shared here when applicable

1. In one early grade classroom, there were 20 students and one teacher. The classroom environment was teacher driven, and the teacher communicated to young students letting them know what they should be doing in a manner that did not foster a warm, welcoming environment. The teacher told the students several times: "If this happens then there will be nothing in the stocking." "We do the same thing every day." "I've said the same thing 5 times." Students did not look happy. Students were compliant.
2. Students were called to the white board to solve mathematical equations in one classroom. The teacher encouraged the student to explain their work and their thinking in solving the equation. The teacher sat in a chair and focused on the student at the board. Students at their desks were somewhat engaged. The students occasionally were asked to participate in dialogue and assist the person at the board. Much of the teacher's commentary was not encouraging.
3. In one early elementary classroom, the teacher moved around the room to monitor student progress with regard to the assignment which required students to describe why they were excited for the holidays. The teacher was very positive and used choral chants to facilitate transitions. Nearly all students participated, and students appeared very aware of classroom expectations. The teacher was observed using positive reinforcements to reiterate expectations when appropriate and as necessary.
4. In one enrichment class students practiced sign language with a partner. The teacher modeled appropriate signs and signed with students. The teacher used academic language as she explained gestures.
5. During an upper elementary science class, students responded to several questions from the teacher appropriately by raising their hands. Students were offered some opportunity to work with or speak to their neighbor/partner in working towards the lesson objective.
6. Students completed math equations using manipulatives with a partner in one elementary class. The teacher circulated the room and spoke with students checking their work.
7. In one resource classroom a student had difficulty self-regulating and adjusting to the school. The student was new to the school and four teachers were assisting the student. The student was emotional, hitting and throwing thing, and yelling. The teachers were patient and tried to soothe them through playing music. The student liked the music and danced.
8. Students completed math equations using manipulatives with a partner in one elementary class. The teacher circulated the room and spoke with students checking their work.
9. Students completed a worksheet on punctuation as a whole class. The teacher asked the students to volunteer to read parts of the worksheet aloud. Many students were disengaged and off-task. The teacher called on students to read and/or provide the correct punctuation. The teacher affirmed if the response was correct. The rest of the class sat passively.
10. In one music classroom there was one teacher and 17 students. The teacher was positive, and students read the words and sang along. Students clapped, stomped, and tapped in various activities. They seemed to enjoy participating in the activity. The teacher was encouraging and has a good relationship with students. Students were engaged.
11. The teacher walked students through a writing prompt using academic language in one mid-level elementary class. Students shared their ideas for a topic sentence and introduction, details, and a conclusion. Students were excited to share their ideas and thoughts with the teacher. There was not an opportunity for students to share with each other their ideas.

12. In one mid-level elementary classroom, the teacher was observed to be negative in their interactions with students. The teacher spoke to the students with such phrases as, "In no part of the directions do you need to talk." "Why are you talking?" "Stop talking." When a student asked for a pencil, she responded, "I don't have any right now." Several negative comments were spoken in a short period of time. When students asked questions, she responded negatively; "No. Is that what I told you to do?" When students did not appear to understand the directions, she added to the directions, but it was unclear what students were to do. Students kept asking questions and the directions were not clear. The students simply did not understand, and the teacher became increasingly frustrated with the students. This process took about 10 minutes and was stressful and confusing. When the teacher explained directions, they frequently relied on repeated phrases such as "I've already said that."

13. In one lower elementary classroom there were 21 students and one teacher. Students were engaged. They greeted each other, talked about classroom expectations with a peer. The students participated in a music and dance time. Then they went over "I can" statements. The students listened to a read aloud and then talked about how characters feel so that they will be successful writing about how characters feel.

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.	As presented during the leadership presentation, SC implements the material terms of the education program. Curricular materials align to Nevada Academic Content Standards (NVACS). Classroom observations indicated students with an IEP or learning English as a new language have supports. Classroom observations confirmed that the educational program conforms with the charter and that curricula aligns to NVACS.
Indicator 3: Governance and Reporting	**Measure 3a:** The school complies with governance requirements Ex: Board policies and oversight of Education Service Provider	SC complies with governance requirements with applicable laws, bylaws, and the charter. The board held a retreat during the summer of 2022. Extensive training, including open meeting law, with new members has been conducted as the school is in year one of operations.
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 a secured office.
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 health office, disposal of sharps, cot, refrigeration	The site evaluation team saw evacuation plans in classrooms, tagged fire extinguishers throughout the building and common areas. The site evaluation team visually checked and located a cot, a refrigerator, and a receptacle for disposing of sharp

		objects in the nurse's area.

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.

Self-Assessment of the implementation of prior recommendations by school staff	This is not applicable to SC for the 2022-2023 site evaluation as SC is in year one of their charter.
Evidence the school can provide to support the implementation of previous recommendations.	This is not applicable to SC for the 2022-2023 site evaluation as SC is in year one of their charter.
Reason's school believes additional time will be needed to fully address the recommended items, if any.	This is not applicable to SC for the 2022-2023 site evaluation as SC is in year one of their charter.

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.

- Student and staff demographics are representative of the community in which the school is located. SPCSA staff recognize diverse demographics across school stakeholders as a strength when identifying, understanding, and responding to needs of a school's population. SC was observed to have an ethnically diverse student population and an ethnically diverse faculty and staff that aligns with the spirit of the SPSCA Academic and Demographic Needs Assessment. Validation day information for the 2022-2023 school year indicates 67% of enrolled students qualify for free and reduced-price lunch, well above the SPCSA average. Additionally, the school serves a representative number of students qualifying for special education services, and students qualifying for English language services and support.

- SC has robust community partnerships that are established. A current partnership with before and after school programs such as the YMCA is strong and appears to be a direct benefit to students and families. Parents have an option to enroll students in before or after school care and the YMCA provides transportation to and from the school to the YMCA building before and after school. The Springs Preserve is less than a mile away. The school lottery was held at the West Charleston Library. The library also provided space for school information sessions for parents and post-enrollment question and answer sessions. The library provides space at no charge. Opportunity Village has sponsored some school events. Raise the Future, a national organization that has historically worked with foster and adoption students to help students develop SES skills and life skills have partnered with SC in a two-year grant. They have a room on campus providing resources to faculty and staff. The conduct events and will host a faculty PD in January 2023. Little Leaders began program with SC in the fall. They conduct tutoring for 20 students each week. All of these create a support network for students and families, are tied to the approved charter application, and assist students and families.

- Several SC governing board members have financial expertise lending strong attention to budgets and financial considerations. Board members said they review finances monthly along with their financial sub-committee. The governing board and the financial sub-committee strive to be responsive to budgetary and financial considerations.

- Families are actively involved in the life of the school. SC offers multiple events and activities for families that contribute to strong family engagement; local library events, game day at the park, community center game nights, and offerings at Springs Preserve are just a few of the activities in which families can participate. Families volunteered to build furniture and move items from temporary facilities to the permanent building in fall 2022. School leadership reports robust participation in parent-teacher conferences, feedback surveys, car-line practice, and monthly *Cafecito*.

- The newly built school facility was planned with forethought. There is space in which the school can grow and expand. The hallways are wide and common areas roomy. SC has already begun work on the annex.

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.

- SPCSA staff appreciate school leadership sharing there is some work to do at SC. The inaugural year of the school has presented opportunities to reflect on where agency and capacity can be built. Leadership expressed building and establishing a culture of learning for student engagement has been challenging. SPCSA staff observed this to be accurate. During the leadership focus group session, the ED expressed challenges in visiting classrooms, and mentoring teachers. Ed said "I would like to shift to academic support for teachers. Facilitating the school's day-to-day routines and procedures during the first year in operation has received the attention.

- Staffing is a challenge at SC. Filling the critical role of the community engagement coordinator is an active on-going search. SC would also like to employ a mental health support staff member in the form of a psychologist or counselor as the school population grows.

- As an independent, single charter school, SC leadership and personnel perform multiple roles as needed across campus. This necessity has created challenges in interfacing with families face-to-face when parents visit the school spontaneously. Families expressed during the family focus group that school communication is good through electronic channels, but difficult and frustrating when parents would like to speak with someone face-to-face.

- Transitioning from the modular buildings to the permanent facility has created a challenge with student records. During the family focus group, parents reported concern over sharing inoculation records, address verification, and other forms of identification multiple times to school personnel since the move to the permanent facility.

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.

- SPCSA staff recommend SC faculty focus on building and monitoring student academic gains by collaborating across grade bands and vertical alignment of instructional student outcomes to build a stronger, intentional foundation for student achievement. Focused professional development opportunities for teachers on current student performance data, will benefit teachers' ability to read and utilize the data when making curricular and instructional decisions to meet student learning needs in a culturally responsive manner for academic growth. Consider offering PD concentrated in creating differentiating learning targets, tiered questioning, student centered discussion techniques, and intentional instructional approaches that engage all students. Strategize ways in which students can practice the use of academic language inside and outside the classroom. SPCSA staff can connect SC leadership with other charter schools within the SPCSA portfolio that have identified strong instructional practices for academic growth as a strength if SC would like assistance.

- SPCSA staff recommend SC establish and cultivate a culture of learning for increased student engagement. Approaches that foster a culture of learning and create overall cohesiveness of

classroom management include Total Physical Response[4] (TPR) strategies (Ferlazzo, 2021, Heflin, 2020), Social-Emotional Learning[5] (SEL) and Response to Intervention[6] (RTI) (Vollmer, Gettinger, Begeny, 2019). SPCSA staff observed many students eager to learn, talk, and share their knowledge and excitement for learning but limited opportunities to do so. Several classrooms observed by the site evaluation team were teacher-centered rather than student-centered. Faculty can implement routines that foster students engagement by:

- o Establishing clear learning targets and criteria for success in each lesson.
- o Improving the use and frequency of academic feedback to students.
- o Fostering student goal setting as an integral part of classroom practice.

Targeted PD focusing on best practices in differentiation for cultural and developmental differences of students or connect to students' individual lived experience will improve student engagement and learning levels.

- Classroom observations highlighted an emphasis on student behavioral compliance rather than a culture conducive to student learning. Many, but not all classrooms were observed by the SPCSA site evaluation team to be punitive and negative rather than supportive and encouraging. SPCSA staff observed this practice in the common areas as well. Students waited in line or sat on the floor and were repeatedly reprimanded for moving or talking while in line. Emphasis on student compliance and quietness rather than creating an environment in which students feel comfortable sharing their learning can create an adverse learning environment (Lynch, 2021; Marroquin, 2018; Nagase, 2020). Students reported in the focus group session having their recess taken away, little to no time to work with partners or peers and receiving whole class scolding if one person misbehaved. Students in the student focus group also indicated feeling uncomfortable asking instructors for assistance or clarification on academic tasks. SPCSA staff recommend that school leadership work with all staff to determine the exact culture the school seeks to establish, and then look for ways to ensure it is consistently upheld throughout the building.

- SPCSA staff recommend SC strategize ways to be available to parents when they come to the school and want to communicate with someone face-to-face. As disclosed in the parent focus group, tone and delivery of information shared from school personnel is a concern from families. Whether the perception is from a few persons or many, leadership should be aware that parents are concerned about how they are communicated with and their frustration in not being able to speak with someone in-person when they visit the school. SPCSA staff recommend school leaders consider PD in communication and/or how staffing can be adjusted for the remainder of the current academic year and in future years to ensure that staff can be available to staff on an as-needed basis. The book *Better Conversations* (Knight, 2015) is one reference that could be used for a school wide book study.

- SPCSA staff recommend SC consider ways to recruit and hire qualified personnel to fulfill staffing needs. SPCSA staff encourage SC create a formalized contingency plan should a critical position go unfilled for several months. A formalized plan will assist in filling future considerations of personnel such as a mental health support staff member, a psychologist, and/or a counselor. As the school grows and continues adding grades, maintaining a list of substitute teachers will also benefit emergent circumstances.

STRONG RECOMMENDATIONS

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[4] Total Physical Response (TPR) is a language teaching method based on the coordination of language and physical movement.
[5] CASEL, the Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning, defines social-emotional learning as "how children and adults learn to understand and manage emotions, set goals, show empathy for others, establish positive relationships, and make responsible decisions" (2021).
[6] Response to Intervention (RTI) is an educational strategy that provides effective and high-quality instruction, monitors students' progress to make sure they are progressing as expected and provides additional support to students who are struggling.

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

DEFICIENCIES

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