



Nevada State Public Charter School Authority

Discovery Charter School Las Vegas-Sandhill Site Evaluation Report: January 8, 2025

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.

Improved star rating

One of the most notable strengths of Discovery Charter School Las Vegas Sandhill is its improved star rating. According to the 2023-24 Nevada School Performance Framework¹ (NSPF), the school has achieved a three-star rating, marking a considerable improvement of 20 index points from the previous year, from 40 to 60 points. In the Growth Indicator Measure², the school's performance has increased from earning 22 out of 35 points to an impressive 32 out of 35, and in the Closing Opportunity Gaps Indicator³, from nine out of 20 to a promising 15 out of 20.

Improved Read-by-Grade 3 proficiency rate

A strength of Discovery Charter School Las Vegas Sandhill is its improved proficiency rate among third graders who took the SBAC State Criterion-Referenced Tests⁴ (CRTs). According to the NSPF, the school's rate of 57.1 percent of third graders read at grade level, which is above the district rate of 51.2 percent.

Staff retention

Staff retention is a strength of Discovery Charter School Sandhill campus. According to the leadership team, seven out of nine teachers, all three support staff, and two administrators returned for the 2024-2025 school year. The quality of teachers is high, and all staff have shared their aspirations to return to Discovery Charter School Sandhill campus for the 2025-2026 school year. The teachers and staff are deeply invested in the school's success, which is evident in their high effect size⁵ on teacher efficacy. Their belief in their ability to effect real-time change in the school, especially with the improvement in star ratings from two to three over the past school year, is a testament to their commitment to the school's success.

Data-driven decisions

The leadership team of Discovery Charter School Las Vegas Sandhill has established a robust system for data-driven decisions, a strength that supports student achievement. For example, the current principal

¹ The Nevada School Performance Framework (NSPF) is Nevada's public-school rating system designed by Nevadans for Nevada public schools and developed in accordance with the federal Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA).

² Growth is determined for ES with a grade configuration that accommodates at least one prior year score and one current year score.

³ The Closing Opportunity Gaps Indicator determines the percentage of students meeting their AGP who did not achieve proficiency in the prior year's state-administered CRT ELA and Mathematics assessments.

⁴ A criterion-referenced test (CRT) Smarter Balanced Assessment Consortium is a type of assessment that measures a student's performance against a predetermined standard or criteria.

⁵ John Hattie created great interest in 2008 when he published *Visible Learning*. In the book, the author compares the statistical measure of effect size to the impact of various influences on students' achievement, such as class size, feedback, and learning strategies.

thoroughly understands the use of the school's online educational resource, i-Ready⁶, and has utilized several available tools. These include setting the system to focus on one skill, such as reading comprehension. Additionally, the school's engagement with an external educational data consultant further enhances this system, ensuring students receive appropriate instruction and support.

⁶ The i-Ready program provides individualized interactive lessons that address the learning needs of each student.

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.

High chronic absenteeism rate

A significant challenge for Discovery Charter School Las Vegas Sandhill is its extremely high chronic absenteeism rate of 63.3 percent, which exceeds the district average of 20.7 percent. According to the NSPF, the school's chronic absenteeism rate went from 36.9 percent in 2022-23 to 63.3 percent in 2023-24 school year. The school's leadership shared that a technical and reporting issue impacted last school year's data, which has since been addressed.

Low science proficiency rate

A challenge at Discovery Charter School Las Vegas Sandhill is the low science proficiency rate. According to the NSPF, the school's rate is less than five percent compared to the district's rate of 21 percent. The principal shared that in an effort for improvement, she wrote a grant for a science curriculum called "Elementary is Engineering"⁷ through the Boston Scientific Museum.

Low pooled proficiency rate in academic achievement

Although the school has increased its pooled proficiency rates to 32.6 percent, they are still below the district rate of 48.3 percent. Discovery Charter School Las Vegas Sandhill must ensure continued improvement to achieve tremendous academic success and reach district-level rates. The leadership team shared that their improvement goal is to attain a 4- or 5-star NSPF rating.

Space and location

The school's leadership team stated that space and location are challenges. The school plans to remodel its building design to include additional teaching spaces and increase building security features. The project is scheduled to start in March 2024 and be completed in May 2024.

Safety

Discovery Charter School's Sandhill Campus faces challenges regarding campus safety. Concerns include a nearby building occupied by individuals experiencing homelessness, lower-than-ideal transparent fence heights, the school's location near busy pedestrian and automobile traffic, and ensuring a highly monitored single point of entry. The school's leadership actively monitors the homelessness safety challenge by working with local law enforcement when concerns arise.

Meeting SPCSA and State compliance requirements promptly and accurately

According to SPCSA records, Discovery Charter School of Las Vegas Sandhill faces the challenge of ensuring that mandatory SPCSA and state routine compliance requirements are completed accurately and in a timely manner. Successful completion will significantly increase the school's compliance with critical SPCSA and state reporting requirements.

⁷ Engineering is Elementary is a science curriculum that presents real-world challenges and encourages students to explore multiple ways to solve a problem.

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.

Ensure compliance with required document submissions

SPCSA staff recommend that Discovery Charter School Las Vegas Sandhill complete all required document submissions accurately and on time. It is imperative that the school submit the school calendar for the upcoming school year before the established timeline to the Nevada Department of Education. Accurate and timely reporting assures that Discovery Charter School Las Vegas Sandhill meets compliance requirements and operates at high levels organizationally.

Decrease chronic absenteeism rate

SPCSA staff recommend that Discovery Charter School Las Vegas Sandhill reduce its chronic absenteeism rate. According to the 2023-2024 NSPF, the school's chronically absent rate is 63.3 percent and is significantly higher than the district rate of 20.7 percent. Communicating regularly to all staff, students, and their families about the importance of daily attendance and the availability of support services that can help keep students in school and on track to success can be helpful. Lastly, the school's leadership team may find helpful strategies regarding best practices for reducing chronic absenteeism on the SPCSA Canvas repository.

Increase student achievement

SPCSA staff recommend Discovery Charter School Las Vegas Sandhill continue developing and refining its comprehensive plan to improve instruction. The school's leadership team may consider several essential resources for effective teaching, including the Nevada Educator Performance Framework, which fosters student learning and growth and improves educator instructional practices. Improving instruction aligns with the school's goal of enhancing students' learning opportunities.

Increase opportunities for staff and stakeholders to review the school's budget

School leadership may find it helpful to provide multiple opportunities throughout the year to engage the staff and stakeholders with specific details regarding the school's budget. This would ensure staff are consistently updated and informed regarding budget details involving available funds allocated for supplies, curricular resources, and Title I status. These sessions and communication opportunities can strengthen the relationship between the school leaders and staff and further cement the growing trend of teacher retention.

Safety concerns

SPCSA staff recommend addressing specific safety concerns on the campus. These include parents being permitted to walk to classrooms unaccompanied or announced, the parking lot and street-facing fences being too low, allowing for easier access and visibility for individuals with harmful intent, and one classroom lacking a functional lock. The leadership team reported that building remodeling plans are intended to address safety concerns.

Site Evaluation Findings: Strong Recommendations

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

There are no strong recommendations issued at Discovery Charter School Las Vegas Sandhill for this site evaluation.

Site Evaluation Findings: Deficiencies

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

There are no deficiencies identified at Discovery Charter School Las Vegas Sandhill 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 ⁸	2
Family Members, Parents, and Guardians	5
Faculty and Staff	5
School Leadership	2
Students	10

⁸ Quorum was not met, and Open Meeting Law was not violated.

Focus Group Summary: Governing Board

Board focus group members, with diverse professional backgrounds in law and finance and as parents, shared their experiences with the site evaluation team. The board recently completed the appointment of a new board chair, as the previous chairperson has transitioned to serve as the school's Executive Director. The hiring process for the school's Executive Director position involved the board creating a sub-committee to lead the process. Over a hundred applicants were screened based on qualifications, resulting in a list of twelve candidates, with nine being interviewed. The sub-committee then selected two finalists, and the board conducted a final interview and selected the top candidate, selecting the former board chair.

The participants shared the school's recent successes, which included an improvement in its NSPF star rating from two to three stars. This accomplishment and the school's improved academic achievement scores have instilled a sense of pride and optimism among the stakeholders. The goal is now to achieve a five-star rating soon. The school's collaboration with a private educational consultant to improve instruction through data-based decision-making is another success story. The high staff retention and commitment of the teachers to continuous improvement further contribute to the school's positive trajectory.

A challenge the board prioritize is decreasing the chronically absent rates. One member shared that the school continually focuses on communication with the students and their parents regarding the importance of not missing quality instruction. As a result, one board member shared that parents and students were more informed about the importance of attending school regularly and the school's attendance policies and procedures.

The participants discussed the Board's Self-Evaluation Process and their methods for evaluating the school's leaders, including referencing an evaluation form that had been used previously. They shared that board members emphasize visiting the school several times a week. They also praised the current principal's effective communication and collaborative style. Lastly, the participants mentioned the school's focus on remodeling the building to add teaching spaces, one of which could be leased to an early education provider, which would assist the school financially.

Focus Group Summary: Family Members, Parents, and Guardians

The family focus group consisted of five parents/guardians. A portion of the session discussed the family's perception of their child's academic, social, and emotional progress. Several group members stated that their child had improved academically, demonstrating significant gains in math and reading. One shared that her daughter has improved her reading skills by one grade level, stating, "My daughter was way behind on reading skills. She loves digital learning and works on programs at home, and she wants to get her homework done right away." Another parent said her son did more at Discovery Sandhill in one month than the whole year at his previous school. Another parent shared that although his child enjoys attending school, he felt that his child needed to be challenged with more rigorous work. Participants also mentioned that the school generally meets their child's social and emotional needs, allowing them to focus on learning.

Members of the focus group underscored the significant benefits of the school's small population and classroom sizes. One parent articulated, "It's like a family at this campus," emphasizing that the personal touch, where every staff member knows the students by name is a unique advantage. Another parent, drawing from her experiences in larger schools, highlighted the ease of communication with Discovery's teachers and administrators. This manageable communication and the school's timely and interpersonal responses contribute to a reassuring and confident atmosphere.

The group noted that school leaders generally address parent concerns promptly. One parent elaborated that a bullying matter was resolved, and clear communication of the resolution was provided. Another parent shared that school leaders contacted her immediately when her child needed speech services. According to focus group participants, the school's strengths include good staff communication, school events, a strong sense of community, incentive awards, and good teachers. However, group participants noted several challenges, such as transitioning their child to Discovery Hillpointe for middle school, located fourteen miles away in a different section of the city, or applying their child to another middle school.

The group was asked to share any recommendations for the school. The group discussed having more extracurricular activities for the students. One parent shared his desire for additional creative arts activities, specifically a robust music program. Another parent said having a Gifted and Talented Education (GATE)⁹ Program would be desirable. A few participants mentioned their desire for the school to add grades six through eight at Discovery Sandhill, rather than just at the Hillpointe location across town. Others shared their thoughts on having a grass playfield for students and more playground equipment. A few raised their concerns about improving school safety, explicitly referring to the transient homeless individuals who occasionally access the vacant building next to the school, which, in their opinion, can be distracting to the learning environment and a perceived safety concern.

⁹ Gifted Education (also known as gifted and talented education (GATE), uses educational approaches of acceleration for identified students to progress through the curriculum at a more advanced rate.

Focus Group Summary: Faculty and Staff

Several themes emerged from the focus group discussion, including high staff retention rates, small class sizes, and a supportive administrator. The group conveyed a low turnover rate among staff, and many chose to return to school primarily due to smaller class sizes and a supportive administrator. One member stated that small class sizes provided an optimal teaching experience vastly different from her former school district. A few members discussed the advantages of smaller class sizes, allowing for a more personalized learning environment and explicitly ensuring their students receive higher-quality instruction. Others elaborated on the principal's support as essential to wanting to remain at the school. A member commented that the principal demonstrates a supportive demeanor. The staff members sincerely appreciated the principal's active communication and follow-through. They commended the principal who served as the assistant principal before being promoted for her dedication to following up with concerns and providing timely updates on important matters, making them feel recognized and valued.

Another theme shared by the group members is the staff's ability to collaborate and the importance of having blocks of planning time. A member stated that the school's schedule of maintaining Fridays as a planning, collaboration, and professional development day is vital for their success. Another staff member mentioned that his lesson design and delivery have improved and attributed this to the indispensable planning time. He commented that he got burnt out working in the local school district and left the profession for a few years. Teaching at Discovery Charter School Sandhill has renewed his passion and love for teaching.

The group was asked to share any recommendations for the school leaders. One member stated that having a budget to purchase math manipulatives, classroom supplies, and curricular resources would be valuable. A few members shared they would like consistent updates on the budget, elaborating on the importance of knowing how the school's budget is utilized. The group communicated the need to have the school more secure, with a highly monitored single point of entry and all gates secured for school operations. They also conveyed the importance of improving the height of the school's fences and suggested the possibility of installing private fencing (non-see-through) by the play area facing the main road to enhance student safety and security. Lastly, the group highlighted the need to provide the students with a grass playfield area. Currently, the student's play area is part of the parking lot and is fenced off from vehicles. A staff member commented, "The students deserve a safer and better area to play."

Focus Group Summary: School Leadership

The leadership focus group was comprised of the school's principal and the newly appointed Executive Director. The leaders reviewed the presentation slides and started with the school's strengths, which included staff retention, data-driven decisions, student achievement incentives, and high expectations for both staff and students. The leaders shared that all staff returned from the last school year and informed the administration that they would return for the next school year. The leaders cited that staff enjoy teaching in a small family-type setting, which can improve overall work-life balance. Retaining quality staff supports the continuity from year to year, providing students and families with consistency.

The school's commitment to data-driven instruction and decision-making is not just a cornerstone of its academic strategy, but also a testament to the value placed on each student's unique learning journey. This approach has been instrumental in the school's improved star rating, resulting from collective efforts to ensure every student's needs are met. The leaders' emphasis on the significance of working with an independent third-party instructional data consultant and their shared experiences of how this partnership has enhanced the educational teams' understanding of data trends and the effectiveness of their lessons and curricular programs, further underscores the importance of our commitment to data-driven instruction. The team's presentation of the most recent student i-Ready data portfolios and their explanation of how they make instructional adjustments based on individual student needs, is a clear demonstration of the dedication to each student's success.

The leaders discussed the importance of ensuring every student has access to and receives high-quality teaching to support continuous improvement. The school emphasized recognizing student growth and features bulletin boards in common areas displaying student data and providing student incentive awards.

The leadership focus group discussion included a focus on current enrollment data. The leaders reported that the school has 119 students enrolled, and future aspirations include expansion and adding middle school grades so their students can remain at Discovery Charter School Las Vegas Sandhill until eighth grade. Expansion plans comprise purchasing the building next to the school or examining nearby buildings. Meanwhile, the leaders are focused on a remodel project to add more teaching spaces and security measures, including enhancing building safety with surveillance cameras and improved locks to exterior doors.

The school's leadership team remains focused on reducing chronic absenteeism. One leader stated that their goal is to reduce the school's rates to under five percent. Furthermore, ensuring students attend regularly will support their aspirations to be a 4- or five-star rated school, a recognition of academic excellence and student success.

Focus Group Summary: Students

Ten students from grades three through five participated in the focus group session. Students took turns sharing their recent learning experiences, and several highlighted their enjoyment of learning math. One said, "I really enjoy math and working with addition and multiplication." A student mentioned his science project, making a giant robot that fights in space. Several highlighted their love for reading. One student shared, "We get to share what we read by talking about what we read to either other classmates or our teacher."

The site evaluation team asked the students what they liked most about attending the school. Several students shared that the teachers are great and that they make learning enjoyable. A few students emphasized that the physical education (PE) class is more engaging this year, mainly introducing new games, skills, and activities. Several students stressed that they liked the "small school" feel. Many students stated that they feel respected at school and that they generally feel safe. Several group members discussed that they feel comfortable talking to a staff member when they have a problem or a concern. One student shared, "I can talk to one of my former teachers." Another said, "I feel safe talking to my teacher because she is near me during the day." A student shared that calling Safe Voice allows people to place anonymous reports or issues.

Suggestions to improve the school include extracurricular activities like football, other sports, additional sports equipment, and music and arts programs. A few students said they would love additional arts and music teachers, further mentioning that having specials more often and a dedicated room for those classes is important. One student discussed that the school should consider using the building next door for a science lab. Most of the group shared that having a playground or grass field would be highly suggested.

The students conveyed things that interfered with their learning, such as students who talked too much when the teacher provided directions. One student shared that she tries her best to listen and focus, but students speaking out of turn disrupt her learning. Other group members discussed that getting sick and missing school makes it difficult to keep up with the academic demands.

Classroom Environment and Instruction Observation Rubric

A total of 11 elementary 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: 1	TOTAL: 9	TOTAL: 1	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: 9	TOTAL: 1	TOTAL: 0	TOTAL: 0

Classroom Environment and Instruction Observation Rubric

A total of 11 elementary 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: 0	TOTAL: 10	TOTAL: 1	TOTAL: 0	TOTAL: 0
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: 1	TOTAL: 7	TOTAL: 1	TOTAL: 0	TOTAL: 2

Classroom Environment and Instruction Observation Rubric

A total of 11 elementary 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: 0	TOTAL: 9	TOTAL: 2	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: 0	TOTAL: 11	TOTAL: 0	TOTAL: 0	TOTAL: 0

Classroom Observations and Additional Comments

Students in a primary classroom were reading books independently. One student at a time was reading with the teacher. The teacher announced if the students she was reading with were successful in reading their book, asking comprehension questions along the way, and the other students paused reading and clapped for the student if they were successful. All students were focused on reading and comprehending the text. One student told another, "I can help you read this!"

In an upper elementary classroom, the teacher provided English language arts instruction. The teacher reviewed student responses to a previous assessment while the students took notes and discussed feedback on the use of grammar. Students were engaged in the lesson. The students were also required to complete a written response to reflect on what they would do differently with their original written response.

In an upper elementary classroom, students collaborated to create an anchor chart titled "Dividing 3-Digit Numbers." They suggested numbers as examples while the rest of the class followed along, recording the problem as guided by the teacher. The discussion flowed naturally between the teacher and students. Together, they evaluated whether four could be divided evenly into 101, sharing their thoughts and reasoning. The teacher posed higher-level questions, such as, "Can you think of a real-life example where you might need to divide 101 by 4? This could help provide context." He allowed students time to reflect on the question. The teacher fostered strong relationships with the students, incorporating humor and shared experiences into the lesson.

A special education pull-out classroom had two students and one teacher. One student was tested for reading words aloud. The student received 96 percent, and the teacher told her to take a slip for her computer to participate in the Treat Train. The teacher asks the student to get her laptop to update her progress. The student skipped out of the room and was happy with her progress. Then, the teacher helped the student review her progress in other areas. The teacher was highly supportive of both students. This room is positive, clean, and quiet, except for the voices of the two students and the teacher. The teacher said, "Look at you go!"

The teacher conducted a lesson in which students were tasked with identifying various text features in a nonfiction text about different regions of the United States. While students were cooperative, the teacher was responsible for driving the lesson. Students were organized into groups, but only about 60 percent actively participated in the group work. The teacher then prompted students to discuss the "What is a summary?" question within their groups. After the discussions, each group selected one member to share their response with the class. One student responded, "A summary is when you don't write the whole story, but just important parts of the story."

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
SPCSA staff recommend that Discovery Charter School Las Vegas Sandhill develop and implement targeted marketing campaigns to boost enrollment.	The school's leadership team shared their action steps to improve enrollment, which currently stands at 119 students, above their projections.	The SPCSA recognizes the school's leadership effort to market and recruit, increasing enrollment to meet their charter contract targets. School leadership shared their plans to consider applying for increased enrollment and adding grades six through eight.
SPCSA staff recommend that Discovery Charter School Las Vegas Sandhill enhance its existing truancy program by refining communication strategies with families and students to decrease chronic absenteeism.	The school leadership reported that chronic absenteeism has improved. A technical and reporting issue impacted last year's data, which has since been resolved. The school has proactively communicated with families on the importance of attending school regularly.	The SPCSA acknowledges the school's effort to decrease chronic absenteeism; however, the rates must decrease to be within the district average or lower, making chronic absenteeism a continued area of focus and recommendation. Ensuring accurate attendance reporting and actively communicating with families with high absences can support the school's improvement efforts.
SPCSA staff recommend that Discovery Charter School Las Vegas Sandhill develop comprehensive academic improvement plans tailored to address specific challenges identified through data analysis.	The school's leadership team shared action steps taken to improve academic performance at the Discovery Charter School Las Vegas Sandhill Campus. The plan includes continued focus on core instruction using curricular materials with fidelity and monitoring student achievement data regularly.	The SPCSA recognizes the school's focus on increasing academic achievement, as evidenced by its move from a two-star rating to a three-star rating. Maintaining a continuous improvement framework will be essential for continued progress.

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 type="checkbox"/> YES	<input type="checkbox"/> NO	<input checked="" 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.