

New Mexico Public Education Commission



2023 Charter School Renewal Application Part B: Progress Report SOUTHWEST SECONDARY LEARNING CENTER

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Instructions

Please read the entire Charter School Renewal Application Kit before preparing documents. In an effort to help applicants understand the requirements of the Renewal Application, the CSD will hold a minimum of two technical assistance workshops. Applicants will be notified of the dates, times, and locations of the workshops.

Enter applicant responses in boxes below. Answer all questions unless the question indicates that applicants should answer only under certain conditions (e.g., rating on a Performance Framework indicator requires explanation, etc.). Narrative responses should be verifiable through documents submitted or observable evidence at the renewal site visit and will be scored according to the rubric in the main 2022 Charter Renewal Application document.

School Information

Name of School: Southwest Secondary Learning Center

Authorizer: New Mexico Public Education Commission

Current Charter Term: 2019-2024

Academic Performance

Student Outcomes

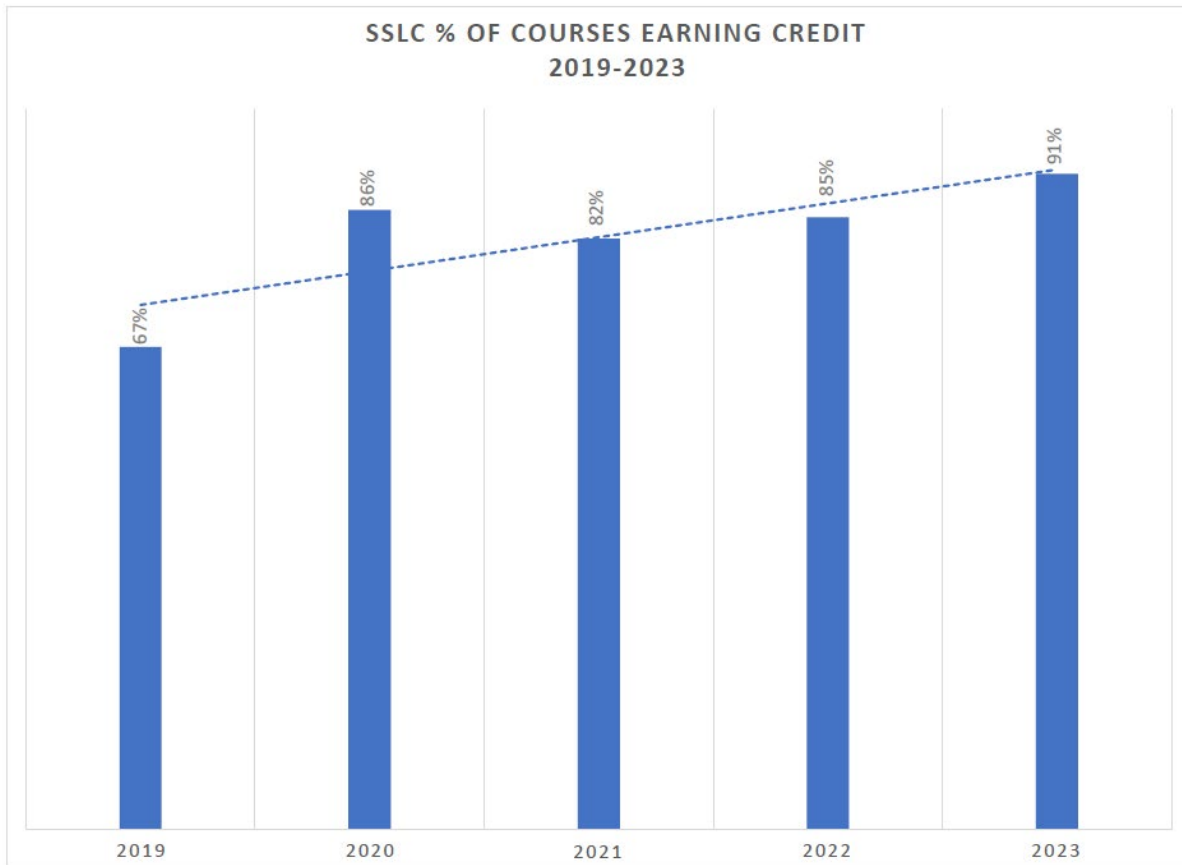
1. Academic Performance

The school reports on its academic performance during the term of the contract, including achieving its goals, student performance outcomes, state standards of excellence and accountability requirements set forth in the Assessment and Accountability Act.

School response:

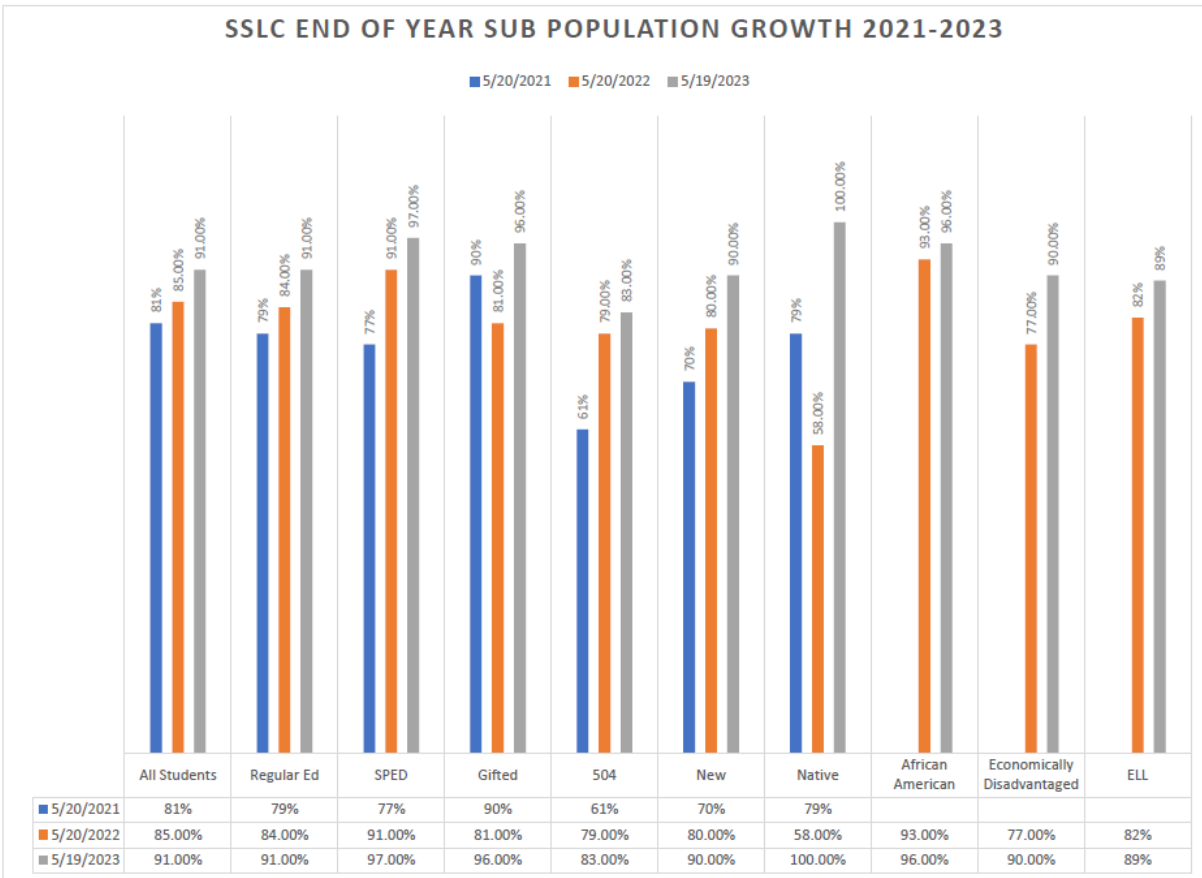
Southwest Secondary Learning Center is proud of continued growth and student success over the term of our contract. We offer a blended learning model that is self-directed and flexible with strong teacher support. As we have utilized a blended model with an online learning platform since our inception in 2001, we were able to quickly transition to fully remote learning during the Covid-19 school shutdown without drastic changes to our program. The Smart Lab, SSLC's hands-on S.T.E.A.M. lab, ordered backpack kits to support the program during remote learning for the 2020-2021 school year. The kits were filled with hands-on tools that allowed students to continue instruction while learning remotely. Kits were dropped off at school as students completed projects to be sanitized, refilled, and checked out again for continued learning.

SSLC has two mission specific goals, and both have MET or EXCEEDED standards for each term of the contract. Further, SSLC takes pride in significant student growth in course completion for credit over the term of the contract. Student progress data has been tracked internally since the 2018-2019 school year, and we added subpopulation data in 2020-2021. Course completion for credit is tracked bi-weekly and analyzed during staff meetings and Professional Learning Community meetings. Adult actions taken to address the findings included program changes such as virtual attendance and academic integrity policies, along with the addition of direct instruction support classes. In May 2023, our internal data demonstrates remarkable improvement in courses completed for credit over the contract term, rising from 67% of courses receiving credit in May 2019 to 91% receiving credit in May 2023. The graph below indicates a high percentage of courses completed for credit in May 2020, and the direct impact of the 2-week "pause" in learning at the start of the pandemic should be noted. Courses during that semester were adjusted to account for the 2-week loss of learning time and received pass/fail instead of traditional grades.



SSLC began tracking the percentage of courses completed for credit in sub-populations during the 2020-2021 school year. We are pleased to report growth in all sub-populations over the course of our charter contract as shown in the graph below.

SSLC Sub-Population End of Year Course Completion Data 2021-2023



SSLC is committed to engaging families in their student’s education. All students are assigned a sponsor teacher upon registration. The sponsor teacher monitors student progress and provides weekly updates to families while serving as the family’s primary contact for questions and/or concerns. The sponsor teacher advocates for the student while holding them accountable for attendance and academic progress.

SSLC received a Comprehensive Support & Improvement (CSI) rating for our graduation rate in 2023. The school has implemented several adult actions focused on improving the graduation rate to include increased parent outreach and engagement with monthly conferences, support classes for students in credit recovery, and intensive classes to aid students in 9th grade English, Algebra I, and Geometry. These are documented in our NM-DASH 90-day plan. SSLC also sends written potential failure notices to families mid-way through each semester. We expect these actions to translate to increased course completion, more students on track for graduation, and an improved graduation rate.

SSLC has engaged in strategic planning since the 2021-2022 school year for continuous improvement. The work is ongoing as we look deeply at our data and the needs of our students, plan for recruitment, and examine our internal practices to promote the best outcomes for all students at SSLC.

1.a. Student Outcomes

1.a. How has the school measured student proficiency and growth, including action taken in the absence of state summative assessments in 2019-20 and 2020-21? Describe interim and formative assessments used, and the results of those assessments. Include a detailed narrative that addresses the actions taken to improve student outcomes, and the success of those actions. Schools may take the opportunity to include data in support of the narrative. If providing data to support the school's narrative, provide it in **Appendix A-1 Academic Data**. Implementation of the described improvement actions should be verifiable through evidence at the renewal site visit.

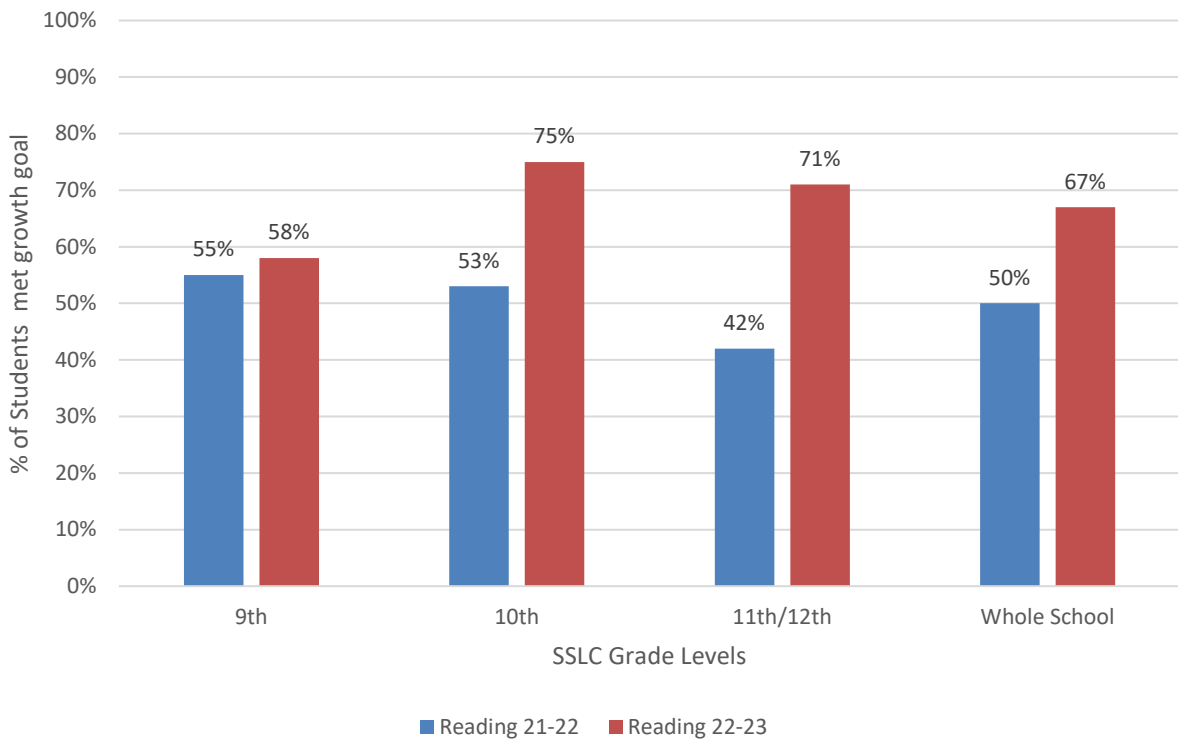
School response:

Southwest Secondary Learning Center has measured student proficiency and growth through short-cycle assessments, standardized assessments, course progress and completion data, and we are continually examining options for improvement. Course progress and completion data were very beneficial in measuring student proficiency during the absence of state summative assessments throughout the 2019-2020 and 2020-2021 academic years.

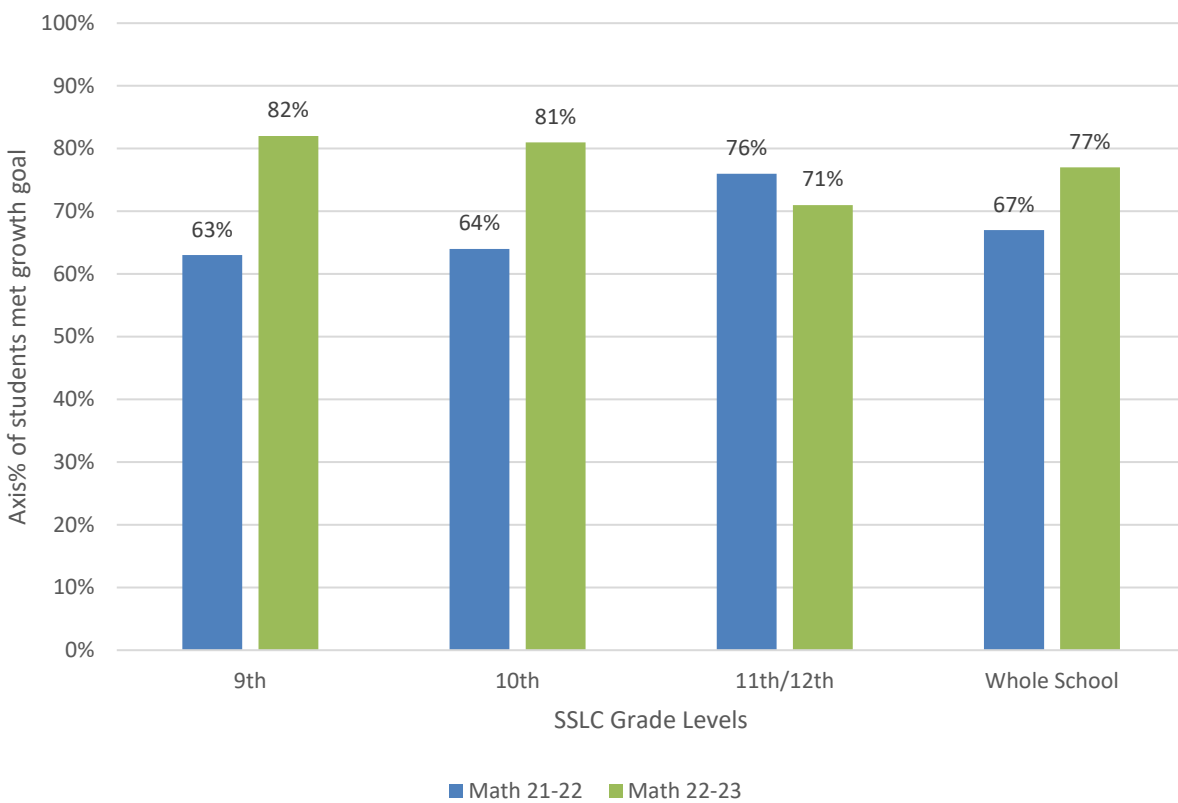
As mentioned in the Academic Performance section above, SSLC began tracking core academic course progress and completion data in 2018. The data has been analyzed by our staff and used to drive instructional decisions such as adding intensive support classes, virtual attendance policies, and remote learning contracts to support students in completing their coursework well and making progress towards graduation. Through these efforts, the end of the fall 2022 semester showed a 19% increase in the number of core academic courses completed for credit since 2018 and a 24% increase for the 2nd semester from 2019 to 2023 (See Appendix A-1.1).

SSLC completes short-cycle assessments 3 times per year to monitor student proficiency and growth. Unfortunately, data from the 2019-2020 year is not available as end-of-year assessments were not administered during the Covid-19 shutdown. Though SSLC administered short-cycle assessments remotely during 2020-2021, data was not collected due to the number of participating students and lack of secure proctoring for remote assessments. SSLC transitioned from Renaissance STAR assessments to NWEA for the 2021-2022 year. Assessment data from NWEA demonstrates overall growth in both reading and math for the 2021-2022 and 2022-2023 academic years as shown in the charts below (additional data in Appendix A-1.2).

SSLC NWEA Reading Growth

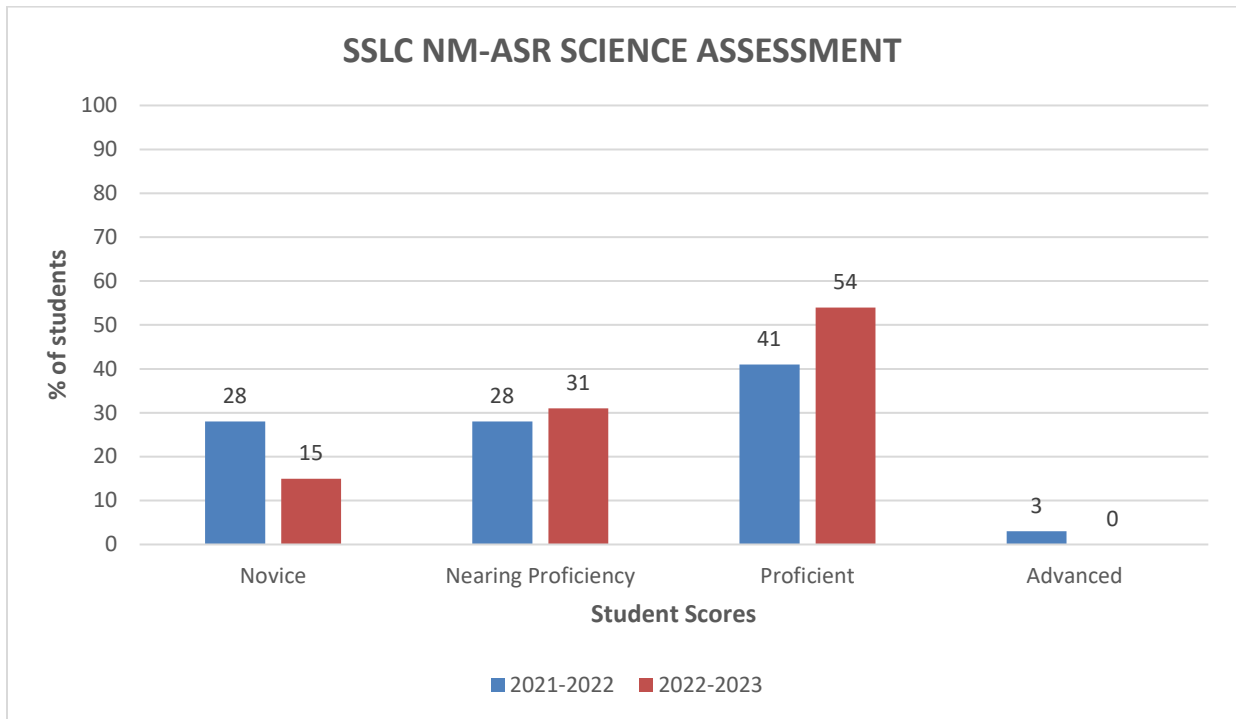


SSLC NWEA Math Growth



All NM high schools transitioned from the NM-MSSA to the SAT for all 11th grade students. The SAT benchmark for 11th grade is 460 for reading and 510 for math. Overall scores have dropped since the initial implementation in the 2020-2021 year. In the spring 2023 assessment, SSLC students scored slightly above the benchmark at 464 in reading and below the benchmark in math at 424. National SAT percentile rankings have declined over the last three years (see Appendix A-1.3).

New Mexico utilizes the Assessment of Science Readiness (NM-ASR) for all 11th grade students. The state did not publish scores 2020-2021 due to the remote learning environment. SSLC students improved from 44% scoring proficient or advanced in 2021-2022 to 54% in 2022-2023 as shown in the chart below (see Appendix A-1.4).



1.b. Mission-specific or School-Specific Goals

Report on the school’s performance in relation to the school- or mission-specific goals in the negotiated performance framework. Performance reports related to school or mission specific goals should be supported by raw data (masked to protect PII) and provided in **Appendix A-2 Mission Goal Data**. The school should report on the performance in each year of the contract term.

Schools that have not met their school- or mission-specific goals in each year of the contract term should provide a narrative that addresses the improvement actions taken and the success of those actions. The purpose of the narrative is to demonstrate substantial progress toward meeting the school or mission specific goals and maintaining that performance level. Implementation of the described improvement actions should be verifiable through evidence at the renewal site visit.

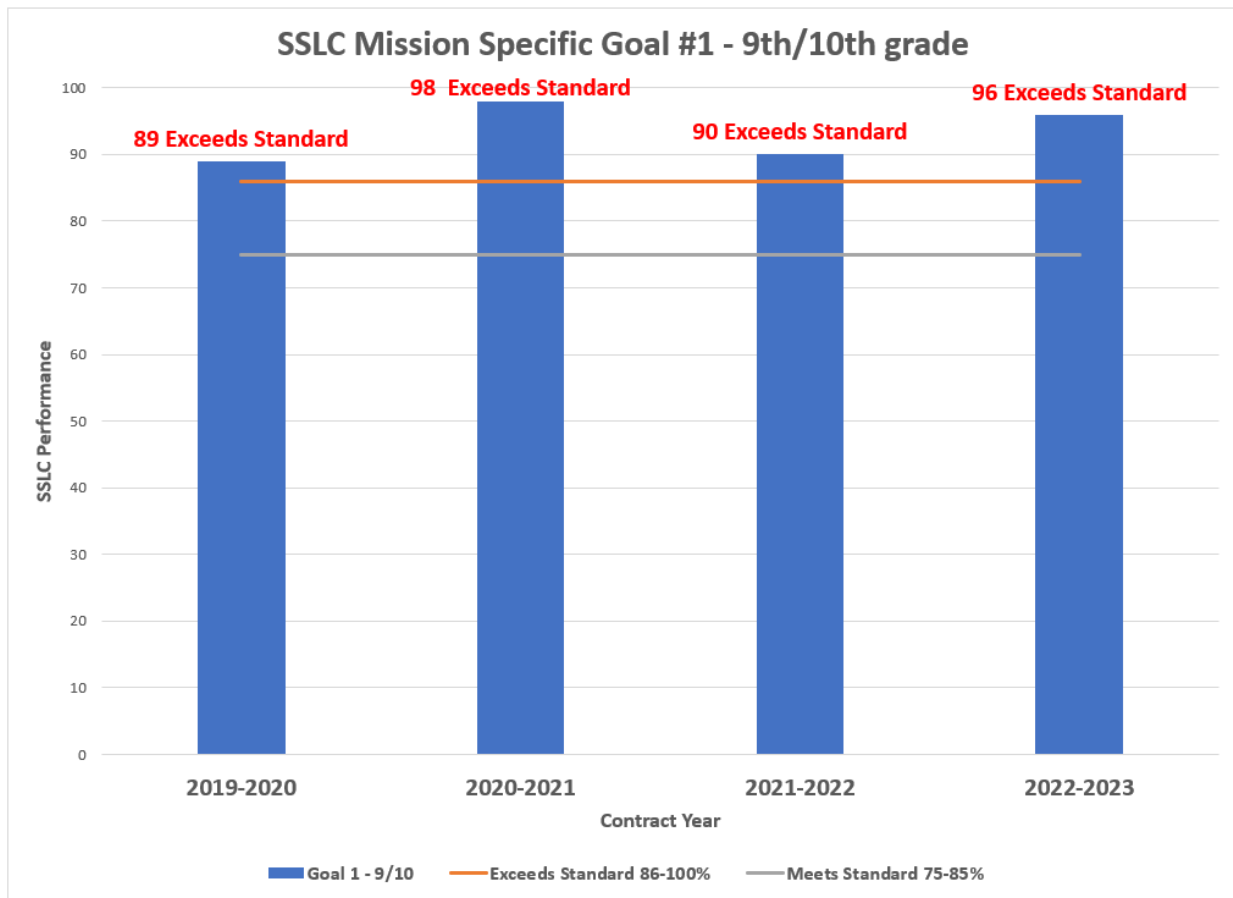
School Response:

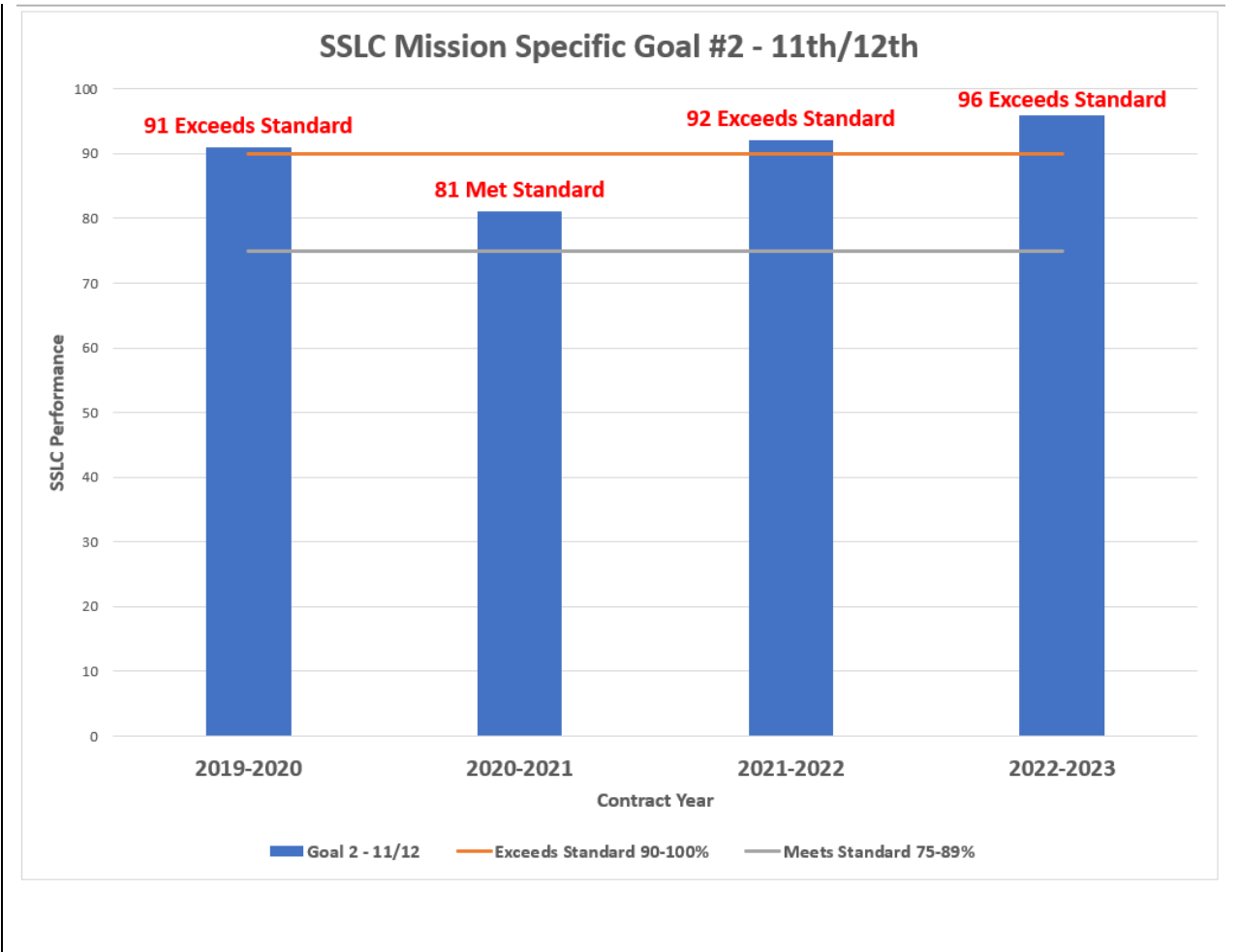
Southwest Secondary Learning Center has two mission-specific goals.

Goal #1: Each year 75% of 9th and 10th grade students enrolled on the 40th and 120th day of the current school year will earn a “C” or better in Smart Lab, SSLC’s College and Career Readiness S.T.E.A.M. Lab.

Goal #2: Each academic year, 75% of 11th and 12th grade students enrolled at 40 and 120 day of the current school year in a dual credit, SMART Lab, or CCR elective will achieve a grade of “C” or better.

SSLC has MET or EXCEEDED standards for each year of the contract term. The charts below highlight SSLC’s performance for each year, and the raw data is provided in Appendix A-2.





2. Organizational Performance

2.a. Educational Program

How is the school implementing the distinctive educational program described in its contract (Performance Framework Indicator 1.a.)? The response should address the ways in which the school is implementing the family, teacher, and student-focused terms of its contract. Please discuss any innovations the school has implemented in support of its mission and educational program.

School response:

Southwest Secondary Learning Center’s mission is to sustain a high performing learning community by preparing computer-literate students for college or a career through a blended learning model that is individualized, self-directed, and flexible. We meet the needs of our students and the terms of our charter contract by providing flexible schedules and an online learning platform. Students choose from daily “Main Lab” sessions offered four days a week including options beyond traditional school hours. In our blended learning model, core classes are taught through an online platform students can access 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. Students are scheduled for “Main Lab” sessions where they can complete coursework with the direct support of content teachers.

This unique model provided an easy transition to remote learning during the Covid-19 pandemic. Students have always had remote access to coursework, but daily Zoom sessions for academic and social/emotional support were implemented during the pandemic. The program was so successful that we retained a remote option now that we have transitioned back to in-person learning. Remote students agree to a contract to maintain course progress, have access to a help line for assistance where they can meet with an instructor on Zoom, and they are required to attend in person for final exams, short-cycle assessments, and standardized testing.

As described in the Academic Performance section above, SSLC is committed to engaging families in their student's education. A sponsor teacher is assigned to each student to serve as a family liaison. The sponsor monitors student progress and provides weekly updates to families while serving as the family's primary contact for questions and/or concerns. The sponsor teacher advocates for the student while holding them accountable for attendance and academic progress.

Direct instruction support classes have also been added to our program following the pandemic. All 9th grade students are scheduled for English and Math intensive courses in addition to their online course work. These classes provide discussion groups, focused instruction, and higher levels of teacher support to ease the transition to online learning. SSLC has also offered intensive courses to support higher level math classes, and a direct instruction Algebra I class that utilizes a flipped model. This course is taught primarily in-person in a more traditional model with the online class serving as a supplement to the in-person instruction.

A key element of SSLC's academic program is the Smart Lab. The Smart Lab is a 21st century classroom that meets career cluster and workplace readiness competencies as a high-tech elective. It is a hands-on S.T.E.A.M. lab that exposes students to the eight strands of technology through advanced graphic arts, computer aided drawing, movie special effects, science data acquisition, control technologies, robotics, electric and pneumatic circuitry, publishing, computer simulation, and multi-media presentations utilizing advanced software. During the 2022-2023 school year, a new certification program was added to the Smart Lab for 11th and 12th grade students to earn industry recognized credentials in programs such as [Adobe](#), [Microsoft Office](#), [AutoCAD](#), [MakerBot](#), and [ToonBoom Animation](#). In its pilot year, nine students earned 12 certifications in Adobe Photoshop, Microsoft Word, Excel, Outlook, and PowerPoint, Makerbot, and AutoCAD. We are pleased to share two of our students in this program had three of the top Microsoft certification scores in the state and were invited to a national competition.

SSLC provides a highly successful dual credit program in partnership with CNM and UNM. We offer the Accuplacer test on our campus, and students in 10th grade and above are encouraged to enroll in dual credit classes. Over the term of our contract from 2019 to the end of the spring semester 2023, SSLC students have earned credit in over 450 college courses as high school students! Two of our students were featured by CNM as Spotlight students to highlight their success in the dual credit program.

SSLC piloted a work-based learning program during the 2022-2023 school year. This program seeks to partner with local employers to place student interns in workplaces and provide an opportunity for hands-on experience in the student's field of interest. SSLC placed two student

interns, and we will continue to work with employers to expand this program in the coming years.

SSLC's unique blend of online and direct instruction, the Smart Lab, industry certification, strong dual credit, and the developing work-based learning program all contribute to our mission and the terms of our charter contract in preparing students for college or career.

2.b. Financial Compliance

How is the school managing its finances (Performance Framework Indicators 2.a-f.)?

For each year in which the school had a significant deficiency, material weakness, or repeated finding(s) identified in the external audit, the school must provide a narrative explaining the improvement actions made to meet financial compliance requirements and the effectiveness of those actions in improving financial compliance. Success should be identified by specific changes in practice and changes in the audit findings in subsequent years. The purpose of the narrative is to demonstrate substantial progress toward achieving and maintaining financial compliance. Implementation of the described improvement actions should be verifiable through evidence at the site including renewal site visit.

If the school's Board of Finance was suspended at any time during the term of the contract, the school must provide a narrative explaining the actions taken on the school's own initiative to correct financial compliance and regain the Board of Finance Authority and the success of those actions. The school must also describe the current status of the Board of Finance and continuing actions to ensure the same financial challenges do not reoccur. Success should be identified by specific changes in practice. The narrative must be supported by evidence to be reviewed during the renewal site visit.

School response:

During the contract period (FY20 – FY24), Southwest Secondary Learning Center had clean audits with no repeat findings, material weaknesses, significant deficiencies, or disclaimed audits. Daily, SSLC adheres to strict internal controls as designated in the school's Accounting Policies and Procedures manual. Staff is educated annually regarding purchasing policies, all cash deposits are made within 24 hours, and all grant funds are obligated prior to commencement of purchases or projects.

Contact Year	Repeat Findings	Material Weakness	Significant Deficiency	Disclaimed Audit
FY2019** outside the contract term, but results were received in FY20	0	0	1	No
FY2020	0	0	0	No
FY2021	0	0	0	No
FY2022	0	0	0	No
FY2023 – IN PROGRESS	-	-	-	-

While outside the contract term of FY20-FY24, SSLC received one Significant Deficiency finding for FY19. The results of the audit were received in FY20, the first year of the contract term. The finding is described below:

Condition/Context: The school has an MOU with Southwest Primary (SPLC) in which expenses for their shared location have been allocated between the two entities. During testing of revenue and expense, it was identified that payments from SPLC were recorded as revenue in the current year versus a reduction to expenses. This required an audit adjustment to properly reduce current year expenses.

Corrective Action Plan: The school had an MOU with SPLC in which expenses were shared. SPLC would send SSLC a check each month for the shared expenses, and it was recorded as revenue rather than a reduction to the expense. As of July 1, 2019, SSLC and SPLC no longer have an MOU in place. Each school will send a check to the vendor for their share of the expense.

The corrective action plan was successfully implemented, and the finding has not been repeated.

Although findings such as “Other Matters” are not required to be addressed in this section, SSLC did receive one finding in FY21 labeled “Capital Asset Management/Other Matters.” A corrective action plan regarding inventory procedures was developed and successfully implemented. The finding was not repeated in the following audit year.

2.c. Governance Responsibilities

Describe how the school has met governance responsibilities during the term of the contract (Performance Framework Indicators 3.a.). Specifically, identify any time when membership on the governing body fell below the requirements in their by-laws or the statutory minimum of five members. Identify the amount of time any vacancies were open and identify any board members who did not complete required training hours in any year of the contract term. For any governance requirements the

school was unable to meet, provide a narrative describing the improvement actions the school implemented to move toward full compliance. The purpose of the narrative is to demonstrate substantial progress toward meeting all governance requirements. The implementation of such actions must be verifiable through evidence during the renewal site visit.

School response:

At no time during the contract period from July 2019 through now has the Southwest Secondary Learning Center Governing Council membership been below the statutory requirement of five members beyond the 45-day grace period. All vacancies and changes in membership included proper notification to the Public Education Commission and Charter Schools Division. Membership has been maintained between 5-11 members according to SSLC Governing Council By-Laws.

All Governing Council members have met or exceeded training requirements each year of the charter contract. In FY 2022 and 2023, the Governing Council sought out additional PED approved finance training to improve their understanding of financial matters and compliance, and they plan to continue this beneficial training each year.

Governing Council Meeting Agendas are posted physically on-site and on SSLC's website at least 72 hours prior to the meeting. Meetings were held virtually from April 2020 through April 2023, and the meeting link was posted on the agenda so any member of the public could attend. In person meetings resumed in May 2023 following the end of the Covid-19 public health emergency.

2.d. Equity and Identity

How is the school protecting the rights of all students (Performance Framework Indicator 4.a.)? How is the school complying with the Martinez-Yazzie mandate to provide culturally and linguistically relevant instruction and to support and validate students' cultures, identities, and sense of belonging? How is the school complying with the requirements of the Indian Education Act (NMSA § 22-23A), the Hispanic Education Act (NMSA § 22-23B), and the Black Education Act (NMSA § 22-23C)? What role does the school's equity council play in protecting the rights of all students?

School response:

Southwest Secondary Learning Center utilizes a full inclusion program and has implemented programs that support all students academically, social-emotionally, culturally, and regarding students' economic status. SSLC established an Equity Council in response to the Martinez-Yazzie lawsuit in spring 2020. The Equity Council has submitted required Equity Council documents including the Readiness Assessment, Culturally and Linguistically Responsive Inventory and Framework, and has provided advisement packages to administration for the upcoming new academic year in the spring of 2021, 2022, and 2023. Staff members receive annual professional development in cultural competence, diversity, equity, and inclusion aligned with the requirements of the Indian Education Act and Hispanic Education Act.

Additional diversity trainings were added for all staff in January 2023 to address the recently passed Black Education Act and will continue annually.

As part of the transition from Response to Intervention (RtI) to Multi-Layered System of Supports (MLSS), our teachers meet bi-monthly in Professional Learning Communities (PLCs) to analyze achievement data for all students and sub-populations, explore specific student concerns, and identify interventions and supports to achieve growth in academic and/or behavioral performance. As mentioned previously in the Academic Performance section, all students are assigned a sponsor teacher who monitors and communicates weekly academic progress and serves as a liaison between the school and the student's family.

SSLC has implemented and continued programs to protect the rights of all students. SSLC has received no complaints determined to be valid regarding: the school's lottery, admission, and enrollment practices, discipline hearings and practices, students' privacy, civil rights, constitutional rights, the McKinney Vento Act, or students in the foster care system.

2.e. Tribal Consultation

Pursuant to the Indian Education Act, NMSA 22-23A-1 et. seq, and Subsections C and D of the Charter School Act, NMSA 22-8B-12.2, if the school is located on tribal land or serves a high percentage of Native American students, describe how the school complied with the requirements of ongoing consultations with tribal authorities.

School response:

Southwest Secondary Learning Center is not located on tribal land and does not serve a high percentage of Native American students.

2.f. Other Performance Framework Indicators

For any Performance Framework indicator for which a school received a "Does Not Meet Standard" or a repeated "Working to Meet Standard" rating over the term of the contract, the school should provide a narrative to address improvement actions it has made to correct those findings. The purpose of the narrative is to demonstrate substantial progress toward meeting organizational performance expectations. Implementation of the described improvement actions should be verifiable through evidence at the renewal site visit.

If the school has received any Office of Civil Rights (OCR) complaints, formal special education complaints or NM Attorney General complaints, the school must identify those, provide all communications (redacted to protect PII) related to those complaints in **Appendix B-1 Complaint Communications**, and describe the current status of the complaint process. If any of those complaints have been resolved and resulted in a finding that the school violated any law, the school must provide a narrative describing the required compensatory and corrective actions required and their status in implementing those actions. The implementation of such actions must be verifiable through evidence during the renewal site visit.

School response:

SSLC has strong improvement in Other Performance Indicators during the contract period. SSLC has received no Office of Civil Rights (OCR) complaints, formal special education complaints, or NM Attorney General complaints determined to be valid over the contract term.

The chart below highlights overall Financial/Organizational Framework ratings, any repeated “working to meet” ratings, and any “does not meet” ratings. Where applicable, a narrative is included below the chart to explain any of these ratings in more detail.

Contract Year	Overall Financial/ Organizational Framework Rating	Repeated “Working to Meet Standard”	“Does not Meet Standard”	Corrective Action Plan
2019-2020	Meets Standard	N/A	2b Accounting Principles	Implemented as described below
2020-2021	Meets Standard	None	None	None
2021-2022	Meets Standard	None	None	None
2022-2023	Meets Standard	4b Attendance and Retention	None	Action plan narrative below

Narrative for 2b Accounting Principles (2019-2020)

SSLC received a “Does Not Meet Standard” rating for indicator 2b labeled “Capital Asset Management – Other Matters” regarding inventory control procedures. A corrective action plan was implemented as described below:

The school administration has implemented a new process to ensure its staff is educated on capital asset review and inventory. They will start providing inventory training to all staff at the beginning of each school year. Throughout the year as capital assets are purchased and disposed of, the capital asset listing will be updated accordingly instead of at the end of the fiscal year. The business manager will be responsible for updating the assets appropriately.

The corrective action plan was successfully implemented, and the rating has been “Meets Standard” for each year since.

Narrative for 4b Attendance and Retention (2022-2023)

SSLC received a repeated “Working to Meet Standard” in FY20 and FY23. SSLC follows the Attendance for Success Act. Families receive same day notification of absences, and students are classified into tiers of intervention bi-monthly. Students in tiers 3 and 4 receive more intensive interventions including attendance contracts and required conferences.

To increase in-year retention, SSLC is improving onboarding communication to ensure new students and their families understand our academic program prior to registering for classes. Updates have been made to the school website to recommend tours and provide more detailed information for families as they consider applying to SSLC.