



Nevada State Public Charter School Authority

Explore Knowledge Academy of Public Speaking

Site Evaluation and Risk Based Monitoring Report: September 17, 2025

State Public Charter School Authority

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Table of Contents

Links to Resources.....	3
Part 1 – Site Evaluation Report.....	4-25
Executive Summary	5
Site Evaluation Findings: Strengths.....	6
Site Evaluation Findings: Challenges.....	8
Site Evaluation Findings: Recommendations	9
Site Evaluation Findings: Strong Recommendations.....	10
Site Evaluation Findings: Deficiencies	11
Focus Group Participation Data.....	12
Focus Group Summary: Governing Board	13
Focus Group Summary: Family Members, Parents, and Guardians.....	14
Focus Group Summary: Faculty and Staff.....	15
Focus Group Summary: School Leadership	16
Focus Group Summary: Students.....	17
Classroom Environment and Instruction Observation Rubric	18
Classroom Observations and Additional Comments	21
Measures of Progress from Previous Site Evaluation.....	23
Operational Compliance Checks.....	24
Appendix A	25
Part 2 – Risk Based Monitoring Report.....	26-39
Executive Summary.....	27
Risk Based Monitoring: (1) Visit Details.....	28
Risk Based Monitoring: (2) School Overview.....	29
Risk Based Monitoring: (3) Scope of Review/Methodology	30
Risk Based Monitoring: (4) Summary of Visit	31
(4.1) Area of Strength	33
(4.2) Area of Improvements/Recommendations.....	34
(4.3) New School Support Plan	37

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](#)

Links to Risk Based Monitoring Resources:

- [Risk Based Monitoring Canvas](#)
- [Resource- Updated Policy Checklist: FY2025-2026 Policy and Procedure Checklist Fillable](#)
- [Grants Administration Canvas](#)
- [SPCSA Risk Based Monitoring Training Modules](#)

Part 1

Explore Knowledge Academy of Public Speaking Site Evaluation Report

Executive Summary

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

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

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

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

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

Site Evaluation Findings: Strengths

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

Strong levels of academic performance

One foremost strength to highlight at Explore Knowledge Academy of Public Speaking, (EKAPS), was its strong levels of academic performance at the elementary, middle, and the high school levels. At the elementary level, the index score increased substantially from the 2023-2024 school year from 48.5 to the current index score for the 2024-2025 of 61 points. At the middle school level, the school earned an index score of 89.5 which equates to a five-star school. Five-star schools are characterized by having a superior school that exceeds expectations for all students and subgroups on every indicator category with little or no exception. At EKAPS high school level, the school earned an index score of 72.2 out of 100 equating to a four-star school. These strong academic outcomes help prepare each individual student for higher education, successful careers and cultivate essential life skills like critical thinking and problem solving.

Unique and sustained educational model

A second major strength at EKAPS was the unique educational model of public speaking. This model provides an innovative educational framework that serves to empower all stakeholders. Students reported having increased confidence, strong leadership skills, higher levels of critical thinking, and a greater ability to inspire and create positive change in the world. Additionally, educators at EKAPS design enhanced classroom activities requiring students to develop speaking skills, which foster higher levels of student engagement in their day-to-day lives of students. The leadership team was observed collaborating with the teaching staff to have meticulously designed the public speaking program to begin gradually at the kindergarten level and to develop as students move into each grade level through their senior year of high school.

High levels of staff retention

Another strength at EKAPS was high levels of staff retention. Both the leadership team and the teaching staff had several consecutive years of employment at EKAPS. High staff retention rates are not a general characteristic at most schools in the United States but are generally the result of various internal factors. At EKAPS, factors included strong administrative support, attractive professional development opportunities, options for a variety of career pathways, and a highly positive school culture.

Small class sizes

Another important strength at EKAPS included small class sizes, which contributed to individual learning opportunities for all students; one-to-one instructional delivery as needed; flexible grouping; and a multi-grade learning model that allowed students to stay at their grade level and excel to higher-grade-level standards when appropriate.

Low levels of chronic absenteeism paired with high levels of student engagement

The school has less than 5% chronically absent students at the Junior/High school levels and 8.5% at the elementary level. These are among the lowest rates in the state of Nevada. Additionally, students were observed as wanting to come to school and be involved in the day-to-day classroom and after-school

activities, as evidenced by the high levels of student engagement recorded on the classroom observation portion of the report and within the student focus group comments of the report.

Strong family engagement

Another strength at EKAPS was the very high levels of family engagement. During the focus group interview conducted on the day of the site evaluation, families reported having strong relationships with the school leadership team as well as with individual members of the teaching staff. Family members said they feel they are equal partners with the school staff in their child's educational experience and were appreciative that the school works closely with them when challenges take place. It is worth noting that a local news channel offers Las Vegas viewers a voting option that viewers voted for EKAPS, resulting in a gold medal for charter schools, gold for elementary, silver for middle, and bronze for high school.

Multiple field trips

Family members, students, and the leadership team reported that EKAPS offers multiple field trips each school year, and this is another strength. Students said the many field trips make learning experiences exciting and boost their motivation to come to school on a regular basis. Family members shared that the hands-on experiential learning provides their children with exposure to diverse cultures and environments and creates lasting positive memories for all students. The leadership team intentionally creates up to twenty field trip opportunities each year, with the knowledge that student curiosity, questioning, and deep connections to the community are formed for students.

Safe and friendly school campus

The SPCSA evaluation team did not see any discipline issues at the school. Classrooms were respectful, with many instances of student-to-student and student-to-teacher acts of kindness and caring. Students and families praised the school for the safe feeling and small family atmosphere that is the day-to-day norm at EKAPS.

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.

Limited funding and budget restraints

As self-reported, EKAPS must work within the confines of a limited budget. This creates challenges with staffing and individual workloads.

Need to increase enrollment

Enrollment levels fall below the projected numbers established by the school and the school board. School leaders reported they are currently working to advertise the benefits of the school through community events.

Lower than desired math academic outcomes

School leaders reported that they would like to see the overall math outcomes for students attending EKAPS increase. School leaders have created goals and benchmarks to measure the implementation of changes to create improvement in this area.

Board and school leadership team are adjusting to the transition to SPCSA

A challenge at EKAPS has been the transition between having CCSD as their authorizer to SPCSA. Changes have included updated procedures and policies, and becoming familiar with all three frameworks: financial, academic, and organizational.

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.

Strengthening the overall understanding of SPCSA Governance Standards and Performance Frameworks

The transition from Clark County School District to sponsorship by the Nevada State Public Charter School Authority (SPCSA) provides EKAPS with a valuable opportunity to align closely with statewide requirements and standards. It is recommended that the school's board and leadership team deepen their understanding of the SPCSA's Governance Standards, as well as the Academic, Financial, and Organizational Performance Frameworks. The [Governance Standards](#), developed in accordance with Section 3 of Assembly Bill 419 from the 81st Session of the Nevada Legislature, outline the characteristics of strong charter school governance. Additional information, including the full [Performance Frameworks](#), can be accessed on the SPCSA website. Referencing these frameworks can help ensure high compliance with required Epicenter tasks, as well as state and federal policies.

Participation in SPCSA trainings

It is recommended that leadership at EKAPS actively participate in monthly professional development sessions, including those focused on Canvas¹, technology tools, and other instructional supports. Additionally, staff should regularly review asynchronous training modules available on Canvas to reinforce their learning and stay updated on key systems and practices. Lastly, referencing the weekly SPCSA update can ensure that the leadership team remains current with important information, including, available grants and training opportunities.

Continue to improve overall math outcomes

It is recommended EKAPS continue to focus on improvement in math teaching and learning outcomes at the elementary, middle, and high school. As self-reported, this is an overall area to be targeted to accelerate proficiency on the SBAC² as well as the ACT³. The school has already implemented staffing changes and has created a second math class to support students with fundamental math skills. School staff may want to consider a technique called "Math Around the Room." This is an activity where students move around the classroom to find and solve math problems, either taped up on chart paper or written on wall whiteboard around the classroom. Students use recording sheets or work in pairs, or groups of three, to solve the problems together. The SPCSA evaluative team has observed this taking place at other charter schools and has noted in these instances, strong levels of rigor, student engagement, and students using math vocabulary to discuss the problems.

Continue to bolster the number of enrolled students

SPCSA recommends that EKAPS continue to bolster the number of students enrolled at the school. It is recommended that the school carry on with strong efforts of increased marketing and participation at community events to promote the school to higher enrollment levels.

¹ Canvas is a web-based learning management system, or LMS. It is used by learning institutions, educators, and students to access and manage online course learning materials and communicate about skill development and learning achievement.

² SBAC refers to the Smarter Balanced Assessment System, a computer-based test that assesses student knowledge and skills in English Language Arts, Literacy, and Mathematics. It is based on Nevada's Common Core State Standards.

³ ACT is a standardized college admissions exam taken by Nevada's high school students to measure skills in English, math, reading, and science.

Site Evaluation Findings: Strong Recommendations

Strong recommendations identified during this site evaluation are listed here, if applicable.
There were no Strong Recommendations for EKAPS during this site evaluation.

Site Evaluation Findings: Deficiencies

Deficiencies identified during this site evaluation are listed here, if applicable.
There were no deficiencies identified for EKAPS during this site evaluation.

Focus Group Participation Data

Focus groups are conducted on the day of the site evaluation and last for 45 minutes. During an abbreviated site evaluation, focus groups are not conducted.

Name of Focus Group	Number of Participants
Governing Board ⁴	3
Family Members, Parents, and Guardians	10
Faculty and Staff	14
School Leadership	3
Students	12

⁴ Quorum was not met, and Open Meeting Law was not violated.

Focus Group Summary: Governing Board

Three members of the EKAPS governing board met for 45 minutes on the day of the site evaluation. Board members explained they maintain strong communication between themselves and the superintendent. Board members stated that their superintendent keeps them well informed, and they actively ask questions during meetings to stay deeply engaged with school matters. The transition to the SPCSA required them to collaboratively develop and add policies to meet new requirements. They view their sense of community as the board's strength and regularly attend school events like Trunk or Treat, Field Day, and graduations. Board members said they believe the strength of the board is the sense of community.

Members of the focus group said they are making progress toward filling open seats on the board. One person commented, "We just got an application that we are reviewing, and we hope to fill that seat soon." One person explained that their board members are officially appointed after they have completed the required training.

The EKAPS board conducts an annual evaluation of the superintendent, typically in May, with a formal report presented by the board president, including contract and compensation discussions. The board adjusted the compensation timeline to November to align with the availability of financial data. Additionally, the board holds an all-day retreat each July, featuring training in the morning and a policy review meeting in the afternoon.

One challenge at EKAPS is the steady decrease in student enrollment. Board members shared their perspectives on this. One member commented, "We used to have 800 students, and as the years have progressed, we have gone down to lower levels." Another board member spoke about possible causes for the decline and said, "It could be due to lack of transportation or families in the community looking at the local school district as an option. The four-day school week may hinder recruitment efforts." Board members said that they have hired professional firms to conduct radio ads and place billboards at malls. A member of the board said, "We have moved to door-to-door to reach the community because we don't have the funding to support professional firms. Our name, Explore Knowledge of Public Speaking, is not recognized."

When asked about the experience with the transfer between the Clark County School District, CCSD as an authorizer to the SPCSA, board members had several comments. One board member said, "It has been a breath of fresh air, and it never really felt like CCSD wanted us. We have always felt like a stepchild. We did not have access to CCSD services." A second board member added, "We have the support of a charter program that wants charters to succeed and push them to be good." A third person remarked, "It has been fast and furious because many things needed to be done."

Focus Group Summary: Family Members, Parents, and Guardians

There were ten participants in the focus group on the day of the site evaluation. Family members shared their perspectives about ways the school model, which focuses on developing public speaking, transfers to the lives of their daughters and sons. A parent of a middle school student said, “Public speaking is one of the best skills you can learn. I noticed that my daughter is more outgoing and outspoken since she has been coming to this school.” Another parent of an elementary school student added, “When I go to the store, my daughter starts a conversation with people and has the confidence to speak with others.” One parent said his son has been enrolled at EKAPS for eight years. He said, “My son has been here since kindergarten and is naturally a quiet boy. This school has helped him to speak up even though he is shy.” A family member concluded, “The educational focus helps prepare the students for any skill path and encourages students to realize they have a voice that matters.”

Family members spoke about several activities that are meaningful and educational for their children. Families said the school organizes several field trips. One family member said, “From a family perspective, the field trips, such as going to the Smith Center, are high-quality experiences. Each activity is child-oriented, safe, cohesive, and enjoyable.” Another parent said, “The kids don’t want to miss anything because they want to be eligible to attend upcoming field trips. Parents reported that the books the students read are interesting, and the students appreciate and look forward to classroom activities. Another family member said, “My children are excited to come to school, and they constantly talk about their teachers.” Families greatly appreciate the sign at the front of the school, which informs everyone about what is taking place on campus.

Families reported feeling welcome when coming to the school. Several participants said the people at the entrance of the school know and greet their child and family members by first name. Some of the valuable experiences from the viewpoint of family members included long-term relationships between themselves, their children, teachers, and school leaders. One family member said, “We had an incident where my daughter was having difficulty with another child. The school leadership team quickly resolved the issue within twenty-four hours. Some family members highlighted their appreciation for the special education department. A parent commented, “My daughter has a visual impairment, and the school staff provides her extra time when she takes an exam. My daughter is thriving here.” Families shared that for advanced students, the school goes above and beyond as well. One parent said, “My son is above grade level in math and is enrolled and learning math skills a grade level above his own. He is constantly challenged. This has led to his well-being and may lead to higher levels of academic outcomes as he works towards college entrance.”

Focus Group Summary: Faculty and Staff

There were fourteen members of the staff who participated in the focus group on the day of the evaluation. Staff spoke about ways EKAPS are unique. One person remarked, “A kindergarten through twelfth grade year is perfect for many of our families because all the children at the home attend at one location, have the same staff year after year, and identical school schedules.” Another staff member commented, “This is my fifth year at this school, and the small class sizes allow us to develop strong relationships with both our students and their families.” Other staff explained the cooperative learning environment, strong levels of communication between the teaching staff, and the flexibility in pairing younger learners with older learners to support students. A member of the teacher staff shared that, “On my first day of teaching at this school, I cried because the students were so full of joy to see one another. I’ve never seen that take place at another school.” Another staff member pointed out that he began his career at the school as a kindergarten aide and is now a high school math teacher. He said that several of his original kindergarten students are his current high school pupils, and he knows that there are high levels of trust between teacher and student and student and teacher.

Several of the staff commented about the unique educational program, which focused on public speaking and has high star ratings at the middle and high school levels. One educator commented, “I think the high educational outcomes are because we don’t teach in isolation. Our group of teachers have lunch together each day, and student outcomes don’t fall on the shoulders of just one person.” Another staff member added, “We help each other out, and attendance is essential. We do an incredible job of getting students here each day. The four-day-a-week schedule is a big plus because students and families come back to school after a three-day weekend, refreshed and ready to learn. This schedule allows families the flexibility to schedule music lessons, sports, and family traveling around the four-day week.”

Staff spoke about possible reasons the enrollment at EKAPS has decreased. Possible reasons include the growth of charter schools in the Las Vegas area, which gives families options of attending another charter school closer to home. Other ideas included families having fewer children and the possible barrier to transportation to the school. When asked about school challenges, the staff mentioned a few. One person said that students don’t get to choose their schedules as other middle and high schools do. Staff said this is a possible barrier to increasing enrollment in those grades. Staff suggested having additional space on campus, more after-school activities, and growing basketball and soccer teams to represent the school.

Focus Group Summary: School Leadership

There were three school leaders in attendance during the leadership focus group. Leaders said the school started out as a project-based learning model and then transitioned to public speaking. The educational focus was explained. One leader said, “All students have a public speaking class where they are required to read, write, and present information. This may be why we have strong levels of our English Language Learner⁵ population exiting the EL status as measured by the World-Class Instructional Design and Assessment⁶ (WIDA) test.”

Strengths at EKAPS were discussed. One leader said, “We have high levels of staff retention from year to year. We just gave one of our teachers a twenty-year certificate. We encourage our staff to change their priorities and teach math instead of English, for example. We have experienced several staff beginning as teacher aides and becoming highly qualified teachers.” Another leader said, “We emphasize field trips and have three planned for next month. We have close to twenty different field trips planned during this school year. Our students love going to the Smith Center and get dressed up.”

Leaders spoke about the newly released Nevada School Performance Framework⁷ (NSPF) star ratings. One leader said, “We are a 3-star elementary, 5-star middle, and a 4-star high school, which I would say is probably like a 4-star all-around school. The elementary level vacillates, and our students starting in first grade have block classes. We send students to the grade level above based on overall scores in some cases, such as math and reading. For example, we have five kindergarten students who moved up to first grade to learn the content but remain in a kindergarten class with their peers to learn the social aspect of being in school. We noticed our students struggle with math and have added a second math class focused on foundational skills. Since the addition, we have observed student confidence in math increasing.”

School leaders said they administer the MAP⁸ Measures of Academic Progress test three times per year. School teams meet and analyze the data and outcomes, working alongside both grade level peers and those above and below the grade level. EKAPS implemented a virtual distance education program option at the school four years ago. Pearson⁹ provides both the teachers and the curriculum. EKAPS has a dually certified staff member who is in contact with each student daily and has a social-emotional learning class.

The school has experienced lower levels of enrollment. School leaders said this is not for lack of trying and have aired multiple radio and TV ads. The staff have gone to preschools in nearby neighborhoods and attended farmers' markets. Staff continue to work to increase enrollment.

⁵ EL learners are students who are learning English and receive specialized instruction and support to develop their English proficiency in speaking, listening, reading, and writing.

⁶ WIDA is an annual standards-referenced test in the four English domains of speaking, listening, reading, and writing.

⁷ NSPF-Nevada School Performance Framework is Nevada's public-school rating designed in accordance with the ESEA-the federal Student Succeeds Act and classifies schools within a five-star performance rating system.

⁸ MAP- Measures of Academic Progress is a computer-based adaptive test that measures student achievement K-12 in math, reading, and language usage.

⁹ Pearson is a for-profit educational publishing company and provides learning materials, including digital content.

Focus Group Summary: Students

There were twelve students enrolled in grades third through twelfth who participated in the focus group. Students were asked to share their thoughts about attending EKAPS. Several students said they like coming to school each day. One student described her experience as fun and welcoming. Another student said the classes are challenging at times. Still another said, “This school makes you learn and it is very manageable.” A final student commented, “All the teachers care about us, and I believe we are being well educated.” Students unanimously love the welcoming atmosphere, the afterschool clubs such as dance, and board games. Students enjoy the theatre class, the big school play, the curriculum, and the fact that the students are accepting one another.

Students engage in public speaking on a regular basis and spoke about their experiences. One student said, “We work on a project which requires speaking, listening, reading, and writing. In other classes such as English language arts, we speak as well and are asked to read out loud to the class from a book. At times, we are reminded to project as we read.” Another student said, “What makes a public speaker great is they project, speak clearly, and show emotion on the stage.” A third student said, “It’s important to have eye contact and have fun. This helps not to pressure yourself.” Another student added, “I’ve learned to focus, use body language, hand gestures, and not let it be boring. It’s very important to connect with the audience.”

Students spoke about the benefits of knowing how to speak publicly. One student commented, “I used to have a difficult time asking for things I needed, and now I make my needs known.” Another student shared, “When I first came to this school, there were opportunities to go on stage, but I didn’t want to do it. Now I’ve look forward to presenting on stage.” One young man explained, “I’ve been here since kindergarten, and now as a senior in high school, I want to speak because to me it is fun. This school has given me a gift, a voice and I can be myself.”

Students spoke about the unique strong relationships which have developed at the school. One student commented, “What is unique here is you can be friends with others in all different grade levels. People are welcoming and supportive of one another. For example, If I’m absent others call and see if I’m okay.” Another student added, “We make a point of complementing each other and you remain friends year after year, so we have many long-term friendships.” Students said they feel safe at school and reported “nice teachers who encourage you to make sure you don’t give up.” One student remarked, “In all my years (since kinder), and I’m a senior now, there are only a few times I can remember anything ever being unsafe.” Students said routine safety drills take place, and teachers reassure students, even during the drills, so students know the teachers will always support them.

Suggestions for improvement were offered by students. Several students would like to have options with their schedule and have the opportunity to not have to repeat an electives class, such as forensics. Other suggestions included a feedback loop between student representatives and the leadership team.

Classroom Environment and Instruction Observation Rubric

A total of 22 elementary, 8 middle, and 9 high 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	The teacher demonstrates knowledge and caring about individual students' lives beyond the class and school. When necessary, students respectfully correct one another. Students participate without fear of put-downs or ridicule from either the teacher or other students. The teacher respects and encourages students' efforts.	Talk between the teacher and students and among students is uniformly respectful. The teacher successfully responds to disrespectful behavior among students. Students participate willingly but may be somewhat hesitant to offer their ideas in front of classmates. The teacher makes general connections with individual students.	The quality of interactions between teachers and students, or among students, is uneven, with occasional disrespect or insensitivity. The teacher attempts to respond to disrespectful behavior among students with uneven results. The teacher attempts to make connections with individual students, but student reactions indicate that these attempts are not entirely successful.	The teacher is disrespectful toward or insensitive to students' ages, cultural backgrounds, and developmental levels. Students' body language indicates feelings of hurt, discomfort, or insecurity. The teacher displays no familiarity with, or care about, individual students.	This criterion was not observed or rated.
	TOTAL: 9	TOTAL: 30	TOTAL: 0	TOTAL: 0	TOTAL: 0
Establishing a Culture for Learning	The teacher communicates passion for the subject. Students indicate through their questions and comments a desire to understand content. Students assist their classmates in understanding the content.	The teacher communicates the importance of the content and the conviction that with hard work all students can master the material. The teacher conveys an expectation of high levels of student effort. Students expend good effort to complete work of high quality.	The teachers' energy for the work is neutral. The teacher conveys high expectations for only some students. Students exhibit a limited commitment to completing the work on their own. The teacher's primary concern appears to be to complete the task at hand.	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. The teacher conveys to at least some students that the work is too challenging for them. Students exhibit little or no pride in their work.	This criterion was not observed or rated.
	TOTAL: 5	TOTAL: 33	TOTAL: 1	TOTAL: 0	TOTAL: 0

Classroom Environment and Instruction Observation Rubric

A total of 22 elementary, 8 middle, and 9 high 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 explains content clearly and imaginatively. The teacher invites students to explain the content to their classmates. Students use academic language correctly.	The teacher states clearly, at some point during the lesson, what the students will be learning. The teacher's explanation of content is clear and invites student participation and thinking. The teacher makes no content errors. Students engage in the learning task, indicating that they understand what they are to do.	The teacher provides little elaboration or explanation about what students will be learning. The teacher's explanation of the content consists of a monologue, with minimal participation or intellectual engagement by students. The teacher may make minor content errors. The teacher must clarify the learning task.	At no time during the lesson does the teacher convey to students what they will be learning. Students indicate through body language or questions that they don't understand the content being presented. Students indicate through their questions that they are confused about the learning task.	This criterion was not observed or rated.
	TOTAL: 6	TOTAL: 33	TOTAL: 0	TOTAL: 0	TOTAL: 0
Using Questioning and Discussion Strategies	Students initiate higher-order questions. The teacher builds on and uses student responses to questions to deepen student understanding. Students extend the discussion, enriching it. Virtually all students are engaged.	The teacher uses open-ended questions, inviting students to think and/or offer multiple possible answers. Discussions enable students to talk to one another without ongoing mediation by the teacher. Many students actively engage in the discussion.	The teacher frames some questions designed to promote student thinking, but many have a single correct answer. The teacher invites students to respond directly to one another's ideas, but few students respond. The teacher calls on many students, but only a small number participate.	Questions are rapid-fire and convergent with a single correct answer. The teacher does not ask students to explain their thinking. Only a few students dominate the discussion.	This criterion was not observed or rated.
	TOTAL: 2	TOTAL: 33	TOTAL: 2	TOTAL: 0	TOTAL: 2

Classroom Environment and Instruction Observation Rubric

A total of 22 elementary, 8 middle, and 9 high 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	Virtually all students are engaged in the lesson. Lesson activities require high-level student thinking and explanations of their thinking. Students have an opportunity for reflection and closure on the lesson to consolidate their understanding.	Most students are intellectually engaged in the lesson. Most learning tasks have multiple correct responses or approaches and/or encourage higher-order thinking. Students are invited to explain their thinking as part of completing tasks. The pacing of the lesson provides students with the time needed to be intellectually engaged.	Some students are intellectually engaged in the lesson. Learning tasks are a mix of those requiring thinking and those requiring recall. Student engagement with the content is largely passive. The pacing of the lesson is uneven—suitable in parts but rushed or dragging in others.	Few students are intellectually engaged in the lesson. Learning tasks, activities, and materials require only recall or have a single correct response. The lesson drags on or is rushed.	This criterion was not observed or rated.
	TOTAL: 5	TOTAL: 33	TOTAL: 1	TOTAL: 0	TOTAL: 0
Using Assessment in Instruction	Students indicate they clearly understand the characteristics of high-quality work. The teacher uses multiple strategies to monitor student understanding. Students monitor their own understanding. Feedback comes from many sources.	The teacher makes the standards of high-quality work clear to students. The teacher elicits evidence of student understanding. Students are invited to assess their own work and make improvements. Feedback includes specific and timely guidance.	There is little evidence that the students understand how the work is evaluated. The teacher monitors understanding through a single method, without eliciting evidence of understanding from students. Feedback to students is vague.	The teacher does not indicate what quality work looks like. The teacher makes no effort to determine whether students understand the lesson. Students receive no feedback, or feedback is global or directed to one student.	
	TOTAL: 0	TOTAL: 38	TOTAL: 0	TOTAL: 0	TOTAL: 1

Classroom Observations and Additional Comments

In high school math class, students worked independently and in groups to complete complex problems. The teacher walked around to provide feedback and suggestions. Relationships were relaxed and positive. There were very high levels of student engagement and rigor taking place.

Middle school students learned about debate skills and how to use research techniques to complete a credibility checklist when examining possible evidence or sources. The teacher delivered direct instruction and led the discussion by reviewing important questions to consider.

In a forensics class offered to grades 6-12, there was one teacher and 16 students. Students were asked to listen to a video, answer questions, and complete a notetaker. Each student in the class was engaged.

In a middle school science class, students read about force and gravity. The teacher stopped and asked open-ended questions about the content while making sure the students were following along with the content. Every student was highly engaged.

High school students engaged in a social studies lesson by reading statements, translating/interpreting the statements, and then providing a rationale for their interpretation. The students engaged in conversations and asked clarifying questions. The teacher facilitated the discussions and prompted students to build on their classmates' thoughts. The activity was followed by a reflection question requiring students to relate their ideas to real-world issues using their devices to write their responses.

Secondary students worked in math groups. Groups worked using their devices to access their i-Ready¹⁰ lessons. The teacher worked with a small group of students using whiteboards, reviewing math questions involving subtraction and regrouping.

There were 15 students in this classroom. All students had a laptop and worked in pairs, creating a podcast. Students prepared an interview script to share the podcast with the class. Students were highly engaged in the process. The teacher and teacher aide roamed the room checking in on students and answering questions.

This upper elementary group was reading their textbook as a whole group, and students took turns reading the text aloud to the rest of the class. Several students volunteered to read out loud after each time. The teacher asked several high-level questions as the group read together.

In a middle elementary classroom with 24 students, students enjoyed talking about the content. The teacher accommodated the students' high interest in eye color and had them talk about it because they were very involved. The teacher had students take a minute to talk about eye color with each other. As students talked, the teacher talked with students. It was a very positive and engaging classroom. There were three adults in this classroom to help the students.

¹⁰ i-Ready lessons are personalized on-line instructional activities in reading and math that adapt to a student's specific skill level, based on their performance on the i-ready diagnostic test.

Historical Fiction was the primary focus in a secondary English Language Arts classroom. The students also referred to their text. The students then began to read the background section of the text, as the teacher asked clarifying questions, highlighting the timeline of the story. The students were very engaged and actively followed along with the lesson as they transitioned to the close reading portion. The teacher in this classroom complimented a student for re-stating the question in his answer. Students appeared to be comfortable and willing to speak up and share their thoughts.

In an early grade classroom, the teacher was highly positive, as evidenced by open-ended real-life questions, calling students by their first names, and encouraging them to explain more and give specific information to back up their original statements. When students became confused, the teacher stopped and pushed the group of students to think more about the topic, and then once students appeared to understand, they moved on with the lesson.

In a primary classroom, students worked on single-digit-by-single-digit subtraction using pennies as counters. The students were independently working while the teacher monitored the classroom. There was an additional staff member who was working with several students in a small group. The students transitioned to a social emotional lesson with half of the students remaining while the other half transitioned to another class. Several others joined the class as the teacher provided instruction and took attendance. The teacher asked the students to share something that was difficult for them but was still possible. Students shared responses while the teacher facilitated the conversations, emphasizing that difficult tasks are possible. The lesson transitioned to having the students draw a picture representing their thoughts on something difficult but possible.

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.

Explore Knowledge Academy of Public Speaking is new to the SPCSA portfolio as of the 2025-2026 school year. Therefore, the information below is not applicable.

Prior Recommendation by Site Evaluation Team	School Assessment of Progress	SPCSA Staff Assessment of Progress
Not applicable	Not applicable	Not applicable

Operational Compliance Checks

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

Appendix A

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

Part 2

Explore Knowledge Academy of Public Speaking

Risk Based Monitoring Report

Executive Summary

Per NRS 388A.150, the SPCSA is responsible for providing oversight of the charter schools it sponsors. This includes conducting site evaluations during the first, third, and fifth years of the charter contract and, as needed, to follow up on strong recommendations or identified deficiencies. The SPCSA is committed to ensuring a smooth, meaningful, and timely process using a well-designed, intentional, research-based protocol.

Additionally, as a pass-through entity of federal funds, the SPCSA is required to conduct risk assessments of subrecipients in accordance with 2 C.F.R. §200.332(b). These assessments evaluate compliance with program and fiscal requirements but do not measure the quality or determine future eligibility.

Risk Based Monitoring: (1) Visit Details

Location Explore Knowledge Academy of Public Speaking
5871 Mountain Vista Street, Las Vegas, NV 89120

Financial Period or 07/01/2024 – 06/30/2025
Fiscal Years/ School

Years Covered

Date(s) and time(s) of Wednesday, September 17, 2025
Monitoring 12:00PM – 4:00 PM

Objectives

- Review the capacity, performance, and compliance of a subrecipient charter school
- Address high-risk and specific issues that need immediate attention
- Determine fidelity of program delivery
- Ensure that any subaward of federal funds is used for authorized purposes; in compliance with federal statutes, regulations, and the terms and conditions of the subaward; and that subaward performance goals are achieved

Date of Report October 16, 2025

Risk Based Monitoring: (2) School Overview

- Total Number of Students: 581
- Grade Levels: K - 12
- Grants with Active Subawards:
 - FY26 Special Education (IDEA, Part B)
 - FY26 Title I, Part A
- Grants with Allocations (subaward pending):
 - N/A
- Total Federal Funds Expended in Previous FY (FY25): Not applicable – not a part of the SPCSA portfolio
- Single Audit Required: N/A
- Current Risk Level: High
- Prior Risk Level: Not applicable – not a part of the SPCSA portfolio

Risk Based Monitoring: (3) Scope of Review/Methodology

The following activities were completed during this monitoring visit:

- Scope of fiscal review:
 - Fiscal Administrative requirements, including:
 - Compliant system of internal controls
 - Compliant system to determine allowability of costs
 - Compliant financial management and accounting system
 - Compliant procurement system
 - Compliant plan for audit resolution
 - Compliant system for inventory management
 - Compliant system for records retention
 - Appropriate use of funds (Monitored in conjunction with review of program implementation)
- Scope of program review:
 - Special Education
 - IEP development, meeting and record maintenance process aligned to federal and state requirements
 - IEP(s) are fully implemented
 - Progress monitoring is regularly conducted in accordance with IEP, federal/state requirements and best practices
 - Ongoing parent communication, participation, and engagement
 - Special Education IEP/file review
 - Title IA
 - Program development included needs assessment, community outreach (parents, teachers, school staff, students) and alignment to School Performance Plan: Road Map to Success (“SPP”)
 - Program implementation aligns to federal requirements and program plan
 - School has worked to ensure effective involvement of parents and the community to improve student academic achievement
 - School regularly collects data and monitors progress towards goals and intended outcomes
 - For CSI, TSI, TSI/ATSI schools, evidence that the school is making progress towards exiting the designation
 - Additional Areas
 - McKinney-Vento
 - Foster Care

Risk Based Monitoring: (4) Summary of Visit

The following tables identify areas of strength, recommendations, and issues identified during this monitoring visit. Issues identified are based on the school's preparation of supporting documentation and presentation of information. These findings are not exhaustive, and additional concerns may exist that were not observed during the review. It is the responsibility of the school to engage in ongoing internal oversight of grants and grant management processes to ensure compliance with all federal and local statutes, regulations, and policy requirements.

- Areas for improvement have been identified. A School Support Plan is required.

Risk Based Monitoring: (4.1) Area of Strength

Monitoring Area: Fiscal

- The leadership and fiscal staff at Explore Knowledge Academy were friendly and welcoming, providing an engaging and transparent environment and promptly answering any questions posed by the SPCSA.
- Explore Knowledge Academy continues to develop a ‘team’ to ensure the appropriate use and management of grant funds. The school is in the process of defining clear roles and responsibilities amongst school staff, the board, and external partners involved in education grants. Explore Knowledge Academy shared a draft of their current policies and procedures with SPCSA staff as requested. The school is working to develop and implement business processes at the campus and charter level for effective and compliant management of grants. They are committed to making the necessary changes to campus policies, procedures, and core processes to ensure compliant and effective grant management practices.
- Explore Knowledge Academy staff and fiscal partners are committed to using funds to improve student academic outcomes. The school intends to use grant funds to the maximum benefit of students.

Monitoring Area: Special Education- Program

- The school leaders at Explore Knowledge Academy of Public Speaking were accommodating and demonstrated a commitment to the school’s success. This was evident in how they responded to questions, welcomed feedback, and shared insight into the school’s history, achievements, and areas targeted for continued improvement. The school leader spoke with great pride about the school, staff, and both current and former students.
- During the special education monitoring block, the required documentation was readily accessible, and the special education facilitator was well-prepared to provide additional information regarding program implementation. A randomly selected student file was reviewed and found to be well-organized, with documentation that was generally compliant. Only two items required revision to fully meet the requirements outlined in the monitoring report.

Monitoring Area: Title IA - Program

- Explore Knowledge Academy consistently communicates performance data to teachers, staff, and parents. This includes updates on MAP testing results, SBAC, WIDA assessments and attendance data. The school also holds parent conferences twice a year to ensure parents and families are informed and aligned with student performance and progress.
- Explore Knowledge Academy provides targeted support for students who may be falling behind through several key initiatives. Under Title I, the school sets academic goals and explores strategies to raise the baseline achievement for all students. In addition, Explore Knowledge focuses on remediation by engaging math and science teachers in targeted support modeled after the Ron Clark Academy approach.

Monitoring Area: Title II – Program

- Explore Knowledge Academy offers professional development for educators across multiple focus areas and is uniquely recognized as the only K–12 public speaking school in the United States. Their professional development efforts center on two key areas: K–12 public speaking and social-emotional learning (SEL). The school has also implemented a schoolwide SEL program. This investment ensures that educators are well-equipped to meet the diverse needs of their students, which is critical for promoting academic success.

Monitoring Area: Title III – Program

- The school does not receive Title III funding; therefore, this section is not applicable. However, it is noteworthy that the school supports English Learners by providing teacher training and implementing book studies to strengthen instructional practices.

Monitoring Area: Title IV – Program

- The school does not receive Title IV funding: not applicable.

Monitoring Area: Additional Areas: McKinney Vento and Foster Care

- Under McKinney-Vento and Foster Care, Explore Knowledge has taken proactive steps to remove barriers to student success. The school provides bus passes to ensure transportation is not a hindrance and distributes Walmart gift cards to assist with school supplies and toiletries. In addition, key student data including attendance is reviewed monthly to monitor progress and provide support as needed.

Risk Based Monitoring: (4.2) Area of Improvements/Recommendations

Monitoring Area: Fiscal

- The SPCSA recommends strengthening the following areas within the school’s written policies and procedures:
 - Clarify roles and responsibilities for grant-related fiscal administration. Policies should clearly identify the specific personnel responsible for fiscal tasks related to grants.
 - Include further details with written policies and procedures to ensure that the *how*, *who*, and *when* are thoroughly documented. Procedures are tied to policies. Making this relationship explicit and how the procedure helps the school achieve its goals and strategic plans helps ensure both understanding and compliance. The SPCSA provides sample fiscal “Policy and Procedures” templates on the Risk Based Monitoring Canvas portal: <https://spcsa.instructure.com/courses/75>.
 - Develop detailed step-by-step procedures. Procedures should be written in a way that is easy to follow by all users, including new staff and contracted personnel. This will help protect business processes and maintain internal controls in the event of staff turnover or the expansion of grant programs. Additionally, detailed processes and procedures can serve as the foundation for internal training materials and should be reviewed annually by fiscal staff to identify and refine process gaps to help improve efficiency and effectiveness.
 - Regularly monitor and submit all required federal and state grant-related compliance reports in Epicenter by the assigned deadlines. Once grant funds are awarded, recipients are required to report information to federal and/or State agencies regarding the use of the federal grant funds. Financial and programmatic reporting provides key information about the overall financial status and program performance of the grant. These reporting requirements are set forth in the authorizing statutes and regulations for each individual grant program that was accepted by the charter school when the grant award was signed and executed. A list of known federal and state reporting requirements is available on the SPCSA’s website: [Annual Reporting Requirements](#).
 - It is recommended that school and contracted staff responsible for grant management continue annual professional learning on Uniform Guidance topics based on industry best practices and federal regulations to strengthen subaward performance and compliance with federal regulations. This can be done through organizations such as Brustein and Manasevit, the National Association of Federal Education Program Administrators (NAFEPA), and the National Grants Management Association (NGMA).

Monitoring Area: Special Education- Program

- The SPCSA outlines the following requirements and best practices for strengthen Explore Knowledge Academy’s written policies, procedures, and program implementation in Special Education:
 - Ensure that the *Records Access List* is clearly displayed and posted near the location where confidential special education folders are stored and that it is kept up-to-date with the names of authorized personnel to access the files.

- Ensure that all confidential file folders contain a file access log to track who has accessed the records.
- Refrain from using "No effect statement needed" or any of its variations in the third column of the PLAAFPs. Instead, provide a clear statement indicating whether the student does or does not require support and/or services in a particular area to show progress.
- The SPCSA recommends consistent practice in discussing with parents or guardians whether an interpreter is needed for special education meetings when the student is identified as Limited English Proficient (LEP), even if English is listed as the student's primary language. Document whether the parent accepted or declined the interpreter in the student's confidential folder status log.
- For EL students who are receiving special education services, ensure that information on the most recent WIDA ACCESS or screener scores is provided in the PLAAFPs. Additionally, *Special Factors #3* must be marked as "Yes." Ensure that *Supplementary Aids and Services* include accommodations and supports that address the student's language development needs based on the most recent EL assessment data.
- Provide the initial PWN to parents within a reasonable timeframe (ten days) prior to the meeting.
- Develop IEP goals that include both a rate/level of proficiency or mastery and a frequency or level of attainment. This ensures goals are measurable and replicable of the proficiency/mastery. *Example: "80% accuracy in 4/5 trials."*
- Review the SPCSA Memo from 9/9/2024 regarding compliant service logs and ensure that the school uses service logs that contain all the required areas for documentation. Staff must regularly complete service logs and place copies in the student's confidential folder or uploaded to Infinite Campus.
- Strengthen staff capacity through ongoing training and oversight related to special education policies, procedures, and practices, while ensuring participation in SPCSA training opportunities.
- Ensure that all staff have easy access to the school's Special Education Policies and Procedures Manual to support compliance with IDEA and IEP requirements.
- Regularly monitor and track due dates for evaluations, IEP meetings, and required special education reports to ensure compliance with IDEA, NAC, and SPCSA requirements.
- A list of additional resources/links is provided in a separate document as a special education resource to the charter school.

Monitoring Area: Title IA

- It is recommended that the school continue to submit the School Performance Plan (SPP) on time through the Plan4Learning application as part of the spring grant application process. The school is also encouraged to consistently complete the SPP Status Checks by the due date specified in Epicenter, using the Plan4Learning application.

Monitoring Area: Title II – Program

- There are no areas of improvement or recommendations at this time.

Monitoring Area: Title III – Program

- Explore Knowledge does not currently receive Title III funds. However, it is expected that the school will continue to complete all Title III related NDE Desktop Monitoring tasks by the due date specified in Epicenter, once those tasks become available.

Monitoring Area: Title IV – Program

- Explore Knowledge does not currently receive Title IV funds.

Monitoring Area: Additional Areas: McKinney Vento and Foster Care

- To ensure continued compliance with the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act, the SPCSA recommends that Explore Knowledge Academy continue to utilize the **McKinney-Vento Non-Regulatory Guidance** as a key resource. This guidance provides clear, actionable strategies for supporting students experiencing homelessness, aligning with federal requirements while addressing the unique needs of this vulnerable population.

Risk Based Monitoring: (4.3) New School Support Plan

Any issues identified below require an improvement plan. The table below describes the conditions found during this monitoring visit.

Monitoring Area: Fiscal Internal Controls

- **Issues Identified:**

- **Conditions Found Not in Compliance:**

- The following required written policies and procedures are not in compliance with the Uniform Guidance, internal controls:

1. Internal Controls
2. Allowability of Costs
3. Accounting & Financial Management Systems
4. Procurement Systems
5. Audit Resolution
6. Inventory Management
7. Records Retention

- **Cause of Deficiency:**

- The charter school was unable to provide compliant written policies and procedures that demonstrate how programmatic, fiscal, and administrative staff effectively execute and complete essential grant management processes in alignment with the school's established expectations. Documented financial management practices do not fully adhere to applicable laws and regulations and/or do not follow the Generally Accepted Accounting Principles (GAAP) and Generally Accepted Government Auditing Standards (GAGAS).

- **Effect of Deficiency:**

- Without clearly defined roles and responsibilities in written policies, staff may be unaware of what is expected of them. Inefficient internal controls may lead to a surplus or deficit costs in grant budgets

- **Criteria Used**

- 2 CFR 200

- **Improvement Plan:**

- Explore Knowledge Academy must develop robust written policies and procedures that clearly document business processes for grants and ensuring all required internal controls are present within each policy.

Monitoring Area: Program: Special Education

- **Issues Identified:**

- **Conditions Found Not in Compliance:**

- No clear Effects statements (third column of PLAAFPs) for areas that were not identified as deficient. Instead of documenting how or if the student's disability affects

their involvement and progress, staff defaulted to a blanket phrase (“No Effects Statement Needed”).

- **Cause of Deficiency:**

The cause of the deficiency may be due to expectations or practices set by the school’s former district.

- **Effect of Deficiency:**

Including a clear Effects Statement in the PLAAFP is important, as federal regulations specify that it should describe how the child’s disability impacts their involvement and progress in the general education curriculum. A well-written Effects Statement also provides the foundation for identifying the most appropriate goals, supports, accommodations, and specialized instruction.

- **Criteria Used**

- NAC 388.284
- 34 CFR 300.320

- **Improvement Plan:**

To strengthen the quality and compliance of IEP development, schools should ensure that all PLAAFP sections include individualized Effects/Impact statements that describe how the student’s disability does (or does not) affect their access to, progress, and involvement in the general education curriculum/setting. Please avoid the use of generic phrases such as “No effects needed”, “x,” “none needed,” “see above,” or “see previous IEP”.

If the identified area is not impacted by the student’s disability, a clear statement that indicates the student is able to access general education without supplemental services and support should be provided.

The school should submit evidence of correction to the SPCSA by:

1. Submitting evidence of correction to the SPCSA by demonstrating corrected PLAAFP Effects/Impact statements in the student’s next IEP as evidenced in the student’s next IEP. Submit the next IEP with appropriate meeting participants’ signatures.
2. Submit an acknowledgement form, signed by all applicable staff (including contracted service providers, if applicable), confirming that they have received and reviewed training on this requirement.

Monitoring Area: Program: Special Education

- **Issues Identified:**

- **Conditions Found Not in Compliance:**

During the most recent IEP meeting, an interpreter was not present for a parent whose primary language is not English. Additionally, there was no documentation indicating that interpreter services were offered or that the parent formally declined them.

- **Cause of Deficiency:**

The cause of the deficiency is unknown.

- **Effect of Deficiency:**

Without appropriate language support or clear documentation of a parent's decision, the parent's ability to fully participate in the IEP process may be limited. Ensuring language access supports both compliance with IDEA and NAC requirements and strengthens collaboration between the school and families to develop an IEP that reflects the student's needs.

- **Criteria Used**

- NAC 388.281
- 34 CFR 300.322

- **Improvement Plan:**

To ensure compliance with IDEA and NAC requirements and to support meaningful parent participation, the following steps are recommended:

1. **Offer and Documentation of Interpreter Services**

- a. Prior to each IEP meeting where a parent's primary language is not English, staff will ensure an interpreter is offered.
- b. If the parent accepts, the interpreter will be arranged and documented in the IEP meeting notes and status logs.
- c. If the parent declines, staff will clearly document the parent's refusal in the IEP and status logs.

2. **Staff Guidance and Training**

- a. Provide staff with reminders and/or a short guidance document on the steps for arranging interpreter services and documenting offers/refusals
- b. Incorporate this into regular special education compliance updates so staff are confident in consistently applying the procedures.

3. **Monitoring and Support**

- a. School leadership will periodically review a sample of IEPs involving families with a primary language other than English to ensure documentation is complete.

The school should submit evidence of correction to the SPCSA by:

1. Submitting evidence of correction to the SPCSA by submitting the next IEP and folder status log with documentation that the school offered an interpreter to the parent prior to the IEP meeting and the parent's response. Documentation must be dated and clearly written.
2. Submit an acknowledgement form, signed by all applicable staff (including contracted service providers, if applicable), confirming that they have received and reviewed training on this requirement.