



Nevada State Public Charter School Authority

Somerset Academy of Las Vegas: Aliante Campus Site Evaluation Report: November 12, 2024

State Public Charter School Authority
775-687-9174
PO Box 19983
Carson City, Nevada 89721
2080 East Flamingo Road, Suite 230
Las Vegas, Nevada 89119

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Links to Resources:

- [Nevada School Performance Framework \(NSPF\)](#)
- [SPCSA Academic Performance Framework Results](#)
- [SPCSA Organizational Performance Framework Results](#)
- [SPCSA Financial Performance Framework Results](#)
- [Best Practices](#)

Executive Summary

This Site Evaluation Report offers an analysis of evidence collected during the school evaluation. Pursuant to [NRS 388A.223](#), 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 years of operation. This comprehensive analysis addresses the school's academic and organizational effectiveness.

An analysis of the school's academic and operational success is undertaken by reviewing the most current versions of the Nevada State Performance Framework (NSPF), the SPCSA Academic Performance Framework, and the SPCSA Organizational Performance Framework.

In addition, the Site Evaluation Team conducts classroom observations to assess both the classroom environment and the instructional techniques on the day of the evaluation. The purpose of these observations is to collect evidence using a rubric based on the [Charlotte Danielson Framework for Teaching](#). All classroom rating outcomes are displayed within this report. The overall numbers provide information about the general nature of instruction at a given school during the day of the site evaluation.

SPCSA staff conducts focus group interviews by speaking with school leaders, governing board members, family members, those employed as staff, and most importantly, students enrolled at the school. The information gained during these focus groups is summarized and included in this report.

The site evaluation is 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 to provide schools with a consistent set of expectations during each year of their charter. Final Site Evaluation Reports are published to the SPCSA website and used in conjunction with other performance information to determine renewal decisions.

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.

Middle school star rating

One notable strength of Somerset Academy Aliante middle school is its achievement of 86 points on the NSPF¹ Star system, based on the most recent data from 2023-2024. This score corresponds to a 5-star rating. The school improved its score by 10 index points, and its low chronic absenteeism rate of just 3.6% for middle school students further contributes to the high score.

High teacher clarity

Classroom observations show that Somerset Academy Aliante is home to many teachers who demonstrate high clarity in their instruction. Teacher clarity helps students gauge their progress through success criteria and intentional and deliberate feedback. Somerset Academy Aliante teachers effectively define learning intentions and success criteria while also providing opportunities for students to engage through formative assessments. This approach was consistently observed in the school's classrooms.

Student leadership opportunity

Somerset Academy Aliante offers middle school students a unique leadership opportunity through Executive Lighthouse which is part of the Leader in Me² curricula. According to both school leaders and students, this group functions as the student council, taking on responsibilities such as organizing events, coordinating fundraisers, and assisting students in developing leadership skills.

Strong student and staff culture

Somerset Academy Aliante fosters a positive and supportive culture for students and staff. In focus groups conducted by the SPCSA site evaluation team, parents and students praised teachers for their active involvement in students' lives and for cultivating a safe environment where trust and communication are prioritized. Additionally, staff retention rates are high, and morale is strong.

Science proficiency in middle school

Somerset Academy Aliante's relative strength is its science instruction. According to the NSPF, the school has a science proficiency rate of 50% in middle school, which is above the district average of 21%. On the day of the site evaluation, classroom observations showed that science instruction seemed to provide standards-based instruction with high student engagement.

Fully certified special education teachers

The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), the federal law governing the education of students with disabilities, mandates that special education teachers possess the necessary content knowledge and skills to support students with disabilities. All of Somerset Aliante's special education teachers are fully certified and licensed, further highlighting the school's strengths.

¹ Nevada Educator performance framework. Nevada's system for rating schools.

² *Leader in Me* is a comprehensive pre-kindergarten through grade twelve framework that nurtures student leadership, fosters a culture of trust, and boosts academic success.

Site Evaluation Findings: Challenges

A summary of challenges as observed through academic achievement indicators, classroom observations, focus group feedback, and portions of the Organizational Performance Framework.

Proficiency trending down in elementary school

One challenge is that Somerset Academy Aliante's elementary school proficiency is progressing downward. The school has decreased its index score from 56 in the 2022-23 school year to 51 in the 2023-24 school year.

High academic standards in elementary school

Another challenge is the difficulty of maintaining consistently high academic standards in the elementary school. While middle school teachers have successfully set high expectations for their students through effective vertical alignment³, contributing to a 5-star rating for the 2023-24 school year, this approach has not yet been fully applied or transferred to the elementary level.

Annual growth percentile

In recent years, Somerset Academy Aliante has strongly emphasized providing high-quality, tier-1 instruction. While this approach resulted in academic progress, it also left the needs of some high and low-performing students unmet. As a result, the school's annual growth percentile in the elementary grades has declined.

Chronic absenteeism in elementary grades

Somerset Academy Aliante Elementary School is challenged with chronic absenteeism. An overwhelming body of research demonstrates chronic absenteeism's negative short- and long-term consequences on academic achievement. Chronically absent students are missing critical instruction time and are at the most significant risk of falling behind and dropping out. There is a discrepancy in chronic absenteeism numbers between elementary school, with 10% of students chronically absent, and in middle school, with only 3.6% of students chronically absent.

³ Vertical alignment refers to the coherence and connection of educational standards, curriculum, and instruction across different grade levels.

Site Evaluation Findings: Recommendations

Recommended items are provided so charter schools may increase their school-wide performance and overall success. The Site Evaluation Team will follow up on these recommendations in preparation for the subsequent site evaluation.

Closing Opportunity Gaps

SPCSA staff recommend that the Somerset Academy Aliante leadership team focus on closing opportunity gaps. According to the 2023-24 NSPF, the school earned three index points out of 20. The school's Adequate Growth Percentile⁴ (AGP) for math is 12.8, compared to the district average of 22.5, and their AGP for English language arts (ELA) is 28, compared to the district average of 36. This is especially crucial for fourth and fifth graders, as they will be the student populations that will show growth on this measure in elementary school on the Nevada CRT, Smarter Balanced Assessment Consortium (SBAC) in the Spring of 2025. It is essential for the team of teachers and leaders to continuously evaluate the data and adjust student groups in real-time as students demonstrate progress to foster further growth.

Differentiated professional development

Another recommendation by the SPCSA is to consider implementing measures to differentiate professional development for staff members. Some ideas include staff surveys for areas of need, finding topics based on classroom observations, and analyzing student data to find topics with the greatest leverage for high student achievement. When learning opportunities for staff are tailored to individual needs, they are more likely to engage with the material, improve their skills, and contribute more effectively to the organization's goals, resulting in enhanced performance and job satisfaction.

High student expectations

It is recommended that Somerset Academy Aliante continue to educate teachers about the importance of having high expectations for students. Teachers are encouraged to allow the students to do the "heavy lifting" of the learning. Some possible options include completing book studies such as *Visible Learning* by John Hattie (2008) and having a deep understanding of vertical alignment to align the instruction to the Nevada Academic Content Standards to avoid watering the content down.

Effective instructional coaching

It is recommended that instructional coaches be used more intentionally to maximize their impact. An effective instructional coach plays a critical role in enhancing teaching practices and improving student outcomes in schools. Some suggestions may include implementing structured observational cycles, developing vertical alignment with teachers across grade levels, and deeply analyzing claims data to identify trends and areas for improvement. Additionally, instructional coaches may want to collaborate closely with teachers to provide targeted, ongoing professional development and offer personalized support that aligns with the specific needs of both educators and students. This holistic approach can

⁴ Adequate Growth Percentile (AGP) describes the amount of growth a student needs to remain or become proficient on the state assessment in three years.

foster a culture of continuous improvement and ensure that best practices are consistently applied across the school.

Common language

SPCSA staff recommend that as the leadership at Somerset Academy Aliante continue to roll out their MTSS expectations, the school implements common language usage across grade levels and among leadership in regard to student expectations on campus. Establishing a common school language around MTSS⁵ (Multi-Tiered System of Support) expectations is one researched- based methodology for creating consistency and clarity across all stakeholders- teachers, staff, students, and families. This will help ensure continuity within the school culture.

⁵ MTSS-Multi-Tiered System of Supports is a framework schools use with a tiered infrastructure that uses data to help match academic and social-emotional behavior and instructional resources to each student.

Site Evaluation Findings: Strong Recommendations

Strong recommendations identified during this site evaluation are listed here, if applicable.

There were no strong recommendations for Somerset Aliante during this site evaluation.

Site Evaluation Findings: Deficiencies

Deficiencies identified during this site evaluation are listed here, if applicable.

There were no deficiencies for Somerset Aliante during this site evaluation.

Focus Group Participation Data

Focus groups are conducted on the day of the site evaluation and last for 45 minutes. During an abbreviated site evaluation, focus groups are not conducted.

Name of Focus Group	Number of Participants
Governing Board ⁶	2
Family Members, Parents, and Guardians	8
Faculty and Staff	14
School Leadership	5
Students	13

⁶ Quorum was not met, and Open Meeting Law was not violated.

Focus Group Summary: Governing Board

Two members of the Somerset Academy School Board participated in the session. One member has served for over eight years, and the other recently joined the board six months ago. The participants underscored the school board's unwavering focus on meeting compliance and contractual agreements. A member shared, "We ensure compliance with Open Meeting Law by providing public notices with detailed minutes." Further, the code of ethics is a cornerstone of the governance board. One board member stated, "It is emphasized through regular training for staff and board members, ensuring all parties understand their obligations to act with integrity."

Evaluating Academics, the charter network's Educational Management Organization, and school leaders is a board function. The members discussed their process, which consists of evaluation surveys completed by school leaders and board members rating Academics's effectiveness. A member shared that the governance board is pleased with their EMO¹⁰ overall, stating that when there are any concerns, school leaders report that communication is efficient and streamlined. Regarding school leader evaluation, the board examines school data and meets with each campus leader at least once yearly to discuss goals and improvement plans. A board member highlighted that regular evaluations and performance reviews are aligned with the school's goals and contractual agreements.

The board members reiterated their unwavering commitment to ensuring all Somerset schools receive the necessary support for continuous improvement. One member in the focus group emphasized that the ultimate goal is for every school to achieve a five-star rating, as per the Nevada School Performance Framework (NSPF). Another member stressed the importance of providing all school leaders with the necessary support to reach this goal. Each board member is assigned to be the lead liaison for a particular school, often visiting and communicating with its leaders to ensure each school is supported.

The discussion in the focus group then shifted to the significance of expanding and developing school programs on each campus, particularly enhancing high school and middle school sports and extracurricular programs. A member emphasized increasing student sports and extracurricular activities as a testament to their board's commitment to providing a holistic learning experience for Somerset Academy students, eliminating the need for them to commute to the neighboring local district schools to participate.

The backgrounds of the governing board members include finance, law, education, business, school administration, and parents as explained by the focus group members. One member conveyed that this diverse range of expertise ensures the board is well-equipped to make well-informed decisions that benefit the schools and their students. The board also has a finance committee and a committee to evaluate school leaders. When a particular project arises, the board forms committees to oversee these endeavors.

Focus Group Summary: Family Members, Parents, and Guardians

Family members participating in the focus group said the best things about Somerset Academy Aliante are that teachers are invested in the students' success as well as social emotional status. They said that teachers are humble enough to direct students to the teacher to where they will best learn. One parent stated, “My child’s teacher has taken my child to another teacher and said, ‘This teacher is really great at knowing this subject, and this teacher can help you best in understanding this subject.’ And my child excelled. The teacher connected my child – that was great.” Parents also indicated that the staff is accountable and take their jobs seriously and professionally.

One parent said the staff knows parents and students by name. Another parent agreed and said parents feel very welcome when they step on campus. The communication level between parents and teachers is fluid and easy, “We can text teachers and communicate quite rapidly.” One parent said they had a friend who had their student transferred to another charter school and transferred back in less than a month because the friend felt more special at Somerset Academy Aliante. Parents in the focus group said they thought they were the special family at Aliante and were laughing when they learned that other families were also ‘the favored family’. One parent said when a concern arose, leadership took care of it in real time, and it was managed so quickly. This created trust and a bond between the families.

Parents were asked if they had any suggestions for improving the school. Several parents stated they would like time at lunch for their children to interact more with their peers. Families collectively agreed that students eat lunch and then leave immediately, and they would like to see this change.

Parents agreed there is a sense of personal community at the school, where it feels like everyone is part of the same team. This is supported by the multiple volunteer opportunities available, although sometimes it is the same families who participate. However, the school provides alternative ways for those who cannot volunteer in person to contribute, such as donating items or sending things in with their children. This inclusive approach allows all families to be involved in supporting the school, strengthening the sense of community.

Focus Group Summary: Faculty and Staff

The group of 14 staff members shared their insights on staff morale. Several noted that staff morale is good, and the school administration is supportive and approachable when any issues arise. One member shared that the administration assisted the staff member when dealing with an upset parent by clarifying the school's discipline policy.

A portion of the focus group discussion concentrated on the success of middle schools and how it can be extended to elementary school classrooms. One teacher said raising expectations at the elementary level to prepare students for the following grades has been a vital thrust this year. Another shared that working on vertical alignment by having conversations and weekly meetings is an emphasis. The group also stated that teachers observed teachers from different grade levels and focused on differentiated teaching strategies. Lastly, teachers fill out a document listing what strategies were observed, the essential questions of the lesson, and what practices could be implemented in their classrooms.

The group was asked to discuss small-group instruction and differentiated learning initiatives and whether there were any implementation challenges. A staff member stated that students who have identified needs based on data receive small-group instruction in math, reading, and science. Additionally, the school uses iReady⁷, an online teaching and assessment platform, to support students' individualized learning needs. The group also mentioned Paw Power, the school's tier-2 forty-minute instructional block using iReady and a walk-to-read model, generally referring to students with similar learning needs walking to their intervention group. One teacher said he uses heterogeneous groupings so students can utilize peers when completing group tasks to blend prior knowledge, infuse academic expertise with what they already know, and count on their peers to strengthen their work. No implementation challenges were noted during the discussion.

The group discussion concluded with a conversation to elaborate on the school's Multi-Tiered Systems of Supports (MTSS). One member stated that team members can request additional services using a staff form, and another briefly discussed their Response to Intervention⁸ Process (RTI).

⁷ i-Ready provides individualized interactive lessons that address the learning needs of each student.

⁸ Response to Intervention (RTI) is a school-based strategy that helps identify and support students who are struggling academically or behaviorally

Focus Group Summary: School Leadership

Leadership at Somerset Academy Aliante indicated the school has earned the prestigious Purple Star designation, recognizing its strong support for military-connected families, as well as the Governor’s designation as a STEM⁹ school, reflecting its commitment to fostering innovation and excellence in science, technology, engineering, and mathematics education. These recognitions highlight the school’s dedication to providing a well-rounded, inclusive, and forward-thinking education for all students.

Leadership reported strength in that the middle school received a 5-star rating and earned 84 points on the SPCSA Academic Framework using the 2023-24 most recent data. The success is attributed to many factors, including high teacher expectations for students, 25/25 points on the geographical comparisons indicator, and decreasing chronic absenteeism from 8% in the 2022-23 school year to only 3% in the 2023-24 school year.

Leadership at Somerset Academy Aliante reported the elementary school has earned 51 points on the NSPF Star System, using the 2023-24 most recent data. This score equates to a 3-star rating. It is a drop in the index score from 2022-23, which was 56 points. When asked, leadership stated the root cause for the decline is a lack of high teacher expectations. They elaborated that ensuring teachers understand high expectations is a good thing and that it is being communicated to staff that students should be doing the “heavy lifting” of the learning.

Another challenge for the 3-star rating communicated by leadership is the need to refine differentiation in kindergarten through fourth grade. Leadership at Somerset Academy Aliante is focused on improving differentiation this year to close the opportunity gap and ensure student success. They reported the school continues to have three full-time literacy coaches on staff, focusing on differentiation and small-group instruction. The coaches use i-Ready¹⁰, MAP¹¹, and Amplify¹² assessment data to guide instruction and inform RTI¹³ strategies.

Staff consistency is strong, with a 90% retention rate since the last site evaluation. The special education team, consisting of seven teachers and eight aides, is fully licensed, and they participate in all weekly professional development sessions. This ongoing professional development ensures that staff are continually refining their skills and staying up to date with best practices. Additionally, the school’s commitment to supporting staff retention through mentorship programs and a positive work environment contributes to a stable and experienced team, which directly benefits student outcomes and creates a cohesive, collaborative atmosphere within the school.

⁹ STEM stands for science, technology, engineering, and math.

¹⁰ iReady is a computer- adaptive program for English language arts and math with personalized learning pathways.

¹¹ Measures of Academic Progress is a diagnostic assessment measuring reading and math skills.

¹² Amplify assessments measure student progress in the Amplify Reading curriculum.

¹³ Response to Intervention

Student-led parent conferences have been introduced for grades five and above this school year. Conferences in this format increases student ownership. By leading the conference, students have taken responsibility for their learning. Students reflect on their strengths and areas for improvement, set goals, and foster a sense of accountability and ownership over their academic progress.

Focus Group Summary: Students

Thirteen students participated in the focus group on the day of the site evaluation. Students conveyed that there are trusted adults on campus they can talk with when they have a concern or a problem. One student said, "It is a welcoming school, and I have very good teachers." Many group members shared the same sentiment and felt safe at school. Also, the students were asked to discuss when they needed help in the classroom or needed help understanding the assignment. Many shared they ask the teacher or peers for assistance. One student stated, "My teachers offer after-school tutoring if I feel embarrassed to get help in class or there isn't time."

The students discussed their improved academic skills since attending Somerset Academy Aliante. One student mentioned, "Writing because my teacher would always help me and tell me to write details and paragraphs." One student shared that he has improved in writing because the teacher makes the assignment clear by providing step-by-step directions, which helps him improve as a writer. Another shared, "Math and science, I like how the learning is interactive, like in forces and motions and doing an egg drop experiment."

Somerset Academy Aliante emphasizes small-group instruction, and the students shared their thoughts about learning in small groups. One student said, "I like to work with small groups. It's usually more helpful because you can ask someone if you don't get it". Another student said they liked it because "we don't fight over the answers." Group members highlighted that listening to their peers' responses made the learning more interesting.

The student focus group discussion concluded with students reflecting on recommendations for the school. Several emphasized their aspirations to consider Student Lighthouse¹⁴ for the elementary grade levels. One stated that a later start time would be appreciated, and another shared the desire for less homework.

¹⁴ In the Leader in Me program, a Student Lighthouse refers to a group of students selected to actively promote leadership within their school.

Classroom Environment and Instruction Observation Rubric

A total of 23 elementary and 8 middle school classrooms were observed for approximately 15 minutes on the day of the site evaluation.

Classroom Environment					
	Distinguished	Highly Proficient	Approaching Proficient	Unsatisfactory	Not Observed
Classroom Learning Environment is Conducive to Learning	<p>The teacher demonstrates knowledge and caring about individual students' lives beyond the class and school.</p> <p>When necessary, students respectfully correct one another.</p> <p>Students participate without fear of put-downs or ridicule from either the teacher or other students.</p> <p>The teacher respects and encourages students' efforts.</p>	<p>Talk between the teacher and students and among students is uniformly respectful.</p> <p>The teacher successfully responds to disrespectful behavior among students.</p> <p>Students participate willingly but may be somewhat hesitant to offer their ideas in front of classmates.</p> <p>The teacher makes general connections with individual students.</p>	<p>The quality of interactions between teachers and students, or among students, is uneven, with occasional disrespect or insensitivity.</p> <p>The teacher attempts to respond to disrespectful behavior among students with uneven results.</p> <p>The teacher attempts to make connections with individual students, but student reactions indicate that these attempts are not entirely successful.</p>	<p>The teacher is disrespectful toward or insensitive to students' ages, cultural backgrounds, and developmental levels.</p> <p>Students' body language indicates feelings of hurt, discomfort, or insecurity.</p> <p>The teacher displays no familiarity with, or care about, individual students.</p>	<p>This criterion was not observed or rated.</p>
	TOTAL: 2	TOTAL: 29	TOTAL: 0	TOTAL: 0	TOTAL: 0
Establishing a Culture for Learning	<p>The teacher communicates passion for the subject.</p> <p>Students indicate through their questions and comments a desire to understand content.</p> <p>Students assist their classmates in understanding the content.</p>	<p>The teacher communicates the importance of the content and the conviction that with hard work all students can master the material.</p> <p>The teacher conveys an expectation of high levels of student effort.</p> <p>Students expend good effort to complete work of high quality.</p>	<p>The teachers' energy for the work is neutral.</p> <p>The teacher conveys high expectations for only some students.</p> <p>Students exhibit a limited commitment to completing the work on their own.</p> <p>The teacher's primary concern appears to be to complete the task at hand.</p>	<p>The teacher conveys that there is little or no purpose for the work, or that the reasons for doing it are due to external factors.</p> <p>The teacher conveys to at least some students that the work is too challenging for them.</p> <p>Students exhibit little or no pride in their work.</p>	<p>This criterion was not observed or rated.</p>
	TOTAL: 1	TOTAL: 26	TOTAL: 3	TOTAL: 0	TOTAL: 1

Classroom Environment and Instruction Observation Rubric

A total of 23 elementary and 8 middle school classrooms were observed for approximately 15 minutes on the day of the site evaluation.

Classroom Instruction					
	Distinguished	Highly Proficient	Approaching Proficient	Unsatisfactory	Not Observed
Communicating with Students	<p>If asked, students can explain what they are learning and where it fits into the larger curriculum context.</p> <p>The teacher explains content clearly and imaginatively.</p> <p>The teacher invites students to explain the content to their classmates.</p> <p>Students use academic language correctly.</p>	<p>The teacher states clearly, at some point during the lesson, what the students will be learning.</p> <p>The teacher's explanation of content is clear and invites student participation and thinking.</p> <p>The teacher makes no content errors.</p> <p>Students engage with the learning task, indicating that they understand what they are to do.</p>	<p>The teacher provides little elaboration or explanation about what students will be learning.</p> <p>The teacher's explanation of the content consists of a monologue, with minimal participation or intellectual engagement by students.</p> <p>The teacher may make minor content errors.</p> <p>The teacher must clarify the learning task.</p>	<p>At no time during the lesson does the teacher convey to students what they will be learning.</p> <p>Students indicate through body language or questions that they don't understand the content being presented.</p> <p>Students indicate through their questions that they are confused about the learning task.</p>	<p>This criterion was not observed or rated.</p>
	TOTAL: 3	TOTAL: 24	TOTAL: 3	TOTAL: 0	TOTAL: 1
Using Questioning and Discussion Strategies	<p>Students initiate higher-order questions.</p> <p>The teacher builds on and uses student responses to questions to deepen student understanding.</p> <p>Students extend the discussion, enriching it.</p> <p>Virtually all students are engaged.</p>	<p>The teacher uses open-ended questions, inviting students to think and/or offer multiple possible answers.</p> <p>Discussions enable students to talk to one another without ongoing mediation by the teacher.</p> <p>Many students actively engage in the discussion.</p>	<p>The teacher frames some questions designed to promote student thinking, but many have a single correct answer.</p> <p>The teacher invites students to respond directly to one another's ideas, but few students respond.</p> <p>The teacher calls on many students, but only a small number participate.</p>	<p>Questions are rapid-fire and convergent with a single correct answer.</p> <p>The teacher does not ask students to explain their thinking.</p> <p>Only a few students dominate the discussion.</p>	<p>This criterion was not observed or rated.</p>
	TOTAL: 2	TOTAL: 17	TOTAL: 10	TOTAL: 0	TOTAL: 2

Classroom Environment and Instruction Observation Rubric

A total of 23 elementary and 8 middle school classrooms were observed for approximately 15 minutes on the day of the site evaluation.

Classroom Instruction					
	Distinguished	Highly Proficient	Approaching Proficient	Unsatisfactory	Not Observed
Engaging Students in Learning	<p>Virtually all students are engaged in the lesson.</p> <p>Lesson activities require high-level student thinking and explanations of their thinking.</p> <p>Students have an opportunity for reflection and closure on the lesson to consolidate their understanding.</p>	<p>Most students are intellectually engaged in the lesson.</p> <p>Most learning tasks have multiple correct responses or approaches and/or encourage higher-order thinking.</p> <p>Students are invited to explain their thinking as part of completing tasks.</p> <p>The pacing of the lesson provides students with the time needed to be intellectually engaged.</p>	<p>Some students are intellectually engaged in the lesson.</p> <p>Learning tasks are a mix of those requiring thinking and those requiring recall.</p> <p>Student engagement with the content is largely passive.</p> <p>The pacing of the lesson is uneven—suitable in parts but rushed or dragging in others.</p>	<p>Few students are intellectually engaged in the lesson.</p> <p>Learning tasks, activities, and materials require only recall or have a single correct response.</p> <p>The lesson drags on or is rushed.</p>	<p>This criterion was not observed or rated.</p>
	TOTAL: 3	TOTAL:22	TOTAL: 6	TOTAL: 0	TOTAL: 0
Using Assessment in Instruction	<p>Students indicate they clearly understand the characteristics of high-quality work.</p> <p>The teacher uses multiple strategies to monitor student understanding.</p> <p>Students monitor their own understanding.</p> <p>Feedback comes from many sources.</p>	<p>The teacher makes the standards of high-quality work clear to students.</p> <p>The teacher elicits evidence of student understanding.</p> <p>Students are invited to assess their own work and make improvements.</p> <p>Feedback includes specific and timely guidance.</p>	<p>There is little evidence that the students understand how the work is evaluated.</p> <p>The teacher monitors understanding through a single method, without eliciting evidence of understanding from students.</p> <p>Feedback to students is vague.</p>	<p>The teacher does not indicate what quality work looks like.</p> <p>The teacher makes no effort to determine whether students understand the lesson.</p> <p>Students receive no feedback, or feedback is global or directed to one student.</p>	
	TOTAL: 1	TOTAL: 21	TOTAL: 4	TOTAL: 0	TOTAL: 5

Classroom Observations and Additional Comments

In a third-grade ELA classroom, the teacher led a lesson on answering close reading questions (e.g., "Why did Caesar want to seize Egypt?"). Then, students used their activity books to write answers to text-dependent questions. The teacher's explanations of content were purely procedural, without indicating how students can think strategically.

In one middle school math class, students chatted at their tables while the instructor walked students through a word problem on the whiteboard. The instructor read the word problem, wrote the equation, and talked through the problem. The students sat passively. This was a missed learning opportunity for students to attempt puzzling out the equation themselves or working with their tablemates.

Students were locating tier-2 vocabulary words within a text they were about to read by pointing at it within the text and putting their thumbs up. The teacher was closely watching and monitoring, giving immediate feedback.

In one robotics classroom, students worked in groups of three to four to build a clawbot utilizing instructions and working on a team. When complete, the clawbot had a programmable brain that students could program to move. Students were to answer questions in their notebooks regarding the process of working with their teammates, direct questions about programming the clawbot, and questions regarding the following instructions. Students worked collegially, saying 'please' and 'thank you' to their teammates.

Students in an upper elementary classroom were planning an essay about how they can make a difference by helping others in different areas of the school. The teacher asked them to share and give feedback to their partners. Students gave intentional feedback on classmates' ideas.

In one middle school social studies class students took turns reading paragraphs about the American colonies and the lead-up to the Boston tea party. Students readily volunteered to read and were excited to read to the class. Students had their texts open in front of them, and the text was also projected onto the whiteboard. The instructor explained political terms and vocabulary between the paragraphs and asked open-ended questions of students. Students discussed easily with the teacher.

Students were practicing the "ck" sound at the end of words. The students had mirrors in their hands to check that their mouths were forming the sound correctly. Students supplied several words together with the sound. The teacher allowed all students to participate.

Students were working in small groups during Paw Power time. One group practiced letter sounds with a teacher, one was blending and writing consonant vowel consonant (CVC) words with a teacher, one was creating letters with Playdough, and one was working on iReady. The classroom environment was calm and supportive. Students were observed to be highly engaged.

Students interpreted ratios, compared ratios, and wrote ratios correctly in one middle school math class when solving mathematical word problems. They solved the problems individually, then volunteered to go to the board to show and explain their thoughts on solving each problem to the class. The teacher verified each answer and clarified whether the students were correct or incorrect. This was a missed learning opportunity for the students to validate other students' thinking and discuss if they solved the problem in another way.

Measures of Progress from Previous Site Evaluation

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 Site Evaluation Team during the school’s previous site evaluation.

Prior Recommendation by Site Evaluation Team	School Assessment of Progress	SPCSA Staff Assessment of Progress
<p>Continue to strengthen communal social capital and relational trust among middle school students, teachers, and leaders, enhance school-wide behavior management strategies, seek actionable feedback from students and parents, celebrate role models, and foster a positive culture across all grades at Somerset Aliante.</p>	<p>Leadership at Somerset Aliante reports that Leader in Me lessons are incorporated into all classrooms on a quarterly basis. In addition, students participate in Executive Lighthouse (formerly Student Council) in alignment with the Leader In Me philosophy and are looked to as leaders in choosing initiatives for the middle school.</p>	<p>SPCSA finds that Somerset Aliante has satisfied this recommendation.</p>
<p>Consider the development of a parent focus group to enlist feedback about student progress, emotional well-being, and ideas for positive reinforcement of behaviors.</p>	<p>Leadership reported holding monthly principal/family meetings on zoom. An average of 30 families attend live, and others watch the recording if they are not able to attend.</p>	<p>SPCSA finds that Somerset Aliante has satisfied this recommendation.</p>
<p>Continue to review the school’s recruitment and enrollment plan to help bolster Free and Reduced Lunch (FRL) numbers in elementary and middle school as well as with EL students.</p>	<p>Somerset Academy is reviewing a weighted lottery, which would give priority to the students identified as a member of the special population category as Free and Reduced Lunch (FRL).</p>	<p>SPCSA finds that Somerset Aliante continues to work on this recommendation.</p>
<p>Focus on the sustainability of strong and rapid growth in math instructional and index scores:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Routine Professional Learning Communities (PLC) Meetings 2. Data monitoring and discussions 	<p>Increase in math proficiency in middle school from 35% to 44% over the past school year. Routine PLC meetings take place and data-based decision making is the focus of these meetings.</p>	<p>SPCSA finds that Somerset Aliante has satisfied this recommendation.</p>

Operational Compliance Checks

Fire Extinguisher	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> YES	<input type="checkbox"/> NO	
Nurse's Station	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> YES	<input type="checkbox"/> NO	
Evacuation Plan in Classrooms	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> YES	<input type="checkbox"/> NO	
Food Permit	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> YES	<input type="checkbox"/> NO	<input type="checkbox"/> N/A
Elevator Permit	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> YES	<input type="checkbox"/> NO	<input type="checkbox"/> N/A

Appendix A

The school may choose to submit a response to the SPCSA Site Evaluation Team’s findings. This response will be included with the report in the public domain. The final report is submitted to the school’s leadership and governing board, the SPCSA board, and into the public record via the SPCSA’s website.