



# Nevada State Public Charter School Authority

Nevada Rise Academy

Site Evaluation Report: January 14<sup>th</sup>, 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.

## **Academic improvement over time**

Nevada Rise Academy's (NVRA) overall index score on the Nevada School Performance Framework (NSPF) rose significantly from 15 points in the 2022-23 school year to 54 points in 2023-24, resulting in an improved star rating from 1-star to 3-stars within one year. Math proficiency increased from 22% in 2022-23 to 30.5% in 2023-24, while English language arts (ELA) proficiency grew from 32% to 45.2% during the same period. Additionally, growth levels in math (59%) and ELA (61%) surpassed the SPCSA averages of 52% and 54%, respectively.

## **Student attendance**

Chronic absenteeism at NVRA saw a dramatic reduction, dropping from 33.7% in the 2022-23 school year to just 5.1% in 2023-24. This significant improvement highlights the school's effective efforts in fostering regular attendance by enhancing communication with families about the importance of consistent school participation. These efforts included targeted outreach, improved engagement strategies, and support systems to address barriers to attendance, contributing to a stronger school community and improved student outcomes.

## **Positive school culture**

NVRA has several strengths that foster a positive school culture. The leadership team hosts a daily morning staff check-in, where awards are presented to recognize staff members' specific contributions to the school. The check-in also includes a spirited "Rise Up" cheer to energize the team for the day. The school is proud of its high staff retention rate from one year to the next. Additionally, four cultural celebrations are held each school year, highlighting events, such as holidays around the world and Black History Month. During these celebrations, every student participates in a performance where they write, direct, and produce presentations on stage, showcasing talents like playing instruments, singing, or acting in plays.

## **Governing board stability**

The Nevada Rise Academy Governing Board has strong retention, with four members having been on the Board since 2018-19 and two members having served on the board since the Committee to Form.

## **Classroom management**

Teachers schoolwide have excellent skills in classroom management at NVRA. Students are happy in the classroom and eager to learn. Members of the site evaluation team observed students self-regulating when needing to use the restroom and transitioning from one place to another in a positive way with clear expectations. SPCSA staff observed faculty, staff, and students using hand gestures, choral responses, and verbal cues to undergird and support classroom management. Using hand gestures and accountable talk in the classroom supports the culture and climate at NVRA. Faculty and staff do not raise their voices; they state what needs to occur, and students move quickly to transition to the activity.

# 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.

## **Facility limitations**

Leadership reported that space continues to be limited at Nevada Rise Academy. The school leases its schooling space with a church; therefore, negotiating common space is challenging and limited. An added challenge is that educational materials must be stored during the weekend for church services. The leadership team said, "Restroom space is limited, and many people use one restroom. Fortunately, we are grandfathered in, so we meet the code. It's just not the most conducive or optimal for our needs." The exploration of procuring a long-term facility for the school is an ongoing discussion with the Governing Board.

## **Low science proficiency rate**

Nevada Rise Academy faces a challenge in science proficiency, with a rate of less than 5%, according to the NSPF, compared to the district average of 21.2%. Leadership noted a prevailing mindset that science proficiency becomes a focus only in 5th grade. To address this issue, the school adopted a new curriculum, Amplify Science<sup>1</sup>, two years ago. Additionally, dedicated science classes are now included in the daily schedule for all grade levels at Nevada Rise Academy.

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<sup>1</sup> Amplify Science is a K–8 science curriculum that blends hands-on investigations, literacy-rich activities, and interactive digital tools to empower students to think, read, write, and argue.

# 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.

## **Student discourse and intentional student-led grouping**

The SPCSA staff recommend providing students with more opportunities for meaningful discourse during lessons, focusing on content-related topics. Encouraging students to engage in thoughtful discussions with their peers promotes deeper understanding and critical thinking. When students are given the chance to converse about their learning, they can share perspectives, clarify their thinking, and build on each other's ideas, leading to a richer and more collaborative learning experience. Furthermore, practicing purposeful, student-led grouping fosters collaboration, independence, and deeper engagement in learning. Some suggestions include using Kagan Structures, Jigsaw Method, and Reciprocal Teaching.

## **Leadership roles and responsibilities**

SPCSA members recommend that leadership improve transparency regarding the roles and responsibilities within the leadership team. One suggestion is to create and share a clear flowchart outlining each leadership member's specific duties and responsibilities. This would help teachers understand who to approach for specific issues and concerns. Faculty focus group participants noted that while leadership maintains an open-door policy, the lack of clarity about individual roles sometimes creates confusion and discomfort. One faculty member shared, "In other places I've worked, going directly to the Executive Director without consulting other leaders first could give the impression that I was in serious trouble. I don't like not knowing who I'm supposed to go to." Several other faculty members echoed this sentiment.

## **Why and how of the learning and metacognition**

While teachers effectively communicated the "what" of the learning by presenting the Nevada Academic Content Standards (NVACS)-aligned objectives, the SPCSA recommends that they expand these explanations by incorporating the questions, "Why are we learning this?" and "What will we be able to do as a result of learning this?" This may better enable students to understand the success criteria for successfully completing an assignment or project. Adding these elements may deepen students' understanding of the purpose behind their learning and connect the objectives to real-world applications. This approach can foster greater student engagement, motivation, and ownership of their learning as they gain a clearer sense of the relevance and outcomes of the skills and concepts being taught.

## **Students do the heavy lifting**

When students do the heavy lifting of the lesson, they can take ownership of their learning, persevere, build complex skills, and master new concepts. The SPCSA staff recommend that teachers at Nevada Rise Academy find ways in which the students do the heavy lifting of the learning. Possible suggestions include having high expectations for work quality, modeling, having students express their solutions and ideas to each other, and present their findings to the class.

# Site Evaluation Findings: Strong Recommendations

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

There are no strong recommendations for Nevada Rise Academy during this site evaluation.

# Site Evaluation Findings: Deficiencies

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

There were no deficiencies issued for this site evaluation for Nevada Rise Academy.



# 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 <sup>2</sup>	3
Family Members, Parents, and Guardians	10
Faculty and Staff	7
School Leadership	3
Students	11

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<sup>2</sup> Quorum was not met, and Open Meeting Law was not violated.

# Focus Group Summary: Governing Board

Three Nevada Rise Academy's Board members met on the site evaluation day. Board members described their oversight role as ensuring alignment with the school's common goals, policies, and procedures. The board has members who are in executive leadership, legal, finance, and own businesses as part of their robust experience. The Board reports meeting bi-monthly and has finance, fundraising, and academic subcommittees.

When asked what factors the board credits to the significant rise in the index score at Nevada Rise Academy, board members said it is effective school leadership, the strategic vision of the leadership team, and their focus on key areas of improvement; they highlighted the targeted efforts and ownership taken by both teachers and leadership, along with their commitment to raising scores. The strategic plan, broken down into actionable steps, played a critical role, particularly in addressing chronic absenteeism, which was a significant factor in the improvement. In addition, board members stated, "The Executive Director hired two data analysts to examine the data and to provide insight on how to help students at a granular level, which includes tutoring, after-school assistance, intentional pullouts from class, and Saturday school."

When asked about the evaluation process for the school leader at Nevada Rise Academy, the board explained that the board chair conducts monthly check-ins with the Executive Director to discuss areas for improvement and review key performance indicators (KPIs). At the end of each year, a formal evaluation process takes place. This includes the Executive Director completing a self-reflection and the board conducting a separate evaluation. The two evaluations are combined to provide a comprehensive assessment. All the information is measured with a rubric with extensive sections about personnel hiring practices, academics, leadership style, culture, growth, professional development, and retention.

Board members discussed implementing a merit-based pay structure for teachers. One board member said, "We take pride in offering a merit-based pay structure for our teachers, which includes performance bonuses. This approach reflects our commitment to recognizing and rewarding excellence. We are proud to foster a strong, supportive culture and to offer competitive compensation that attracts and retains top talent."

The board is stable in sharing that two members have been on since the Committee to Form. The board also reported that they recruit and bring on about one to two members per year. They reported being opportunistic in looking for members all the time. One member said, "We do not have a resource pool, but we have not had an empty space where we need to look for members for a long period of time."

# Focus Group Summary: Family Members, Parents, and Guardians

On the day of the evaluation, 10 family members participated in the focus group, highlighting several strengths of the Nevada Rise Academy program. Participants praised the rich opportunities the school provides for children to engage in the arts, emphasizing the value of these experiences. They also spoke highly of the warm, family-like atmosphere fostered at Nevada Rise Academy. One parent remarked, “The unique opportunity for my child to participate in the cultural events of the school—these are reflected throughout the school, into the academics, and within the broader community.” In addition, parents expressed appreciation for the effective communication facilitated through ClassDojo<sup>3</sup>, MyEducationData<sup>4</sup>, and IXL<sup>5</sup>, as well as the overall responsiveness of teachers in addressing any concerns.

Another strength mentioned during the family focus group was the quality and accessibility of the teachers at Nevada Rise Academy. One parent shared that their child has the teacher’s phone number and can FaceTime them with questions. She said, “The teacher takes the time to explain concepts until my student fully understands.” Other parents mentioned that their children’s teachers often respond to questions after hours and are happy to provide support. They expressed surprise and gratitude for this level of dedication, noting that they are aware teachers are not obligated to be available outside of school hours.

Parents acknowledged the academic rigor at Nevada Rise Academy and highlighted the contract signed at the beginning of the year by both parents and students. They appreciated that this agreement holds students accountable for their learning and behavior, emphasizing the importance of their commitment. One parent said, “This approach helps instill a sense of responsibility and reinforces the value of education.”

One suggestion the parent focus group members had for Nevada Rise Academy was possibly adding a middle school. Since the school currently serves kindergarten through fifth grade, parents expressed that one of the challenges they face is finding an appropriate school for their children for sixth grade and beyond. They believe expanding to include a middle school would provide continuity in education and allow their children to remain in a familiar and supportive environment. This expansion could also strengthen the sense of community among students, families, and staff, according to those participating in the focus group.

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<sup>3</sup> Class Dojo is a communication platform for schools and families.

<sup>4</sup> MyEducationData is a website that has detailed information for families regarding student data.

<sup>5</sup> IXL is a computer- adaptive program for English language arts and math with personalized learning pathways.

# Focus Group Summary: Faculty and Staff

Seven Nevada Rise Academy staff members met for forty-five minutes on the morning of the site evaluation. Staff members mentioned that staff morale is positive. One faculty member shared strong professional and personal connections with leadership and colleagues. Team members feel comfortable being themselves and sharing humor in the space. Another faculty member admitted that, initially, they were skeptical about the morning meetings<sup>6</sup>, but they now find them uplifting, empowering, and supportive. "We are a team here," they said, emphasizing the sincerity of the environment.

The staff at Nevada Rise Academy were asked about their efforts to sustain and improve the school's 3-star status. They highlighted several strategies, including practicing performance tasks, implementing small group instruction, and encouraging students to carefully read directions and engage in productive struggle during assignments. Teachers emphasized helping students identify "the most important piece of the question" to enhance critical thinking. One staff member shared that their primary focus is improving attendance, ensuring students are eager to come to school, excited to learn, and motivated by opportunities to explore new concepts and make meaningful connections. Another faculty member stressed the importance of building strong relationships with parents to foster classroom success. He said, "It's crucial for me to know that parents can support their student's learning at home, so I prioritize making those connections to strengthen collaboration between school and home."

Staff members at Nevada Rise Academy spoke about the communication flow between teachers and leadership. One faculty member noted they approach the Executive Director for financial or parental concerns and another leadership member for different issues. Faculty observed that the delegation of responsibilities among leadership team members is not well-defined, though they appreciate that leadership is approachable and willing to listen. Staff speculated that the leadership team's open-door policy might contribute to the absence of a clear flowchart or defined standard operating procedures, leaving some uncertainty about individual roles and responsibilities within the leadership team.

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<sup>6</sup> Morning meetings are held before school to praise staff and connect for the day.

# Focus Group Summary: School Leadership

Three members of the leadership staff met and participated in the leadership focus group on the day of the site evaluation. Several strengths were shared. When asked about the significant reduction in chronic absenteeism at Nevada Rise Academy, which dropped from 33% in 2022-23 to 5% in 2023-24, one leader detailed the proactive measures taken. He explained that they regularly print lists of students with chronic absences or those nearing that threshold, ensure the data's accuracy, and personally track students during carline and in class, crossing names off the list as they are accounted for. The leader stated, “We also reach out to families directly to encourage attendance and addresses transportation barriers by covering costs for services like HopSkipDrive<sup>7</sup>.” The school also implemented incentives to boost attendance, such as free dress days and attendance challenges, particularly after school breaks, when attendance can be a larger issue.

Nevada Rise Academy leaders expressed satisfaction with their teacher retention rates. They highlighted their success in retaining the teachers they wanted to keep and share strategies used for staffing, including recruiting through platforms like Indeed and Teach for America. They also noted that the school operates on a four-day work week with students. The fifth day is used for planning, professional development, and data analysis, which has been an attractive feature for staff. To further incentivize retention and performance, the school offered a bonus of 10% of a teacher’s salary during the 2023-24 school year. This bonus is tied to factors such as the school’s star rating, reductions in chronic absenteeism, the percentage of students meeting MAP<sup>8</sup> growth projections, and overall teacher retention rates.

Nevada Rise Academy leaders reported several ongoing challenges they are actively addressing. One significant issue is the facility size, which limits its ability to expand and creates logistical hurdles. For instance, a shipment arriving on a Friday must be cleared quickly to ensure shared spaces remain functional, adding unnecessary stress to daily operations. While the school has invested \$100,000 in a playground to enhance student experience, they are still searching for a permanent, long-term facility to call home. Another challenge is navigating compliance requirements without a dedicated back-office team, which places additional burdens on teachers and impacts students directly. This lack of administrative support means educators are often required to manage tasks that could otherwise be handled by a specialized team. Leaders also noted that their staffing model constantly evolves to meet the school’s needs, which adds complexity to maintaining consistency and long-term planning. Despite these challenges, they remain committed to finding solutions that support the school’s mission and community.

School leaders at Nevada Rise Academy reflected on the strategies for sustaining their recent improvement in the Nevada School Performance Framework (NSPF) star rating, which rose from 1-star in 2022-23 to 3-stars in 2023-24. They emphasized the importance of incentivizing teacher performance by offering stipends for achieving student growth goals, which contributed to the increased star rating.

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<sup>7</sup> HopSkipDrive partners with schools to offer a safe school transportation solution.

<sup>8</sup> MAP stands for Measures of Academic Progress which is a diagnostic assessment measuring reading and math skills.

Leaders are also exploring financial sustainability through operational changes, such as restructuring certain positions from salaried to hourly roles. This shift is intended to manage resources more effectively while maintaining support for key initiatives. To bolster long-term financial stability, the school has hired a dedicated fundraising group. However, leadership noted that their community partnerships have not yet yielded significant monetary benefits. They added securing a permanent facility remains a pressing priority to ensure the stability and growth of the school; with the school in the final year of its current lease, leaders remain optimistic that these measures will help maintain the school's upward trajectory and provide a strong foundation for the future.

# Focus Group Summary: Students

Eleven students from Nevada Rise Academy met with the SPCSA site evaluation team on the day of the visit. Students shared their enthusiasm about recently learning a variety of new topics. One student mentioned enjoying learning how to add mixed numbers and developing a love for fractions. Another student said, "In science, we are studying constellations. I have an interest in space." Jackie Robinson's story and his fascinating achievements also captured students' attention. Additionally, students reported writing personal narratives about a birthday party and learning about geologists, sparking curiosity about the natural world.

Students in the Nevada Rise Academy focus group shared that they are particularly invested in the cultural celebrations held throughout the year, with performances for the community four times annually. For example, students participated in a performance for Hispanic Heritage Month, where they performed a song from the movie *In The Heights*. For Black History Month, teachers are preparing a special performance to celebrate and educate students about influential figures and events. The fifth graders also have a special event called the "Sneaker Ball," a dance for them to enjoy. Additionally, 5th graders who achieve perfect attendance, display good behavior, and have the highest usage on IXL are rewarded with a field trip to see the Harlem Globetrotters. The Ruby Bridges Walk is another significant event, where all students walk around the block while learning important lessons about Ruby Bridges' role in history. For Black History Month, teachers prepare a special performance to celebrate and educate students about influential figures and events.

Students at Nevada Rise Academy expressed that they feel emotionally and physically safe while attending school. They noted that regular drills help them prepare for emergencies, and there are always many adults in the building who are there to protect the students. Additionally, staff members provide reassurance, contributing to a sense of security. Students also mentioned that they feel safe with their classmates and get along well with one another. They also reported having at least one adult on campus that they feel comfortable going to should a problem arise.

Students at Nevada Rise Academy shared that they use MyEducationData to track their progress and check their grades. The platform allows them to view their enrichment activities and even see their friends' birthdays. They also check it after every test to see how they perform compared to their peers. It provides a helpful way to monitor their academic progress and stay connected with classmates.

When asked about ways their school could be improved, Nevada Rise Academy students suggested a few changes. They pointed out the lack of restrooms in the portables, which they felt could be an inconvenience. Some students expressed a desire to bring fidget spinners to class to help them focus. Additionally, several students mentioned that they would like more community "crew" time to connect with their peers and engage in group activities.

# Classroom Environment and Instruction

## Observation Rubric

A total of 25 elementary classrooms were observed for approximately 15 minutes on the day of the site evaluation.

<b>Classroom Environment</b>					
	<b>Distinguished</b>	<b>Highly Proficient</b>	<b>Approaching Proficient</b>	<b>Unsatisfactory</b>	<b>Not Observed</b>
<b>Classroom Learning Environment is Conducive to Learning</b>	<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>	This criterion was not observed or rated.
	<b>TOTAL: 5</b>	<b>TOTAL: 17</b>	<b>TOTAL: 2</b>	<b>TOTAL: 0</b>	<b>TOTAL: 1</b>
<b>Establishing a Culture for Learning</b>	<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>	This criterion was not observed or rated.
	<b>TOTAL: 1</b>	<b>TOTAL: 20</b>	<b>TOTAL: 4</b>	<b>TOTAL: 0</b>	<b>TOTAL: 0</b>



# Classroom Environment and Instruction Observation Rubric

A total of 25 elementary classrooms were observed for approximately 15 minutes on the day of the site evaluation.

<b>Classroom Instruction</b>					
	<b>Distinguished</b>	<b>Highly Proficient</b>	<b>Approaching Proficient</b>	<b>Unsatisfactory</b>	<b>Not Observed</b>
<b>Communicating with Students</b>	<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>	This criterion was not observed or rated.
	<b>TOTAL: 3</b>	<b>TOTAL: 21</b>	<b>TOTAL: 1</b>	<b>TOTAL: 0</b>	<b>TOTAL: 0</b>
<b>Using Questioning and Discussion Strategies</b>	<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>	This criterion was not observed or rated.
	<b>TOTAL: 2</b>	<b>TOTAL: 16</b>	<b>TOTAL: 4</b>	<b>TOTAL: 0</b>	<b>TOTAL: 3</b>

# Classroom Environment and Instruction

## Observation Rubric

A total of 25 elementary classrooms were observed for approximately 15 minutes on the day of the site evaluation.

Classroom Instruction					
	Distinguished	Highly Proficient	Approaching Proficient	Unsatisfactory	Not Observed
<b>Engaging Students in Learning</b>	<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>
	<b>TOTAL: 3</b>	<b>TOTAL: 18</b>	<b>TOTAL: 4</b>	<b>TOTAL: 0</b>	<b>TOTAL: 0</b>
<b>Using Assessment in Instruction</b>	<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>	
	<b>TOTAL: 2</b>	<b>TOTAL: 20</b>	<b>TOTAL: 1</b>	<b>TOTAL: 0</b>	<b>TOTAL: 2</b>

# Classroom Observations and Additional Comments

In a primary-grade classroom, the learning target was to divide multi-syllabic words into syllables, which the teacher reviewed with the students at the beginning of the lesson. The students used their whiteboards as the teacher led them through an activity. The teacher called on many students, but only a small number participated in the discussion. The teacher asked students to explain their reasoning, but only some students attempted to do so. The pacing of the lesson was uneven—suitable in parts but rushed or dragging in others.

Students listened to a reading explaining loyalists and colonists in one reading activity that blended American colonial history. The lesson included vocabulary, political terminology, taxes, and millinery skills. Students were asked to discuss with their shoulder partner whether they thought the main character was a loyalist or a colonist based on context clues. The teacher then asked students to share their thoughts with the whole class. The teacher did not confirm or negate students' thoughts and only asked them what they based their discernment on. The students continued the reading, looking for clues to affirm or change their original thinking. The teacher paused occasionally to ask the whole class questions about the time period, including vocabulary definitions. Students answered chorally.

Students responded to character trait prompts asked by the teacher to their shoulder partners. The teacher then called on individual students to share their thoughts and filled out the character trait shared on the whiteboard worksheet. Students copied the same answers on their individual sheets. The teacher affirmed the students' answers as the conversation went on. This was a missed opportunity for students to explain their thinking and agree or disagree with their peers without the teacher being the authoritative voice. The teacher followed this activity with an opportunity for students to write a three-sentence argument on how the chapter builds the plot and moves the action, which is separate from the original activity of identifying character traits in a text.

Students completed IXL tasks in small groups. The instructor worked with one small group on identifying relevant facts and annotating texts from multiple sources, and an instructional aide assisted another small group. Students were mostly engaged.

Students were completing a Solve and Share math practice based on addition combinations of ten. There was a sense of urgency surrounding the work, as a timer was set for one minute to complete the practice. One student solved the problem on the Board as students watched.

During small group enrichment time, the teacher taught two students' academic vocabulary words using words, pictures, and the student's own background knowledge. The other students in the room were working on a rigorous task aligned with Nevada Academic Content Standards that required critical thinking skills. The teacher pulled another group during the rotation to work on a test prep task. The students listened to a text and underlined important information to help them answer questions.

The teacher introduced a lesson on an opinion essay about an animal that has a bad reputation but is useful. The teacher was clear and concise in her instruction about creating a thesis statement for students' essays. The students had plenty of time to talk with other students about their ideas, yet there was a strong sense of urgency in the classroom and clear classroom expectations. Students participated readily in the discussions and showed excitement for the lesson.

In an upper elementary classroom, the students learned about loyalists and their beliefs. The teacher emphasized academic vocabulary and created loops of opportunities for students to share their thinking as the students filled out the answers in their workbooks and cited their evidence. The teacher modeled high expectations, and the students demonstrated high commitment to completing their work.

In a primary classroom, students were actively engaged in small group activities, including encoding and writing with the teacher, using a computer-based program to develop reading skills, and participating in a sight word lesson. The teacher guided her small groups by asking, "What strategy will you use to segment the word you are spelling?" Students responded with strategies like "arm" and "chopping " methods. The students were highly engaged, and the classroom environment fostered a positive and productive learning atmosphere.

In a primary classroom, students worked on sight words using their Bridge to Learning workbook from Heggerty, a well-regarded literacy curriculum. The teacher offered prompts and purposeful feedback, maintaining a sense of urgency. The classroom atmosphere was calm, welcoming, and conducive to learning.

Some students worked independently on IXL to practice math, while others joined the teacher in a small group lesson focused on time and money concepts. Using a visual aid, the teacher effectively explained "quarter to" and "quarter after." Her classroom management was exemplary, as she set clear expectations and provided positive reinforcement. She skillfully modulated her voice—raising and lowering it as needed—to maintain engagement and demonstrate a respectful and supportive attitude toward her students.

The teacher provided direct instruction in English language arts in an upper elementary classroom. The teacher read a text about a famous fictional individual while the students followed along, and the teacher periodically asked them text-dependent questions. The students were then required to complete a summative assessment involving creating a graphic organizer. The teacher reviewed and displayed the criteria for success along with the standards RL<sup>9</sup> 5.1, RI<sup>10</sup> 5.2, and W<sup>11</sup> 5.9b. Students worked actively as the teacher monitored their progress, providing assistance and prompts as needed, such as "prove it" and "get it directly from the text."

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<sup>9</sup> RL stands for reading literature, one of the Nevada Academic Content Standards.

<sup>10</sup> RI standards for reading informational text, one of the Nevada Academic Content Standards.

<sup>11</sup> W stands for writing, one of the Nevada Academic Content Standards.

# 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
Improve academic performance (1-star status in 2022-23).	Nevada Rise Academy increased its 1-star rating (2022-23) to a 3-star rating (2023-24).	SPCSA staff finds this recommendation has been met with satisfactory progress.
Develop a robust staff of specialists and teachers ready to meet the needs of specialized student populations.	Nevada Rise Academy achieved increased proficiency scores and a star rating on the NSPF, which indicates a robust staff ready to meet the needs of all students. The school leaders added instructional coaches and other experts to the leadership team.	SPCSA staff finds this recommendation has been met with satisfactory progress.
Continue to develop ways to address chronic absenteeism.	Nevada Rise Academy decreased chronic absenteeism from 33% (2022-23) to 5% (2023-24).	SPCSA staff find this recommendation has been met with satisfactory progress.
Implement a sharps receptacle.	A sharps receptacle has been implemented.	SPCSA staff finds this recommendation has been met with satisfactory 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 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.