Nevada State Public Charter School Authority

Site Evaluation Report:
Freedom Classical Academy
Evaluation Date: 9/19/2023
Report Date: 10/13/2023

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Appendices

A: Nevada School Performance Framework

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

B: SPCSA Academic Framework

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

C: SPCSA Organizational Framework

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

INTRODUCTION AND SCHOOL BACKGROUND

INTRODUCTION

This Site Evaluation Report offers an analysis of evidence collected during the school evaluation that took place on 9/19/2023 at Freedom Classical Academy. 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. Additionally, the SPCSA conducts targeted site evaluations for charter schools with outstanding notices of concern, breach, and strong recommendations/deficiencies as noted within the most recent site evaluation. This targeted 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.

Members of the SPCSA staff will note additional information regarding the classroom observations on one page of this report. This page will be located on the page immediately following the classroom rubric readings. 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

Freedom Classical Academy is in North Las Vegas, Nevada in a facility at 777 E Ann Road. The school serves 1,013 students (as of the most recent Validation Day) in 1st through 8th grade. The mission of Freedom Classical Academy is: "to bring forth future leaders through a fusion of classical education and STEM instruction in an environment that promotes liberty and virtue."[1]

[1] Because the Freedom Classical site evaluation occurred before the enrollment count for 2023 – 2024 was finalized, this information may be dated at the time this report is released.

ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE

Nevada School Performance Framework 2023

Elementary School

Freedom Classical Academy K-8

School Year 2022-2023 Nevada School Rating

School Level: Elementary School
Grade Levels: KG-08
District: State Public Charter School Authority
School Address: 777 E. Ann Rd North Las Vegas, NV 89031

34.0
Total Index Score

School Type: *SPCSA*
School Designation: *Additional TSI*
95% Assessment Participation: *Met*

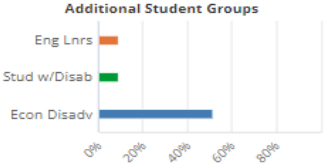
Student Race/Ethnicity

20.5%	White
11.8%	Bl/Afr Am
49.2%	Hisp/Latino
7.2%	Asian
0.5%	Am Ind/AK Nat
1.6%	Pac Isl
8.9%	Two or More

School Performance History

School Year	Index Score/ Star Rating
2021-2022	35.0 NR
2020-2021	41.0 ★★

Additional Student Groups



Middle School

Freedom Classical Academy K-8

School Year 2022-2023 Nevada School Rating

School Level: Middle School
Grade Levels: KG-08
District: State Public Charter School Authority
School Address: 777 E. Ann Rd North Las Vegas, NV 89031

74.5
Total Index Score

School Type: *SPCSA*
School Designation: *No Designation*
95% Assessment Participation: *Met*

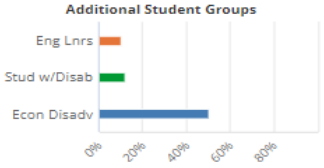
Student Race/Ethnicity

17.5%	White
18.7%	Bl/Afr Am
50.1%	Hisp/Latino
6.3%	Asian
0.0%	Am Ind/AK Nat
2.8%	Pac Isl
4.3%	Two or More

School Performance History

School Year	Index Score/ Star Rating
2021-2022	70.0 NR
2020-2021	72.0 ★★★★

Additional Student Groups



Math and ELA Results
Nevada School Performance Framework
2023

Proficiency Rates

Elementary School

Math Proficient

Groups	2023 %	2023 % District	2023 % MIP	2022 %	2022 % District	2022 % MIP
All Students	40.1	52.0	53.5	38.8	49.2	51.1
American Indian/Alaska Native	-	35.7	40.7	-	28.5	37.6
Asian	53.3	74.5	71.9	60.8	72.8	70.4
Black/African American	14.6	31.4	38.9	19.2	30.3	35.7
Hispanic/Latino	31.8	42.2	45.5	34.4	37.9	42.7
Pacific Islander	-	49.0	53.4	-	47.2	50.9
Two or More Races	50.0	57.8	59.6	33.3	55.6	57.5
White/Caucasian	61.9	63.7	63.3	54.5	60.7	61.3
Special Education	12.1	29.1	35.5	10.1	26.3	32.1
English Learners Current + Former	31.9	38.1	42	33.6	34.9	39
English Learners Current	19.3	27.6		26.1	25.5	
Economically Disadvantaged	33.5	39.0	44.9	36.2	35.6	42

ELA Proficient

Groups	2023 %	2023 % District	2023 % MIP	2022 %	2022 % District	2022 % MIP
All Students	37.6	54.6	61.2	39.0	55.4	59.2
American Indian/Alaska Native	-	48.2	48.1	-	40.8	45.4
Asian	50.0	74.1	77.8	56.5	74.9	76.7
Black/African American	21.9	37.5	48.2	28.8	39.8	45.4
Hispanic/Latino	30.6	45.9	53.2	34.2	45.1	50.8
Pacific Islander	-	49.0	62	-	53.7	60
Two or More Races	30.7	60.7	67.9	23.8	61.5	66.2
White/Caucasian	55.9	64.4	70.6	52.2	65.5	69
Special Education	15.1	27.4	36.8	13.3	25.5	33.5
English Learners Current + Former	25.5	37.6	47.2	35.7	37.4	44.4
English Learners Current	9.6	24.1		23.8	24.4	
Economically Disadvantaged	29.4	42.0	51.9	31.2	42.8	49.4

Middle School

Math Proficient

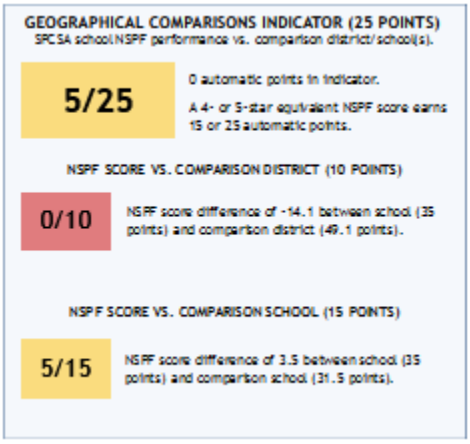
Groups	2023 %	2023 % District	2023 % MIP	2022 %	2022 % District	2022 % MIP
All Students	37.0	38.5	42.7	30.4	36.5	39.7
American Indian/Alaska Native	-	35.0	35.3	-	36.3	31.9
Asian	50.0	62.5	62.6	37.0	62.7	60.6
Black/African American	20.9	19.4	31	16.6	18.2	27.3
Hispanic/Latino	34.9	28.3	36.2	26.2	26.4	32.8
Pacific Islander	-	37.9	43.1	-	28.3	40.1
Two or More Races	16.6	44.5	46.4	28.5	41.8	43.6
White/Caucasian	57.3	51.4	52.3	51.5	48.1	49.8
Special Education	7.8	11.5	26.5	7.6	9.7	22.7
English Learners Current + Former	22.5	21.5	28	23.3	20.1	24.2
English Learners Current	<5	6.5		14.8	7.6	
Economically Disadvantaged	37.8	24.9	36.1	27.5	23.9	32.7

ELA Proficient

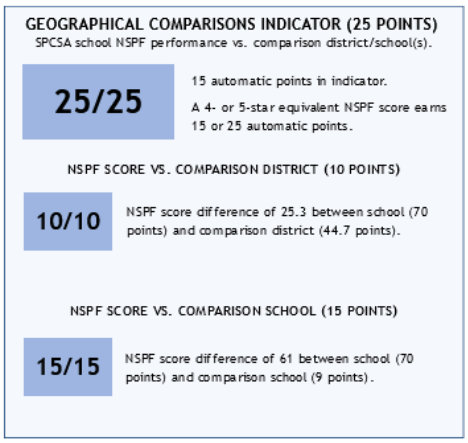
Groups	2023 %	2023 % District	2023 % MIP	2022 %	2022 % District	2022 % MIP
All Students	46.0	53.4	58.6	49.3	57.3	56.4
American Indian/Alaska Native	-	45.6	49	-	53.7	46.3
Asian	63.6	74.7	78.2	55.5	79.0	77.1
Black/African American	40.3	37.4	43.9	40.7	41.1	40.9
Hispanic/Latino	45.1	44.8	50.5	44.8	48.2	47.9
Pacific Islander	-	47.2	57.8	-	53.3	55.5
Two or More Races	50.0	60.0	65	57.1	64.6	63.2
White/Caucasian	49.1	64.0	69.6	62.5	67.2	68
Special Education	13.1	17.4	29.6	7.6	18.0	25.8
English Learners Current + Former	36.6	34.0	31.7	36.3	38.8	28.1
English Learners Current	14.7	12.0		21.2	16.7	
Economically Disadvantaged	44.6	40.8	49.8	47.5	45.9	47.1

SPCSA Academic Performance Framework
Geographic Comparison Report[2]

Elementary School

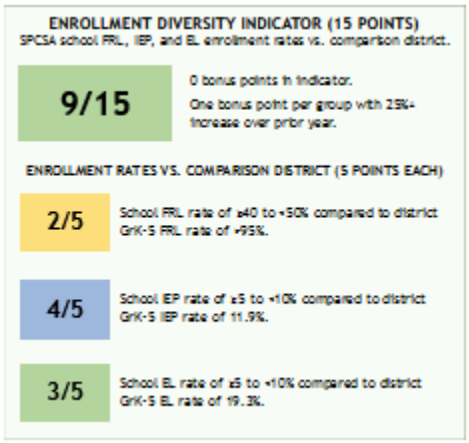


Middle School

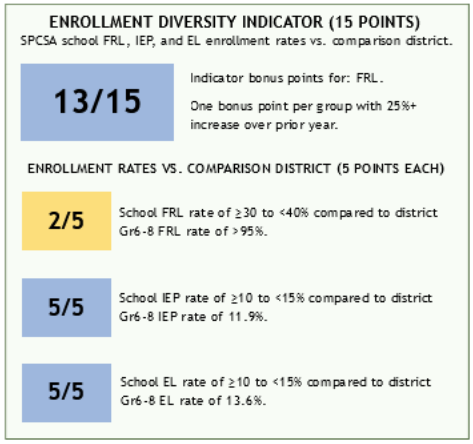


SPCSA Academic Performance Framework
Diversity Comparison Results

Elementary School



Middle School



2 Because the SPCSA board will not review the SPCSA Performance Framework until the November 2023 board meeting, the above information reflects information from the 2021-2022 school year.

FOCUS GROUP SUMMARIES

FOCUS GROUP SUMMARY

Group	Number of Participants	Duration of Focus Group
Governing Board	2	45 minutes
Parents/Families	7	45 minutes
Students	11	45 minutes
School Leadership	3	45 minutes
Staff	11	45 minutes

Governing Board[3]:

- Two members of the Freedom Classical Governing Board participated in the focus group on the day of the site evaluation. Currently, six board positions are occupied while members search for a qualified seventh person to complete the board. Although the board does not conduct special committees, the school leader invites each board member to participate in school level committee meetings to encourage them to be a part of decision making at the school level. In addition, each governing board member is provided with a school newsletter on a routine basis in order to be well-informed regarding school activities.

- Meeting on a monthly basis, board members have individual areas of expertise. These include those with professional backgrounds in law, finance, education, and parents of students enrolled at Freedom Classical Academy. With a well-rounded board, various board members provide training in open meeting law, analysis of the budget as well as input about academic test scores. Board members use a rubric to evaluate the executive director. The executive director completes the same rubric, and the board compares responses. A parent survey is also conducted and included as additional information to inform the evaluation of the executive director. One board member said, "We would like to create a survey from the leadership team to include in this process as well."

- An executive director update is provided at each board meeting and includes information about student academic status such as index and interim test scores. The board recently approved plans to hire instructional coaches and interventionists for the 23-24 school year. The board adopted new curricula for kindergarten through fifth grade math, which was implemented as the new school year began. Other items approved by the board include a new data system called MyEducationData[4], which was implemented during the previous school year. Board members said they are aware of the NSPF star ratings published on September 15, 2023, for both elementary and middle school. The board sees involving the parents as an integral piece to student growth. One board member commented, "I recommended that the school offer a parent university that would connect parents with resources and understanding so parents can assist at home."

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

[4] MyEducationData is a data platform which provides parents, teachers, and staff to access their student' information including such as achievements, grades, and attendance.

Parents/Families:

- Seven family members participated in the focus group and shared information about why they enrolled their children at Freedom Classical Academy. One person said, “We came from a different charter and have discovered that this one is a perfect fit for us. I can’t imagine being anywhere else.” Another person said she had been at the school since it opened and was impressed that the staff knew her children so well. She added, “The male role models are excellent for the boys on campus. Other families said members of the administrative team know their child by name and expressed feeling comfortable talking with teachers and the principal. A parent stated, “The curriculum approach is what brought us here but the people keep us year after year.”

- When parents were asked about knowledge of their child’s academic data, families said they were kept up to date. One person said, “Last year, the school team used, MyEducationData, to share information about my child. I was informed about testing, proficiency scores, as well as tardies, and on-going attendance patterns. My son was able to earn badges for certain completion of assignments.”

- Family members were appreciative of the extra academic help the school offers when a student is falling behind academically or having difficulty with a given concept. One person said, “My daughter had trouble with division and the teacher tried to help. We spoke and I showed my daughter the European way of division. The teacher was surprised that my daughter picked it up so quickly and was successful. I met with the teacher and showed the teacher my method.” Another parent said one of the teachers attended her child’s birthday party so that she could observe her daughter in her home environment to better understand and support her child. A third parent said that two years in a row, teachers worked closely with her daughter to help her overcome shyness. One parent said, “Teachers care enough the see beyond grades.”

- Parents were asked to describe the culture at the school from the perspective of a family member. One parent stated, “There are so many events such as sports, night at the museum, book fair and us parents get to be on the inside at these times. We naturally build relationships with the school leader, staff, and other families. Another family member stated, “ There are other things like the school newspaper, gardening club, in addition to the athletics. Another parent explained, “Last year at one of the parent teacher meetings, the school leaders and staff explained they want to learn about all the different cultures of students and families at the school. I’m impressed that they had the guts to ask the parents what they think about. Several of us feel that this is a great way for our kids to learn about the world around them and the beauty of so many cultures.” One family member added, “When my child was seriously ill, our school leader cried along with me and just that action alone, helped me know how much the school leader and community care about our family and my child.”

Students:

- Eleven students in grades three through eight participated in this focus group. One student said the adults at the school support students by knowing what students need academically. Another student said he felt supported because the adults helped stop bullying and talked to students about how to behave and make good choices. Several students said they feel safe and protected at Freedom Classical Academy. One student said adults are aware of anyone approaching the gates or fence and remove intruders so students stay safe while attending school.

- One student said their family chose to attend Freedom Classical Academy because her parents felt that Freedom Classical would provide a better education than the previous school she was attending. Another student said she has been at Freedom Classical since kindergarten and is now in eighth grade. She said she enjoys her friends here and knows the routine. Several students spoke about the relationships they have with teachers. One student said, "I am very close to my fourth-grade teacher and appreciate the kindness and extra care I receive." Another student said, "I have a strong relationship with a kindergarten teacher even though she was not my teacher, I just enjoy talking with her." One student said her teacher knows her well. She said, "My teacher knows my favorite color and I stop by and visit with her." Another student said she is close to her teacher because her teacher knows when she is not feeling well and knows how to make her feel better.

- Students were asked to talk about learning and academics at Freedom Classical Academy. One student said, "When we are learning we are focused on the learning. The dress code is enforced when we walk into the building." Students also reported having tutoring opportunities after school. "The teacher can communicate with our parents and let them know what area a student may need help in and then we can go to tutoring." One student said, "When you visit our classroom you will see teachers at the front of the classroom explaining what we are doing. In eighth grade we are expected to be more independent." Students in middle school said they feel that they talk quite a bit in the classroom. One student said they are encouraged to explain what they are learning to a partner. "We talk about how we learn differently quite a bit."

- There were mixed responses when students were asked about receiving feedback to their learning. Middle school students said they receive written feedback in the form of notes on their graded assignments. "Teachers circle what we get correct to focus on the positive." Another student said the teachers give homework back with notes on what they should work on for that coming week. An elementary student said, "If I am doing well in a subject, the teacher doesn't really talk about that. I only hear about things if I need to work on something." Another student said the feedback depends on the teacher. One student said she attended tutoring on Saturdays and she benefitted from attending.

- Students spoke about strengths and challenges at the school. Students appreciate the option for hot and cold lunch, sports, and science activities in all grades. One student said she liked the events the school supports such as – trunk-or-treat, the eighth-grade class traveling to Carson City this year, and the middle school dances. A few students mentioned they would like to have library as a special. One student remarked the bullying could be improved. Another student agreed and said she would like to see students not act out in class. A middle school student said she would like to see more representation of different cultures. She said, "This is the first year the school offered anything for Hispanic month and it should have been done earlier." Students said the recess time is lessened and they would like more opportunities to get outside and get oxygen to their brains. Students said they would like to see more shade outside in the play areas.

Leadership:

- Three school leaders participated in the focus group and spoke to the challenges at the school. School leaders said that the largest challenge is staffing. One person stated, "We recruit all year long. Finding qualified teachers is difficult. About 50% of our teachers are new this year. This is also problematic when we spend a lot of resources on staff development and then folks leave."

- In terms of academic performance, school leaders shared that elementary school performance is an area in which the school continues to strive for improvement. One school leader explained the math curriculum has been changed this year to better align with SBAC[5]. The math program has been changed to *Reveal Math* for kindergarten through fifth grade for the 23-24 school year. Leadership and staff are very pleased with MyEducationData. One person commented, "We have data walls throughout the building. "These visuals help faculty, students, and parents to be informed about achievement levels. Each class has class goals that are posted classrooms. The class works toward those goals all year long."

- Leadership said they have been inundated with severe special needs cases as word has gotten out in the community that Freedom Classical Academy provides deep support for students with special needs (SPED). "We are down a few para-pro positions. Our case managers are at their caseload maximum". Leadership reported they have hired a second nurse to manage the severe needs of the students with special needs. "The IEPs[6] have not changed. The needs of the students have become more aggressive." Leadership reported, "IEPs are hosted in Infinite Campus[7] where all applicable instructional staff have access. Teachers, parents, the case manager, the SPED Coordinator, and any related third-party providers all attend IEP meetings. IEPs-at-a-glance are created and distributed to general education teachers each year. IEP flags are added to students' Infinite Campus Module. Parents are provided with a copy of the IEP and monthly progress monitoring reports. There are two self-contained classrooms at Freedom Classical Academy.

- Leadership said, "We heavily emphasized instruction, skills, and test taking strategies. We brought in a national trainer using Title II[8] funds to focus and train staff on student engagement. Robert Jackson came in and led a training with faculty on 'how to engage young, black, male students.'" Members of the leadership team shared they encouraged the use of Socratic seminars, "but that requires committed teachers and some of our teachers are not as committed." Leadership said they need to focus on changing the perception that teaching is the center of instruction. Much of the professional development has been focused on strategies for student engagement, and the concept of teachers speaking less than the students. Leadership said they reinforced "learning, not compliance."

Staff:

- The staff spoke about their experiences working at the school. One teacher said she preferred working at charter schools and said she aligns with the mission and philosophy of Freedom Classical. Another teacher said she moved from another school because Freedom Classical had a position open that she really wanted. Another person on the staff said he was impressed that the only items in the foyer were the Declaration of Independence, the Bill of Rights and the United States Constitution. One member of the teaching staff commented that she came out of retirement to teach at this school.

- The participants in the focus group were a blend of teachers who were experiencing their first year in a charter school environment and those who had been working in a charter school environment for three-plus years. A few teachers said they transitioned to charter schools because they

[5] SBAC: The Smarter Balanced Assessment System utilizes computer-based tests and performance tasks that allow students to show what they know and are able to do.
[6] IEP: Individualized Education Plan. A plan or program developed to ensure that a child with an identified disability receives specialized instruction and related services.
[7] Infinite Campus is a data system which houses student data including grades, attendance, and system wide data.
[8] Title II, Part A is a U.S. Department of Education grant program that provides supplemental funding to help support effective instruction.

appreciate the way teachers and students are respected and believe the school leaders provide strong support for teachers and student success.

- The members of the teaching staff commented on ways they adjust instruction to meet the needs of each student. One teacher commented, "We slow down instruction when we notice students are not grasping information." One teacher said she uses small group work. Math teachers said they use both manipulatives, and strategic partnering. A math teacher added, "During strategic partnerships, one student will explain or teach a concept to another, which students say assists their understanding." With regard to academic interventions, teachers spoke of building strong habits with students. One teacher said, "Regardless of a student's ability, being motivated to develop the habit builds effective learning." Another teacher said he progress monitors and uses data to drive his classroom decisions. One teacher explained there is a daily intervention hour. At the elementary level, teachers have aides and use the hour to break students into small groups and focus on specific skills needed. At the middle school level, there is built-in intervention time as well. A middle school teacher said, "We have two and one-half hours with students and we can break that time up for strategic intervention time."

- The teaching staff was asked about their understanding of a classical education model. One teacher said the direct instruction teaching model is used most often in classical education. "The teacher provides the information and then students are encouraged to formulate their own opinions and vocalize their thinking." Several teachers said their goal is to build students' love for learning. One teacher said, "I teach students to think deeply about why they are in school. I want them to think about the why, what is their purpose?" Another teacher said he appreciates the teacher's role in the classroom, "We focus on critical thinking skills; how to solve problems and utilize knowledge on solving problems." Another teacher said, "you need a knowledgeable teacher, a motivated student, and something to write on and write with. That's all you need to teach." One teacher said there is a moral component to classical education "which shows the students there is a whole approach to what they are learning and how that moral component frames who they are as a person and the decisions they make."

- One teacher said student data assists her in creating groups to build intervention strategies and to backward design her lessons. "The data tells me who is functioning at a particular level. I create the lessons around where those missing skills are. We use Moby Max[9] that helps us if students had a poor testing day, or just clicked through the answers." One teacher said, "the accuracy of Moby Max allows teachers to supplement student learning and the basic skills that students may be missing."

- Staff was asked about professional learning opportunities and instructional coaching at the school. One teacher said there are videos provided and she accessed them to complete her accelerated teaching program. This assisted her in obtaining her teaching credential. One teacher said "the professional development here is highly engaging and the teachers pay attention during this time. Staff reported they have an instructional coach for kindergarten through third grade and another for math and grades fourth through eighth. Although it is early in the school year, instructional coaches have observed classrooms and have given feedback.

[9] Moby Max is an integrated K-8 curriculum and teaching system with progress monitoring, goal setting, and fluency practice.

CLASSROOM ENVIRONMENT AND INSTRUCTION OBSERVATION RUBRIC

A total of 26 classrooms were observed for approximately 15 minutes on the day of the evaluation. Several of the observations were of elementary level classrooms. The majority of lessons observed were in the content areas of ELA, Math, and Science.

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.	
	Total: 1	**Total:** 18	**Total:** 7	**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: 2	**Total:** 20	**Total:** 4	**Total:** 0	**Total:** 0

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: 4	**Total:** 17	**Total:** 5	**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: 2	**Total:** 17	**Total:** 7	**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: 10	**Total:** 14	**Total:** 1	**Total:** 1	**Total:** 0
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: 10	**Total:** 14	**Total:** 1	**Total:** 1	**Total:** 0

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: 4	**Total:** 8	**Total:** 14	**Total:** 0	**Total:** 0
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: 5	**Total:** 8	**Total:** 9	**Total:** 0	**Total:** 4

Additional information about the classroom observations shared here, when applicable.

1. In one elementary classroom, students followed along while the teacher read a story aloud. The teacher asked students factual and recall questions each time a passage was read. Occasionally, the teacher asked higher-level questions regarding contextual clues and vocabulary meaning. The teacher also related vocabulary meaning to student behaviors. The teacher confirmed students' responses, or explained concepts, rather than allowing students the opportunity to share their understanding or engaging in higher level reasoning.

2. In this upper elementary classroom about 8 minutes of instructional time was spent waiting for students to put away laptops. As students stood in line to put the laptops away, other students and the teacher waited for this to be completed. This appears to be a loss of instructional time.

3. In the early middle school math class, the student read and the teacher talked. Most students were not engaged.

4. In the middle elementary classroom students talked about their writing. Students were with a partner and revising/editing each other's writing . Students were highly engaged as they were reading, speaking, writing, and listening. One student said, "You didn't capitalize this."

5. In the upper elementary classroom, students read aloud a portion of the content. In many cases, it was hard to understand or hear the student reading out loud to the class. Some students read the content themselves, while others stared off into space. It is unclear how those not following along will be able to absorb or understand the important instructional content.

6. In the elementary classroom, this particular teacher engages the students in the concept. She asks questions such as, "Who can think of two types of matter that separate?" She allowed the students to talk and to share ideas. She provided specific feedback and restated what the student said. Several students are involved with high levels of classroom engagement.

7. In one of the resource rooms, there were two teachers, each with a small group. The para pros were sitting at their desks talking with one another. This appeared to be distracting the students and seemed to interfere with classroom learning.

8. There was a teacher and 27 students in this classroom, and the teacher spent a great deal of instructional time talking about how loud the students were. The teacher appeared to be frustrated with the students at this time. As students don't understand what she is saying, the teacher began raising her voice and slowing her speech in a manner which seemed highly disrespectful to students. This teacher is very unhappy in this scenario.

9. The teacher stayed at the front of the room as homework was reviewed and called on students to answer each question. Students raised their hands and were called upon by the teacher. When selecting students, the teacher said, "Who am I going to pick on?". A third of the students raised their hands. The teacher called on the same side of the room each time. The teacher confirmed or negated student responses. Students who did not complete the homework filled in the answers as the teacher gave the correct answers. An opportunity was missed for the students to call upon each other or confirm each other's responses. The teacher wrote the answers on the board. Students could have easily volunteered and written their answers on the board, with their peers having input as to whether the information was correct or not. The teacher asked if students had any questions, but there was no wait time provided for students to respond.

10. In one elementary math class, students were tasked with writing an equation from a visual. Students were repeatedly told to be quiet and work independently. Students then turned in their paper. There was no discussion as to how students arrived at their answers, sharing of their decision making, or sharing of answers.

11. A small group intervention for 2nd grade taking place in the hallway with 5 students. Teacher asked students to say the word and feel where it is in the mouth. This is a high-level intervention with quality methods.

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.	Evidence gathered during the student, staff, leadership, and family focus group indicates Freedom Classical is implementing the material terms of their educational program as stated in the charter. Curricular materials within the k-5 math and k-5 English Language Arts have changed to Reveal Math and Core Knowledge which may more closely align with SBAC (Smarter Balanced Assessment Consortium), the state test. According to stake holders at the school, the new curriculum still remains in alignment with the fusion of classical education and STEAM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Art, and Math) the school has stated within the curricular information.
	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.	Students with an IEP are protected. The evaluation team was informed that Individual Education Plans (IEPs) are housed in Infinite Campus where all applicable instructional staff have access. In addition, the school reported that teachers, parents, the case manager, SPED Coordinator, and any related third-party providers all attend IEP meetings. In addition, IEPs-at-a-glance are created and distributed to general education teachers yearly and parents are provided with a copy of IEP and monthly progress monitoring reports. Students learning the English language are protected. The evaluation observed students participating in small group instruction with the EL Coordinator. The evaluation team was informed that the coordinator monitors student progress. The school leader reported that EL students participate in ongoing assessments which measure growth.
Indicator 3: Governance and Reporting	**Measure 3a:** The school complies with governance requirements Ex: Board policies and oversight of Education Service Provider	The school has adopted policies for Code of Ethics, Conflicts of Interest, and Open Meeting Law (OML) observation. The school has maintained 5 board members meeting the composition criteria established in the Charter Board members have received training.The Board meets several times a year, at least once every other month.
Indicator 4:	**Measure 4a:** Student records under lock and	The site evaluation team observed student and staff

Students and Employees	key/stored appropriately **Measure 4d:** Personnel files are under lock and key/stored appropriately	records are maintained under lock and key and stored appropriately.
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	All classrooms were observed to have evaluation plans posted. A set of updated and tagged fire extinguishers exist throughout the school. The nurse station has a cot, sharps container, and a refrigerator for storing medication as needed.

Measures of Progress from Previous Site Evaluations The extent to which the school has been successful in maintaining areas of strength, removing challenges, and acting upon the recommended items made by the SPCSA during the school's previous evaluation.	
Prior recommendations by SPCSA staff	The following Strong Recommendations were issued to Freedom Classical Academy in September 2022: • Within the area of student voices, there is time and room for improvement. In many cases, students spoke only when called upon and in response to a factual teacher questions which resulted in one- or two-word responses rather than a demonstration of higher-level thinking. • Shift from teaching according to the scripted teacher manual and improve overall student achievement by using interventions currently outside of the curriculum to re-teach, provide individual practice, conduct small group learning, and track for effectiveness. • There was evidence that shared learning targets such as objectives have been created and were included in lesson plans and observed during classroom observations. Continue and increase this best practice. • Within the area of feedback to students, student goal setting, strategic teacher questioning and increased numbers of students having self-efficacy it is believed that more time may be needed to fully implement these. Strong Recommendation number four remains in effect.
School Assessment of progress made against recommendations and evidence provided, or reasons school believes additional time may be necessary to fully address past recommendations	The school leader shared the following information regarding progress made against previous recommendations: • Student engagement and relevancy - Efforts to increase student engagement and relevancy continue. Training and coaching has been and continues to be provided. • Standards-based instructional program – Freedom Classical Academy switched math curriculum to better align with math standards and SBAC expectations. A new intervention program was adopted while standards-based resources and MyEducationData continue to be used. • Student feedback, goal setting, and questioning – Increased use of MyEducationData to have data discussions and goal setting. Training on Socratic discussion and questioning techniques provided.
SPCSA staff assessment based upon findings during site evaluation to the shift from teaching according to the scripted teacher manual and improved overall student achievement by January 15, 2023	**Please note:** **The previous recommendations are listed above the staff assessment for ease of comparison.** • **Previous Recommendation issued 9-2022**: Within the area of student voices, there is time and room for improvement. In many cases, students spoke only when called upon and in response to a factual teacher question which resulted in one- or two-word responses rather than a demonstration of higher-level thinking. It is recommended that the school

	team place an emphasis on this area. • **SPCSA Staff assessment of progress on 9-2023:** In some classrooms, there was evidence of increased student voices and opportunities for students to participate in learning more actively. Overall, there remain several instances of students speaking only when called upon and in response to a factual teacher question which resulted in one- or two-word responses, especially at the elementary school level. As a whole, there were few instances of students using higher level thinking within classrooms observed at the elementary school level. Within the middle school level, there appeared to be higher levels of students' speaking and using higher level thinking. It is important to note that school leaders shared that about 50% of the teaching staff is new this school year. • **Previous Recommendation issued 9-2022:** Shift from teaching according to the scripted teacher manual and improve overall student achievement by using interventions currently outside of the curriculum to re-teach, provide individual practice, conduct small group learning, and track for effectiveness. • **SPCSA Staff assessment of progress on 9-2023:** There were many instances of teachers referring to their written lesson plans as opposed to the teacher manual which accompanies the curriculum. It is important to note that both the ELA and Math curriculum is new to the teaching staff this school year at the elementary level. There were many examples of teachers, parents, and school leaders commenting on the use of MyEducationData to create small group learning and increase tutoring effectiveness. The SPCSA staff evaluators observed a few instances of small group instruction taking place, as well as data information displayed on the staff lounge and school hallways with clear indicators of goals. The intervention software Moby Max was piloted during the 21-22 school year and has been implemented during the 22-23 school year as a software intervention program. • **Previous Recommendation issued 9-2022:** There was evidence that shared learning targets such as objectives have been created and were included in lesson plans and observed during classroom observations. Within the area of feedback to students, student goal setting, strategic teacher questioning and increased numbers of students having self-efficacy it is believed that more time may be needed to fully implement these. • **SPCSA Staff assessment of progress on 9-2023:** Within the middle school classrooms, it appears that students receive increased levels of feedback in regard to their individual learning and achieving learning targets/objectives. In some

	cases, this was present in elementary classrooms as well. Overall, within the elementary level classrooms, more attention to providing students specific individual feedback is needed. When students within the student focus group were asked about feedback, students in middle school said the middle school teachers circle what students get wrong. It may be that at the middle school level, there is a belief that students can accomplish highly difficult learning outcomes. At the elementary level it is less obvious that the majority of teaching staff hold high expectations for students. In some cases, there was clear pessimism and, in a few classrooms, teacher frustration with students. It is important to note that in some elementary level classrooms teachers appeared to be highly competent, motivated, and used best practices such as modeling for students, having students feel words in their mouth, talking with other students about learning and creating high level questions in advance. These elementary level teachers are not, at this time, within the majority of classrooms at Freedom Classical Academy.

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.

- Freedom Classical Academy is increasing the diversity of the student population and becoming more representative of the community the school primarily serves. Of note, the school now qualifies as a Title I school with about 40% of the school's students in elementary and middle school qualifying for free or reduced-price lunch. The number of students with an IEP is steadily growing and the school has two self-contained classrooms. The SPCSA strives to increase the diversity of students served by sponsored schools and is committed to serving a population that is representative of the state regarding race/ethnicity as noted in the current strategic plan.

- The September 2023 data published by the Nevada Report Card indicates the Freedom Classical middle school has a four-star status. The index score has increased over the previous school year by 4 points from a total of 70 index points during the 21-22 School Year to 74 index points during the 22-23 school year. The academic status at the Freedom Classical middle school is a strength.

- The school has taken measures to improve the curriculum in both math and English Language Arts (ELA) to better align with the SBAC summative test. In addition, the school is increasingly using data, such as SBAC results, MAP testing, and classroom assessments to closely monitor student academic outcomes. This is the second year the school has been using the data platform, MyEducationData, to view student progress, create small group instruction, and provide small group tutoring groups. The SPCSA team observed several data charts within the teacher's lounge and hallways of the school. These charts display information about where a group of students (no individual names are displayed) tested academically in ELA and math and provide goals for improvement.

- The school board and leadership team are highly engaged in improving student outcomes, especially at the elementary level. The school has hired two new instructional coaches and an English Language Coordinator to provide support for the students and staff. The coaches video classroom instruction and share opportunities for adding engagement and best teaching practices with faculty. The board approved travel and funds for members of the staff to attend national conferences centered on student engagement. The leadership team has arranged for targeted professional development sessions to increase the number of strategies for higher levels of student engagement and class participation.

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.

- Freedom Classical elementary school has been rated a 2-star school per the Nevada Report Card information, published in September 2023. With an index score of 34 out of a possible 100. The academic status of the elementary school is a challenge.

- According to school leaders, the campus experienced high levels of staff turnover during the conclusion of the 2022-2023 school year and the opening of the 2023-2024 school year. School leaders indicated there was close to a 50% turnover rate. The current challenge is in recruiting and sustaining employment of qualified staff.

- The SPCSA staff observed several missed opportunities for using instructional classroom time wisely. For example, in some elementary classes, students waited to place their laptops back into the cart for eight minutes. In other cases, students waited for the teacher to check their work or to begin the next instructional task.

- School leaders spoke to the frustration and challenge of preparing and conducting professional development sessions and have the newly trained staff leave at the end of the school year. The school leaders continue to provide professional development and seek ways, such as instructional coaches to implement best practices more fully from training into classroom actions this school year.

- The SPCSA staff observed that levels of student engagement and opportunities for students to more actively speak or use higher level thinking to be at lower levels overall. There were a few middle school classrooms in which students were asked to explain the objective to each other.

STRONG RECOMMENDATIONS

The remaining strong recommendations identified during this site evaluation are listed here. The following two previous strong recommendations will remain in effect. The site evaluation team will conduct a check for progress and completion in three months' time in December 2023.

1. There were instances of improved student engagement and noted in the middle school. However, the previous Strong Recommendation number one will remain in effect until additional evidence can be documented by school leaders. Evidence should be based on interim student data outcomes and demonstrate an increase in student engagement, including increased time for student voice. This is suggested to take place from the beginning of this school year to mid-year-December 2023. The SPCSA evaluation staff understand this is the responsibility of the Freedom Classical leadership team and board to implement. The evaluators would like to offer the following easily implemented strategies the school leaders and teaching staff may wish to consider:

   - ✓ The turn-and-talk routine increases students' opportunities to respond. In traditional classrooms, the teacher asks a question and one student answers. When teachers use the turn-and-talk routine instead, all students have an opportunity to answer questions or discuss key content. Research shows that having multiple opportunities to respond and actively engage in content learning improves student learning (MacSuga-Gage & Simonsen, 2015). Teachers report that when they use the turn-and-talk routine, their students are more engaged. Structured partner work can also increase on-task behavior for students who struggle to sustain attention and focus in the classroom (*e.g.,* Locke & Fuchs, 1995).

   - ✓ Consider creating a common vision of what critical thinking looks and sounds like at Freedom Classical. Once a shared understanding has been developed among staff, teachers should design learning experiences that call for students to employ critical-thinking skills. Consider new methods of including strategies for helping students to become critical thinkers.

   - ✓ Consider employing the following essential skills for critical thinking: communication and information skills, thinking and problem-solving skills, interpersonal and self- directional skills, and collaboration skills.

   - ✓ Encourage students to explain the objective to each other. If students volunteer, allow other students to agree or disagree with the explanation and explain why.

   - ✓ Employ the use of learning journals to bolster students' ability to think about their learning. Include time for students to generate questions about a topic and provide time to discuss new learning and thoughts.

   - ✓ Consider the use of microphones, especially during times when students are asked to read out loud, or to help students hear one another in the classroom.

2. Within the area of feedback to students, student goal setting, strategic teacher questioning and increased numbers of students having self-efficacy it is believed that more time may be needed to fully implement these. This Strong Recommendation remains in effect.

   Deliverable: Provide an update with regard to progress of increased feedback to students, student goal setting, and strategic teacher questioning by December 2023.

DEFICIENCIES

There are no deficiencies identified for Freedom Classical during this site evaluation.

References

Macsuga-Gage, A.,& Simonsen, B., (2015) Examining the Effects of Teacher-Directed Opportunities to Respond on Student Outcomes: A Systematic Review of the Literature *Education and Treatment of Children* 38 (2) 211-239

Locke, W., & Fuchs, L.,(1995) Effects of Peer-Mediated Reading Instruction on the On-Task Behavior and Social Interaction of Children with Behavior Disorders: *Journal of Emotional and Behavior Disorders 3 (2) 292-302*