



Nevada State Public Charter School Authority

Site Evaluation Report: Discovery Charter School Las Vegas-Sandhill Evaluation Date: 2/15/2024

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

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Appendices

A: Nevada School Performance Framework

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

B: SPCSA Academic Framework

http://charterschools.nv.gov/uploadedFiles/CharterSchoolsnvgov/content/News/2019/19062_8-Academic-Performance-Framework-Guidance-Document.pdf

C: SPCSA Organizational Framework

http://charterschools.nv.gov/uploadedFiles/CharterSchoolsnvgov/content/News/2019/19062_8-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 2/15/2024 at Discovery Charter School of Las Vegas (DCSLV) Sandhill Campus. The State Public Charter School Authority (SPCSA) conducts a comprehensive review of evidence related to all charters within the portfolio during the first, third, and fifth year of operation. This comprehensive analysis addresses the academic success of the school and the effectiveness and viability of the school organization.

An analysis of the school's academic and operational success is undertaken by reviewing the most current versions of the Nevada State Performance Framework (Appendix A) and the State Public Charter School Authority Academic Framework (Appendix B) as well as the Organizational Framework (Appendix C).

In addition, the Site Evaluation Team conducts classroom observations within the areas of classroom environment and instruction. The purpose of these observations is to collect evidence using a rubric which has been normed by our team. All classroom rating outcomes will be displayed within this report so that school leaders have an overall idea of what is happening in general, at any time, in any classroom. The overall numbers will provide information about the school outcomes on this one day.

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 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

DCSLV Sandhill is located in Las Vegas, Nevada in a facility at 4801 S. Sandhill Rd. The school serves 93 students (as of the most recent Validation Day) in kindergarten through fifth grade. The mission of Discovery Sandhill is: "To promote a safe, nurturing environment which fosters student success through community involvement, progressive educational practices, and innovative use of technology."

ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE

Nevada School Performance Framework 2023

Elementary School

Discovery Charter School
Sandhill

School Year 2022-2023 Nevada School
Rating

School Level: Elementary School
Grade: KG-05
Levels:
District: State Public Charter School Authority
School: 3975 S Sandhill Rd
Address: Las Vegas, NV 89121



40.0
Total Index Score

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



Student

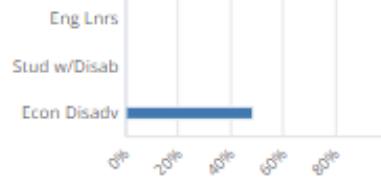
Race/Ethnicity

- 21.3% White
- 17.9% BI/Afr Am
- 48.3% Hisp/Latino
- 2.2% Asian
- 0.0% Am Ind/AK Nat
- 1.1% Pac Isl
- 8.9% Two or More

School Performance History

School Year	Index Score/ Star Rating
2021-2022	37.0 NR
2020-2021	27.7 ★★

Additional Student Groups



Math and ELA Results Nevada School Performance Framework 2023

Elementary School Proficiency Rates

Math Proficient

Groups	2023 %	2023 % District	2023 % MIP	2022 %	2022 % District	2022 % MIP
All Students	24.2	52.0	53.5	18.7	49.2	51.1
American Indian/Alaska Native	-	35.7	40.7	-	28.5	37.6
Asian	-	74.5	71.9	-	72.8	70.4
Black/African American	-	31.4	38.9	-	30.3	35.7
Hispanic/Latino	17.6	42.2	45.5	23.0	37.9	42.7
Pacific Islander	-	49.0	53.4	-	47.2	50.9
Two or More Races	-	57.8	59.6	-	55.6	57.5
White/Caucasian	-	63.7	63.3	-	60.7	61.3
Special Education	-	29.1	35.5	-	26.3	32.1
English Learners Current + Former	-	38.1	42	-	34.9	39
English Learners Current	-	27.6		-	25.5	
Economically Disadvantaged	35.2	39.0	44.9	-	35.6	42

SPCSA Academic Performance Framework Geographic Comparison Report

Elementary School

GEOGRAPHICAL COMPARISONS INDICATOR (25 POINTS)
SPCSA school NSPF performance vs. comparison district/school(s).

12/25

0 automatic points in indicator.

A 4- or 5-star equivalent NSPF score earns 15 or 25 automatic points.

NSPF SCORE VS. COMPARISON DISTRICT (10 POINTS)

2/10

NSPF score difference of 1.1 between school (40 points) and comparison district (38.9 points).

NSPF SCORE VS. COMPARISON SCHOOL (15 POINTS)

10/15

NSPF score difference of 15.5 between school (40 points) and comparison school (24.5 points).

SPCSA Academic Performance Framework Diversity Comparison Results

Elementary School

ENROLLMENT DIVERSITY INDICATOR (15 POINTS)
SPCSA school FRL, IEP, and EL enrollment rates vs. comparison district.

11/15

Indicator bonus points for: FRL IEP.

One bonus point per group with 25%+ increase over prior year.

ENROLLMENT RATES VS. COMPARISON DISTRICT (5 POINTS EACH)

3/5

School FRL rate of ≥ 40 to $< 50\%$ compared to district GrK-5 FRL rate of $> 95.0\%$.

3/5

School IEP rate of ≥ 10 to $< 15\%$ compared to district GrK-5 IEP rate of 13.1%.

3/5

School EL rate of ≥ 5 to $< 10\%$ compared to district GrK-5 EL rate of 18.5%.

FOCUS GROUP SUMMARIES

FOCUS GROUP SUMMARY

Group	Number of Participants	Duration of Focus Group
Governing Board	2	45 minutes
Parents/Families	4	45 minutes
Students	5	45 minutes
School Leadership	2	45 minutes
Staff	5	45 minutes

Governing Board¹:

- According to the board, there are currently seven board members, and there have been no recent changes in membership. Board members reported that the board convenes once a month for regular meetings. Board members mentioned that the principal provides updates to the board and checks on various matters. Board members highlighted the diverse expertise brought by each member, including educators, parent representatives from both campuses, and individuals with backgrounds in business, finance, and law. The board discussed various strategies for future recruitment and enrollment, including engaging with the community through events, social media outreach, and targeted marketing efforts such as adding autism offerings.
- Board members shared that they have received training on board procedures, quorum rules, and new member orientation facilitated by the SPCSA. Board members mentioned reviewing financial reports provided by a designated financial representative of DALV and examining different accounts and expenditure patterns to ensure fiscal responsibility.
- From the board's perspective, key strengths of the school include effective leadership under the principal, a positive learning environment fostered by dedicated staff members, and proactive measures taken to motivate students, such as incentives and new assistant principal initiatives. Board members emphasized the importance of continuous improvement towards achieving a 5-Star Nevada School Performance Framework (NSPF) Star Ratings, ongoing engagement with families to promote student attendance and the positive impact of increased parent engagement through events and initiatives.

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

FOCUS GROUP SUMMARIES

Parents/Families:

- Parents expressed satisfaction with the school's ability to provide high-quality instruction, citing effective communication from teachers regarding their child's progress and academic performance. Communication platforms like Class Dojo² and Infinite Campus³ are utilized to keep parents informed daily, fostering a strong partnership between home and school. Parents praised the teachers' efforts in providing materials and support for students to catch up on missed academic content. They noted that teachers communicate effectively about missed work, enabling students to stay on track academically upon their return to school.
- Parents affirmed the quality of teachers at DALV, highlighting improvements in their children's reading abilities and overall academic growth. They noted their children's excitement for learning and engagement in the classroom, attributing it to the personalized attention and supportive environment fostered by the teachers.
- Families are informed about school-wide expectations through a provided handbook, which outlines discipline procedures with specificity. The school encourages family involvement by inviting parents to visit classes and participate in events like the Valentine's dance. In addition, the school provides resources for reinforcing academic skills at home.

Students:

- Students expressed positive sentiments about the transition to the new building, highlighting benefits such as larger classroom spaces, increased teacher support for interventions, and expanded outdoor areas for activities like PE and recess. They appreciated the availability of individual laptops, a larger nursing area, and enhanced facilities like the large front office space.
- Students described a variety of learning topics, including multiplication and division of fractions, area and perimeter, creative narrative writing, and science projects such as chain reactions and pumpkin degeneration experiments. They also mentioned incentives like field trips, pizza parties, and treats for achieving learning goals.
- Students shared they engage in various speaking and presenting activities in class, such as developing riddles for Black History Month characters, reporting to the whole class on what they've learned, explaining problem-solving methods in math, and participating in class voting. They also have goals for completing i-Ready⁴ lessons and enjoy celebrating achievements with treats and outdoor play.

² ClassDojo is an educational technology company that develops communication apps for teachers, students, and parents. It's primarily used in schools to facilitate communication, track student behavior, and share updates on student progress. It allows teachers to give feedback to students and share photos, videos, and announcements with parents. This platform aims to create a positive classroom culture and strengthen the connection between teachers, students, and parents.

³ Infinite Campus is a student information system used by schools and school districts to manage student data such as attendance, grades, schedules, and more. It provides a centralized platform for educators, administrators, students, and parents to access and update essential information related to the academic journey. Infinite Campus streamlines administrative tasks and facilitates communication within the educational community.

⁴ i-Ready is an online instructional tool and curriculum designed to assess student's academic abilities in reading and mathematics, providing personalized learning paths tailored to each student's needs. Through adaptive assessments and engaging activities, i-Ready aims to support educators in identifying student strengths and areas for growth, facilitating targeted instruction, and promoting academic growth.

FOCUS GROUP SUMMARIES

FOCUS GROUP SUMMARY continued

- Students indicated that they can easily catch up on missed academic work from home, using laptops to complete assignments and i-Ready lessons. They also mentioned classroom reading strategies and support from teachers if they need clarification on missed concepts.

Leadership:

- Leadership expressed positivity about the transition to the new building, despite initial challenges with the physical move during hot weather. Leadership reported that morale among staff has improved and plans to purchase the building in two years are underway. Enrollment is currently 94 students, with plans for targeted marketing and community engagement events to boost enrollment numbers.
- Leadership reported ongoing efforts to address chronic absenteeism through initiatives like a truancy diversion program and regular communication with families. The addition of support dogs and efforts to address absenteeism indicate a holistic approach to student well-being.
- Leadership highlighted various academic support initiatives, including monthly data talks, small group interventions, and literacy pullouts led by a data specialist. Additionally, the leadership team explained that Discovery Sandhill offers a range of extracurricular activities, such as a financial literacy program, Scouts programs, and music and art lessons. Leadership explained that the emphasis on holistic education and student involvement in problem-solving underscores the school's commitment to student success and engagement.

Staff:

- Staff members expressed various reasons for their motivation to work at Discovery Sandhill, including positive comparisons to other educational environments, feelings of autonomy and respect, and opportunities for professional growth. They highlighted leadership's receptiveness to their input and the supportive culture at the school.
- Teachers said they employ diverse strategies to foster academic talk in the classroom, such as providing incentives for using academic vocabulary, giving students time to engage in discussions, and modeling academic language frequently. Staff emphasized the importance of student discourse to reinforce learning.
- Staff members have participated in professional development sessions on student achievement data, including training on using tools like i-Ready and ST Math⁵. They integrate insights from these sessions into their curriculum decisions and classroom instruction, aligning their practices with data-driven approaches to improve student outcomes.

⁵ ST Math is a visual instructional program designed to help students understand and master math concepts through interactive and visual learning. Developed by the MIND Research Institute, ST Math provides engaging puzzles and challenges that promote problem-solving skills and conceptual understanding without relying on language proficiency. It's widely used in schools to supplement math instruction and improve students' mathematical reasoning abilities.

FOCUS GROUP SUMMARIES

FOCUS GROUP SUMMARY continued

- Teachers reported they utilize a variety of activities to promote inclusivity in the classroom, such as partner discussions, trading partners, and group discussions. They strategically group students based on ability levels and employ techniques like table talks to ensure all learners feel included and supported.
- Staff members leverage resources to cultivate a culture of respect and trust within the school community. Staff emphasized collaboration and mutual support among faculty members, organizing events like potlucks to promote cultural understanding and teamwork. Staff highlighted the importance of interpersonal relationships as a key resource in fostering respect and trust among students and staff alike.

CLASSROOM ENVIRONMENT AND INSTRUCTION OBSERVATION RUBRIC

A total of 11 classrooms were observed for approximately 15 minutes on the day of the evaluation.

Classroom Environment					
	Distinguished	Proficient	Basic	Unsatisfactory	Not Observed
Classroom Learning Environment is Conducive to Learning	Students create and maintain a learning environment where students feel free to share their ideas and take risks in learning. Students take ownership in explaining, modeling, and reinforcing classroom routines. Learning experiences guide students to identify their strengths, interests, and needs; problem-solve; ask for support when appropriate; maximizing learning time.	The teacher creates and maintains a learning environment where students feel free to share their ideas and take risks in learning. Teachers explain, model, and reinforce classroom routines. Learning experiences guide students to identify their strengths, interests, and needs; problem-solve; ask for support when appropriate; maximizing learning time.	The teacher attempts to create and maintain a learning environment where students feel free to share their ideas and take risks in learning. Teachers attempt to explain, model, and reinforce classroom routines. Learning experiences make an effort to guide students to identify their strengths, interests, and needs; problem-solve; ask for support when appropriate. Learning time is sometimes maximized.	The teacher does not create and maintain a learning environment where students feel free to share their ideas and take risks in learning. Teachers do not explain, model, and reinforce classroom routines. Learning experiences do not guide students to identify their strengths, interests, and needs; problem-solve; ask for support when appropriate. Learning time is seldom maximized.	This criterion was not observed or rated.
	Total: 5	Total: 5	Total: 1	Total: 0	Total: 0
Establishing a Culture for Learning	Students and teachers respond appropriately when conflicts arise and demonstrate respect for and affirm their own and others' differences related to background, identity, language, strengths, and challenges.	Teacher responds appropriately when conflicts arise and demonstrate respect for and affirm their own and others' differences related to background, identity, language, strengths, and challenges.	Teacher attempts to respond appropriately when conflicts arise and demonstrate respect for and affirm their own and others' differences related to background, identity, language, strengths, and challenges.	Teacher does not attempt to respond appropriately when conflicts arise and does not demonstrate respect for and affirm their own and others' differences related to background, identity, language, strengths, and challenges.	This criterion was not observed or rated.
	Total: 5	Total: 6	Total: 0	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: 5	Total: 6	Total: 0	Total: 0	Total: 0
Students' Cognitive Awareness of Learning Goals/Targets	Students can explain/demonstrate the goals/targets of the lesson, content, unit, or classroom activity during this instructional timeframe.	Most of the students can explain/demonstrate the goals/targets of the lesson, content, unit, or classroom activity during this instructional timeframe.	Some of the students can explain/demonstrate the goals/targets of the lesson, content, unit, or classroom activity during this instructional timeframe.	Students cannot explain/demonstrate the goals/targets of the lesson, content, unit, or classroom activity during this instructional time frame.	This criterion was not observed or rated.
	Total: 5	Total: 6	Total: 0	Total: 0	Total: 0
Quality and purpose of questions	Students formulate and ask high-level questions.	Teacher formulates and asks several high-level questions.	Teacher questioning and discussion techniques are uneven with some high-level questions.	Teacher makes poor use of questioning and discussion techniques, with low-level questions, limited student participation, and little true discussion.	This criterion was not observed or rated.
	Total: 0	Total: 7	Total: 0	Total: 1	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: 2	Total: 6	Total: 1	Total: 0	Total: 2

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: 3	Total: 7	Total: 1	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: 2	Total: 9	Total: 0	Total: 0	Total: 0

Additional information about the classroom observations shared here when applicable

- In one early elementary classroom, there were six students and one teacher. Students completed a spelling worksheet in small groups of two, and they were engaged in the task.
- Students responded to the teacher's direct questions as they were called upon. They completed a worksheet as the teacher directed them. The teacher sat in a chair at the far end of the classroom away from the students, and students sat in small groups at tables, following along. The teacher read the worksheet and called upon the students to respond to low-level, factual recall questions.
- In one upper elementary classroom, students provided evidence to support their thinking to the prompt provided by the teacher. They used terms such as disagree, agree, and to add on during whole group discussions.
- Students brainstormed to create a whole class map of a creative writing narrative, and they were eager to respond and share their thinking.
- The teacher scaffolded the definition of terms for elementary students, and students participated in discussions about the meaning of words.
- In one pull-out literacy lesson, students read their homework aloud and responded to questions from the teacher. They were engaged and excited to share their thinking.

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	<p>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.</p> <p>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.</p>	Evidence gathered during focus groups indicates the school is implementing the material terms of its educational program as stated in the charter. Students with an Individual Education Plan received individualized instruction.
Indicator 3: Governance and Reporting	<p>Measure 3a: The school complies with governance requirements Ex: Board policies and oversight of Education Service Provider</p>	Leadership reports timely notice of Governing Board Meetings. Each board meeting contains an agenda item for public comment for stakeholders to ask questions and provide comments or concerns about the school. Meeting agendas and minutes are publicly accessible via the school's website. Per the governing board and leadership focus group sessions, the governing board follows governing board policies. The board composition is aligned with Nevada state requirements.

<p>Indicator 4: Students and Employees</p>	<p>Measure 4a: Student records under lock and key/stored appropriately</p> <p>Measure 4d: Personnel files are under lock and key/stored appropriately</p>	<p>Student and faculty records are stored under lock and key in a secure room designated just for records.</p>
<p>Indicator 5: School Environment</p>	<p>Measure 5b:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● 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 	<p>The site evaluation team saw evacuation plans in classrooms, tagged fire extinguishers throughout the building and common areas, and an elevator permit. 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.</p>

Measures of Progress from Previous Site Evaluations

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

<p>Prior recommendations by SPCSA staff</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● With a chronic absenteeism rate of 57.5%, the chronic absenteeism rate levels are a challenge at Discovery Sandhill. The SPCSA recommends the school continue its current work to improve the overall numbers of students attending school daily. ● SPCSA staff recommends that the board chair and school leader reflect on current communication and consider ways to increase frequency for ongoing conversations so as to ensure strong alignment between the administration and governing body. It is suggested that this training take place within one month of this report, but no later than July 1, 2023. ● SPCSA staff recommends DC SLV Sandhill continue to prioritize student achievement given the proficiency rates and overall index score at the school. ● It is recommended the school staff and leadership review this section of the report and continue efforts to address all items that remain as challenges from the previous evaluation. ● Although the school campus is moving geographical locations, it is important that school leaders and staff adhere to general compliance in terms of safety and cleanliness of the school.
<p>School Assessment of progress made against recommendations and evidence provided, or reasons school believes additional time may be necessary to fully address past recommendations</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Chronic Absenteeism Reduction: Leadership reported that they implemented a truancy program, introduced telehealth appointments, and established procedures for obtaining doctor's notes to address chronic absenteeism. These efforts aim to improve student engagement and overall achievement. ● Board Governance Training: Board members have undergone comprehensive training to enhance their understanding of governance responsibilities and compliance with open meeting laws. Regular communication between the board chair and school leader has been initiated to ensure strong alignment between the administration and the governing body.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Prioritizing Student Achievement: Leadership shared that collaboration with a data analyst, literacy specialist, and math interventionist has been initiated to provide targeted instruction and interventions aimed at improving student achievement. Leadership reported that the data analysis indicates positive progress, with all three schools predicted to achieve a four-star rating. ● School Cleanliness: According to leadership, with the relocation of the school campus, efforts have been made to maintain cleanliness and safety standards in the new facility. The bathrooms are regularly maintained with adequate supplies, and evacuation plans are posted in each classroom to ensure a safe school environment for students, families, and staff. ● Submission of School Performance Plan (SPP): The SPP has been submitted to the SPCSA, indicating compliance with reporting requirements and ongoing commitment to academic excellence and accountability.
SPCSA staff assessment based upon findings during site evaluation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● The school will require time to implement the previous recommendations (see more within the Recommendation section of this report.).

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.

- **Effective Board Leadership:**
The board's stability and transparency are evident through monthly meetings and financial report reviews, ensuring consistent governance and financial accountability. As one parent noted, "The leadership and teachers take time to not only know our children, but they go out of their way to get to know the parents," indicating a strong commitment to building trust and engagement within the school community.
- **Community Engagement and Support:**
Discovery Sandhill maintains strong ties with its community, fostering a sense of belonging and support. Parents emphasized feeling involved and valued, with communication channels like Class Dojo and Infinite Campus enhancing their connection with the school. One parent noted, "It feels like a private school. There is less volume of students and that creates more personal one-to-one with the teachers and students."
- **Small, Family-Oriented Environment:**
The school's small class sizes promote a close-knit environment where students, families, and staff develop strong relationships. Students feel comfortable approaching staff with concerns or questions, contributing to a supportive learning atmosphere. As one staff member shared, "Our strongest resource is our people."
- **High Morale:**
Discovery Sandhill boasts a stable workforce, fostering consistency and continuity in education. Staff, students, and families are enthusiastic about the new building and express optimism for the school's future. As one teacher stated, "Compared to the district, this is heaven. This would be the only place I would come out of retirement for."
- **High Focus on Academic Gains:**
Discovery Sandhill demonstrates a strong commitment to academic achievement and growth throughout its grade levels. Notably, despite a slight gain in index score from 37 to 40, remaining at a 2-star rating, the school continues to prioritize student progress. Students actively engage in monitoring their academic goals, facilitated by initiatives such as the i-Ready bulletin board and the utilization of third-party data analysis programs. As one student highlighted, "We aim to complete 20 i-Ready lessons this month, and we celebrate our achievements with a school-wide 'train' where we recognize those who meet their goals."
- **Initiatives Addressing Chronic Absenteeism:**
Leadership at Discovery Sandhill has implemented proactive measures to address chronic absenteeism, including truancy programs and telehealth appointments. While improvements have been made, there remains an opportunity for further enhancement in this area. As stated by a staff member, "Stressing the importance of retention, learning loss, and missed opportunities for their child has helped a lot."

SITE EVALUATION FINDINGS

STRENGTHS Continued

- **Academic Support Programs:**

The school has prioritized increasing student achievement through various academic support programs and interventions. The addition of an assistant principal, literacy and math interventionists, learning labs, and after-school tutoring reflects a commitment to providing comprehensive support for students. Staff members are actively engaged in professional development, including data training sessions facilitated by a data specialist, to enhance instructional practices and student outcomes.

- **Effective Crisis Management and Adaptability:**

The leadership team at Discover Charter Schools demonstrates exceptional resilience and adaptability in the face of significant challenges. In response to major flood damage at both the Hillpointe and Sandhill locations, as well as a nearby fire at Sandhill, the leadership, particularly the school leader, exhibited strong management skills in swiftly establishing routines for schooling, coordinating with families, students, and staff to ensure continuity in education. Additionally, their adept handling of administrative tasks such as managing paperwork and communicating with insurance and reconstruction entities underscores their capability to navigate complex situations effectively.

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.

- **Lower than Anticipated Enrollment:**

The school is experiencing lower-than-anticipated enrollment figures, which may affect budget planning and staffing decisions. Board members discussed strategies for future recruitment and enrollment, including community outreach efforts and targeted marketing campaigns. "The principal goes to grocery stores and talks to folks as they come into the grocery store and advertises on social media. We are also planning on adding autism offerings," one member shared.

- **Chronic Absenteeism Rates:**

Discovery Sandhill grapples with persistent challenges related to chronic absenteeism rates, despite the implementation of various interventions. The chronic absenteeism rate stands at 36.8%, down from 57.5% from the last site evaluation. Efforts such as the truancy diversion program, which involves weekly calls to homes and sending letters detailing the child's absences, underscore the school's proactive approach. Additionally, phone calls home to understand the reasons behind absences are prioritized. Stressing the significance of retention, mitigating learning loss, and addressing missed opportunities for students remain focal points. However, logistical hurdles, such as delays in the deployment of transportation resources due to inspection processes, hinder the full implementation of these initiatives. While the school has invested in acquiring additional transportation assets through grants, including vans and a yellow line service, challenges persist in effectively utilizing these resources to combat chronic absenteeism.

SITE EVALUATION FINDINGS

CHALLENGES Continued

- **Current Star Ratings:**
Discovery Sandhill's 2-star NSPF rating at the elementary level suggests areas for improvement in academic performance and student outcomes. While the school is actively working to enhance its educational offerings and support systems, achieving higher star ratings may require targeted interventions and sustained efforts across all grade levels. As a staff member mentioned, "We all want to be 5-star schools. It's a process and we are starting to see some momentum."

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.

- **Enrollment Strategies:**
It is recommended by SPCSA staff that Discovery Sandhill develop and implement targeted marketing campaigns aimed at boosting enrollment. Discovery Sandhill's student enrollment cap is 120 students. Currently, there are 93 students enrolled at Discovery Sandhill. Continue to focus on diversifying the student body and maximizing capacity. This may include engaging with the community through events, social media, and partnerships to increase visibility and attract prospective families.
- **Continued Absenteeism Interventions:**
SPCSA staff recommends that Discovery Sandhill enhance its existing truancy program by refining communication strategies with families and students. This may include implementing proactive measures, such as weekly calls, letters home, and personalized follow-ups, to address chronic absenteeism effectively. Collaborate with community partners to identify underlying reasons for absences and provide targeted support.
- **Academic Improvement Plans:**
SPCSA staff recommends that Discovery Sandhill develop comprehensive academic improvement plans tailored to address specific challenges identified through data analysis. This may include utilizing data-driven approaches to identify areas for growth and implementing targeted interventions. Collaborate with academic specialists, such as literacy and math interventionists, to provide additional support to students. Monitor progress regularly and adjust strategies as needed to improve academic performance and increase the NSPF index score.

STRONG RECOMMENDATIONS

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

DEFICIENCIES

There were no deficiencies identified for Discovery Sandhill during this site evaluation.