



Nevada State Public Charter School Authority

Honors Academy of Literature

Site Evaluation Report: December 11th, 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

Table of Contents

Executive Summary 3

Site Evaluation Findings: Strengths..... 4

Site Evaluation Findings: Challenges 6

Site Evaluation Findings: Recommendations 7

Site Evaluation Findings: Strong Recommendations 8

Site Evaluation Findings: Deficiencies 9

Focus Group Participation Data..... 10

 Focus Group Summary: Governing Board11

 Focus Group Summary: Family Members, Parents, and Guardians..... 12

 Focus Group Summary: Faculty and Staff..... 13

 Focus Group Summary: School Leadership 14

 Focus Group Summary: Students 16

Classroom Environment and Instruction Observation Rubric 17

Classroom Observations and Additional Comments 20

Measures of Progress from Previous Site Evaluation..... 23

Operational Compliance Checks..... 24

Appendix A 25

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 conduct 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.

Strong stakeholder relationships

Honors Academy of Literature has established deep connections with families, students, their board members, and the broader community. Examples of community connections included ‘Community Walks’ lunch in the downtown park and conversations about social problems in the downtown area of Reno, Nevada.

Small school environment

The intentional focus on maintaining a small school setting is another strength. Families reported they attend the Honors Academy of Literature because the school is welcoming, warm, and friendly. Several family members, staff, and students reported that due to the school's small size, a tight-knit community has been established and maintained over the last twelve years. Parents said contact with teachers is frequent, and parent support is welcome. The school has prioritized safety, which, with a small campus, was determined to be robust. Students and families reported feeling physically safe on campus. The electives offered at the school are student- and teacher-driven, which is engaging and exciting. The small school setting encourages students to try new activities and explore their interests regardless of experience level. This ability to create electives based on student choice is due in part to the small size of the school and the ability of school leaders to be flexible and change things quickly. In addition, the small school structure has created the landscape to plan and implement a range of community events, outreach programs, and extracurricular activities. These include an interactive library, a robotics program, and various clubs. The small school environment has enriched student experiences.

Positive school atmosphere with dedicated staff

The staff at Honors reported high levels of job satisfaction. With high levels of job satisfaction comes higher retention rates and more teacher consistency for learners. The teachers reported feeling valued and trusted, which adds to a positive learning environment. The school leader was the school's original founder twelve years ago and has maintained her position as the school principal the entire time. This continuity in leadership provides families, board members, students, and staff with a reliable and dedicated leader. School culture is characterized by laughter and a relaxed atmosphere, making learning enjoyable for students and teachers.

Robust Special Education program

The Special Education Program at Honors Academy of Literature showed evidence of key components that contribute to a robust program. Regular evaluation of students using various tools to identify strengths, weaknesses, and student-specific needs are utilized to create tailored Individual Education Plans. Individualized instruction was observed, and lessons were designed to cater to each student’s unique learning style and needs, including adaptations and modifications.

Students reported being welcomed to classrooms and feeling valued and supported to reach their full potential. Special education teachers at Honors Academy of Literature are highly qualified and have specialized training in special education, including knowledge of evidence-based practices and effective strategies for diverse learners.

Intentional cooperative learning groups and connections to real-life teaching techniques

Another strength at the Honors Academy of Literature was implementing targeted small-group instruction, problem-solving, and a school-wide plan to aid students in self-regulation. The SPCSA team observed several classrooms with cooperative learning groups, the use of technology incorporating real-world events, and several opportunities for students to take breaks and move around as needed. Assignments often involved collaboration and communication among students, promoting social interaction. Teachers were highly committed to providing individualized instruction to students.

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.

Declining Performance Metrics

The overall index scores per the Nevada School Performance Framework¹ have notably decreased. The elementary school received a 1-star rating and index score of 21 in 2023-24 and a 1-star rating and index score of 23 in 2022-23.

Underperformance in English Learner (EL) Enrollment Numbers

The percentage of English Learners is notably lower than the charter average, indicating an opportunity for improvement with this special population.

Rising Chronic Absenteeism

Chronic absenteeism rates in elementary and middle school worsened from the previous school year. At the elementary level, the rate went from 10.7% in 2022-23 to 19.4% in 2023 -24, and the middle school rate went from 6.8% to 18%. This increase in absenteeism negatively impacts overall performance metrics.

¹ Nevada School Performance Framework is (NSPF) is Nevada's public school rating system was developed in accordance with the Federal Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) and established by Nevada Revised Statute (NRS) 385A.600 and classifies schools within a five-star performance rating system.

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.

Chronic Absenteeism

SPCSA staff recommend Honors Academy of Literature continue strategizing ways to address chronic absenteeism. Chronic absenteeism may lead to low academic success. At the elementary level, the rate went from 10.7% in 2022-23 to 19.4 in 2023-24, and the middle school rate went from 6.8 % to 18%. This increase in absenteeism negatively impacts overall performance metrics.

The increase in absenteeism rates at both the elementary and middle school directly affects the NSPF index score for a school. The Nevada State Point Attribution Table (PAT) for chronic absenteeism rates has been provided below. The school index ratings could have been up to eight points higher if absenteeism rates were improved.

Rate	Points	Rate	Points	Rate	Points
<5	10	≥ 11 and < 12	6.5	≥18 and <19	3
≥ 5 and <6	9.5	≥ 12 and < 13	6	≥ 19 and < 20	2.5
≥ 6 and <7	9	≥ 13 and < 14	5.5	≥ 20 and < 21	2
≥ 7 and <8	8.5	≥ 14 and < 15	5	≥ 21 and < 22	1.5
≥ 8 and <9	8	≥ 15 and < 16	4.5	≥ 22 and < 23	1
≥ 9 and <10	7.5	≥ 16 and < 17	4	≥ 23 and < 24	0.5
≥ 10 and <11	7	≥ 17 and < 18	3.5	≥ 24	

Chronic Absenteeism Point Attribution Table

School personnel may want to access SPCSA’s link to “Best Practices,” located on page two of this report. One of these best practices is information on formalizing a school-wide chronic absenteeism plan. Continue increasing attendance and educating families on the direct correlation between good attendance and student achievement.

Consider implementing a more robust Social Emotional Learning (SEL) program:

The SPCSA recommends the school explore the possibility of implementing a more robust program to routinely teach students methods in Social Emotional Self-Regulation and school-wide behavior expectations. There are several programs available. Because children in today’s world are inundated with information about who to be, what to do, and how to live, it is more important than ever to determine a way to teach children how to manage priorities, focus on their goals, and be a positive influence on their school, and the world around them. One of the requests from the family members in the focus group was for Honors to find a way to teach children about being kind and accepting each other racially, culturally, and as individuals. In addition, within the student focus group, students shared instances of a few of their peers speaking disrespectfully to teachers, causing instruction to be interrupted, and some instances of unkind actions toward substitute teachers.

Site Evaluation Findings: Strong Recommendations

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

The SPCSA strongly recommends Honors Academy of Literature raise the elementary school's star rating. The school has received a 1-star rating for two consecutive years. During the 2022-23 school year, the school's index score was 23.3. The overall index score decreased during the 2023-24 school year to 21.6. A one-star school is identified as having **not met** the state's standard for performance. A one-star school has multiple areas that require improvement, including an urgent need to address areas significantly below standard. The school is subject to state interventions. The SPCSA recommends that school leaders and staff focus on increasing the following:

- **Classroom Management:** Strengthen the process to create and maintain an environment conducive to learning and appropriate for student behaviors. Classroom environments must minimize disruptive behaviors. In some cases, the classrooms at Honors were lively and noisy, which might have made it challenging for some students to concentrate. Additionally, in some classrooms, there were some students who were disrespectful in their interactions with one another, and the teacher did not intervene when this occurred.
- **Build a sense of urgency:** When students feel like their tasks are urgent and important, they are more likely to be motivated to complete them. This can improve classroom productivity and keep students engaged. Consider an all-staff professional development session on effective pacing during lessons with time frames based on the ages of the students. Consider having some teachers video themselves for ten minutes and observe the learning taking place during that time. In one instance, on the day of the evaluation, a teacher got up several times during her instructions to address materials issues while other students waited, and time was wasted (approximately 7 minutes). In another classroom, due to student disruptions such as off-task talking and not paying attention, the lesson was paced too slowly, and the students were losing interest. In 15 minutes, students only worked through one problem.
- **Intentional Targeted Instruction:** Increase the number of students knowing what they are to learn rather than what they are to do. The evaluation team observed several examples of teachers telling students what to do without the “why” of the learning. In several cases, there were not many checks for learning at the end of the learning time. It is suggested the school team work to help students conduct a self-analysis of what they learned compared to what they were supposed to learn.
- **Continue to improve math proficiency rates.** At the elementary level, math proficiency was 19.1% for the 2023-24 school year, and in Middle School was 27.5%.

Site Evaluation Findings: Deficiencies

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

There are no Deficiencies identified for Honors Academy of Literature 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 ²	3
Family Members, Parents, and Guardians	11
Faculty and Staff	11
School Leadership	3
Students	10

² Quorum was not met, and Open Meeting Law was not violated.

Focus Group Summary: Governing Board

Three members of the Honors Academy of Literature met on the day of the site evaluation. Board members described their oversight role as ensuring alignment with the school's common goals, policies, and procedures. They said they focus on maintaining a consistent flow of information, keeping abreast of updates from the school leader, and being informed about the school's financial standing and compliance with SPCSA regulations. One person said, "Our commitment centers on supporting the school's mission to cater to student needs effectively."

The board reported they convene at least quarterly to discuss various matters, and it currently does not have any special committees. However, board members said they remain open to forming special committees in responding to specific needs, such as safety protocols.

The board is comprised of diverse expertise, including business ownership, legal experience, parental perspectives, accounting, education, and community involvement. Notable members include a self-employed individual, a city attorney, a CPA, and a teacher from the school. This indicates a wide range of knowledge contributing to board decisions.

To address the school's 1-star rating, the board explained the ways they support the school. For example, they support curriculum development initiated by the school leader and engage in approving necessary expenditures for educational materials and events. The board said they collaborated with the Parent-Teacher Organization (PTO) to host engaging events aimed at student learning, including reading nights, math nights, and science nights. Additionally, the board members said they focus on ensuring that students build a solid academic foundation through supportive initiatives like after-school clubs and transportation solutions enabled by grants for vehicles.

The board actively monitors academic progress, with annual evaluations of student educational achievement and social development facilitated by updates from the school leader and teacher representatives. The board acknowledged the adverse effects of chronic absenteeism on the school's rating and has implemented measures to combat this issue, such as providing transportation and introducing requirements for students to catch up on missed assignments.

To further enhance family communication regarding attendance, the board recognizes the necessity of disseminating information about the implications of absenteeism on academic performance. Board members indicated they have, in previous years, made strides in reducing chronic absenteeism. However, they acknowledged the unfortunate rise in chronic absenteeism during the 2023-2024 school year.

In summary, the board is committed to providing effective governance and support for the school, fostering student success through strategic initiatives and community engagement.

Focus Group Summary: Family Members, Parents, and Guardians

There were eleven family members who participated in the focus group on the day of the evaluation. Several strengths of the Honors program were highlighted. Family members spoke appreciatively about the high levels of individualized educational attention their children receive. One family member said, “The staff and leaders emphasize community and provide a personalized education tailored to my son’s needs.” A second family member added, “With smaller class sizes, teachers can implement individualized learning plans effectively, meeting students where they are and nurturing their strengths.”

A second strength was discussed. Family members boasted about the highly welcoming environment. A parent of a middle school student explained, “Honors foster a welcoming atmosphere that encourages students and parents to be highly involved in the day-to-day interactions at the school, and this, in turn, enhances our overall school experience.” Family members described the communication between parents and teachers as robust and said high levels of communication are a hallmark of the school. Parents said they appreciated this partnership, especially when addressing challenges their children face, like those transitioning to middle school. A parent of a grade school student remarked, “Unlike past experiences in other schools, the feedback here is constructive, and the staff is accessible and responsive to my concerns.” Families said a closed Facebook group for parents has been established. The platform facilitates quick communication and support, further enhancing community ties.

According to members of the family focus group, the school provides highly comprehensive data on their children’s academic progress via events like the scholar showcase and goal-setting nights. Parents said they appreciate receiving packets outlining their child’s reading level, standardized test scores, and relevant resources to support learning at home, such as manipulatives for reading and math practice. A family member commented, “This transparency helps me engage more effectively in my child’s educational journey.”

While the school had many strengths, some parents suggested enhancements, such as incorporating typing skills into the curriculum and emphasizing physical education, particularly for students with ADHD³, who need more physical activity. There was also a call for greater cultural education and competency to ensure that children learn about and honor diverse backgrounds. Parents would like the school to proactively address these areas rather than reactively responding to issues as they arise. There’s a noted need for a curriculum that proactively addresses social-emotional learning before issues arise. Parents desire more focused lessons on mental health, friendship, and empathy, which could help cultivate a supportive school community and foster better human behavior in students.

³ ADHD stands for Attention Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder, which can affect a student’s ability to focus, pay attention, listen, or put effort into schoolwork.

Focus Group Summary: Faculty and Staff

Eleven staff members of the Honors Academy of Literature met on the morning of the site evaluation for forty-five minutes. Faculty communicated that the school has a positive culture with strong alumni support, frequent leadership interactions, and high levels of care among staff. Collaboration across grade levels is encouraged, and staff retention rates were excellent.

Regarding levels of data-driven instruction, teachers and staff members reported that they are treated as professionals and use various assessments (e.g., pre-assessments, MAP⁴ testing) to inform instruction. One of the staff commented, "Our school leader understands we are a highly educated and dedicated group and encourages each of us to make important decisions for what is best for our students." Other members of the staff agreed with this comment. Members of the teaching staff explained that the school uses a curriculum, but the staff is highly encouraged to take a collaborative approach to change the pacing, materials, lessons, and timelines within the curriculum to meet student's needs effectively.

One member of the special education team commented on the special education program at Honors. She explained that there is a robust system for monitoring students with Individual Education Plans, with regular check-ins and collaboration among teachers and support staff. An open study hall takes place daily and provides additional academic support for students seeking one-on-one instructional tutoring. Additionally, high levels of communication with parents are prioritized. Staff said the presence of an Occupational Therapist (OT) has added valuable support to students and teachers.

Educators explained that there is one class for each grade level at Honors and a wide range of academic levels within the class. For example, one student who was formerly homeschooled entered third grade without a strong understanding of the alphabet and corresponding sounds. The teacher immediately provided this young person with strong levels of individualized instruction at the level needed. This is one example of how each teacher seeks out exactly what a student may need and then provides academic support, which in this case was foundational literacy. The staff engages in thorough data analysis to inform teaching strategies, particularly in math and literacy. Observations indicated challenges with math vocabulary and problem-solving, leading to targeted interventions.

Staff were asked to speak about their current strategies to curb chronic absenteeism. One staff member said they are actively addressing chronic absenteeism through a variety of methods. These included direct communication with families when students are absent. In addition, one staff member has initiated several home visits, which he said, "seems to improve relationships with some families." Collaboration with parents extends beyond academics, addressing broader social needs such as transportation, clothing, and food items. The staff demonstrates a genuine commitment to professional development, student-centered instruction, and community connections, resulting in a supportive learning environment.

⁴ MAP stands for Measures of Academic Progress and is a computerized test that measures student growth in reading, language arts, and math.

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. One leader commented, “We prioritize building strong relationships with families, focusing not on adding numbers to our students enrolled but on community engagement. A new member of our leadership team actively communicates with families daily, emphasizing the importance of these connections within our staff.” Another highlight and strength of the school was shared, “We offer numerous learning activities beyond the traditional school day, including two highly successful robotics teams that students enjoy and excel in. We anticipate participation at the state level. Additionally, we have a basketball club that teaches students how to engage in pickup games, an ocean club that has thrived, multiple book clubs, and a maker’s club that has expanded into a second classroom featuring a 3D printer. We even provide a book club for parents to help a child reach their full potential.”

School leaders spoke about the special education program. They reported that approximately 20% of Honors students are in special education, overseen by the school Assistant Principal and aligned with the RTI⁵ process to ensure respectful identification of students. One leader explained, “One challenge we face is space limitations, as we currently support one self-contained classroom and offer families choices regarding their educational settings. We strive to provide the least restrictive environment, which is unique for a small school.”

Previous challenges were discussed. One leader updated the SPCSA staff and said, “We implemented a data-wise cycle to identify student problems, focusing on generalizing math vocabulary across various subjects, including library and music, which we aim to enhance this year. We promote student self-regulation through a framework of ‘zones’: red, blue, and green, to help students identify and manage their emotions. We are committed to improving math proficiency and closing the opportunity gap.” The school leader was pleased with the improvement in special populations and said, “Our numbers for Free and Reduced Lunch (FRL) have increased over the past two years. There have been potential inaccuracies in our English Learner (EL) statistics, as we exit students from EL support as they no longer require it.” Another update was shared regarding the elementary math curriculum. The school leader said, “We employ a rigorous curriculum for grades 3 to 5, particularly in 4th and 5th grade, using IXL alongside our embedded curriculum. Each year, we incorporate additional layers to our IXL usage, tracking overall growth through varied timelines.”

School leaders highlighted some unique features at Honors. For example, this year’s holiday presentations will explore different cultures, showcasing global celebrations through visual arts, food, and music. Last year students, collaborated with a rabbi to enhance their understanding of diverse traditions. One school leader commented, “We map out electives that are driven by both teachers and students. As students yearn for breaks from traditional classes, we initiated walks that allowed them to engage in their surroundings. These walks, regardless of weather, offer rich learning experiences. We integrate discussions about local social issues, fostering community improvement through engagement.

⁵ RTI stands for Response to Intervention and is a model of a system of supports that schools put in place to provide high-quality education to all students. The system aims to identify struggling students early on and uses a tiered model to support.

Speaking about levels of classroom rigor, one leader said, “We acknowledge there are only so many instructional minutes in a day and generally group students by grade level, tracking MAP scores. While offering a full-time classroom isn’t feasible, we’ve supplemented independent studies with advanced 8th-grade courses to balance exposure to relevant content.”

The school leader commented on testing outcomes at Honors. The leader said, “We are aware of the fluctuations in measures of achievement testing and our online learning system, IXL⁶ scores, and the challenges unique to small schools. We understand the variability in our testing data and the systematic issues at play.”

Leaders were asked to summarize the current focus at the school for the improvement of student outcomes. One leader said, “We aim to strengthen administrative coaching linked to IXL and maintain a balance between student and teacher interactions. We emphasize hands-on learning tied to real-life situations, fostering intrinsic motivation and ownership of learning. We focus on academic discourse and the language used in discussions, ensuring that misconceptions are addressed comprehensively, and students engage deeply with the material. We remain committed to promoting student ownership, rigorous conversations, and formative assessments to enhance learning outcomes within our educational community .”

IXL is a subscription-based learning site used to accelerate learning achievement and provide personalized computer-based learning for individual students.

Focus Group Summary: Students

Ten students in grades three through eight participated in the focus group on the day of the evaluation. The responses highlight several key reflections about the school environment and personal experiences of the student. Students shared they had recently grasped concepts related to plant biology, such as the role of stomata in leaves, as well as mathematical skills like dividing fractions and multiplying two-digit numbers. They also learned about ecological concepts like food webs and chains and understanding cells.

Students commented on feeling physically safe at school, attributing this to the protective presence of staff members and the supportive nature of the teachers. New teachers were described as nice and supportive, and while they can be strict, when necessary, they also offer emotional support when students are feeling down. The students appreciated the balance of firmness and care from the faculty, noting that teachers are attentive to students' needs, especially during challenging situations like a "code yellow," a safety protocol in emergencies.

Several students mentioned some frustrations regarding classroom disruptions caused by certain classmates who talk over the teachers. Students said disruptions create situations where teachers must redirect attention, which can waste instructional time for the whole class. One student said, "I feel that this behavior detracts from learning opportunities, particularly when it leads to lost recess time as a consequence of misbehavior." The students rated their peers' friendliness at around seven out of ten, indicating a generally positive attitude but noting that some students can cause issues. They mention that some students, particularly older ones and certain new aides, struggle to earn respect, leading to a classroom atmosphere where distractions are prevalent.

When faced with serious problems, the students said they felt confident approaching teachers for help, especially relying on caring faculty members. The presence of older students acting as "kindergarten buddies" also contributed to a supportive school environment. Students outlined various reasons that can lead to absences from school, including feeling tired, having siblings with appointments, or being ill. They expressed a desire to attend school but also enjoy moments of leisure during breaks. The student's thoughts on family dynamics, such as having siblings to coordinate with, indicate that logistics can complicate perfect attendance.

Students mentioned witnessing unkind behavior directed at a new aide trying to improve her health. This highlights issues of unkind behavior within the student body and indicates the need for greater sensitivity and respect among classmates.

Overall, the student's reflections conveyed a mix of appreciation for the supportive learning environment while also bringing attention to challenges in classroom management, respect for teachers, and the social dynamics among students.

Classroom Observation Rubric

A total of 11 elementary and 5 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: 1	TOTAL: 14	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: 11	TOTAL: 4	TOTAL: 0	TOTAL: 0

Classroom Observation Rubric

A total of 11 elementary and 5 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: 0	TOTAL: 11	TOTAL: 3	TOTAL: 0	TOTAL: 2
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: 7	TOTAL: 4	TOTAL: 0	TOTAL: 3

Classroom Observation Rubric

A total of 11 elementary and 5 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: 1	TOTAL: 7	TOTAL: 8	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: 8	TOTAL: 5	TOTAL: 0	TOTAL: 3

Classroom Observations and Additional Comments

The teacher was working with a student on writing a problem in expanded form in math. She paused and asked specific questions such as "What does one hundredth mean? How would you write that?" She asked the student to explain his thinking and reflect on his learning. He did this successfully.

In one middle-level elementary classroom, students were given a set of cards, which they were required to cut and then sort. Six small groups of students worked with each other on this task. The teacher roamed the classroom and asked several open-ended questions. One group of students was working on cutting the materials up for a long time. Some students finished the task quickly and waited for an adult to check the work. The teacher was highly motivated and engaged with students to get them to analyze the diagrams.

A teacher introduced primary students to African culture in a music class. He displayed a drum and encouraged students to guess what materials it was made from. The teacher clearly outlined the learning objectives for the lesson, and the students watched a video about African drums.

In an upper elementary classroom, there were twenty students and one teacher. About one-third of the class was confused about what students should be doing. Students were sharpening pencils; one was crawling on the floor and was unproductive. Four other students were productively working and talking with each other. All students had the same assignment: multiplying multi-digit numbers and then coloring the boxes. The assignment was not rigorous, and there were no high levels of student intellectual engagement. The class stopped and went to recess without checking for learning or understanding during this portion of the school day.

In a middle school math classroom, the teacher encouraged students by saying, "Please explain your thinking, even if you got it wrong." One student shared their reasoning, while another admitted they misunderstood the question's requirements. The class then discussed strategies for handling confusion, such as rereading the question and eliminating incorrect answers. They also emphasized the importance of staying calm and avoiding unnecessary stress. The teacher guided the discussion, fostering thoughtful responses from the students.

There were sixteen students and one teacher in this classroom. Students were working independently at table groups of three to complete a chart about a country. Students used laptop computers to research and fill out the chart. For the most part, students were working on the assignment; however, some were off task and talking about other non-academic topics. The teacher was working with a small group of two students, encouraging them to complete their assignments and answering questions with these two students.

In a middle school math class, students were engaged in a computer-based language game, competing against each other as the results were displayed and continually updated on the teacher's whiteboard. The teacher encouraged students to refer to a wall displaying common prefixes to assist with answering questions. The room was lively and noisy, which made it challenging for some students to concentrate. Additionally, some students were disrespectful in their interactions with one another, and the teacher did not intervene when this occurred.

In this early-grade classroom, students were working on an assignment independently or in small groups. Another set of six students met with the teacher and worked with the teacher learning about part, part, and whole. The teacher read the problem aloud as students completed the part, part, and entire, then moved to number bonds, representing them similarly. Students were asked to write down the equation. The teacher used open-ended questions, students were asked to discuss with partners, manipulatives were used, and the teacher was able to respond to each student within the group. The teacher was interrupted on several occasions by the other students with questions or off-task behavior. These interruptions hindered the teacher and small group participants from transitioning smoothly between different parts of the lesson, reducing the overall rigor of the learning within the small group.

Students in one middle-grade classroom were watching a movie about electricity. Students were asked to talk about what would happen without electricity. After discussing the small group, students were asked to respond to this question as a whole group. Students provided answers which were more commentary than educational and there seemed to be a sense of restlessness and the need for a break at this time. Students went to lunch immediately afterward, leaving the lesson without a proper conclusion or reflection on the learning.

In a primary classroom, the teacher worked with a small group of students, using the book *The Too Many Sisters* as a starting point for the lesson. Each student had a "part-part-whole" mat and two groups of cubes to assist with the activity. The teacher posed a problem verbally, giving students time to discuss their ideas with a partner, modeling the problem, and find the solution. However, some students did not participate in the partner activity, and the teacher did not address this. The teacher asked purposeful questions, such as, "Are we adding or subtracting? How do we know?" to guide and support students' understanding. The lesson was paced too slowly due to student disruptions and the students losing interest. The teacher got up several times during her instruction to address materials issues while other students waited, and time was wasted. Meanwhile, other students in the room worked independently on math centers. While most remained on-task, one student rolled on the floor and did not engage in the work.

In this early elementary classroom, there were twenty students and one teacher. The teacher helped students understand the concept of one number being greater than another. She invited several students to explain what this meant to them. The teacher was careful to re-state what students said. When students answered incorrectly, the teacher helped them understand. There seemed to be a bit of slow pacing here. Students were restless, and the lesson ended without a review of learning or completed assignments.

In a primary classroom, students collected weather data and collaboratively created a class graph. The teacher maintained high expectations for students' work, ensuring they stayed on task and adhered to a structured timeline. She praised students who completed the preliminary steps for the graph efficiently and encouraged consistent progress throughout the activity.

In an upper elementary classroom, students encountered difficulties accessing an English assignment, prompting the teacher to pivot and have them focus on their Christmas research for holiday presentations instead. The teacher explained, "We look at our color coding in writing, our reasons, and our overall ideas. Now, they will all come together." Despite this direction, some students were off task, loud arguing broke out, and it took about 10 minutes for the class to settle and begin the assignment. The teacher reviewed noise-level expectations and directed students to a projection, explaining how to use color coding for transitions in their writing. While some students remained disengaged and did not follow along, others responded appropriately to the teacher's questions and stayed on task.

The teacher worked individually with a student, using various supports such as pictures, numbers, a multiplication chart, and a number chart to guide the lesson. The student effectively utilized these tools to solve the problem. Through thoughtful questioning, the teacher asked the student, "Why are we adding these numbers together?" The student successfully articulated the reasoning behind the solution.

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
Continue to monitor school-wide data to raise index scores.	The Honors Academy Leadership team continues to work to improve school-wide index scores.	Honors Academy has a one-star rating per NSPF. It is critical that the school improves its current rates. See the Strong Recommendation section.
Close demographic gaps in FRL and ELL populations.	Leadership at Honor’s Academy reports FRL and EL populations have increased, and the school has been identified as a Title I school.	The SPCSA team agrees with the school’s assessment of progress and encourages Honors Academy of Literature to continue to make gains in this area.
Improve chronic absenteeism rates.	The leadership team has created a new position at the school to work on family relations and to conduct home visits. The leadership team is currently working to improve the chronic absenteeism rate.	The SPCSA team acknowledges the work of the Honors Leadership team. It is important to note that continued work in this area is needed. See the Recommendation section.
Place emphasis on parent engagement around math.	Leadership reports that families are invited to support students with all curricular items, including math.	The SPCSA team acknowledges the attention to this previous recommendation and agrees with the leadership team.
Consider new ways to engage new families to the school.	The Honors Academy leadership team reports that the school is not under enrolled and has intentionally set the school to be a small school setting.	The SPCSA team agrees with the school leader’s analysis of this recommendation.

Operational Compliance Checks

- Fire Extinguisher YES NO
- Nurse's Station YES NO
- Evacuation Plan in Classrooms YES NO
- Food Permit YES NO N/A
- Elevator Permit YES NO 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.