



Nevada State Public Charter School Authority

Strong Start Academy

Site Evaluation Report: February 11, 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

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 9

Site Evaluation Findings: Deficiencies 10

Focus Group Participation Data.....11

 Focus Group Summary: Governing Board 12

 Focus Group Summary: Family Members, Parents, and Guardians..... 13

 Focus Group Summary: Faculty and Staff..... 14

 Focus Group Summary: Students 17

Classroom Observations and Additional Comments 21

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 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.

Unique dual language program

One of Strong Start Academy's key strengths is its commitment to maintaining a true dual-language program for all students. The school leader reported that instruction follows a balanced 50/50 model, with equal emphasis on Spanish and English. This approach offers numerous benefits, such as enhancing executive function skills and reducing the achievement gap across all subject areas between English Learners (ELs) and native English speakers. During observations, SPCSA staff noted that math classes were conducted entirely in Spanish, demonstrating the school's dedication to immersive language learning.

Strong English language arts curriculum

Strong Start Academy upholds rigor, high expectations, and clarity in its academic programs. The American Reading Company¹ (ARC) curriculum is particularly effective in building students' background knowledge, providing a solid foundation for literacy development. The curriculum also has a strong component for small groups and a Teacher Toolkit² with daily scripted, explicit lessons. An ARC trainer visits the school six times yearly to support instruction, dedicating additional time to mentoring novice teachers.

Highly qualified staff

Another strength for Strong Start Academy is the highly qualified staff. The school leader mentioned that the school is fully staffed with highly qualified, licensed teachers. Only three positions remain unlicensed, all of which are specialist roles, and those educators are actively working toward obtaining their certifications. According to leadership, four teachers have their English Language Acquisition and Development (ELAD) Endorsement, with several more teachers on the Strong Start Academy staff working towards getting theirs. Based on the classroom observation rubric on page 17 of this report, 17/20 classrooms were rated as distinguished or highly proficient in establishing an effective culture for learning.

Strong school leader

Another strength of Strong Start Academy is the strong, experienced school leader. The leader has a system of intentional teacher-hiring processes in which she has prospective teachers model lessons in classrooms on the Strong Start campus, focusing on rigor and engagement. The leader has high expectations for her staff and teachers, which reflects heavily on the student population. Additionally, in

¹ American Reading Company's (ARC) Core is a K-12 high-quality curriculum that combines systematic, evidence-based skills instruction with knowledge-building in science, social studies, and literature.

² Teacher Toolkit is a bank of explicit lesson plans available to teachers for reteaching key skills in reading.

collaboration with TNTP³, the school leader created a specialized evaluation tool tailored to assess dual-language teachers, aligning with the school's unique instructional model.

Strong MTSS implementation

Another key strength of Strong Start Academy is its well-run MTSS⁴ process. The school was nominated by the Nevada Multi-Tiered System of Support (MTSS) project for gold status during the 2023-24 school year for their work within the framework. MTSS awarded tiered levels advance from Silver to Gold to Platinum to Diamond. Strong Start Academy also has a dedicated health and wellness coordinator who helps with student wrap-around services, such as counseling, crisis care, and family support. The 2023-24 Nevada School Climate and Social-Emotional Learning Survey completed by their students further validates this success, with the school achieving an excellent range in physical and emotional safety. A theme that emerged in all focus groups was the school's ability to effectively implement its MTSS framework to support students' academic, social, and emotional needs.

Safe campus

A key strength of the school is its commitment to maintaining a safe and secure campus. Clear safety protocols, well-trained staff, and a positive school culture ensure students feel protected and supported throughout the day. Secure entry points, regular safety drills, and staff visibility contribute to a safe learning environment where students can confidently focus on their education.

Community partnerships

An additional strength of Strong Start Academy is its strong community partnerships, which provide valuable resources and support for students and families. According to the school leader, the academy benefits from a yearly grant from the City of Las Vegas, which helps fund safety initiatives and collaborations with local organizations. The city charges only \$1 per month for the rent of the building, and the school is part of the ReInvent⁵ initiative. Safe Key⁶ is offered free to parents for before- and after-school care. Programs like Big Brothers and Big Sisters⁷ provide mentorship, with volunteers meeting weekly with students. The academy also partners with local businesses for fundraisers, and the school has participated in events such as a local marathon, where its volunteer efforts helped secure additional funding.

³ TNTP stands for The New Teacher Project, which is for educators, researchers, and innovators who help build a strong academic foundation that is essential for improving children's life outcomes.

⁴ MTSS stands for Multi-Tiered Systems of Support, a framework that helps educators provide tailored academic and behavioral support to all students.

⁵ ReInvent utilizes the National Community Schools model in which public schools partner with families and community organizations to provide educational opportunities and supports for students' school success.

⁶ SafeKey is a before and after-school care program for students.

⁷ Big Brothers and Big Sisters is a youth mentoring program that connects adult volunteers with children and adolescents to provide guidance, support, and positive role modeling.

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.

Chronic absenteeism

Chronic absenteeism continues to be a challenge for Strong Start Academy, with 22.9% of students classified as chronically absent according to the 2023-24 Nevada School Performance Framework (NSPF)⁸. Missed instruction impacts student learning, engagement, and overall academic progress. The school is actively addressing this issue through targeted interventions, including increased family communication, education, and attendance incentives. Strengthening partnerships with families and the community remains a key strategy in improving student attendance and ensuring academic success.

Outside services

As a small, single-campus school, Strong Start Academy is challenged to provide essential support services, such as those offered by nurses, psychologists, speech pathologists, occupational therapists, and physical therapists. The school struggled to find a counselor or social worker due to a grant that ended with the University of Nevada, Las Vegas in December of 2024.

Limited space indoors and outdoors

A challenge for Strong Start Academy is its limited indoor and outdoor space, including parking constraints. The current play area consists of cement and turf, with plans to expand facilities. Construction is in progress for a new third, fourth, and fifth grade space, each with three classrooms for 60 students per grade level. The school plans to install a playground for intermediate students to enhance recreational options. Additionally, the school leader stated that a nearby parking structure, shared with another school, is set to open in March 2025, providing improved parking access for students and staff.

⁸ The Nevada School Performance Framework (NSPF) is Nevada's public-school rating system designed by Nevadans for Nevada public schools and developed in accordance with the federal Student Succeeds Act (ESSA).

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 that Strong Start Academy continue strategizing ways to address chronic absenteeism. “Chronic absenteeism significantly impacts a variety of student outcomes including mathematics and reading achievement, social-emotional development, grade retention and dropout, and student discipline” (Balfanz & Byrnes, 2018; Gottfried, 2017). As indicated in Strong Start Academy’s challenges on page six of this report, 22.9% of students were considered chronically absent for the 2023-24 school year. The absenteeism rate directly affects the NSPF index score for Strong Start. As noted in the parent focus group summary on page 13, some parents reported being unaware of the chronic absenteeism rate. The Nevada State Point Attribution Table (PAT) for chronic absenteeism rates has been provided below. The school index ratings could have been up to nine 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	

Increase student voice in classrooms

To enhance student engagement and deepen learning, SPCSA recommend that Strong Start Academy focus on increasing student discourse within classrooms. Some ideas include encouraging more discussions, collaborative problem-solving, and peer interactions, which can help students develop critical thinking, communication skills, and a deeper understanding of the material. Strategies such as think-pair-share, Socratic seminars (especially in the intermediate grades), and structured debates can create a more interactive learning environment. The school can support higher-level thinking and overall academic growth by fostering a culture where students feel comfortable expressing their ideas and engaging in meaningful discussions.

Continued professional development

The SPCSA recommends that Strong Start Academy leadership continue building instructional capacity by providing professional development to staff to develop their pedagogy further using the best practices of the dual language educational model, as indicated in Improvement Strategy One on the Strong Start School Performance Plan. Providing quality professional development for the staff can support the school's mission of giving all students a dual language education that supports and embraces the development of English and Spanish while honoring their home languages and cultures.

Site Evaluation Findings: Strong Recommendations

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

There were no strong recommendations for Strong Start Academy during this site evaluation.

Site Evaluation Findings: Deficiencies

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

There were no deficiencies for Strong Start Academy 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 ⁹	2
Family Members, Parents, and Guardians	5
Faculty and Staff	12
School Leadership	1
Students	9

⁹ Quorum was not met, and Open Meeting Law was not violated.

Focus Group Summary: Governing Board

The city council appointed the eight-member board for Strong Start Academy, with each member serving a two-year term with the option to renew. The board meets monthly and holds two annual retreats—a full-day retreat in June and a half-day in January. These retreats focus on regulatory training, compliance updates, education financing, and key areas of oversight. The team-building activities also foster open communication and collaboration among members. The board operates through several committees, including the Academic Committee, Community Outreach Committee, Site Facilities and Safety Committee, and Executive Committee, ensuring a well-rounded approach to governance and school improvement.

The board members of Strong Start Academy bring a wide range of expertise, spanning education, educational administration, special education, bilingual education, security, human resources, personnel training, grant writing, and business management. Board members view their role as providing critical oversight and support to ensure the school's success. They actively contribute by offering guidance, brainstorming solutions, and ensuring academic decisions align with the school's charter and data-driven insights. They also prioritize strong communication with parents, oversee financial stability, and uphold the integrity of school operations. Through their collective knowledge and commitment, the board plays a vital role in supporting Strong Start's mission and long-term success.

Board members echoed that Strong Start Academy is distinguished by its commitment to a true 50/50 Spanish/English dual-language model, making it one of the few schools in Southern Nevada to offer such an immersive bilingual experience. They indicated, “The school’s mission is to provide students with a high-quality education that fosters biliteracy, ensuring they can read, write, and speak fluently in both languages. It prepares students to thrive in a multicultural and multilingual world.”

The board has identified several key areas for improvement to enhance the school's success. Ensuring the safety of the campus remains a top priority, and ongoing collaboration with the City of Las Vegas is essential to maintaining a secure and effective learning environment. The board is also focused on expanding the school to accommodate fifth grade, ensuring sufficient space to meet the needs of students. Securing diverse funding streams is a priority to support academic programs and provide the necessary resources for high-quality instruction. Attendance is another concern, with chronic absenteeism posing a challenge, with one board member indicating, “We are committed to finding strategies to reduce absenteeism and improve student engagement.”

Focus Group Summary: Family Members, Parents, and Guardians

Five parents were in the family focus group on the day of the site evaluation at Strong Start Academy. 100% of parents commented that they feel comfortable expressing concerns or questions to the school, believing a resolution can be found. One parent noted, “The administration makes time for parents when they visit the school, and when someone calls, the staff ensures they don’t make the caller feel rushed.” Another parent shared that when she reached out to the school on a Friday evening, she received a response by Saturday morning. The overall attitude of the school is to address concerns as quickly as possible.

Families indicated they stay informed about their child's progress in each subject through several communication channels. “We receive grade updates twice a quarter via Infinite Campus¹⁰, along with feedback on homework,” one parent said. Parents also communicated that parent conferences are held three times yearly to discuss academic progress. Class Dojo¹¹ further supports communication, where teachers are responsive to messages. Parents also appreciate that teachers model math lessons for them, helping to reinforce learning at home.

Regarding chronic absenteeism, parents in the focus group were surprised to learn that attendance directly impacts the school’s star rating. They were unaware that the school’s chronic absenteeism rate was 22% and could not recall being informed about the importance of regular attendance. While they noted that the school newsletter includes various topics, it does not provide detailed information about absenteeism, the significance of doctor's notes, or how crucial attendance is for student success. Parents needed clearer communication on this matter to understand its implications better.

Parents in the Strong Start Academy focus group suggested improving the school experience. One parent expressed disappointment that the classroom costume parade was not open to parents, saying, "I would have liked to attend and watch." They also highlighted a desire for more parent engagement events to connect with other parents and build a stronger community. In addition, parents suggested more field trips to enhance students' learning experiences. A parent stated, “The physical space at the school is a challenge, with the lunchroom being the only available common area for gatherings.” Parents pointed out the lack of adequate outdoor play space, emphasizing the need for more places where children can engage in physical activities.

¹⁰ Infinite Campus is a K12 information technology platform that provides web-based student data management systems to school districts.

¹¹ Class Dojo is a communication platform for schools and families.

Focus Group Summary: Faculty and Staff

Teachers at Strong Start Academy commented that staff morale is generally strong, with many staff members staying for three years or more. Teachers appreciate that expectations are clearly outlined and that a committed team upholds high standards for both staff and students despite the inherent stresses of teaching in two languages and the overall demands of the profession. A staff member commented about school leadership: "The administration fosters a supportive environment by setting expectations at the beginning of the year through an employee handbook, one-on-one conferences, and regular observations that help clarify any questions."

Opportunities for improvement include reducing stress by offering smaller, more manageable class sizes and enhancing Professional Learning Communities¹² (PLCs). Recent adjustments have allowed teams to meet beyond grade-level groups, improving communication and strategy sharing. With lead teachers providing targeted training and standardized forms now posted on a shared drive, the collaborative process within PLCs has become more efficient and effective.

Staff members described the MTSS process at Strong Start Academy as a structured and collaborative approach to support students who require tier 2 and tier 3 services. One teacher said, "It begins with a formal RTI¹³ (Response to Intervention) process, where grade-level teams meet to review student data and discuss concerns." Teachers come prepared with data, and the team works to identify the specific issues affecting students. Special education staff and specialists also survey students and group them by grade level and topic. Staff commented that these small groups meet once a week for 20-minute sessions over five weeks. The health and wellness specialist plays a key role in identifying services that may not be readily available within a small charter school, ensuring that students receive the necessary support. A teacher shared one example of success with the process. She said, "There was a student who, initially, was very shy and unwilling to interact with others, but he began making positive changes after working with our Safe School¹⁴ professional, who is a part of the RTI system. The student now actively engages with peers and has become more confident. He even earned the title of Student of the Month."

When appropriate, teachers incorporate an SEL¹⁵ component into their lessons at Strong Start Academy by starting the day with morning videos that focus on social-emotional learning. This is followed by circle time, where students have the opportunity to speak and pass around a talking piece, encouraging open communication. For students who require additional support, teachers utilize a program called

¹² A professional learning community, or PLC, is a group of educators that meets regularly, shares expertise, and works collaboratively to improve teaching skills and the academic performance of students.

¹³ Response to Intervention, or RTI, identifies and supports students who need extra academic or behavioral help to succeed in school. It is a tiered approach because there are various "levels" of support that students move through depending on how much support they need.

¹⁴ A Safe School professional in Nevada is a mental health professional who works in schools to address bullying and mental health concerns.

¹⁵ SEL stands for social-emotional learning.

Rethink¹⁶, which facilitates small group sessions designed to address tier 2¹⁷ behaviors. This approach helps students develop emotional awareness and improve their interpersonal skills in a structured and supportive environment.

¹⁶ Rethink is a bank of grade-level lessons with engaging activities and tiered supports to help students develop critical social-emotional skills including stress management, problem solving and resilience.

¹⁷ Tier 2 is the first level of intervention for students who do not show progress in Tier 1. Students are provided with Tier 2 interventions when they need support to meet academic or behavior goals.

Focus Group Summary: School Leadership

The SPCSA staff met with one school leader on the Strong Start Academy’s site evaluation day. She shared updates regarding enrollment. “Initially, the projected enrollment for the first year was 180 students. However, only 100 students were enrolled starting in August 2023, and only 67 students attended on the first day.” The leader then indicated that in response, adjustments were made to the enrollment process, and the school is now on track with a total of 216 students.

According to the school leader, the school educates and encourages parents to be more involved through various initiatives. The school hosts monthly family engagement events, focusing on such topics as SEL, cultural exploration, and Black history. There are three dedicated family engagement parent conferences held at Strong Start Academy. Parents are also invited to join the morning SEL circle and watch educational videos. Additionally, the school offers tailored resources for the school community, including a mobile eye bus and a dental program. The goal is to create a culture of involvement, and the leader emphasized that daily face-to-face interactions make extra transportation services unnecessary.

The school leader highlighted several professional development initiatives to enhance teachers’ expertise in effective reading and math instruction at Strong Start Academy. Staff members utilize Imagine Learning¹⁸ products in Spanish, which strengthen foundational reading skills and serve as a bridge for Spanish-speaking students by promoting translanguaging practices supporting language development. Recognizing that this approach is a primary reason parents choose the school, the institution also facilitates additional training for bilingual teachers. Specifically, the school arranges and funds staff collaborations with WIDA¹⁹ to assist teachers in obtaining ELAD²⁰ endorsements, with four out of eighteen staff members currently holding this certification.

The school leader spoke about Strong Start Academy’s staff retention rate. She commented, “Last year, four teachers departed from the school—three of whom had planned to leave by mid-year due to ongoing challenges. These departures involved educators who required extensive classroom supervision and intensive coaching, impacting the overall culture at Strong Start. As a result of the coaching and healthy culture, the current staff retention rate is 100%, with all remaining teachers eager to contribute to a more supportive and stable environment.” A high staff retention rate in schools promotes continuity in instruction, fosters a stable and collaborative school culture, and strengthens teacher-student relationships, ultimately contributing to improved student achievement.

¹⁸ Imagine Learning is an education technology company that offers digital curriculum and tools for PreK-12 students. The company's software provides supplemental math, language and literacy programs that are research and evidence-based, data-driven, and instructionally differentiated.

¹⁹ WIDA stands for World-Class Instructional Design and Assessment.

²⁰ ELAD stands for English Language Acquisition and Development endorsement.

Focus Group Summary: Students

Students at Strong Start Academy shared their favorite classes with SPCSA staff, highlighting the school's diverse learning experiences. Many students expressed a fondness for math, explaining that it introduces them to new concepts through interactive computer activities and even includes a ranking system that adds a fun, competitive element. Others enjoyed both reading and math because these subjects offered ample learning opportunities. One student mentioned, "I feel like reading opens up windows into history through figures like Jane Goodall." Another student said they appreciated the extra support to improve reading and writing skills, such as assistance with five-paragraph essays. Additionally, some students favor physical education because it allows them to exercise and stay active.

Strong Start Academy students shared that their morning SEL sessions boost their mood and provide a space where they can answer thoughtful questions and learn to be kind. During this time, they are encouraged to reflect on their future aspirations by considering what they are interested in becoming, and they also explore the lives of inspiring historical figures. According to students, this practice not only nurtures their emotional well-being but also broadens their understanding of character and resilience.

Students at Strong Start Academy expressed that they feel physically and emotionally safe at school. They indicated that they believe nothing harmful will occur because teachers genuinely care about them and are always ready to protect and support them. The school's commitment to the three Bs—Be Safe, Be Kind, Be Responsible—reinforces this sense of security and community. One student commented, "I appreciate knowing I am never alone because my teachers and friends form a strong support network."

Some students believe that improving respect for teachers is important, as they have observed instances of rudeness in the classroom. Two students specifically mentioned the need for greater appreciation and kindness toward teachers. One student said, "I think a school mascot is a good idea." Additionally, one student noted that while most classmates actively participate in their work, some do not, highlighting a potential area for increased engagement and accountability within the school community.

Classroom Environment and Instruction Observation Rubric

A total of 20 elementary 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: 5	TOTAL: 12	TOTAL: 2	TOTAL: 0	TOTAL: 1
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: 3	TOTAL: 14	TOTAL: 2	TOTAL: 0	TOTAL: 1

Classroom Environment and Instruction Observation Rubric

A total of 20 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
Communicating with Students	If asked, students can explain what they are learning and where it fits into the larger curriculum context.	The teacher states clearly, at some point during the lesson, what the students will be learning.	The teacher provides little elaboration or explanation about what students will be learning.	At no time during the lesson does the teacher convey to students what they will be learning.	This criterion was not observed or rated.
	The teacher explains content clearly and imaginatively.	The teacher's explanation of content is clear and invites student participation and thinking.	The teacher's explanation of the content consists of a monologue, with minimal participation or intellectual engagement by students.	Students indicate through body language or questions that they don't understand the content being presented.	
	The teacher invites students to explain the content to their classmates.	The teacher makes no content errors.	The teacher may make minor content errors.	Students indicate through their questions that they are confused about the learning task.	
	Students use academic language correctly.	Students engage with the learning task, indicating that they understand what they are to do.	The teacher must clarify the learning task.		
	TOTAL: 4	TOTAL: 11	TOTAL: 3	TOTAL: 0	TOTAL: 2
Using Questioning and Discussion Strategies	Students initiate higher-order questions.	The teacher uses open-ended questions, inviting students to think and/or offer multiple possible answers.	The teacher frames some questions designed to promote student thinking, but many have a single correct answer.	Questions are rapid-fire and convergent with a single correct answer.	This criterion was not observed or rated.
	The teacher builds on and uses student responses to questions to deepen student understanding.	Discussions enable students to talk to one another without ongoing mediation by the teacher.	The teacher invites students to respond directly to one another's ideas, but few students respond.	The teacher does not ask students to explain their thinking.	
	Students extend the discussion, enriching it.	Many students actively engage in the discussion.	The teacher calls on many students, but only a small number participate.	Only a few students dominate the discussion.	
	Virtually all students are engaged.				
	TOTAL: 2	TOTAL: 9	TOTAL: 5	TOTAL: 0	TOTAL: 4

Classroom Environment and Instruction Observation Rubric

A total of 20 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
Engaging Students in Learning	<p>Virtually all students are engaged in the lesson.</p> <p>Lesson activities require high-level student thinking and explanations of their thinking.</p> <p>Students have an opportunity for reflection and closure on the lesson to consolidate their understanding.</p>	<p>Most students are intellectually engaged in the lesson.</p> <p>Most learning tasks have multiple correct responses or approaches and/or encourage higher-order thinking.</p> <p>Students are invited to explain their thinking as part of completing tasks.</p> <p>The pacing of the lesson provides students with the time needed to be intellectually engaged.</p>	<p>Some students are intellectually engaged in the lesson.</p> <p>Learning tasks are a mix of those requiring thinking and those requiring recall.</p> <p>Student engagement with the content is largely passive.</p> <p>The pacing of the lesson is uneven—suitable in parts but rushed or dragging in others.</p>	<p>Few students are intellectually engaged in the lesson.</p> <p>Learning tasks, activities, and materials require only recall or have a single correct response.</p> <p>The lesson drags on or is rushed.</p>	<p>This criterion was not observed or rated.</p>
	TOTAL: 3	TOTAL: 10	TOTAL: 6	TOTAL: 0	TOTAL: 1
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: 13	TOTAL: 6	TOTAL: 0	TOTAL: 1

Classroom Observations and Additional Comments

Students worked through math workbook pages with the teacher's help. The lesson was largely unstructured, and wasted time with students off task.

Students gave input on a math page, and the teacher worked on the board. The lesson was entirely in Spanish. Students used cubes to help determine the answers.

Students used markers and individual whiteboards to write words with similar vowel sounds. The teacher then called on individual students to share a word, and she copied the word for the whole class on lined paper at the front of the class. The teacher validated if the students were correct. This was a missed opportunity for students to explain their thinking.

Students completed various tasks in centers in one elementary class as the teacher circulated around the room assisting students. Students played a game at one table, learning turn-taking, counting, sportsmanship, and sharing space. Students learned math facts by matching cards at two other tables.

Students described in complete sentences what they saw on a book cover to a partner in an early grades elementary class. Students guessed what they thought the book would be about, making predictions. Students then shared with the class things their partners shared. The teacher began reading the book on the whiteboard and asked students to explain what certain words meant.

Students collaborated in Spanish to solve a fraction problem through drawing, writing, and discussion. The teacher encouraged teamwork and allowed productive struggle, supporting their problem-solving process.

In a primary classroom, students orally blended sounds to form words and identified beginning sounds based on teacher cues. They also practiced decoding words with short vowels and a silent "e" at the end. The clear instruction and well-established routines helped students anticipate the next steps. The strong rapport between the teacher and students was evident.

Students wrote dictated sentences from the teacher in Spanish, such as, "The setting of the story The Boy Who Cried Wolf is in China," and then translated them into English. However, there may have been a missed opportunity for students to generate and write their own sentences independently.

Students used a graphic organizer to illustrate the characters, setting, the problem, and the solution for a story they would begin writing the next day. The teacher guided their thinking by asking targeted questions, such as, "What is the problem in your story?" and "What lesson will your story teach?"

The teacher and students read the lesson objective together before the teacher prompted them to work in pairs. Students engaged in a structured partner activity, first greeting each other formally and then collaboratively discussing the central message. Throughout the lesson, students took the lead in the learning process.

In an intermediate elementary math classroom, the teacher led a lesson teaching the students the concept of accuracy. The students were asked to share their responses, and they engaged in a brief discussion with the teacher and the class, allowing them to explain the reasoning behind their logic. The teacher then focused on the lesson's objective: to learn how to measure and record jump distances fairly. The students were highly engaged, and there were many structured discourse opportunities to discuss their reasoning and thought processes. The pacing of the lesson was appropriate, and many checks were made for student understanding.

In a primary classroom, the students accessed the Imagine Learning platform on their devices. Approximately ten students were on their devices and headphones while the teacher, using Spanish instruction, worked with a small group of three students on reading fluency. Another adult assisted a student one-on-one, using Spanish to instruct the student.

Students sat on the carpet as the teacher reviewed academic vocabulary using picture cues, incorporating their input. An anchor chart displayed "oo" words, like "spoon," and "ew" words, like "few," though it was unrelated to the vocabulary review. Students then completed a phonics book activity, selecting pictures that matched the targeted sounds.

In a secondary elementary English language arts classroom, the students learn how and why individuals, events, or ideas develop and interact in a text. The materials used were their Mystery and Forensic Science textbooks. The lesson focused on reviewing story elements in a mystery, focusing on the setting, characters, plot, and theme. The lesson was well-paced, and the teacher used effective questioning techniques to build student interest and engagement. There was a total of 13 students in the classroom.

Students in a lower elementary classroom transitioned to math instruction by working on a subtraction pretest worksheet as the teacher provided instruction in Spanish. The students were self-directed and highly committed to completing the pretest. After the pretest, the teacher displayed the math activity on the screen and provided a guided practice review of single-digit by single-digit subtraction problems and two-digit by one-digit subtraction involving regrouping in Spanish.

Measures of Progress from Previous Site Evaluation

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

Prior Recommendation by Site Evaluation Team	School Assessment of Progress	SPCSA Staff Assessment of Progress
SPCSA staff recommended a strategic plan with benchmarks to closely monitor and meet enrollment targets.	The Strong Start Academy (SSA) charter contract was revised to include new enrollment targets, and a plan was developed in collaboration with the board of directors, with regular updates provided at each board meeting to track enrollment projections.	SPCSA staff finds this recommendation has been met with satisfactory progress.
SPCSA staff recommended closely monitoring its bilingual instructional model, focusing on building staff capacity, and considering additional remediation to address COVID learning losses and support new students to formal schooling.	SSA conducts annual Spanish language assessments for all students to measure language growth and offers after-school and extended summer learning programs each year to support students performing below grade level.	SPCSA staff finds this recommendation has been met with satisfactory progress.
SPCSA evaluators recommended strengthening family engagement by establishing a PTO, improving communication about grade expansion, using parent surveys to guide events and training, and offering flexible, recorded sessions to accommodate family schedules.	SSA has an active Parent Council holding monthly meetings to promote involvement and support decision-making. School information is shared with families via Class Dojo, Infinite Campus, and weekly newsletters with communication in English and Spanish.	SPCSA staff finds this recommendation has been met with satisfactory progress.
SPCSA evaluators recommend the school leadership and board familiarize themselves with SPCSA resources, such as MTSS training and funding opportunities, and utilize staff support as needed to enhance awareness and access.	SSA stays informed on available resources through the SPCSA weekly updates, Epicenter ²¹ tasks, the different repositories, email communication, and available meetings. Now in its second year of MTSS implementation, supported by SPCSA external coaches, SSA was recommended to apply for the MTSS Gold Recognition Award.	SPCSA staff finds this recommendation has been met with satisfactory progress.

²¹ Epicenter is a digital platform housing documents required by Nevada charter schools.

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.