



Nevada State Public Charter School Authority

Silver Sands Montessori Charter School

Site Evaluation Report: April 3, 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 conducts focus group interviews by speaking with school leaders, governing board members, family members, those employed as staff, and most importantly, students enrolled at the school. The information gained during these focus groups is summarized and included in this report.

The site evaluation is designed to focus on teaching and learning (e.g. curriculum, instruction, assessment, and services for at-risk students) as well as leadership, organizational capacity, and board oversight. The SPCSA uses the established criteria to provide schools with a consistent set of expectations during each year of their charter. Final Site Evaluation Reports are published to the SPCSA website and used in conjunction with other performance information to determine renewal decisions.

Site Evaluation Findings: Strengths

A summary of strengths as observed through academic achievement indicators, classroom observations, focus group feedback, and portions of the Organizational Performance Framework.

Dedication to the Montessori mission

Montessori principles are a key pillar of the school, and Silver Sands Montessori Charter School prides itself on its adherence to the Montessori method. A Montessori Charter school in Southern Nevada, Silver Sands Montessori Charter School offers a unique educational approach that emphasizes personalized learning and student-centered instruction. This specialized method provides students with a holistic educational experience tailored to their individual needs. Montessori principles are a key pillar of the school, and Silver Sands Montessori Charter School prides itself on its adherence to the Montessori method. The school requires teachers to earn a Montessori certification through North American Montessori Center while employed at the school.

Consistent leadership team

The leadership team at Silver Sands Montessori Charter School has remained stable and consistent since opening its charter in the Las Vegas Valley. Families in the family focus group appreciated and valued leadership, knowing students and families by name. Family members reported feeling welcome at the school and used the example of being greeted by name when visiting the school. Participants in the faculty and staff focus group and participants in the governing board focus group also stated that the consistency in the leadership team and their combined institutional knowledge was an asset in assisting them in their respective work with the school.

Multi-Tiered System of Supports (MTSS)¹ implementation

MTSS Nevada² awards tiered levels from Silver to Gold to Platinum to Diamond. The leadership team at Silver Sands Montessori Charter School reported being dedicated to implementing Tier-1 MTSS with fidelity at Silver Sands Montessori Charter School. Silver Sands Montessori Charter School has been in partnership with the SPCSA as the charter authorizer to support students, teachers, and school staff with tiered systems of support, focus on mental health, and the use of targeted and universal screeners to encourage the health and well-being of everyone in the school system.

¹ According to Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA, 2015), a Multi-Tiered System of Support (MTSS) is a comprehensive continuum of evidence-based, systemic practices to support a rapid response to students' needs, with regular observation to facilitate data-based instructional decision making.

² The Nevada Department of Education (NDE) and the Nevada Positive Behavior Interventions and Supports (PBIS) Technical Assistance Center with the help of the School Climate Transformation Grant-SEA, is funded through multiple sources of state and federal funding, including competitive funds from the US Department of Education (USDOE), Substance Abuse Mental Health Services Agency (SAMHSA).

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.

Low enrollment

Silver Sands Montessori Charter School has been challenged with lower than anticipated enrollment. Silver Sands Montessori Charter School has sought an enrollment decrease with the SPCSA and looks to amend its contract a second time with the SPCSA to reduce enrollment.

Chronic absenteeism

Silver Sands Montessori Charter School faces a significant challenge due to high rates of chronic absenteeism, necessitating targeted interventions and collaborative efforts to promote consistent student attendance and engagement. A chronically absent student is a student who has missed 10 percent or more of the days they were enrolled for any reason and a school's chronic absenteeism rate is the percentage of chronically absent students. The chronic absenteeism rate for Silver Sands Montessori Charter School was 30.8 percent at the elementary level and 23.9 percent at the middle school level for the 2023-24 academic year. The overall SPCSA chronic absenteeism rate for the 2023-24 was 20.7 percent in elementary school, and 15.8 percent in middle school grades.

Low percentage of English language³ learners (ELs) meeting their growth targets in elementary school

The low percentage of ELs meeting their growth targets on the WIDA⁴ at Silver Sands Montessori Charter School was 18.7 percent and is below the district rate of 48.4 percent, according to the 2023-24 NSPF. This earned the school one point out of a possible ten in the English Language Proficiency Indicator of the NSPF. EL students meeting their growth targets is a challenge.

Nevada School Performance Frame (NSPF)⁵ Index Score

Silver Sands Montessori Charter School has received a 1-star rating at the elementary school level for two consecutive years on the NSPF. Silver Sands Montessori Charter School earned an index score of 20.5 in 2023-2024, an increase from the 8.8 points earned out of a possible 100 in 2022-23. Silver Sands Montessori Charter School received a 1-star rating for the academic years 2022-23 and 2023-24 which resulted in a Notice of Breach from the SPCSA Board at the SPCSA Board meeting on November 15, 2024, for academic performance.

³ [1] English language (EL) learners, or EL learners, are students learning to communicate fluently or effectively in English.

⁴ WIDA is a comprehensive assessment measuring English language proficiency in four categories: identification, placement, progress, and achievement. The WIDA screener is used to determine ELL support services as well as determine when a student has developed proficiency to exit ELL school services.

⁵ The Nevada Education Performance Framework (NEPF) was designed in 2011 and passed by Nevada legislators. It was created by the Teachers and Leaders Council (TLC) as a statewide performance evaluation system for teachers and building-level administrators. During the subsequent legislative sessions of 2013, 2025, 2017, 2019, and 2021, NRS (Nevada Revised Statutes) changed AB222. The overall goals of the framework are to foster student learning, improve instructional practices, and engage stakeholders in the continuous improvement and monitoring of a professional growth system.

Site Evaluation Findings: Recommendations

Recommended items are provided so charter schools may increase their school-wide performance and overall success. The Site Evaluation Team will follow up on these recommendations in preparation for the subsequent site evaluation.

Continue MTSS

SPCSA staff recommend Silver Sands Montessori Charter School implement a MTSS with fidelity. This includes attending the SPCSA meetings regularly. While the leadership team reported less major discipline cases compared to the opening year of the Silver Sands Montessori Charter School campus (2022-2023), there is still work to do onboarding newly enrolled students to follow schoolwide expectations of behavior. Registering a large number of students and onboarding new staff to expectations for behavior takes time and personnel resources. Please continue these efforts to build consistency and stability.

Update curricular materials

SPCSA staff recommend Silver Sands Montessori Charter School examine and update curricular materials schoolwide and ensure alignment with Nevada Academic Content Standards (NVACS). The current 1-star rating at Silver Sands Montessori Charter School indicates curricular materials do not include ALL of the NVACS, therefore students are not provided a full opportunity to learn the knowledge needed for compulsory testing. During the leadership focus group, members of the leadership team indicated the curricula has been in place since the inception of the school. As NVACS are updated to reflect the changing landscape of education, periodic review and on-going maintenance of Montessori materials and their alignment with state materials should be routinely maintained across grade levels.

Site Evaluation Findings: Strong Recommendations

Fill opening governing board seats

SPCSA staff strongly recommend Silver Sands Montessori Charter School fill the vacant board seat by July 1, 2025, to fill their seven-member board. The new board member should undergo governance board training to effectively fulfill their responsibilities and contribute to the school's governance.

Professional development (PD) on surrounding community for engagement

SPCSA staff strongly recommend Silver Sands Montessori Charter School pursue PD specific to the demographics of the growing student population and surrounding community. This may include PD on Title I populations, resiliency, trauma-informed practices, unhoused populations, and food insecurity. Teachers may be unfamiliar with the demographics of the student population. School leadership may want to consider a text study using *Managing diverse classrooms* (Rothstein-Fisch & Trumbull, 2008). Many teachers and staff may need support in how best to communicate with families, help in locating community resource information, and in educating families in how to find and complete forms. The following text may provide a foundation for developing an avenue for communication: *Families, schools, and the adolescent* (Hill and Chao, 2009).

Targeted PD on classroom management

SPCSA staff strongly recommend that Silver Sands Montessori Charter School develop targeted PD in classroom management. The site evaluation team observed varying levels of teachers' abilities to run routine procedures and processes within their classrooms. SPCSA staff observed a few teachers with acceptable classroom management and some who could use deep, consistent research-based techniques. One widely used practical text for classroom management is *Classroom management for middle and high school teachers. 12th edition* (Emmer and Evertson, 2022). Another classroom management staple for all content areas is *The first days of school: How to be an effective teacher* (Wong, 2018).

Maximize learning time

SPCSA staff strongly recommend Silver Sands Montessori Charter School participate in PD designed to maximize learning time from the beginning of the lesson until the close of the lesson and implement strategies in their lessons. SPCSA staff observed several classrooms during the site evaluation in which there were a number of students having free time or lengthy time in between transitioning from one activity to another. In schools with high levels of student academic outcomes, there is usually an urgency to learn and make the best use of instructional time.

Increase enrollment

SPCSA staff strongly recommend Silver Sands Montessori Charter School develop a robust plan to increase student applications and optimize enrollment. This strong recommendation follows two site evaluation cycles of making a recommendation for increased enrollment as well as Silver Sands Montessori Charter School amending their contract with the SPCSA to decrease their enrollment cap. During the site evaluation dated April 2025, the leadership indicated Silver Sands Montessori Charter School would be seeking another amendment in enrollment to their charter contract with the SPCSA governing board. The site evaluation report written for the 2023-24 academic year made the following recommendation on chronic absenteeism:

The SPCSA site evaluation team recommends that Silver Sands institute comprehensive measures

to alleviate chronic absenteeism. This may include implementing truancy programs, bolstering parent engagement initiatives, and offering support services for at-risk students. Addressing this issue is crucial, particularly with chronic absenteeism at 28.8 percent at the elementary level and 19.1 percent at the middle school level.

Silver Sands Montessori Charter School should consider highlighting its highly individualized approach to student success, and its unique status as being a public Montessori school in their marketing materials.

Site Evaluation Findings: Deficiencies

Silver Sands Montessori Charter School elementary school deficiency for low level of academic school performance

Context	<p>Per the Charter School Contract between the State Public Charter School Authority and Silver Sands Montessori Charter School, which most recently re-entered into contract with the SPCSA on July 1, 2021, pursuant to NRS 388A.255, the consideration 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>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>The Charter School Contract between the State Public Charter School authority and Silver Sands Montessori Charter School, which was most recently re-entered into contract with the SPCSA on July 1, 2021: 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 original contract executed: Silver Sands Montessori Charter School 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 provide quality Montessori education in an environment that encourages a child’s love of learning and respect for self, others, community and the world.”</p> <p>Current levels of student learning and achievement in the elementary grades at Silver Sands Montessori Charter School fell well below expectations. The elementary school’s index score for the 2023-24 academic year was 20.5 percent. Several of the students attending Silver Sands Montessori Charter School were not provided with the opportunity to learn to their greatest potential and student achievement was not maximized as observed during the most recent site evaluation. High-quality instruction was not present in several of the observed classrooms. Tier-1 instruction was not providing acceptable levels of academic achievement.</p>
Causes	<p>Silver Sands Montessori Charter School has not offered a robust Tier-1 instructional program, as evidenced by the 2023-24 NSPF index score at the elementary school level. There were extensive gaps in student learning and overall achievement levels at the elementary level. Tier-1 instruction must be improved. School leaders and staff are strongly encouraged to improve academic achievement at the elementary level grades. When teachers are effective, students are actively engaged, and they both become intentional learners. (Moss & Brookhart, 2019).</p> <p>High-performing classrooms generally have these common indicators:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Rigorous pacing and sense of urgency to utilize time productively.• Teachers prepared materials at the beginning of an activity.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bell-to-bell teaching. • Rigorous teaching techniques. • Higher-level questioning. • Learning tasks/activities requiring multiple responses or methodologies. • Consistent communication of learning objectives and targets <p>The site evaluation report for the 2022-23 year noted a need to clarify instructional learning targets for students during the 2022-23 site evaluation: “It is recommended that the school develop clarity around instructional learning targets. This might include students being asked to explain in their own words what they are going to learn about on a given day. This might include the students and teachers acknowledging that they have achieved a learning target or objective. A learning log might provide a good way for students to put into writing what they are learning and to celebrate what they have learned.”</p> <p>The site evaluation for the 2023-24 year noted: “Given the 1-star rating at the elementary level, it is imperative for Silver Sands Montessori Charter School to implement a comprehensive improvement plan focused on academic enhancement, student engagement, and community involvement. The school should prioritize strategies to address the identified challenges, such as chronic absenteeism and learning loss, through targeted interventions, robust professional development for teachers, and enhanced family engagement initiatives. Additionally, Silver Sands should leverage data-driven decision-making processes to identify areas for improvement and monitor progress effectively. Collaborating with the SPCSA and other educational partners can provide valuable support and resources to facilitate the school's journey toward academic excellence and a higher star rating. By implementing these recommendations with dedication and diligence, Silver Sands can work towards achieving a higher rating and ensuring the success and well-being of all its students.”</p> <p>Leadership reflected on the root causes for having a 1-star NSPF rating. Causes mentioned by leadership include high rates of chronic absenteeism and under-enrollment.</p>
Effect	<p>According to the 2023-24 NSPF, Silver Sands Montessori Charter School’s elementary education index score for the 2023-24 academic year was 20.5 percent. Students' proficiency rates in ELA were 33.3 percent, 13 percent in math, and 10.3 percent in science. Each of these measures were well below the district average.</p> <p>Silver Sands Montessori Charter School received a Notice of Breach from the SPCSA Board at the SPCSA Board meeting on November 15, 2024, for academic performance for the 2023–2024 school year pursuant to NRS 388A.273.</p> <p>“Any school(s) demonstrating underperformance that has the potential to trigger revocation proceedings in the next three to five years should the academic performance not improve should be issued a formal Notice to ensure the school and its governing board are aware of the concerns (NRS 388A.300 and 388A.330). Underperformance is defined by NAC 388A.350 as any school receiving a rating below three stars in the NSPF or schools that have not consistently complied with the SPCSA Academic Performance Framework.”</p>

Deficiency Finding	<p>The expectation is that Silver Sands Montessori Charter School 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>Silver Sands Montessori Charter School has been identified as a one-star school at the elementary school level. Silver Sands Montessori Charter School has not met Nevada state's standard of performance and urgently needs to address areas that are significantly below standard. Students and subgroups are 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 inventions.</p> <p>Monitoring students’ needs for specific academic skills and interventions is critical at this time. As Silver Sands Montessori Charter School considers ways to immediately increase student academic skills and growth gains, the governing board and leadership may want to emphasize and research areas of best practice.</p> <p>One best practice includes maximizing learning time. In schools with high levels of student academic outcomes, there is usually an urgency to learn and make the best use of instructional time, maximizing learning time from the beginning of the lesson until the close of the lesson. Teachers are ready with classroom materials and/or already have them available for students to utilize the moment class begins to minimize student disengagement and off-task behaviors. Efficiency in streamlining procedures for turning in paperwork, transitioning from one activity to another, and employing student assistance can assist in maximizing academic proficiency.</p> <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 receives 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. The site evaluation team and the school leadership will agree upon the plan of action, including the documented steps and accompanying timeline.</p>
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Silver Sands Montessori Charter School deficiency for chronic absenteeism

Context	<p>Per the Charter School Contract between the State Public Charter School Authority and Silver Sands Montessori Charter School, which most recently re-entered into a contract with the SPCSA on July 1, 2021, pursuant to NRS 388A.255:</p> <p>2.5.2 The Charter School shall adopt and adhere to a Truancy and Absence Policy pursuant to NAC 388A.160(5).</p> <p>3.1.2 In determining whether or not the Charter School complies with the essential terms of the educational program, the Authority will use the Charter Application (initial or as amended) as the basis to assess fidelity.</p> <p>3.3.1 The Charter School shall be subject to and comply with all requirements related to the state assessment and accountability system for public schools.</p> <p>3.3.2 Nothing in this section prohibits the Charter School or the Authority from assessing student learning outside of and in addition to the state’s testing program.</p>
Condition	<p>According to the contract between Silver Sands Montessori Charter School and the SPCSA, which was renewed on July 1, 2021, pursuant to NRS 388A.255: Silver Sands Montessori Charter School 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 provide quality Montessori education in an environment that encourages a child’s love of learning and respect for self, others, community, and the world.”</p> <p>At this time, the current levels indicate chronic absenteeism rate is 30.8 for the elementary school grades and 23.9 for the middle school grades at Silver Sands Montessori Charter School. Chronic absenteeism is linked as a condition to poor academic achievement and is defined as a student missing at least 10 percent of days in school per year for any reason, including excused and unexcused absences.</p> <p>Students at Silver Sands Montessori Charter School Elementary School have earned a 1-star NSPF rating for two consecutive years, corroborating the correlation between chronic absenteeism and low-performing academic achievement.</p>
Causes	<p>According to NSPF data, chronic absenteeism rate was 30.8 for elementary school grades and 23.9 for the 2023-24 academic year and 28.8 percent at the elementary level and 19.1 at the middle school level for the 2022-23 school year. The site evaluation report completed by the SPCSA dated February 2024 noted chronic absenteeism as a challenge and a recommendation, stating:</p> <p>“The SPCSA site evaluation team recommends that Silver Sands institute comprehensive measures to alleviate chronic absenteeism. This may include implementing truancy programs, bolstering parent engagement initiatives, and offering support services for at-risk students. Addressing this issue is crucial.”</p> <p>Attendance information from the most recent data indicates chronic absenteeism rate is 30.8 for elementary school grades and 23.9 for the 2023-24 academic year. The absenteeism rate has a direct effect on the NSPF index scores.</p>

Effect	<p>Chronic absenteeism impacts learning, academic performance, social development, and the overall educational progress of a student (Pini, 2022). Students who are chronically absent often fall behind in coursework, struggle to grasp concepts, and experience difficulty keeping up with their peers due to missed instruction time.</p> <p>Chronic absenteeism is a strong indicator of potential academic failure and an increased risk of dropping out of school. Missing school regularly can disrupt a student's social connections with classmates and contribute to feelings of isolation or disengagement (McKenzie, 2022).</p>
Deficiency Finding	<p>The expectation is that Silver Sands Montessori Charter School will immediately create and implement a chronic absenteeism plan to ameliorate chronic absentee rates school-wide.</p> <p>A critical plan may want to consider the best practices in combined partnership with leadership and Silver Sands Montessori Charter School's Governing Board. Best practices include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Focus on empathy: How can the school help families? What specific things can families do? Avoid focusing on punitive messages that leave parents feeling blamed. • Include printed personalized postcards or letters about the individual child rather than just generalized texts. • Provide precise, personalized information rather than generic messages that could apply to anyone. • Send repeated communication throughout the year. • Send positive notes home when students are on time or remain in school for the entire day. • Designate one school person who telephones home, the second a student is tardy or absent, and find out the cause of the absence. • Plan home visits. • Engage families through texts, email, mail, or in person—requires good contact information. • Determine the barrier- is it acute illness, trauma, housing or food insecurity, lack of predictable scheduling, transportation, inequitable access to services, a home situation, undiagnosed disability, anxiety, or miseducation about attendance? <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 receives 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 which will include the documented steps and accompanying timeline.</p>

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 ⁶	2
Family Members, Parents, and Guardians	7
Faculty and Staff	5
School Leadership	4
Students	9

⁶ Quorum was not met, and Open Meeting Law was not violated.

Focus Group Summary: Governing Board

Governing board focus group participants reported that the seven-member board convenes every five to six weeks year-round and holds concurrent virtual and in-person meetings as needed. Sub-committees include finance, academic excellence, and governance, each contributing expertise to different aspects of school operations. The board comprised members with diverse backgrounds, including technology, business administration, finance, legal, education, and special education. One board member said it has been a challenge to establish quorum for meetings due to one member recently moving out of state and occasionally traveling back to his/her residence in the Las Vegas Valley and another member who recently gave notice.

Members of the governing board said Silver Sands Montessori Charter School's greatest strengths lie in their connection to the community, although it had been lagging lately. One board member lamented the decline in board attendance and participation from community and family members, stating, "For the last five or six board meetings, we have had no public comment. It feels depressing. We used to have engagement. There used to be multiple parents actively online, participating in questions and answers and readily available with the PTO⁷ reports."

Governing board members expressed that they were seeing a cultural shift in the student body as well as parental involvement over time. As one board member said, "Involvement is not what it used to be. They don't seem to understand there needs to be home support." Board members stated they have not spoken with leadership about ways to engage the community with the school, but they "feel the sense of malaise, and it is good to get parental involvement."

Board members were aware of the one-star status of Silver Sands Montessori Charter School and were concerned. Participants in the focus group said although they do not use a formalized rubric to evaluate leadership each year, the administration team is reviewed yearly through examining various materials and notes that include monthly meetings notes, correspondence between parents and the school, leadership and board members, complaints to the school, emails the board may receive about leadership, and public commentary.

⁷ PTO stands for Parent Teacher Organization.

Focus Group Summary: Family Members, Parents, and Guardians

Parents chose to enroll their children at Silver Sands Montessori Charter School for a variety of reasons, including the Montessori methodology. Many of the parents in the focus group reported that they had participated in Montessori schools as children. Several of the parents also stated their own children attended Montessori preschools and they wanted their children to continue with that educational approach. Parents appreciated the small class sizes, the private school feel of the school, the integrated hands-on learning, the ability of children to accelerate in a subject at their own pace, the emphasis on helping others, growth over time, relationship building between peers and adults, and the safety and security of the school. Parents expressed a sense of familiarity with the families at the school. One parent said, “We know faces and names. If something is off, we know it.” Family members were vocal in stating that many families chose to enroll their child at Silver Sands Montessori Charter School because s/he did not do well in other types of learning environments.

Parents in the focus group said the school communicated routinely about upcoming events and information through text messages, email, ClassDojo⁸, Infinite Campus⁹ the weekly newsletter, and the Facebook webpage. When asked, parents said the school did not include information about absences or chronic absenteeism at Silver Sands Montessori Charter School. Parents in the focus group were largely unaware of the chronic absenteeism challenges or that on average, a third of the student population was absent on any given day. Parents expressed support and wanted to assist. Several parents stated their children had been enrolled at Silver Sands Montessori Charter School for a number of years, and family engagement and volunteerism had changed over the years.

Parents stated students rarely brought homework home, and a few suggested it would be nice to see what students were working on and assist their children with schoolwork. A few parents stated the school could be more rigorous and challenging with their expectations. Parents said students should have a healthy and productive level of struggle for academic achievement. A few parents were concerned that students did not use books, only worksheets or packets.

⁸ 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 direct messaging directly to parents and students.

⁹ Infinite Campus is a web-based program providing families the ability to view academic information for their children.

Focus Group Summary: Faculty and Staff

Faculty and staff reported utilizing student MAP¹⁰ scores and easyCBM¹¹ to formulate intervention groups, small groups for tiered interventions, and reading groups in response to the NSPF elementary school one-star rating on PD days. Teachers said after-school tutoring was available for students on Tuesdays and Thursdays for one hour after school. Approximately 10 students attended on average, and two teachers oversaw the tutoring session and assisted in all subject areas. Instructors were compensated for their time. Grade-level chairs assisted with state standard alignment, and lead teachers scaffolded the Montessori method when needed.

Faculty and staff appreciated getting to know the individual family members who attended the school by name. School personnel said there was camaraderie amongst the staff and a comfortable, close-knit, easy feeling where leadership was supportive and if any assistance was needed, it was met quickly.

A few teachers said they enjoy working at Silver Sands Montessori Charter School due to their close relationship with other parents. Others said they chose Silver Sands Montessori Charter School due to the Montessori curricula. One teacher said she had children who attended a Montessori school and wanted to work in a small school and small class setting. “I get to know the families; I get to know the students well. I like how they help each other and teach each other.”

Teachers said chronic absenteeism was a topic discussed frequently. Teachers said they see some trends in families in that if one student is absent due to an illness, then all of the siblings tend to be absent from school. Faculty and staff said the pattern of absences also seems to emerge from the same families. Further, there are several families who travel internationally and do so for lengthy amounts of time during instructional time. One teacher said, “We don’t offer transportation, and we don’t serve food at the school as initiatives.” Teachers said they provide attendance classroom incentives to students, and there is a tiered system for alerting families of absences upon the first absence through ClassDojo.

¹⁰ 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.

¹¹ easyCBM is a web-based, research-based assessment system that provides benchmark and progress monitoring assessments in reading and math for students in grades k-8, designed to support Response to Intervention (RTI) or Multi-Tiered Systems of Support (MTSS).

Focus Group Summary: School Leadership

The leadership team shared the Montessori community continues to be a strength of Silver Sands Montessori Charter School with families appreciating the individualized learning opportunities the school offers along with smaller class sizes, and the holistic focus on the well-rounded child who interacts with people of various ages. One member of the leadership reported that over half of the middle school graduating class had been enrolled at Silver Sands Montessori Charter School since kindergarten. Teachers at Silver Sands Montessori Charter School continue to be trained through a year-long course in Montessori methodology.

The leadership team spoke about chronic absenteeism challenges and school initiatives to ameliorate them. Members of the leadership team said teachers record absences through Class Dojo. Members of the leadership team shared that families reported various reasons for having absences that range from extended international travel throughout the year to transportation hardships. Silver Sands Montessori Charter School does not provide transportation through bus vouchers or have their own passenger van or bus. The school incentivized attendance for the 2024-25 year and leadership was hopeful absenteeism rates were on the decline.

Members of the leadership team spoke candidly with the site evaluation team concerning low enrollment. Silver Sands Montessori Charter School participated in school choice fairs, exchanged fliers with nearby pre-schools and potential feeder schools, and placed Facebook advertisements as recruitment efforts. Leadership shared they were prepared to request a second enrollment amendment to the Silver Sands Montessori Charter School Charter Contract with the SPCSA Governing Board at an upcoming governing board meeting.

Members of the leadership team addressed the 1-star NSPF received for two consecutive years on the NSPF, which resulted in a Notice of Breach from the SPCSA Board at the SPCSA Board meeting on November 15, 2024, for academic performance. Members of the leadership team acknowledged chronic absenteeism contributed to the rating as well as student academic test scores. The school implemented after-school tutoring, as well as targeted math and English language arts (ELA) small group intervention for one-half hour daily. During this intervention time, students learn how to read a question prompt, dissect the question, and answer the question.

The leadership team reported curricula at Silver Sands Montessori Charter School has remained Scholastic Guided Reader to obtain students' baseline reading levels, and then the school uses Lexile levels for ELA. For writing, Silver Sands Montessori Charter School implements Four Square Level and the accompanying manuals and workbooks. The math curriculum has been in place since Silver Sands Montessori Charter School's inception.

Focus Group Summary: Students

Students participating in the focus group suggested several things teachers should do that were important to students. These included keeping students' brains actively thinking, supporting students when they were hurt, listening when they have problems, assisting when needed or when another was being rude, and letting students know the teachers genuinely care. Many of the students in the focus group shared that they felt safe with their teachers and at the school.

Students said they found attending school at Silver Sand Montessori peaceful, and learning was comfortable and relaxing. Students shared they could select what they wanted to work on and move at their own pace. One student said, "In other schools I have attended, the teacher says we have to do this work right now; here, we get to work on what we want. It's easy learning. Whatever learning we are on, we get to learn on what level we are." Students shared they had recently learned in math how to multiply and divide fractions, how to use decimals appropriately, and multiplication and division. Students said they were often provided with math problems on the board to puzzle out first thing in the morning with a time frame to complete them, they could work with classmates to complete the questions. They explained and shared their thoughts on solving the problem(s).

Students suggested Silver Sand Montessori could improve by having stronger measures in place to deter classroom learning disruptions. Several students cited examples in which their ability to concentrate or accomplish activities, assignments, or hear the instructor were disrupted by outbursts from other students. Students said there had been incidents of classmates "talking over the teacher, playing around with materials, being rude, being too physical, and causing physical damage." A few students reported classes have lost recess privileges and/or been banned from using certain items due to these disruptions (*e.g.*, a particular sport no longer allowed or no basketball for a month). One student stated, "It's annoying."

Classroom Environment and Instruction

Observation Rubric

A total of 17 elementary and 6 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: 1	TOTAL: 8	TOTAL: 12	TOTAL: 2	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: 0	TOTAL: 6	TOTAL: 14	TOTAL: 3	TOTAL: 0

Classroom Environment and Instruction

Observation Rubric

A total of 17 elementary and 6 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: 0	TOTAL: 7	TOTAL: 15	TOTAL: 1	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: 4	TOTAL: 8	TOTAL: 2	TOTAL: 9

Classroom Environment and Instruction

Observation Rubric

A total of 17 elementary and 6 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: 0	TOTAL: 6	TOTAL: 13	TOTAL: 4	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: 6	TOTAL: 15	TOTAL: 1	TOTAL: 1

Classroom Observations and Additional Comments

Middle school students worked on reviewing for a vocabulary quiz while the teacher walked around the room, monitoring them as they studied. After a few minutes, the teacher gave them a vocabulary quiz, which required the students to spell the word. Some students spelled the word, while others spelled it with a short definition. Words included congregate, harbor, contestant, and antithesis.

Middle school students worked on their slide presentations in their physical science classroom. Students actively worked on their presentation slides using their devices while the teacher monitored their progress, provided feedback, and asked questions.

Two adults lead small math groups on the carpet area in a lower elementary grade level. Each group consisted of approximately six students, and a few students who were not assigned to a group worked independently. Regarding creating a culture for learning, generally, during the observation session, students exhibited a limited commitment to completing the work independently. Also, in terms of questioning techniques, the teachers invited students to respond directly to one another's ideas, but few students responded. The pacing of instruction was uneven.

Students were completing a worksheet on related multiplication and division facts, either independently or with a partner. The activity focused solely on fact recall rather than applying mathematical concepts. The room was noisy, and some students were disengaged. One teacher and two aides assisted various students, but there was little intervention when one student took another's chair. Overall, the assignment lacked the rigor expected in the NVACS for this stage of the school year.

Students were engaged in various activities throughout the room, including working with blocks, shapes, and a counting table, as well as interacting with two teachers. They worked independently and guided their own learning. However, three students were not participating in any activity and were wandering around the room.

The learning environment was cluttered and lacked organization, with minimal structure in the classroom. Students were engaged in various activities throughout the room—one student practiced flashcards with an older peer, while others read books independently. The atmosphere was noisy and bustling with activity, however it was too noisy to get learning done.

Students were scattered throughout the room and engaged in activities such as organizing shapes, counting objects, creating patterns, and drawing. While most remained focused, three were not actively participating. The teacher interacted with several students, even guiding one on a search for objects as part of a task card activity. Meanwhile, two teacher aides worked with students on their drawings.

Students were using STEM materials to build designs, incorporating items like popsicle sticks, pipe cleaners, tape, and bottles. While one teacher engaged with a small group, assisting them with their creations, the other two teachers sat together, talking and not interacting with the students.

Primary elementary-grade students engaged in work cycles that included coloring activities, building with blocks, and counting, among other tasks. There were approximately fifteen students, and four adults monitored the students.

The teacher introduced a language exercise by playing a video on the history of written language. Students listened attentively as he explained the activity. He then instructed them to form groups and create their own language.

Several students were off task and unfocused while completing tasks on a middle school assignment where they could work together or in groups. The instructor was respectful to the students, and students were respectful in their speech to each other. The urgency to learn and care about learning was absent.

Students sat in table groups and worked on creating an alphabet key as they invented a new language. They were then to write a sentence in their new language. Students were loud, off-task, and disrespectful to each other and the instructor. There was a severe loss of learning time as students were disengaged and distracted.

Lower elementary school students sat on the carpet while the teacher read a book titled "Tortilla and Rounds Last Tortilla." The teacher read aloud and periodically asked the students questions, emphasizing shapes like rectangles.

In an upper elementary classroom, students had a list of tasks displayed on the board, including board work, math problems, a spelling packet, sentence practice, and daily work. They were expected to complete these assignments at their own pace. Despite the teacher's encouragement to stay focused, many students lacked a sense of urgency in finishing their work. Additionally, three students in the room were not engaged in their classwork.

Students completed math problems in concentrated intervention time as preparation for upcoming SBAC¹² testing. Students completed problems individually, then demonstrated their thinking and how they solved the problem for the class and the instructor on a white board. Students were engaged, worked together in small groups of three to four and were excited to learn.

The teacher projected a text titled The Lodger on the board, reading some sections aloud while students read others. As she read, she verbalized her thought process to model comprehension strategies and made a text-to-self connection. The instruction was largely implicit. Meanwhile, other students around the room were working on assignments they needed to complete. Those engaged in the reading followed along attentively, reflecting the teacher's ideas and approach.

Students interacted with each other and the instructor as they listened to a story and responded to targeted questions. Some students were disengaged. The teacher spoke gently to redirect students by asking them all to stand and stretch. This did not stop one student from misbehaving. The teacher was frustrated but maintained composure. Other students became agitated and disengaged.

¹² The Smarter Balanced Assessments (SBAC) measure student progress in grades three through eight toward 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.

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
The SPCSA site evaluation team recommends that Silver Sands Montessori Charter School continue efforts to increase enrollment numbers through targeted marketing strategies, community outreach, and enrollment events.	Silver Sands Montessori Charter School is currently under-enrolled with an enrollment cap of 260. Leadership reported participating in school choice fairs, exchanging fliers with feeder schools, and placing Facebook advertisements. A second enrollment amendment request with the charter authority was forthcoming at the time of the site evaluation.	The SPCSA finds this has not been met and is listed as a strong recommendation.
The SPCSA site evaluation team recommends that Silver Sands' governing board expedite the process of filling the vacant board seat by June 1, 2024. The new board member should undergo governance board training to effectively fulfill their responsibilities and contribute to the school's governance.	Members of the leadership team and the governing board reported having a seven-member board with six members currently serving. The board has been actively looking for replacing one board member for a bit of time. Another board member commuted from out of state and holds a residence in the Las Vegas Valley. His/her attendance has been irregular at times, yet the governing board met quorum for scheduled meetings.	SPCSA team finds this has not been met and is listed as a strong recommendation.
The SPCSA site evaluation team recommends that Silver Sands institute comprehensive measures to alleviate chronic absenteeism.	The leadership team reported teachers contacted families when students were absent. The school offered attendance incentives such as restaurant coupons for attending all testing dates.	SPCSA finds the current levels of chronic absenteeism are unacceptable and this has not been met. This is a deficiency.
Strong recommendation to implement a comprehensive improvement plan focused on academic enhancement, student engagement, and community involvement.	The leadership team reported the above practices had been put in place.	SPCSA finds these items cumulative items have not been met given the two consecutive years of the one-star NSPF rating, the consecutive years of site evaluations citing recommendations for improved academic enhancement. This is listed as an academic deficiency.

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 type="checkbox"/> YES	<input type="checkbox"/> NO	<input checked="" 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.

From: Marlo Tsuchiyama <marlo@silversandsmcs.org>

Sent: Thursday, May 29, 2025 1:25 PM

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Subject: Re: Draft site evaluation report Silver Sands Montessori

We would like to include that this school year, 2024-2025, chronic absenteeism rate has decreased significantly and we will include the detail data and action steps in our Site Evaluation Response Plan as directed.

Much appreciation for your time and assistance!

Regards,
Marlo

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