



Nevada State Public Charter School Authority

Freedom Classical Academy

Site Evaluation Report: April 10, 2025

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Links to Resources:

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

Executive Summary

This Site Evaluation Report offers an analysis of evidence collected during the school evaluation. Pursuant to [NRS 388A.223](#), the State Public Charter School Authority (SPCSA) conducts a comprehensive review of evidence related to all charters within the portfolio during the first, third, and fifth years of operation. This comprehensive analysis addresses the school's academic and organizational effectiveness.

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

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

SPCSA staff 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.

Middle school star rating

Freedom Classical Academy boasts a four-star rating for its middle school based on the 2023-24 NSPF ratings, with an index score of 77.5 out of 100 points, up from 74.5 out of 100 points in the previous school year. In the closing opportunity gaps indicator¹, the school earned a score of 19 out of 20, indicating that students made excellent growth in both math and English language arts (ELA). The four-star rating indicates Freedom Classical Academy has performed well for all students and subgroups and should be commended for this. The rating demonstrates strong academic performance for all students. Freedom Classical Academy middle school did not fail to meet expectations for any group on any indicator.

Special education program offerings

Another key strength of Freedom Classical Academy is its robust special education program offerings. The school offers a wide range of services tailored to meet the diverse needs of its students, with six dedicated special education classrooms, including two self-contained classrooms. Instructional support is delivered through both push-in and pull-out models, ensuring that students receive individualized assistance while remaining integrated into the general education environment as much as possible. The return of the Gifted and Talented Education² (GATE) program this school year further expands the school's commitment to serving all learners. These programs reflect the school's focus on equity and inclusion, providing targeted support and enrichment to help every student reach their potential.

Student engagement and student voice during classroom lessons

Student engagement and student voice have improved at Freedom Classical Academy, as noted by the SPCSA site evaluation team and as reported by leadership and staff. The school has made deliberate efforts to create intellectually engaging classrooms through structured initiatives such as Teach Like a Champion³ training. This training has contributed to a noticeable rise in student participation and higher-level thinking based on classroom observation results from the last site evaluation in September 2023. Monthly professional development supports the consistent application of these strategies, and there is a strong emphasis on increasing student voice across grade levels, as indicated by the SPCSA site evaluation team during classroom observations on the day of the site evaluation. As noted on page 26 of this report, under the "engaging students in learning" indicator, four classrooms were rated as distinguished, and 20 classrooms were rated as highly proficient.

¹ The Closing Opportunity Gaps Indicator determines the percentage of students meeting their annual growth percentile who did not achieve proficiency in the prior year's state-administered criterion-referenced tests in English language arts and mathematics assessments.

² G.A.T.E. is the acronym for Gifted and Talented Education. The Office of Educational Research and Improvement in the U.S. Department Education define GATE students as: "Children with outstanding talent performing at a remarkably high level of accomplishment when compared with others of their age, experience, or environment"

³ Teach Like A Champion is a teaching approach that proposes a set of particular techniques for teachers to follow.

Evidence of teacher passion and quality lesson planning

Another notable strength at Freedom Classical Academy is the thoughtful implementation of a well-researched, standards-aligned curriculum, Core Knowledge Language Arts⁴ (CKLA) in English language arts, and Reveal⁵ math curriculum. As referenced by Ed Reports⁶, both curriculums meet standards for alignment with the Nevada Academic Content Standards⁷ and usability by teachers. As the SPCSA site evaluation team noted, teachers showed an evident passion for the content, often going beyond the basics to design inventive, engaging, and purposeful lessons that brought the curriculum to life. This dedication to high-quality instruction, paired with curricular resources, has supported the school's ongoing mission to elevate student achievement.

Administration in tune with the needs of teachers

An additional strength of Freedom Classical Academy is the leadership team's emotional intelligence and empathetic approach to supporting staff well-being. In today's classrooms, teachers have been described as "exasperated by heavy loads of emotional labor in the classroom" (Ferguson et al., 2022). Administrators at Freedom Classical Academy were observed by SPCSA staff as being attuned to the mental health needs of their teachers, creating a culture where educators feel seen, valued, and supported. The four-day instructional week benefits students and provides staff with much-needed time for rest, planning, and personal wellness. According to staff and school leadership, leadership encourages open communication and offers flexibility when needed, including increasing teacher salaries by 15%, offering bonuses, and actively working to reduce burnout by promoting a healthy work-life balance. This intentional focus on staff morale and wellness contributes to a favorable school climate as well as strengthens teacher retention and instructional effectiveness.

⁴ CKLA - Core Knowledge Language Arts is a comprehensive language arts curriculum created by Amplify for Grades pre-kindergarten through fifth grade that combines a multi-sensory approach to phonics with rich texts carefully sequenced to build content knowledge.

⁵ Reveal Math is a balanced core math program for grades Kindergarten through eighth grade.

⁶ Ed Reports is a web-based resource that examines curricular materials, gathers evidence, and comes to a consensus on scoring of materials and programs.

⁷ Nevada Academic Content Standards (NVACS) are a set of grade level standards intended to provide a focus of instruction each year. They are a framework for curriculum and instruction in the state of Nevada.

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.

Notice of Breach for low academic achievement in elementary school

A Notice of Breach was issued to Freedom Classical Academy by the SPCSA on November 15, 2024, for low academic achievement in the elementary school. Data from the 2022-23 school year revealed that the school's Closing Opportunity Gaps Indicator⁸ was notably low and earned the school four out of 20 points. Specifically, the math Adequate Growth Percentile (AGP) was 12% compared to a year before when it was 23%. In addition, in the 2023-24 school year, the Growth Indicator⁹ stood at 10.5 out of 35 points, which reflected both low median and adequate growth in math and English language arts. Additionally, according to the SPCSA Nevada Academic Performance Framework, the school scored 33.9 out of 100 points, and a Nevada school rating indicator of 15.9 out of 60 fell short of expectations. Lastly, the elementary school earned only two out of 10 points under the English Language Proficiency Indicator, with a school rate of 33% of EL¹⁰ students meeting their growth targets compared to 43% from the previous year. These metrics show the urgent need for targeted interventions to boost student achievement and narrow achievement gaps in elementary school.

Space constraints

One challenge for Freedom Classical Academy is space constraints. As the school continues to grow and add valuable layers of academic and behavioral support, including intervention programs, specialized classrooms, and additional staff, physical space has become increasingly limited. The need for more instructional areas to support small group learning, remediation, and specialized services is pressing, and the leadership team is actively exploring solutions to ensure that program quality can continue to expand without compromising learning environments.

Ongoing challenge of staff retention

A continuing challenge for Freedom Classical Academy is teacher retention, particularly due to the loss of qualified educators to schools with more competitive compensation packages. The leadership indicated that a stable, experienced teaching staff is essential to maintaining consistency and delivering high-quality instruction. During the 2024-2025 school year, the middle school math and science departments have seen significant turnover, with eight teachers leaving, as noted by both leadership and staff during focus groups, which are critical testing grades. Currently, the instructional team consists of approximately 60% licensed teachers and 40% long-term substitutes. Recruiting and retaining top talent remains a top priority for the school moving forward.

⁸ The Closing Opportunity Gaps Indicator determines the percentage of students meeting their annual growth percentile who did not achieve proficiency in the prior year's state-administered criterion-referenced tests in English language arts and mathematics assessments.

⁹ Growth is determined for elementary school with a grade configuration that accommodates at least one prior year score and one current year score.

¹⁰ EL stands for English language learners.

Chronic Absenteeism

Another challenge that Freedom Classical Academy faces is the rising percentage of chronically absent students. In elementary school, the rate grew from 11.5% in the 2022-23 school year to 12.1% in the 2023-24 school year, while middle school saw an increase from 12.2% to 13.2% over the same period. As chronic absenteeism rises, the school must implement ongoing efforts and targeted interventions to address the issue.

A rise in friction between some family members with teachers and administration

An additional challenge for Freedom Classical Academy has been an increased instances of contention between some families and members of the teaching and administrative staff based on conversations regarding homework deadlines and credit, as reported by leadership, the board, and the staff during focus groups. While not widespread, these negative interactions can impact school culture and relationships. Leadership reported proactively addressing each situation individually, improving communication, rebuilding trust, and ensuring that all stakeholders feel heard and supported. As communicated by leadership, Freedom Classical Academy remains committed to fostering a collaborative environment where families and staff work together in the best interest of students.

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.

Decrease chronic absenteeism rates

SPCSA staff recommend that Freedom Classical 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 Freedom Classical Academy’s challenges on page seven of this report, 12.1% of students were considered chronically absent in elementary school and 13.2% of middle school students for the 2023-24 school year.

- Regular attendees: miss five or fewer days a year (less than one day per month)
- At-risk attendees: miss 5% to 9% of school (about nine days a year, or one to two days per month)
- Chronically absent attendees: miss 10% or more of school (about 18 days a year; more than two days per month)
- Severely chronically absent: miss 20% or more days of school (about 36 days a year; more than four days per month).

Consider refining the elementary school homework policy

SPCSA staff recommend Freedom Classical Academy consider refining the current homework policy for elementary students. While the existing structure promotes high expectations, with assessments weighing 70% and homework at 30% of a student’s grade, some students and families may struggle to meet the demands of ongoing assignments such as book reports, projects, and poetry memorization.

Possible suggestions include:

- Introducing a tiered support system for students to provide differentiated levels of assistance for students experiencing difficulty.
- Offering more in-class time to work on assignments to help ensure all students have equitable access to the support and resources needed to succeed.
- Implementing flexible deadlines for homework.
- Encouraging open communication between parents and teachers.
- Establishing consistent feedback loops between parents and teachers to help identify any challenges students might be facing and offer solutions. This collaboration can also help parents better support their children with homework without feeling overburdened.

One book to consider reading is *Visible Learning* (Hattie, 2008). The book educates instructors and education leaders about the effect sizes of various instructional practices, including homework. Emphasizing the quality and relevance of assignments, rather than quantity, is another possible suggestion and can also help maintain accountability while promoting deeper learning and student confidence.

Continue building relationships with parents

Due to some reported issues of friction between families and school leadership and staff, SPCSA staff recommend continuing to build and strengthen relationships with parents through problem-solving strategies such as fostering open communication and trust. Through continuing these efforts, Freedom Classical Academy can mitigate negative interactions and create an environment where parents feel engaged and valued. When families are positively involved in their child's education, data indicates:

- Increased student achievement (*Park & Holloway, 2017; Jeynes, 2015*).
- Improved attendance and behavior (*Smith, Reinke, Herman, & Huang, 2019; Sheldon, 2020; Nokali, Bachman, & Vortruba-Drzal, 2019*).
- Improved social-emotional skills, (*Smith, Sheridan, Kim, Park, & Beretvas, 2020; Van Voorhis, Maier, Epstein, & Lloyd, 2023*).

Continue the strategic partnership between the board and leadership to raise the one-star in elementary school

Another recommendation for Freedom Classical Academy is to continue the strategic partnership between the board and school administration. By continuing to align clear goals and collaboratively using data to drive decisions, the board and leadership team can work together to implement targeted interventions that address the academic areas identified in the Notice of Breach issued by the SPCSA for the elementary school. This partnership is essential for ensuring consistent support, resource allocation, and accountability, all of which are critical to raising the school's one-star rating and achieving sustained academic growth for students.

Site Evaluation Findings: Strong Recommendations

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

There were no strong recommendations for Freedom Classical Academy for this site evaluation.

Site Evaluation Findings: Deficiencies

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

Deficiency for low level of academic school performance in elementary grades

Context	<p>Per the Charter School Contract between the State Public Charter School Authority and Freedom Classical Academy dated on July 1, 2020, pursuant to NRS 388A.255, the considerations of the legislature in enacting legislation to authorize charter schools is to serve the best interests of all pupils, including pupils who may be at risk; and a procedure by which the positive results achieved by charter schools may be replicated and the negative results may be identified and eliminated.</p> <p>A. Consistent with any oversight practices set out in the Charter School Performance Framework, the Authority shall follow a progressive system of notification and calls for corrective action on the part of the Charter School. (7.5.1)</p> <p>B. The Charter School Contract between the State Public Charter School authority and Freedom Classical Academy executed on July 1, 2020: Part 3: Education Program Element: Curriculum: the charter school shall have control over and responsibility for delivery of the educational program and for attainment of the performance standards as set forth in the charter school performance framework.</p>
Condition	<p>According to the contract Freedom Classical Academy has committed to first, provide a sound education program for students to attain the Nevada Performance standards and second, per the school’s mission, “To bring forth future leaders through a fusion of classical education and science, technology, engineering, and math (STEM) instruction in an environment that promotes liberty and virtue.”</p> <p>The current levels of student learning and achievement in the elementary grades at Freedom Classical Academy fall well below expectations. Freedom Classical Academy earned an index score of 26.5 points out of 100 points for elementary grades for the 2023-24 school year, which is the equivalent of a one-star rating. For English language arts (ELA), the proficiency rate was 36.2%, math proficiency was 36.8%, and science proficiency was seven percent, compared with SPCSA district rates of 54.6%, 51.2%, and 21.2%, respectively.</p>

	Several of the students attending Freedom Classical Academy are not provided with the opportunity to learn to their greatest potential and are not having their student achievement maximized, as observed during the site evaluation and reflected in the one-star rating. Tier one instruction is not providing acceptable levels of academic achievement.								
Causes	<p>Freedom Classical Academy students are not offered a robust tier one instructional program. There are extensive gaps in student learning and overall achievement levels. Tier one, tier two, and tier three instruction must be improved in the elementary school. School leaders and staff are strongly encouraged to improve academic achievement. As teachers become more effective, students become more actively engaged, and they both become intentional learners. The following elements are usually present in high-quality instructional classrooms:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consistent communication of learning objectives • Teachers familiar with the curriculum • A clear understanding of what and why students are learning a concept • Students actively engaged in their own learning • Students explaining their thinking • Strategic teacher questioning • Students displaying self-efficacy • Formative assessments 								
Effect	<p>The most recent Nevada School Rating Report for the 2023-2024 school year, as posted by the Nevada Department of Education in September 2024, indicates:</p> <p>Elementary: An overall index score of 26.5 out of a possible 100 points.</p> <p>Drops in index scores between the 2022-2023 school year and the 2023-2024 school year at each level took place:</p> <table border="1"> <tr> <td></td><td>Elementary School</td></tr> <tr> <td>2022-2023</td><td>34.0</td></tr> <tr> <td>2023-2024</td><td>26.5</td></tr> <tr> <td>Δ</td><td>-7.5</td></tr> </table>		Elementary School	2022-2023	34.0	2023-2024	26.5	Δ	-7.5
	Elementary School								
2022-2023	34.0								
2023-2024	26.5								
Δ	-7.5								
Deficiency Finding	<p>The expectation is that Freedom Classical Academy will provide a sound educational program for students to maximize student achievement. According to the Policy Achievement Level Descriptors within the Nevada School Performance Framework technical guide, a three-star school identifies an adequate school that has met the state's performance standards.</p> <p>Freedom Classical Academy Elementary School has been identified as a one-star school for the 2023-24 academic year. Freedom Classical Academy has not met Nevada state's standard of performance and urgently needs to address areas that are significantly below standard. Students and subgroups are</p>								

	<p>inconsistent in achieving performance standards. The school must submit an improvement plan that specifically identifies tailored supports to subgroups and indicators that are below standard. The school is subject to state interventions.</p> <p>Monitoring students' needs for specific academic skills and interventions is critical. As the Freedom Classical Academy governing board and leadership team consider ways to immediately increase student academic skills and growth gains, the governing board and leadership may want to emphasize the following areas, which are usually present in high-performing classrooms:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Tier one instruction: Build and monitor student academic gains by collaborating across grade bands and vertical alignment of instructional student outcomes. Educating teachers on current student performance data will benefit teachers' ability to read and utilize the data when making curricular and instructional decisions. Implementing high-quality, standards-based, differentiated lessons with meaningful text-dependent student discourse opportunities is usually essential to the goal of increasing quality Tier one instruction. ○ Lesson plans: Lessons should contain scripted scaffolded questions. Include: ○ Quantifiable objectives: Measurable objectives provide clarity to the students. Quantifiable objectives assist both the teacher and the students with concrete deliverables and evaluate student mastery. ○ Closure activities: Closure activities reinforce learning, refer back to the objective and the standard, and assess what students have learned. Students describe how, why, or what they learned at the end of each lesson. ○ Pacing: Well-organized lessons with time frames that address rigor and urgency, keep the teacher and the students on task, and enable the teacher to ensure s/he is always referring to the planned objective, standard, differentiation, and assessment. ○ Teachers make visible the learning objectives and go over them at the beginning and end of each lesson with the students. Objectives are referenced and emphasized throughout instruction. This keeps both the students, and the teachers focused on the task. This assists students internalize lesson goals and objectives, promoting stronger engagement. ○ Time management: Teach bell-to-bell to optimize learning time. ○ Efficient classroom procedures: Streamlining classroom procedural tasks for entering the classroom, getting ready to work,
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	<p>turning in paperwork, transitioning from one activity to another, obtaining materials, and clearing materials should be routine and expeditious to unencumber the learning. Some resources to consider in this area include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ The first days of school: how to be an effective teacher (Wong, 2018) Managing diverse classrooms (Rothstein-Fisch & Trumbull, 2008) ○ Professional development on questioning techniques, student-centered discussion techniques, and intentional instructional approaches that engage all students to assist in bolstering student academic growth. <p>A deficiency is considered highly serious and in urgent need of immediate attention. Once issued, school leaders are asked to complete a Site Evaluation Response Plan within four (4) weeks of the school board and the school leader receiving the site evaluation report. The school may request an extension in writing if needed. The site evaluation team will review the Response Plan, meet with school leadership, and provide feedback to the school. Both the site evaluation team and the school leadership will agree upon the plan of action, including the documented steps and the accompanying timeline.</p>
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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 ¹¹	2
Family Members, Parents, and Guardians	4
Faculty and Staff	12
School Leadership	3
Students	6

¹¹ Quorum was not met, and Open Meeting Law was not violated.

Focus Group Summary: Governing Board

Two Freedom Classical Academy board members participated in the focus group on the day of the site evaluation. Among the board members were a teacher from another charter school in Nevada, a financial advisor, and a member who also served on the board of a credit union. All board positions were filled at the time. The board was committed to consistent governance, holding regular monthly meetings with few exceptions. Their work was supported through active subcommittees focused on improving parent communication and coordination, enhancing the academic curriculum, and implementing rewards and incentives for students to support a positive school culture.

The board was aware of key academic challenges impacting student performance, particularly the issue of students not turning in homework. To address this, they considered various strategies to increase student accountability and parental involvement. They also implemented parenting classes to help address disengaged behaviors from families. Recognizing that some families experienced a cultural or educational divide that prevented them from effectively supporting their children at home, the board took proactive steps to bridge this gap. For example, the school offered sessions to teach parents the same math their children were learning, enabling them to better assist with homework and reinforce learning outside the classroom.

In response to the elementary school's one-star rating at the time, the board analyzed the root causes with Freedom Classical Academy's leadership team and believed that limited instructional support for students in Tier two¹² was a contributing factor. As part of their long-term strategy, the board assisted in a plan through which nine new teacher interventionists were hired for Freedom Classical Academy. These interventionists worked with students throughout the day in small groups and were coached by the literacy specialist. The board also collaborated with leadership to explore ways to provide even more targeted academic support. In addition, they developed plans to offer cultural orientation and parenting classes for new families entering the school, with the goal of setting clear expectations and fostering stronger family-school partnerships from the beginning.

¹² 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 behavioral goals.

Focus Group Summary: Family Members, Parents, and Guardians

During the parent focus group, five parents shared several highlights about Freedom Classical Academy. They appreciated the opportunity for students to stay together from kindergarten through eighth grade, fostering a strong sense of community. The school's variety of sports and extracurricular clubs was also a favorite, as it encourages students to try new activities and discover their interests. One parent stated, "I like that Freedom Classical Academy has academic rigor." The use of departmentalization starting in third grade was seen as a positive step in preparing students for more advanced learning. Strong student interventions and small group instruction were also highlighted by parents for providing additional support where needed. Overall, parents expressed appreciation for the school's curriculum, hands-on projects, and exposure to diverse teaching styles.

Some parents expressed concerns about the amount of homework assigned at Freedom Classical Academy, particularly with the four-day school week. They felt that the workload, which includes lengthy assignments and memorization tasks such as a page and a half of poetry, can be overwhelming for students and negatively impact their mental health. One parent shared, "The homework is a massive amount, and we're doing it until 8 or 9 p.m. It's just too much for the mental health of our kids." While projects were viewed by parents at Freedom Classical Academy more favorably since students are typically given more time to complete them, parents noted that the overall homework load often depends on the individual teacher. There were also some concerns about middle school students receiving last-minute notices for assignments, adding to the stress and time management challenges. Parents expressed a desire for changes to the homework policy, hoping it would become more thoughtful and purposeful in the amount and type of work assigned.

When asked about the transition to the four-day school week, parents shared mixed experiences. Some felt it didn't make a significant difference in managing homework or school responsibilities, but others appreciated the change. One parent said, "My child enjoys having Fridays off, as it gives him more time to relax and improves his mental health." Several parents mentioned that having Friday available makes it easier for students to catch up on missing work, better enjoy their weekends, and attend scheduled appointments.

When asked what they would like to see changed, parents at Freedom Classical Academy mentioned several areas for improvement. One parent suggested revising the dress-down policy, noting that while it's intended as a reward, it doesn't feel meaningful and could be moved to a different day of the week. Others expressed concerns that students are not allowed to use earned homework passes, which they felt was unfair. There was also disappointment about canceled field trips, with cancellations sometimes happening on short notice. Additionally, parents noted high staff turnover and the inconsistency in teaching styles from class to class as ongoing concerns.

Focus Group Summary: Faculty and Staff

During the site evaluation at Freedom Classical Academy, 12 staff members provided insight into staff morale across the school. Overall, staff reported that morale varies by grade level but is generally stable. One staff member described morale in the middle school as “Decent, although it has been affected by high turnover, particularly with the eighth-grade math position, which is now on its third teacher this year.” These challenges, while largely out of the control of the staff, have required teachers to step in and fill gaps, which can lead to added pressure. In contrast, morale in grades four and five was reported to be strong, and in the kindergarten through third-grade wing, staff describes the culture as “feeling like a close-knit family.” Across all grade levels, teachers expressed appreciation for the responsiveness of the administrative team. When signs of morale dips arise, staff reported that leadership takes proactive steps to address concerns and boost staff well-being.

Staff members at Freedom Classical Academy shared that one of the root causes of the one-star rating in the elementary school is the provision of differentiated instruction through small groups and one-on-one instruction. While small groups are vital to student growth, they come with challenges, particularly around managing time and meeting the diverse needs of students. One staff member said, “With a wide range of academic levels in each classroom, it can be challenging to ensure that every student receives the individualized support they need while keeping the rest of the class engaged.” To address this challenge, staff members relayed that instructional aides play a key role by pulling small groups throughout the day. Teachers also tailor whole-group instruction and adapt lessons to meet students at their individual levels. In middle school, staff provide one-on-one help during class and reinforce learning through after-school tutoring sessions. Digital programs such as Coach Digital¹³ and Moby Max¹⁴ offer additional individualized practice and support. Staff at Freedom Classical Academy also emphasized that MAP¹⁵ Growth data is the primary driver for forming and adjusting small groups. One teacher explained, “We use MAP data to hone in on where each student is and build our small groups around that. It’s not one-size-fits-all here.” Staff members report that this data-driven approach helps ensure that instructional time is focused, intentional, and responsive to the needs of all learners.

Staff members at Freedom Classical Academy shared mixed perspectives on the current homework policy, especially in the elementary grades. While many agree that the rigor helps prepare students for academic success, they also expressed concerns about the volume and its impact on students and families. Teachers noted that from a parent’s perspective, the workload can feel overwhelming, particularly for families with limited time or resources to support their children at home. Some staff observed that the current policy does not account for the varying levels of support students receive outside of school, and this inequality often shows most clearly in long-term projects. “You can see the difference in who has help at home and who doesn’t. Projects sometimes highlight the gap more than help close it,” one teacher shared.

¹³ Coach Digital is a curriculum that provides instruction and practice for reteaching, reinforcement, and remediation in grades 3–8.

¹⁴ Moby Max is an online, adaptive curriculum for grades three through eight.

¹⁵ Measures of Academic Progress (MAP) is a computer-adaptive assessment utilized to monitor student growth to inform and personalize instruction. MAP was officially adopted by the State Board of Education to assess Nevada students as a part of the Read by Grade Three (RBG3) program.

In response, some teachers have started adjusting due dates and modifying assignments to reduce stress for both students and families. While families who are able to provide academic support at home tend to be more comfortable with the policy, others struggle, and this disparity can negatively affect student morale and academic performance.

Toward the end of the focus group, staff members at Freedom Classical Academy expressed that they felt genuinely supported by the school's leadership team. They shared appreciation for the administration's consistent backing when navigating challenging situations with parents, as well as the trust given to teachers to tailor their lessons in ways that best meet the needs of their students. One staff member relayed, "The four-day instructional week is a major contributor to improved work-life balance and overall morale." Teachers at Freedom Classical Academy also noted that ongoing professional development, particularly focused on student engagement strategies, has been meaningful and practical.

Focus Group Summary: School Leadership

The leadership focus group at Freedom Classical Academy, comprised of three members of the leadership team, met to reflect on key initiatives driving instructional improvement and student engagement. A central focus has been the implementation of *Teach Like a Champion* strategies, with specific emphasis on "radar," "cold call," and "turn and talks," which have led to noticeable improvements in classroom engagement. The team also highlighted the integration of *Leader in Me*¹⁶ through a soft start to the school year and daily 30-minute Social-Emotional Learning (SEL) lessons, helping to build a strong classroom culture. Monthly professional development sessions have supported consistent growth in instructional practices, and there's a renewed emphasis on increasing student voice through Socratic Seminars¹⁷ and goal-setting practices. Overall, the group expressed optimism about the progress made and a commitment to refining practices to support both student achievement and teacher development.

Leadership members at Freedom Classical Academy shared placing a strong emphasis on MTSS Tier one strategies, ensuring that as much support as possible happens directly in the classroom. This comprehensive approach includes proactive restorative circles, especially emphasized in the middle school setting, along with regular check-ins designed to address behavioral and academic needs early. One leader added, "We are planning to add a dean position next year as part of the model to further support our MTSS efforts." They also empower their teachers to include scheduled breaks to help manage student stress and maintain focus. These efforts have translated into results, including a leadership-reported 70% decrease in behavioral issues and multiple success stories that underscore the effectiveness of building strong community ties and fostering a supportive learning environment. Leaders shared that there is some friction with parents surrounding homework issues. In response, leaders at Freedom Classical Academy are building stronger relationships with parents, encapsulated in the message, "We want you on our team; we are both here for your child."

To address chronic absenteeism, Freedom Classical Academy leaders have implemented a multi-faceted strategy aimed at keeping rates below 10 percent. While the current rates are around 12% to 13%, this marks a significant improvement from previous levels as high as 30%. One key element has been parent education—helping families understand the impact of absences on student achievement and sharing comparative data through MyEducationData¹⁸ to illustrate individual student attendance trends versus schoolwide benchmarks. The school maintains a four-day student schedule, which has supported mental health needs of both students and teachers and provided time for routine appointments, reducing the need for absences during the academic week. Staff also engage in ongoing conversations with families about planning vacations around school breaks to avoid missed instructional time. "These efforts,

¹⁶ A PK–12 evidence-based model focused on leadership, culture, and academics that equips students, educators, and families with the leadership and life skills needed to thrive.

¹⁷ A Socratic seminar is a formal discussion based on a text, where participants engage in dialogue through open-ended questions.

¹⁸ MyEducationData is an online platform that provides parents with easy access to their child's academic information, offering a comprehensive overview of their child's performance, attendance, and other key details, all in one secure and user-friendly location.

combined with consistent communication and a supportive school culture, have hopefully contributed to a steady decline in chronic absenteeism,” leaders shared.

The leadership team at Freedom Classical Academy has identified several root causes contributing to the decline in the elementary school’s rating from two stars in the 2022–23 school year to one star in the 2023-24 school year. They indicated that a major factor was the transition to a new curriculum in both English language arts and math, which created adjustment challenges. One leader mentioned, “In some instances, the curriculum was unintentionally watered down, leading to inconsistencies in instruction and gaps in rigor.” Additionally, leaders reported that many current students were in their foundational learning years during COVID, further impacting skill development. High teacher turnover has also been a challenge, with about one-half licensed teachers and one-half long-term substitutes leading to instructional irregularities. In response, the school launched several interventions. A testing center was established every morning for a full month to support SBAC¹⁹ administration. The GATE²⁰ program was reinstated, and remediation now occurs during the school day, supported by nine aides who have all been trained by the school’s literacy specialist. These aides and classroom teachers lead targeted small-group instruction and are closely monitored using *mClass*²¹ with progress checks every 10 days. Tools like *Moby Max*²² are used to reinforce skills, and efforts continue to fill academic gaps while maintaining high expectations. These focused interventions reflect the school’s commitment to raising student achievement and returning to a higher performance level.

¹⁹ The Smarter Balanced Assessments (SBAC) measure student progress in grades three through eight towards college and career success and are aligned with the Nevada Academic Content Standards in English language arts and mathematics. Results from the SBAC are included on the Nevada Report Card.

²⁰ G.A.T.E. is the acronym for Gifted and Talented Education. The Office of Educational Research and Improvement in the U.S. Department Education define GATE students as: “Children with outstanding talent performing at a remarkably high level of accomplishment when compared with others of their age, experience, or environment.”

²¹ mCLASS is an all-in-one system for Science of Reading-based universal screening, dyslexia screening, progress monitoring, and instruction for grades K-six.

²² Moby Max is a K-8 learning platform that has tasks for students in math, literacy, science and social studies.

Focus Group Summary: Students

Students at Freedom Classical Academy shared their honest perspectives on various aspects of their school experience. When discussing homework, students noted that although it often felt boring, it helped them review and reinforce what they learned in class. Vocabulary and history assignments were described as especially helpful, and the math review was also considered useful. Students at Freedom Classical Academy pointed out that homework often carried significant weight, sometimes up to 30% of a grade or 100 points, and that missing assignments could drastically lower their grades, even if they performed well in class.

The students at Freedom Classical Academy reflected on recent lessons and what they found interesting about school. They mentioned learning how to add fractions by finding and combining whole numbers, exploring a Civil War unit, and studying a science lesson involving creating a spacecraft that could exist in Neptune's atmosphere using wind resistance and suction cups on ice. One student shared, "We read *Frankenstein*, and I learned about the importance of caring for something responsibly." Other students mentioned working on pre-algebra and writing summaries, noting that teachers in these subjects made learning engaging.

Most students at Freedom Classical Academy said they felt physically safe at school, but some had concerns about mental and emotional safety. A few students shared that they were made fun of or felt uncomfortable due to peer behavior, although many agreed that teachers were caring and provided someone to turn to when needed. One student said, "I feel completely physically and emotionally safe." Another shared, "I feel physically safe but less secure mentally because of teasing or bullying by other students." When asked to rate the friendliness of their peers on a scale of one to ten, students gave an average rating of about six. They explained that some students were friendly, others were not, and some used inappropriate language or sometimes acted aggressively.

Students at Freedom Classical Academy concluded the focus group by offering several suggestions for improving their school experience. They expressed frustration with group punishments and advocated for more consistent and individualized discipline. Furthermore, they recommended providing more opportunities for social interaction and breaks throughout the day, reducing the amount of homework, and allowing more time during class to complete it. Despite these concerns, the students shared their appreciation for teachers who genuinely cared about their emotional well-being and took action when bullying or other issues were brought to their attention.

Classroom Environment and Instruction

Observation Rubric

A total of 19 elementary and 11 middle classrooms were observed for approximately 15 minutes on the day of the site evaluation.

Classroom Environment					
	Distinguished	Highly Proficient	Approaching Proficient	Unsatisfactory	Not Observed
Classroom Learning Environment is Conducive to Learning	<p>The teacher demonstrates knowledge and caring about individual students' lives beyond the class and school.</p> <p>When necessary, students respectfully correct one another.</p> <p>Students participate without fear of put-downs or ridicule from either the teacher or other students.</p> <p>The teacher respects and encourages students' efforts.</p>	<p>Talk between the teacher and students and among students is uniformly respectful.</p> <p>The teacher successfully responds to disrespectful behavior among students.</p> <p>Students participate willingly but may be somewhat hesitant to offer their ideas in front of classmates.</p> <p>The teacher makes general connections with individual students.</p>	<p>The quality of interactions between teachers and students, or among students, is uneven, with occasional disrespect or insensitivity.</p> <p>The teacher attempts to respond to disrespectful behavior among students with uneven results.</p> <p>The teacher attempts to make connections with individual students, but student reactions indicate that these attempts are not entirely successful.</p>	<p>The teacher is disrespectful toward or insensitive to students' ages, cultural backgrounds, and developmental levels.</p> <p>Students' body language indicates feelings of hurt, discomfort, or insecurity.</p> <p>The teacher displays no familiarity with, or care about, individual students.</p>	<p>This criterion was not observed or rated.</p>
	TOTAL: 2	TOTAL: 26	TOTAL: 2	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: 3	TOTAL: 23	TOTAL: 4	TOTAL: 0	TOTAL: 0

Classroom Environment and Instruction

Observation Rubric

A total of 19 elementary and 11 middle 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: 1	TOTAL: 26	TOTAL: 3	TOTAL: 0	TOTAL: 0
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: 0	TOTAL: 19	TOTAL: 9	TOTAL: 0	TOTAL: 2

Classroom Environment and Instruction

Observation Rubric

A total of 19 elementary and 11 middle 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: 4	TOTAL: 20	TOTAL: 6	TOTAL: 0	TOTAL: 0
Using Assessment in Instruction	<p>Students indicate they clearly understand the characteristics of high-quality work.</p> <p>The teacher uses multiple strategies to monitor student understanding.</p> <p>Students monitor their own understanding.</p> <p>Feedback comes from many sources.</p>	<p>The teacher makes the standards of high-quality work clear to students.</p> <p>The teacher elicits evidence of student understanding.</p> <p>Students are invited to assess their own work and make improvements.</p> <p>Feedback includes specific and timely guidance.</p>	<p>There is little evidence that the students understand how the work is evaluated.</p> <p>The teacher monitors understanding through a single method, without eliciting evidence of understanding from students.</p> <p>Feedback to students is vague.</p>	<p>The teacher does not indicate what quality work looks like.</p> <p>The teacher makes no effort to determine whether students understand the lesson.</p> <p>Students receive no feedback, or feedback is global or directed to one student.</p>	
	TOTAL: 1	TOTAL: 20	TOTAL: 7	TOTAL: 0	TOTAL: 2

Classroom Observations and Additional Comments

Students in one English language small group "listened with a purpose" to the teacher as she read a book about birds. They were to think of what type of beak each bird had and why they had it. Students openly shared their thoughts and discussed them during the reading.

In this middle school resource pull-out classroom, students (13) and one teacher worked independently. The teacher walked around the room and supported students as they needed it. Another adult sat at her desk and worked on something.

The teacher began by reviewing the learning objective with students: to read and write adverbs. Shifting focus, she directed students to take out their texts on the War of 1812. She asked them questions such as, "Who was at war?" and "Why didn't the British and French want America to help them?" Her energetic teaching style and frequent praise created a positive and responsive classroom atmosphere, reflected in students' eagerness to participate. To encourage interaction, the teacher prompted students to give each other "snaps," show a "mad face," and indicate agreement with their classmates by raising their hands.

In an upper elementary classroom, students worked collaboratively in small groups to read a historical text and respond to related questions. They remained actively engaged, listening carefully to one another as they discussed their answers. The teacher moved throughout the room, interacting with different groups by asking thoughtful, clarifying questions. She also encouraged students to include more detail in their responses, reminding them that they would soon perform dramatizations based on the text.

In a middle school English classroom, the teacher introduced and described various vocabulary words to students. Following the vocabulary discussion, students completed a brief grammar assignment independently. During this time, the teacher circulated the room, providing individual support.

In this upper elementary classroom, there were 29 students and one teacher. The teacher was having an intense conversation with students about spelling. He was asking students to be reflective about spelling. He called on students who volunteer, asked many low-level questions, and invited them to participate one by one. The remainder of the class was disengaged. During the questioning portion of the ELA, one student was speaking about why she thought one character was distrustful. When other students tried to speak for her, the teacher said, "Wait, let her defend her point."

In a middle school math classroom, students were working on identifying multiple data sets and comparing them using a structured rotation model. The teacher guided the lesson by modeling examples on the board while students actively took notes. After the initial instruction, students began an independent assignment to practice applying equations to analyze and compare the data sets. The teacher circulated the room throughout the work period, answering questions, clarifying concepts, and providing individual support to ensure student understanding. The classroom maintained a focused and productive atmosphere, with students engaged in their tasks.

Students collaborated in four groups to design a spacecraft capable of functioning on a specific planet. Each group was assigned a different planet and provided a fact card detailing conditions such as temperature, gravity, and surface characteristics. Using this information, students created a plan and built their spacecrafts, working productively and cooperatively throughout the activity.

There were two adults and 28 students in this earlier grade classroom. The teacher is highly imaginative in her engagement of students using several strategies to involve students in the learning. The teacher displayed her willingness to make a mistake, and had students help "fix" the issues. The teacher worked hard to support students in listening skills.

The teacher clearly introduced and unpacked the learning objective: collect data to make a line plot and generate questions about the line plot. She explained that a line plot is a number line used to display data. Students referred to their notebooks containing small anchor charts on the topic and actively took notes during the lesson. To check for understanding, the teacher asked various knowledge-level questions, calling on individual students to respond. Students worked in groups at their tables with a "stack of data" based on a class survey to organize and create line plots. Each group member had a specific role, contributing to the collaborative task.

In one early grade classroom, there were 26 students and one teacher. Instruction was for the whole group, and the teacher used movements to help students connect the sounds of letters to the words.

This was an upper elementary classroom. The teacher had students come to the front and write their mathematical expressions. Then, one student came to the front and checked each expression. This was a wonderful example of students evaluating the work of others, and the class was highly engaged.

Students wrote five-paragraph opinion essays on which grade level they believe is the best and why. They were expected to support their opinions with clear reasons and use appropriate transition words to organize their ideas. The classroom environment was calm and focused as the teacher circulated, offering support and encouragement with phrases like, "I believe in you!" Students remained respectful toward their peers and the teacher and were actively engaged in their writing. Students were also paired with one another to edit their essays.

In one upper elementary classroom, students evaluated numerical expressions in math, using whiteboards to show their work step by step. Two teachers were present, circulating and providing support as needed. Although students were seated in pairs, they primarily worked independently to solve the expressions. Once they finished, the teacher prompted them to "turn and talk," encouraging them to explain their equations and ask each other questions about their solutions. Students were genuinely engaged in these discussions, actively participating and demonstrating understanding.

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
Increase student engagement, including student voice.	The staff was trained in the <i>Teach Like a Champion</i> method and replaced ineffective staff members. Leaders reported improved student engagement through classroom observations, with some areas for continued growth.	Classroom observations on page 21 of this report indicated that four out of 30 classrooms were rated as distinguished in student engagement practice, 20 out of 30 classrooms were highly proficient, and six out of 30 were approaching proficiency, indicating that Freedom Classical Academy has met this recommendation.
Increase feedback to students, student goal-setting, and strategic teacher questioning.	Leaders reported that goal setting was highly emphasized throughout the 2023-24 school year.	<p>Based on information gained in leadership, student, and staff focus groups, as well as in classroom observations, Freedom Classical Academy has met the recommendation to increase student feedback and implement student goal-setting.</p> <p>Classroom observations on page 20 of this report indicated that 19 out of 30 classrooms were highly proficient in strategic teacher questioning, nine out of 30 classrooms were approaching proficient, and it was not observed in two out of 30 classrooms, indicating that Freedom Classical Academy will continue to work on this recommendation.</p>

Operational Compliance Checks

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

Appendix A

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