



Nevada State Public Charter School Authority

Mater Academy of Northern Nevada Site Evaluation Report: 04/03/2025

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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.

Building resilience in students

A major strength at Mater Academy of Northern Nevada (MANN) and a common thread throughout the focus groups and classroom observations were the systems in place to create a school environment where students' resilience skills become stronger. Building resilience is a vital skill for students because it equips them to navigate the challenges of academics, as well as life's adversity, trauma, tragedy, anxiety, and uncertainty.¹ As students embrace resiliency, they learn to survive and eventually develop their full potential in educational and life endeavors. On the day of the site evaluation, leaders reported the growth students incurred in Social Emotional Learning (SEL)². One of the school leaders explained, "Our students are growing in SEL competencies and are far less aggressive than in previous years. Our entire school staff has worked to create an environment where students feel safe and supported. We believe our students will become more resilient and increase their ability to bounce back from any setbacks."

At MANN, systems to create resilience included:

- **A support network** that included strong relationships between students, families, teachers, and school leaders. Students at MANN reported that their teachers know them well and students feel accepted. On page 15 of this report's Focus Group Summary, a student commented, "I have many teachers I can talk to, and learning is my escape." Additionally, on page 11, a board member commented, "I think our vision would be to continue to provide a special supportive school and build relationships because they are so vitally important. Our students at MANN feel seen, and they don't drop through the cracks." Family members reported during the Family Focus Group session, "The school has been able to take steps to assist my son. He has relationships with school leaders and knows this is a safe place to go to school. He knows who to go to for reassurance."
- **A school-wide growth mindset** that guided students to embrace challenges as opportunities for personal growth. This was a common thread heard throughout the site evaluation. For example, during the student focus group, a student said, "At this school, everyone will make mistakes, but the teachers and staff are really on it and have kids talk it out." Another student commented, "The teachers give enough opportunity to thrive and shine, and even when we do something wrong and get a write-up, they help us to do the right thing the next time." A family member commented, "I have faith in my child's teacher. My daughter is going into 9th grade and was feeling bad about herself this year. The teacher provided her the motivation and positive environment to re-focus and thrive."

¹ BeachBoard, C How to Build Students' Resilience *Edutopia* 2025 <https://www.edutopia.org/article/strategies-build-students-resilience/>

² SEL stands for Social and Emotional Learning, an integral part of human development in which students learn to develop healthy identities, manage emotions, achieve personal and collective goals, feel and show empathy for others, establish and maintain supportive relationships, and make responsible and caring decisions.

- **Setting goals** takes place at MANN. Long-term goals have been broken into manageable, achievable steps, and small victories were celebrated along the way. For example, students shared they use i-Ready³ to learn and then monitor their scores so that they are aware of their progress. Students reported they have a binder they use to create goals and record test outcomes. One student remarked, “I know I’m improving. Each time I get my report card and scores, I see it improve.” Families appreciated the student-led conferences, which take place twice per year. One parent commented, “I like that my child presents information about his progress at conferences. He shared information with the site evaluation team about his “stretch goal,” and this gets him speaking and aware of his current academic status. I think this helps my son know where he needs to improve.” In terms of celebrating victories, MANN has focused on positive outcomes by providing Mater Pride class incentives, monthly celebrations, semester rewards, and a family celebration at the end of the school year.
- **Mindfulness and stress management** It is important to note that MANN was recognized as one of the top six charter schools in Nevada by the National Center on PBIS⁴ (Positive Behavioral Interventions and Support Program). In addition, MANN continues MTSS⁵ opportunities and works toward school-wide expectations. MANN was the recipient of the “Platinum Award” from the MTSS PBIS SPCSA (State Public Charter School Authority) committee. At MANN, resiliency is supported when students practice mindfulness meditation and stress-reduction techniques to stay grounded in the present moment and manage stress effectively. Strategies have been established to encourage students to take a break when they realize they are becoming anxious. During the family focus group, a parent said, “I have learned that if my son is getting overstimulated, he is allowed to stay in a classroom with the teacher and help to organize things” Another person said, “I love the quiet corners in most classrooms or the counselor’s office. I like the fact that the students know that if they need a break, the staff will find them a spot alone to reset.” A student in the focus group said, “Some kids are negative, but there is a counselor who will help and calms down students.”
- **Providing support for increased levels of individual and small-group instruction** MANN supports individual student learning by providing instructional assistants in every classroom at the elementary school level. Comments on page 20 of this report describe some of the advantages of this instructional decision. For example, one evaluator wrote, “This elementary classroom had two adults. One teacher went over the essential question and made sure to make connections to the objective. The teacher stopped, asked a question, and had students talk to a partner about what they thought. Both adults leaned in and spoke with the students.”

³ i-Ready Learning is a digital instructional resource assessing students with grade-level materials in reading and math.

⁴ Positive Behavior Interventions Supports (PBIS) is an evidence-based classroom management approach containing four practices: (a) teaching school-wide expectations, (b) acknowledging expected behavior, (c) correcting errors, and (d) requesting assistance.

⁵ The Multi-Tiered System of Support (MTSS) is a proactive academic and behavioral framework. The MTSS framework provides schools and teachers onboarding and ongoing training and resources of tiered interventions and supports.

A family member commented that students are provided with small-group instruction and personalized attention. A family member stated, “When we started attending this school, my son got more attention.” School leaders spoke about this and said, “A master schedule is set up to accommodate student specials and a daily Power Hour⁶ for intensive instructional remediation or acceleration.” Members of the staff commented that they have a co-teaching model in the middle school.

Diversity and a high number of students within three sets of special populations

A key expectation for SPCSA schools is to work on attracting and enrolling a more diverse student population and implement targeted strategies to foster inclusivity, reaching out to underserved communities and providing support and resources for students with an Individualized Education Plan (IEP), Free and Reduced Lunch (FRL), and English Learner (EL) backgrounds. MANN has a high number of students within three sets of special populations. SPCSA’s 2023-24 Academic Performance Report includes a section labeled the *Enrollment Diversity Indicator*, which allows for a maximum of 15 points. The MANN elementary and middle school report indicates 15 of 15 points, which breaks into 5/5 for FRL rate, 5/5 for IEP rate, and 5/5 for EL rate. These are perfect scores within the SPCSA’s Academic Performance Framework within the Enrollment Diversity Indicator. MANN is clearly committed to providing equitable access to a diverse and innovative education for all.

Strong evidence of a positive school climate

MANN continues to create a school environment where students, staff, and families feel safe, supported, engaged, and accepted. A positive school climate can improve students’ academic achievement, attendance, engagement, and behavior. It also has a positive impact on teacher satisfaction and retention. On numerous occasions on the day of the site evaluation there were instances of this taking place. For example, when evaluators arrived at the school in the morning, students were greeted by adults with a positive good morning, or a high five. One parent in the family focus group said, “I love drop-off where the children are greeted with a hug, music is played, and students get pumped up and ready to learn.” Another parent said, “I like that the teachers communicate with students even on the weekend and after hours. The teachers made things personal and have attended sporting events such as baseball, basketball, and lacrosse games.” Teachers reported that staff morale is positive, with one teacher stating, “I would never go anywhere else.” A board member said during the board focus group, “This is such a special place. You want your kids and grandkids here, and I feel very privileged to be here. Everything is positive.” From the student’s perspective, one student during the student focus group session was thrilled to share that he no longer needs an IEP⁷. He stated, “My teachers give me the encouragement I need, and I feel safe and comfortable around them. I surpassed my IEP, and I no longer have an IEP because I met all my goals, and I feel happy about this.”

⁶ Power hour is a designated time within the school day to provide focused interventions, and small group instruction.

⁷ An Individualized Education Program (IEP) is a legal document that outlines the special education instruction, services, and support that a student with specific types of disabilities needs to receive in a learning environment.

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

Two-star index score at elementary and middle school level

A significant drop in the index score at the elementary level is a challenge. The index score dropped from 65 out of 100 and a three-star score in 2022-23 to a 41-index score and a two-star score in 2023-24 per the Nevada School Performance Framework⁸. Within the framework, the Academic Achievement Indicator measuring proficiency was highly concerning. The school earned 7 of 25 possible points in this category. A challenge exists at the middle school level with an index and index of 57. Within the framework, several indicators could be improved, including Academic Achievement with five of 25 possible points, Closing Opportunity Gaps with three of a possible 20 points, and Student Growth with 19 of a possible 30 points.

Elementary school science proficiency rate

The elementary school science proficiency rate is a challenge. The SPCSA average for science proficiency is 21.2 percent, and the MANN proficiency rate was less than 5 percent. This equates to fewer than 5 percent of MANN students testing as proficient in science. This indicates a challenge in science proficiency at the elementary level.

Chronic Absenteeism

Chronic Absenteeism at both the elementary and middle school levels continues to be a challenge at MANN. The leadership team and staff reported ways they are addressing chronic absenteeism this school year. According to the Nevada School Performance Framework (NSPF), the elementary level was 11.8 percent, and the middle school level was 14.8 percent. This comes from the most recent data, the 2023-24 school information.

New math curriculum

Implementing a new math curriculum is a challenge as educators must realign and become familiar with materials and program layout. According to the leadership team at MANN, the school is no longer using Springboard Math⁹. The school has worked with the Mater Miami team, Mater Las Vegas teams, and an outside consultant to determine and implement the best curriculum for students. The MANN team used NVACS¹⁰ to ensure alignment with the standards.

Need to further improve instructional methods

As MANN is dedicated to improving instructional methods and moving student achievement outcomes to higher levels, a challenge exists with consistency in the highest levels of instructional best practices, and there is room for improvement. There is an opportunity for the educators at MANN to increase learning outcomes for students and for the classroom environment and instructional practices to move from “Highly Proficient” to “Distinguished” as noted on pages 17-19 of this report.

⁸ NSPF is Nevada’s public school rating system designed by Nevadans and developed in accordance with the federal Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) per NRS 385A.600 and classifies schools within a five-star performance rating system.

⁹ Springboard Math is a math content curriculum

¹⁰ 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: Recommendations

Recommended items are provided so charter schools may increase their school-wide performance and overall success.

Address the two-star ratings at elementary and middle school levels

The overall star ratings at both the elementary and middle school levels are currently being addressed by the entire MANN team. Since the goal to increase the star rating involves raising the index scores at the elementary and middle school levels, improvements to achievement gaps, as well as proficiency levels are needed at MANN. The SPCSA team would like MANN to consider the following suggestions based on recent scholarly research.¹¹

- Review approaches to closing achievement gaps, including tutoring programs and daily interventions. Consider conducting an analysis of the school's current tutoring and intervention practices to determine what modifications might obtain substantial or impressive outcomes.
- Consider evaluating daily Tier-1¹² instruction to address possible root causes that may create a daily learning gap and compound into achievement gaps over time. Tier-2¹³ and Tier-3¹⁴ instructional methods tend to focus on symptoms of underachievement. Closely evaluate MANN's possible root causes of Tier-1 instruction that may hinder the full potential of student growth opportunities. After reviewing evaluation outcomes, consider the numbered items listed below, should they apply, and strengthen overall school-wide instructional practices within daily Tier-1 instruction.

1. Increase rigor levels in Tier-1 instruction

Scholarly research suggests students who are not exposed to the most rigorous grade-level content may lack some of the support needed to master the content fully. This may include levels of background knowledge necessary to connect content vocabulary and/or the needed skills for academic discourse.

2. Increase student engagement during Tier-1 instruction

Numerous researchers have cited that when students sit passively listening rather than actively participating in their own learning, they absorb less content knowledge. This might include students collaborating with peers more often during classroom instruction, building interpersonal skills, and developing students' persistence with the ability to concentrate for longer periods of time.

3. Increase levels of deeper learning during Tier-1 instruction¹⁵

Evaluate current classroom assignments to establish whether higher taxonomic stages are carried through when students are tasked to practice newly learned material during classroom independent learning time and as students' progress to high levels of independent mastery.

¹¹ Valenzuela, J. Boosting Critical Thinking Across the Curriculum. Edutopia, 2022. <https://www.edutopia.org/article/boosting-critical-thinking-across-curriculum>

¹² Tier 1 instruction is also known as core instruction and is the universal, foundational level of instruction provided to all students in the classroom.

¹³ Tier 2 instruction in education refers to supplemental, small-group interventions for students who aren't making sufficient progress in the general classroom.

¹⁴ Tier 3 instruction in education represents the most intensive level of intervention and provides individualized and explicit instruction. This level involves smaller group sizes, and more frequent and longer sessions.

¹⁵ Lee, C. Blooms taxonomy: How do you use Bloom's Taxonomy in the classroom? 2023. <https://www.turnitin.com/blog/blooms-taxonomy-how-do-you-use-blooms-taxonomy-in-the-classroom>

4. *Teacher-directed instruction vs. student-led team learning during Tier-I instruction*
Consider evaluating current levels of rigorous and robust student-to-student discourse opportunities and ensure content vocabulary is practiced by the students daily.

Continue to lower chronic absenteeism

It is recommended MANN refine and continue with plans to lower chronic absenteeism at each level of the school, the elementary and the middle. According to the most recent Nevada Report Card, the elementary level was 11.8 percent, and the middle school level was 14.8 percent. Improved outcomes will bolster the overall star ratings and index scores as well as improve students' level of learning.

Continue to monitor the implementation of the new math curriculum

With the implementation of the new math curriculum, continue to be sensitive to possible gaps in published materials and student outcomes. Continue to support teachers as they become more familiar and seasoned with the new materials.

Increase science proficiency results in elementary school

Consider placing an emphasis on implementing science lessons and hands-on science activities. Consider integration of this subject matter to realize substantial growth in science as measured by the CRT summative test. Additionally, the bolstering of science at the elementary level may likely lead to stronger outcomes at the middle school level as students move toward higher grade levels.

Site Evaluation Findings: Strong Recommendations

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

There were no strong recommendations identified for MANN during this evaluation cycle.

Site Evaluation Findings: Deficiencies

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

There were no deficiencies identified for MANN during this evaluation cycle.

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 ¹⁶	3
Family Members, Parents, and Guardians	8
Faculty and Staff	10
School Leadership	7
Students	13

¹⁶ Quorum was not met, and Open Meeting Law was not violated.

Focus Group Summary: Governing Board

Three members out of seven members of the MANN governing board met and confirmed there is one open position on the board. The board said they meet every other month on Wednesdays. Board members spoke about some of the positives from the board's perspective. One board member stated, "Our school leader provides an update about school academics at each board meeting. The two-star rating was disappointing, and I know there have been some changes as a result." Another board member added, "We added a writing curriculum. We are seeing some great growth in student academic improvement numbers." Board members said the school team has worked to improve the number of chronically absent students. A board member commented, "One of the many positive things we are aware of is that families want their children to attend MANN. We know this because we look at the enrollment totals as well as the number of students on the waiting list." Another board member added, "We just had open enrollment, and I remember when we were a brand-new charter school and struggling to fill the school. I specifically remember our school leader standing out on the corner handing out flyers. What a contrast to the wait list we have now."

The board members in attendance said they have a very solid understanding of the levels of academic achievement of students. Board members said they review information about specific student data from a well-known consultant. The board said they appreciate the information and continue to monitor data about where the school is trending. One board member shared, "We are looking and expecting at least three stars across both elementary and middle this year. We were all surprised by last year's outcome and star level. From our viewpoint, things were going very well."

The board is excited about early plans for a new school. One board member stated, "I want to keep students at all levels and provide a pathway through high school." Board members explained that the reason behind opening a high school came from the parents asking for the upper-grade levels. One board member stated, "I think our vision would be to continue to provide a special supportive school and build relationships because they are so vitally important. Our students at MANN feel seen, and they don't drop through the cracks."

Board members said that charter school funding and budgets seem to be difficult. One person said, "Every day there is different information coming in. We had to approve a different budget that was tighter than we would have liked it to be. We don't have the full impact yet."

When board members were asked if there was anything else they would like to share, several positive comments were made. One member shared, "This is such a special place. You want your kids and grandkids here, and I feel very privileged to be here. Everything is positive." Another member added, "One of the strengths of MANN and the leadership is that they are educating the whole child, looking at mental health, physical health, and behavioral support as well." A different board member commented, "The school team helps to show students what is possible. For example, the career day consisted of 40 different possible careers. This enabled the students to see firsthand the many opportunities out there in the world and show them their potential."

Focus Group Summary: Family Members, Parents, and Guardians

Eight family members commented on their educational experiences at MANN. One parent shared, “When we enrolled here, I was impressed with how responsive the teachers were.” Another participant said, “When my child started attending this school, my son got more attention.” A third parent said, “The school principal will call with good things to say about my child.” Finally, one parent reported, “We have been here since kindergarten, and there have been challenges because my son has been diagnosed with a disability. The school has been able to assist my son. He has relationships with school leaders and knows this is a safe place to go to school. He knows who to go to for reassurance.”

Family members spoke about relationships between themselves and their children’s teachers. One family member said, “Teachers are very strong; they are open and communicate with our family very often.” Another person said, “I have faith in my child’s teacher. My daughter is going into ninth grade and felt bad about herself this year. The teacher provided her the motivation and positive environment to re-focus and thrive.” A parent added, “The staff is very approachable; using ClassDojo¹⁷ we get notes and texts, so we know what is going on.” One family member said, “I like that the teachers communicate with students on the weekend and after hours. The teachers attend sporting events such as baseball, basketball, and lacrosse games.” Parents said their children got excited when they see their teachers at games. Family members listed several events which included a Valentine's Day dance, cultures around the world, and nature walks on Saturdays. One family member explained, “There are family events held at the school during each season. The whole family is invited and included in the activities.”

Families spoke about the academic information they may retrieve from the Infinite Campus Portal¹⁸. They like having the ability to check grades and see assignments. Families appreciated the student-led conferences twice per year. One parent commented, “I like that my child presents information about his progress at conferences. He shared information about his “stretch goal” and this gets him speaking and aware of his current academic status. I think this helps my son know where he needs to improve.”

Parents said they feel welcome at school. One parent said, “I love drop-off where the children are greeted with a hug, music is played, and students get pumped up and ready to learn.” Family members highlighted that students are provided with small group instruction and personalized attention. For example, one parent shared, “My daughter has a friend experiencing some challenging times, and the school staff allowed my daughter to help her friend.” Another person said, “I have learned that if my son is getting overstimulated, he is allowed to stay in a room with the teacher and help to organize things.” Another member said, “I love the quiet corners in most classrooms or the counselor’s office. I like the fact that the students know that if they need a break, the staff will find them a spot alone to reset. One parent said, “I like that when there was police activity in the neighborhood, the school responded in a calm, safe, and orderly manner.”

¹⁷ ClassDojo is an online classroom management platform where teachers can record and track student behavior, facilitate classroom activities, curate student portfolios, and engage in school-to-home communication in over 35 languages through photos and videos and messages directly to family members.

¹⁸ Infinite Campus is a web-based program providing families the ability to view academic information for their children.

Focus Group Summary: Faculty and Staff

There were ten staff members who took part in the focus group on the day of the site evaluation. Staff commented on their experiences at MANN. One staff member shared, “I feel a tremendous amount of gratitude for the leaders, families, and especially my fellow teachers. When one of us is having a difficult day, other members of my grade level team provide support in terms of a pep talk or by reminding me of the good things we do here at MANN.” Other staff members agreed and said they feel a strong sense of community at MANN. As one educator put it, “We know that all of us are in this together, and we create a sense of positive expectations and willingness to go above and beyond for our students.”

When asked about the strengths they notice about MANN, staff explained how students are the most important aspect for everyone at the school. One staff member said, “We participate in a great deal of professional development to better support our students. Our emphasis is on both academic and social-emotional learning competencies.” Another staff member added, “We have noticed our students becoming more and more comfortable in solving problems and asking for assistance. We see fewer fights and issues between students than in the past.” Members shared that they attribute these positive changes to the work the school has undertaken in Positive Behavior Supports (PBIS) and to the individual attention that the staff is able to provide. One teacher remarked, “We all want to be at the school every day. On top of that, we celebrate when our students grow and learn, and it is very positive.” Another staff member remarked, “We have instructional assistants in every elementary classroom, and this is a big help.” One teacher said, “We take part in the training, and then we go back and talk about what we learned during our PLC meetings. One thing I like is our commitment to trying out new strategies and ideas to strengthen our ability to educate our students.”

The staff commented on several specific supports provided to students regarding academics. The staff mentioned that they have a co-teaching model in middle school and the full support of the school leaders. One person said, “We use intervention time to support each student, and we have time for data chats, lesson planning, and our ongoing learning built into our master schedule.” Staff commented on ways the school is currently decreasing levels of chronic absenteeism. One staff member said, “We are focusing on positive changes this year. For example, we celebrate good attendance each month. We also have a perfect attendance award each semester, and we are planning a family end of year celebration.”

Staff members said several of them participated in extra duty paid professional learning last June. Staff said they were provided with time to work on curriculum maps and plan for the upcoming school year. One staff member said, “We take part in eight hours of extra duty each quarter so that we can look back and look ahead and thoughtfully plan what is best for our students.” Another teacher shared, “One thing I love about this school is the way we observe each other teaching. I learn about specific strategies I can duplicate in my own classroom when watching others do it live with their own students. It makes it seem very possible.”

Focus Group Summary: School Leadership

Seven members of the MANN leadership team met and highlighted multiple valuable operational events contributing to the success of MANN. A culture of learning, a positive school environment, instructional assistants in every elementary classroom, a master schedule set up to accommodate student specials, and a daily Power Hour for intensive instructional remediation or acceleration were among some of the items. In addition, school leaders pointed out another important signal of success. Leaders reported the growth students incurred in Social Emotional Learning (SEL). One of the school leaders explained, “Our students are growing in SEL competencies and are far less aggressive. Our entire school staff has worked to create an environment where students feel safe and supported. We believe our students will become more resilient and increase their ability to bounce back from any setbacks.”

Since the middle and elementary level star ratings decreased from the previous school year, administrators spoke about possible root causes. One thought was that the middle school and elementary growth targets were very high (in the 90’s). This may have caused a barrier to a school ability to sustain the needed growth levels year after year to maintain the higher star rating. One leader said, “We have to shift to obtaining proficiency points, and we have kids needing the grit to keep trying to get to grade level, and some shut down because it is incredibly difficult.” Another school leader explained, “Maybe we had our teachers doing too much for the students. Perhaps the teachers were doing what we call the “heavy lifting,” (the difficult reading, writing, and solving of problems), but our students were still growing academically.” Another school leader commented, “Our students didn’t do well on the writing portion of the SBAC,¹⁹ and we have strategically moved to teaching students to write bullet points instead of handwriting every answer on paper first and then transferring the information in a typed format to the computer test.”

In response to the drop in index scores, the team was clear about changes this school year. Leaders reported that their system for tracking and supporting behaviors is tighter than in the past. Leaders said the restorative justice plans are key to improving student behavior. One leader commented, “Parents feel they are a part of the team to support student behavior, and our parent meetings are ending very positively.” Another school leader added, “Our middle school teachers have worked really hard and are holding steady to the set of aligned student conduct expectations.” School leaders spoke about the school team being even more aware of what competencies students need to make significant increases academically. A leader said, “We are arriving at the awareness of what students need to increase their proficiency. We are seeing small group instruction become more intentional and educators can shift to support students to improve their content knowledge in specific subjects. We are a student-centered school.” The school leader said, “The culture here is phenomenal, and this is a place our families want to be. This is rare. We are excited to state we have three students who no longer need special education services.”

¹⁹ SBAC is the Smarter Balanced Assessment Consortium, a standardized test consortium. It creates Common Core State Standards aligned tests to be used in several states.

Focus Group Summary: Students

Thirteen MANN students in third through eighth grade participated in the student focus group. The group was asked to describe their experiences attending this charter school. Several students spoke about the learning, teachers, clubs, and support. One student commented, "I have many teachers I can talk to, and learning is my escape." Another student added, "At this school, learning is fun, and the way teachers explain information helps us exercise our brains and lets us know what we need to do to learn and grow academically." One student said, "I am very active, and there are many events to participate in, such as field day." One student thoughtfully shared, "They actually care about us here, they really do care." Another student said, "I started school here in third grade, and I have several friends, and I love the sports and the clubs." A different student added, "I like this school because they are (the teachers) good at teaching us and having us discuss and talk. When learning math, the teachers here help us learn math in a unique way, and we are understanding mathematical ideas such as ratios."

Students were asked to describe how they felt about their teachers. The student comments help provide information from the student's perspective. One student said, "I feel they (the teachers) are suitable for me, and I feel comfortable when sharing personal information." A second student stated, "My teachers give me the encouragement I need, and I feel safe and comfortable around them. I surpassed my IEP. This means I no longer have an IEP because I met all my goals, and I feel very hopeful and overjoyed about this." A third student said, "This school is the one my heart desires and all the classrooms are comfortable and support us." An older student stated, "The teachers give us enough opportunity to thrive and shine, and even when we do something wrong and get a write-up, they help us to do the right thing the next time." One student explained, "I like I am not being left out or feel lonely. As a group, we talked about this and discussed the movie 'Mean Girls.' The main character didn't have friends when she grew up, which contributed to her actions." Several other students said the teachers are fair, make them feel comfortable, and care about them.

Students shared they use i-Ready to monitor their own learning and progress via documentation of their scores. Students noted that as the scores go up, they take tests, and the program gets more difficult each time. Students reported they have a binder they use to create goals and record test outcomes. One student remarked, "I know I'm improving each time I get my report card, I see it improve."

Students were asked to describe the way students treated one another. Students were able to recall some events that had taken place at the school, such as cussing, throwing snow, and stealing a bag of chips. However, the student's perspective on the outcomes of these events showed a pattern of care, forgiveness, and resolution. For example, one student said, "All the fifth-grade girls and teachers talked about what was going on." Another student said, "Some kids are negative, but there is a counselor who will help calm down students." Another student said, "At this school, everyone will make mistakes, but the teachers and staff are really on it and have kids talk it out." Finally, one student said, "Our teachers and staff will try to resolve issues in some way."

Classroom Environment and Instruction

Observation Rubric

A total of 10 elementary and 11 middle school classrooms were observed for approximately 15 minutes on the day of the site evaluation.

Classroom Environment					
	Distinguished	Highly Proficient	Approaching Proficient	Unsatisfactory	Not Observed
Classroom Learning Environment is Conducive to Learning	<p>The teacher demonstrates knowledge and caring about individual students' lives beyond the class and school.</p> <p>When necessary, students respectfully correct one another.</p> <p>Students participate without fear of put-downs or ridicule from either the teacher or other students.</p> <p>The teacher respects and encourages students' efforts.</p>	<p>Talk between the teacher and students and among students is uniformly respectful.</p> <p>The teacher successfully responds to disrespectful behavior among students.</p> <p>Students participate willingly but may be somewhat hesitant to offer their ideas in front of classmates.</p> <p>The teacher makes general connections with individual students.</p>	<p>The quality of interactions between teachers and students, or among students, is uneven, with occasional disrespect or insensitivity.</p> <p>The teacher attempts to respond to disrespectful behavior among students with uneven results.</p> <p>The teacher attempts to make connections with individual students, but student reactions indicate that these attempts are not entirely successful.</p>	<p>The teacher is disrespectful toward or insensitive to students' ages, cultural backgrounds, and developmental levels.</p> <p>Students' body language indicates feelings of hurt, discomfort, or insecurity.</p> <p>The teacher displays no familiarity with, or care about, individual students.</p>	<p>This criterion was not observed or rated.</p>
	TOTAL: 5	TOTAL: 12	TOTAL: 3	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: 17	TOTAL: 1	TOTAL: 0	TOTAL: 0

Classroom Environment and Instruction

Observation Rubric

A total of 10 elementary and 11 middle school classrooms were observed for approximately 15 minutes on the day of the site evaluation.

Classroom Instruction					
	Distinguished	Highly Proficient	Approaching Proficient	Unsatisfactory	Not Observed
Communicating with Students	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: 2	TOTAL: 18	TOTAL: 1	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: 14	TOTAL: 1	TOTAL: 0	TOTAL: 6

Classroom Environment and Instruction

Observation Rubric

A total of 10 elementary and 11 middle school classrooms were observed for approximately 15 minutes on the day of the site evaluation.

Classroom Instruction					
	Distinguished	Highly Proficient	Approaching Proficient	Unsatisfactory	Not Observed
Engaging Students in Learning	<p>Virtually all students are engaged in the lesson.</p> <p>Lesson activities require high-level student thinking and explanations of their thinking.</p> <p>Students have an opportunity for reflection and closure on the lesson to consolidate their understanding.</p>	<p>Most students are intellectually engaged in the lesson.</p> <p>Most learning tasks have multiple correct responses or approaches and/or encourage higher-order thinking.</p> <p>Students are invited to explain their thinking as part of completing tasks.</p> <p>The pacing of the lesson provides students with the time needed to be intellectually engaged.</p>	<p>Some students are intellectually engaged in the lesson.</p> <p>Learning tasks are a mix of those requiring thinking and those requiring recall.</p> <p>Student engagement with the content is largely passive.</p> <p>The pacing of the lesson is uneven—suitable in parts but rushed or dragging in others.</p>	<p>Few students are intellectually engaged in the lesson.</p> <p>Learning tasks, activities, and materials require only recall or have a single correct response.</p> <p>The lesson drags on or is rushed.</p>	<p>This criterion was not observed or rated.</p>
	TOTAL: 4	TOTAL: 14	TOTAL: 3	TOTAL: 0	TOTAL: 0
Using Assessment in Instruction	<p>Students indicate they clearly understand the characteristics of high-quality work.</p> <p>The teacher uses multiple strategies to monitor student understanding.</p> <p>Students monitor their own understanding.</p> <p>Feedback comes from many sources.</p>	<p>The teacher makes the standards of high-quality work clear to students.</p> <p>The teacher elicits evidence of student understanding.</p> <p>Students are invited to assess their own work and make improvements.</p> <p>Feedback includes specific and timely guidance.</p>	<p>There is little evidence that the students understand how the work is evaluated.</p> <p>The teacher monitors understanding through a single method, without eliciting evidence of understanding from students.</p> <p>Feedback to students is vague.</p>	<p>The teacher does not indicate what quality work looks like.</p> <p>The teacher makes no effort to determine whether students understand the lesson.</p> <p>Students receive no feedback, or feedback is global or directed to one student.</p>	
	TOTAL: 0	TOTAL: 15	TOTAL: 3	TOTAL: 0	TOTAL: 3

Classroom Observations and Additional Comment

This elementary classroom had two adults and 19 students. There were strong levels of positive student behavior strategies used. Teachers used the students' first names and provided several instances of positive reinforcement for students following expectations.

This elementary classroom had two adults. One teacher went over the essential question and made sure to make connections to the objective. The teacher stopped, asked a question, and had students talk to a partner about what they thought. Both adults leaned in and spoke with the students. One teacher passed out positive reinforcement pom poms to students for following expectations.

Two teachers successfully transitioned students to learning on small devices. Students used earphones and devices that worked properly. Students appeared to be fully engaged and seemed to like the activity.

This was an SEL lesson. The topic was gratitude. Students were highly engaged, and the teacher included many opportunities for students to take part in the activity. Students seemed to feel free to participate and express themselves.

There were high levels of engagement and a positive classroom culture. Two adults and 23 students. Students were thanked often, and first names were used. The teacher had highly polished questioning capabilities.

In a middle school ELA classroom, all students were engaged in either reading or writing. The teacher monitored the room and checked in with students as needed. The teacher was highly encouraging and used students' first names. The activity was timed, and the teacher let students know what they could do as they finished the assignment.

In this classroom, there was one teacher and seven male students and one female student. Students did not seem engaged or know what they were to accomplish. The teacher was not respectful to students and said, "Sit there". It is unclear what was going on in this classroom, but it did not seem like students were learning. The teacher had a monotone voice. Several students were easily distracted and asked about going to the bathroom or getting a new computer.

This was a middle school science class with one teacher and 29 students. Students were taking a practice CRT test. They were each using an iPad to construct a strong answer to a science-based question. The teacher was highly supportive and monitored student progress, and answered questions as needed. He was encouraging students to use their skills. He said, "You have learned several writing strategies, and you know what works best for you."

Measures of Progress from Previous Site Evaluation

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

Prior Recommendation by Site Evaluation Team	School Assessment of Progress	SPCSA Staff Assessment of Progress
Improve Parent Engagement	School leaders reported they have developed a new parent-teacher partnership and added a parent education component. Family nights were offered routinely, and attendance was increasing as more families became involved with the school.	The SPCSA agrees with the school leader's assessment of progress in this area.
Lower chronic absenteeism rates	School leaders reported the numbers improved from the prior school year. The school is focusing on positive incentives, celebrations, rewards, and end-of-year celebrations.	The SPCSA agrees with the school leader's analysis. Additional work in this area continues.
Continue MTSS opportunities	School leaders reported being actively involved. The school received a platinum award from the MTSS/PBIS SPCSA committee.	The site evaluation team commends MANN for their outstanding progress in this area.
Continue to establish a new middle school math curriculum	The school has SAAVAS and has carefully vetted the curriculum, received support from other Mater campuses, and conducted training for staff.	The SPCSA agrees with the school's analysis. The SPCSA recommended the school continue to focus on this transition.

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.