

New Mexico Public Education Commission



2023 Charter School Renewal Application Part B: Progress Report

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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 Preparatory Learning Center

Authorizer: Public Education Department

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 Preparatory Learning Center remains steadfast in our pursuit to provide a rigorous academic program for all students with a focus on STEAM in grades 4-8, and blended online learning in grades 7-8. The school successfully navigated the pandemic school closures, the transition back to in-person learning, and continues to meet or exceed state standards per our mission to sustain a high performing learning community as evidenced by a spotlight school designation.

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:

In the absence of state summative assessments for the 2019-2020 and 2020-2021 school years, Southwest Preparatory Learning Center (SPLC) utilized both interim and formative data to accurately assess student growth and proficiency to the greatest extent possible in light of the difficulties of remote administration during most windows. During the 2019-2020 school year, SPLC utilized the STAR Assessment platform from Renaissance Learning. The results of those interim assessments suggested levels of proficiency across subjects and grade levels that did not align with formative assessments or other teacher created metrics.

The fall, winter, and spring administration scores in mathematics yielded school wide average proficiency ratings of 63, 71, and 69 percent respectively. Reading proficiency scores were also determined to be grossly inflated as the fall, winter, spring administration results yielded schoolwide proficiency averages of 51, 58, and 56 percent respectively. At the close of the school year, administration and staff decided to abandon the vendor in order to find a more reliable data source for determining student achievement and growth.

For the 2020-2021 school year, SPLC utilized the Interim Measure of Student Success and Achievement (missal) provided by the PED. This data set provided a more realistic picture of student growth from the fall to spring test administrations but was found to lack a sufficient breakdown of individual standards to adequately guide core instruction and academic intervention efforts.

After researching other available interim assessment platforms, SPLC made the decision to utilize the Northwest Evaluation Association's MAP testing based on the vendors utilization of nationally normed data. Initially, the data was worrisome as proficiency scores fell significantly to school wide averages of 31 percent in language arts and 26 percent in mathematics. Ultimately the shift proved beneficial as the data provided a specific breakdown of which standards students were struggling with in addition to more accurately measuring their growth across the school year. Additional validation for the change came in the form of a closer correlation between interim data and end of year state mandated testing results. SPLC students scored 15 percent above their interim MAP scores on the NM MSSA in language arts and 8 percent above in mathematics for the 2021-2022 and 2022-2023 school years.

In addition to the adult actions taken to analyze and find a solution for improving the school's assessment data, SPLC staff has worked diligently over the current contract term to address the needs of our students. During the 2019-2020 and 2020-2021 school years teachers and administrators maintained a normal school day schedule in order to support a robust remote learning program. Students were online from 8:00am to 3:00pm mirroring a normal school day with lunch and recess breaks built in. Students transitioned via the Zoom platform to different classes and teachers throughout the day. Teachers and support staff were on campus with smartboards up so that they could interact with all students and encourage engagement to the best of their ability. The on-campus presence allowed teachers to cross train one another in specific areas of technology that improved lesson delivery.

In preparation for the implementation of the NWEA MAP assessments, teachers participated in on-going professional development to learn best practices for utilizing data, improve data-driven instruction, and best implement academic interventions. School support staff monitored many students over lunches and breaks to ensure that they had down time to spend with their peers. These sessions were well attended and contributed to the overall social and emotional well-being of our students.

During the 2021-2022 school year, SPLC hired an academic interventionist who focused predominately on the reading comprehension strategies which underly successful student performance in language arts and mathematics. In the following year that position was elevated to that of an Academic Dean with a focus on providing direct assistance to teachers in interpreting data and modifying instruction through involvement in professional learning community sessions. SPLC has experienced a sense of excitement about student outcomes as further academic data has been released and takes pride in having earned a spotlight school designation.

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 Preparatory Learning Center (SPLC) negotiated two Mission-Specific Goals for the current contract term. Targets for the rating categories are the same for both goals.

Goal #1: 80% of 7th graders, enrolled at 120 day of both the prior and current school year, will complete one online course each semester and 80% of 8th graders, enrolled at 120 day of both the prior and current school year, will complete two online courses each semester, with a B or better.

Rating Category and Target	2019-2020	2020-2021	2021-2022	2022-2023
Exceeds: 90% to 100%	No data available*	27%	65%	57%
Meets: 80% to 89%				
Does Not Meet: 70% to 79%				
Falls Far Below: 69% or less				

Goal #2: 80% of 4th, 5th and 6th graders enrolled on the 40th and 120th days will complete the Smart Lab technology course, each semester, with a B or better.

Rating Category and Target	2019-2020	2020-2021	2021-2022	2022-2023
Exceeds: 90% to 100%	No data available*	71%	92%	98%
Meets: 80% to 89%				
Does Not Meet: 70% to 79%				
Falls Far Below: 69% or less				

Southwest Preparatory Learning Center has maintained a strong focus on our mission specific goals throughout the current contract term, albeit with mixed success. Our first mission specific goal relates to the blended online learning program in the middle school grades. Creating engagement in this learning format proved difficult both during and after the school closures. As students worked remotely for much of the 2020-2021 school year, the combined average of all 7th and 8th grade course completions saw a success rate at or above 80% for only 27% of the student population. It is important to note that while the overall average fell well below, the percentage of students in 8th grade who successfully finished a

single class was 22%. 3% of students received no score for the year as they did not meet the 10% completion rate set by the vendor to be considered a valid enrollment, which is to say that that they completed almost no work for the year.

While tracking academic performance as students returned to campus the following year, it was realized that many students had regressed academically and found the coursework and format more difficult than ever. Rather than soften the curriculum, SPLC staff focused on reworking the courses, especially in science, to address gaps created by learning loss to ensure that students were gaining the skills they would need to be college and career ready. During this year, additional staff were brought on to assist in assessing the new status quo and reflect on previous practices that were no longer working for our students. While engagement and course completion rose in the 2021-2022 school year, the average target goal rating remained below the threshold for success as only 65% of course completions realized a success rate at or above 80%. It is important to note that an additional 11% of the 8th grade cohort did reach the target goal for one of the classes.

Additional adult actions were taken in advance of the 2022-2023 school year to further improve the implementation of the school's educational program as it relates to this mission specific goal. SPLC hired additional highly qualified staff and a shift to guided note taking was implemented to ensure that students had the prerequisite skills to be successful in either online or traditional high schools. Hands on activities aligned to the online coursework were added to further increase student engagement in science. The overall average target goal percentage fell slightly during this year due to the increased rigor, but we have good reason to believe that the adult actions were successful based on evidence from the vendor. While students did not meet the 80% at 80% threshold, when the completion target was lowered to 70%, nearly 90% of course completions met this bar.

The second of our mission specific goals relates to achievement scores in STEAM coursework for students in grade 4-6. During the 2020-2021 school year it proved very difficult to replicate the experience of a hands-on course as students were primarily in a remote learning environment. Teachers worked hard to provide materials for projects that could be sent home but met significant barriers to instructional delivery during this time. It should be noted that homeroom teachers were assigning grades per practices established in previous contract terms, and one teacher in particular awarded A grades to all students which drove the overall average up during years 2020-2021 and 2021-2022. To address this issue, new staff was brought in to reform the structure and expectations of the course which included a greater emphasis on written reflection, verbal expression of student learning in addition to an expansion of exposure to the Next Generation Science Standards. The graphs in Appendix A-2 Mission Specific Goal Data SPLC clearly indicate the importance of this shift. With the assigned instructor solely responsible for grading, A and B grades began to level out and the occurrence of below target grades diminished, as did the occurrence of any incomplete courses.

*The school changed administration in 2020. No data was available for the 2019-2020 school year.

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 Preparatory Learning Center (SPLC) is implementing its distinctive educational program as follows:

(Note: numbering corresponds to that of the Contract)

i. SPLC offers 6th grade at the elementary level.

SPLC continues to offer 6th grade at the elementary level. This model allows for a simpler transition to what is traditionally a middle school grade level as students and parents have two primary contact teachers, one specializing in English Language Arts, Social Studies, and associated disciplines, and one specializing in Mathematics, Science, and associated disciplines.

ii. 4th and 5th grade instructors teach both grades, looping with their students in math and language, giving students a unique experience and minimizing transition in the math and language curriculum.

SPLC continues to offer a co-teaching model for 4th and 5th grade students. There are several advantages to this design over a traditional homeroom model. Students in both grades receive Mathematics and English Language Arts instruction from content area specialists. Those students who enter SPLC in grade four realize the benefits of remaining with the same instructors for two consecutive years. This model allows for the building of stronger relationships between teachers, students, and families. All stakeholders are aware of the expectations and routines which greatly minimizes time lost to introducing and embedding classroom culture at the beginning of the school year. In addition to building stronger relationships, this format provides the teacher with a better understanding of the skills students bring with them from the previous year and allows them to make better connections to the current year's curriculum.

iii. SPLC provides the Smart Lab technology elective course for all grades 4-8.

SPLC continues to provide a STEAM class, known as Smart Lab, to students in all grade levels. As students progress from one grade to the next they build upon previous learning of the Next Generation Science Standards and avoid any potential redundancy in instruction. Over the course of SPLC's current Contract the academic rigor of this course continues to expand as the instructor incorporates increased cross curricular instructional strategies aimed at providing a deeper learning experience for students. Cross curricular instruction develops the diverse thinking and creative problem-solving skills that are essential to college and career success.

iv. SPLC offers pre-algebra to all 7th graders and Algebra 1 to all 8th graders for high school credit.

SPLC continues to offer Pre-algebra to 7th grade students and Algebra 1 to 8th grade students with the opportunity to earn high school credit at the end of the course. In recognition of post pandemic learning loss 8th grade students do not automatically receive Algebra 1 credit upon completion of the course. The combination of a rigorous End of Course examination and teacher discretion determine whether students will earn high school credit or receive an 8th grade math credit. This modification in implementation helps ensure that students do not enter high school without the requisite skills to be successful or a grade that negatively impacts their high school grade point average.

v. SPLC provides a monthly community-based activity component to the academic curriculum for 7th and 8th grade.

SPLC continues to offer monthly community-based activities to students in the 7th and 8th grades. Seventh grade students earn New Mexico History credit upon completion of their course. Over the term of the current Contract, SPLC staff have increased the academic rigor of the course by deepening the complexity of associated assignments. At present, staff are working together to assess ways to deepen the cultural relevance of the course by front loading cross curricular instruction and leveraging community partnerships to bring in guest speakers and gain greater access to museum and cultural centers. The eighth-grade community-based activities are under a similar development as the school looks to improve the relevance of the course through a sharper focus on service learning and exposure to career opportunities.

vi. SPLC provides one online course for 7th grade and two online courses for 8th grade.

SPLC continues to provide online programming to 7th and 8th grade students. 7th grade students take a science course while 8th grade students take both science and history. These courses are aligned to both the Common Core State Standards and the NM social studies standards. Based upon an assessment of post pandemic skill deficits, SPLC has empowered students to better succeed in their coursework through the implementation of structured note taking, instruction in test taking strategies, and improved staffing capacity. In addition, hands on activities are now incorporated into the science courses to capitalize on the benefits of multi-modal instruction and increased student engagement. The effectiveness of utilizing an online learning platform derives from the blended experience of asynchronous and synchronous learning opportunities. This model provides students with both in-person instruction and opportunities for self-paced learning. A blended instructional experience at the middle school level prepares students to better understand their preferred learning modalities and prepares them for college and career opportunities that are experiencing a shift to online teaching and training.

vii. SPLC provides Spanish to all students in grades 4-8.

SPLC continues to provide Spanish instruction to students in all grades. The instructor utilizes the NM Spanish Language Arts standards in addition to having developed a cultural studies component over the last few years. This combined approach allows SPLC students to receive

appropriate instruction regardless of their language proficiency when entering our educational program.

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:

The table below indicates that two significant deficiencies were identified in FY2021. No other significant deficiencies, material weaknesses, or repeated findings were identified during the current contract term.

Year of External Audit	FY2019	FY2020	FY2021	FY2022
Total Findings	1	1	2	1
Significant Deficiency	0	0	2	0
Material Weakness	0	0	0	0
Repeated Finding(s)	0	0	0	0

The first significant deficiency, 2021-001 Capital Asset Management, involved a newly acquired asset which was listed with a one-year useful life. A review of the asset classification found that the useful life was understated and should have been more consistent with similar equipment ranging between three and five years. Reporting the asset with a one-year life resulted in the school's depreciation expense being overstated by \$8,922. Action was taken by the school's Business Manager to obtain confirmation from the vendor of the accurate life expectation of the asset and to correct the asset classification within the inventory system. Management ensures that adequate internal controls are established surrounding the year-end financial close and reporting process related to capital assets. Financial compliance has been maintained in this area and there have been no repeat findings.

The second identified Significant Deficiency, 2021-002 Compensated Absences, resulted in an accrual of \$5,460 in unrecorded leave payout in the June 30, 2021 financial statements. In reviewing the amount reported, those paid to regular school employees had been completed,

but the final leave payment to the former Head Administrator had inadvertently been left out. A separate review for Head Administrators has been added to the process and there have been no repeat findings during the current contract term.

At no time during the current contract term has the Southwest Preparatory Board of Finance been suspended.

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's response:

The Southwest Preparatory Learning Center Governance Council met the following responsibilities during the term of the Contract as described above: Council membership has never fallen below the statutory minimum of five nor its by-law requirements of five to seven members; and all members completed their required training hours in all years of the current Contract term.

A single oversight occurred in the 2022-23 school year when notification to the Public Education Commission of the designation of a new Governance Council member to an existing position exceeded 60 days. Notification, however, was approved as part of the consent agenda of the March 24, 2023, Public Education Commission meeting. No corrective action plan was required by the Charter School Division in relation to this finding. Southwest Preparatory Learning Center's Head Administrator and Governing Council President work together at monthly meetings to prevent a repeat occurrence and ensure full compliance with all reporting requirements.

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 Preparatory Learning Center's Equity Council is committed to protecting the rights of all students. SPLC 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, and students in the foster care system.

SPLC has established and met all Equity Council requirements, including the Readiness Assessment, Culturally and Linguistically Responsive Inventory and Framework, and has provided an annual Advisement Package to the administration for the upcoming new academic years. All staff receive cultural competence, diversity, equity, and inclusion training annually.

Through Equity Council recommendations, SPLC staff have incorporated the following into our instructional programs to further address the individual needs and rights of all our students:

- Counseling and social work to address social-emotional wellness.
- Regular PLCs analyze achievement data for all students, explore student concerns, and identify interventions and supports to achieve academic and/or behavioral performance.
- Calendars and schedules are provided in paper and digital form that are easily accessible for all students and families.
- Free Afterschool program for all students, which includes free tutoring options.
- Inclusive special education services at all grade levels.
- Sponsor teachers are assigned to all students who meet with families regularly regarding academics, attendance, and social/emotional issues.
- A new app, available on iOS and Android operating systems, is under development. This user-friendly platform will provide pertinent school information to all families by utilizing multilingual translation.
- An Educational Interventionist was hired in school year 2022-2023 to provide direct support to traditionally marginalized populations and high need students.

SPLC seeks to promote inclusion and acceptance for all students. In compliance with the Martinez-Yazzie mandate, and the Indian, Hispanic, and Black Education Acts, high quality instructional materials are vetted by staff and administration during the adoption phase to ensure that these materials help validate all students' home culture, identity, and sense of belonging in the school community. Where need exists, teachers adapt materials or incorporate outside resources to further increase the cultural relevance of instruction. The school's Equity Council protects the rights of all students by gathering input from a diverse range of stakeholders including those that represent the interests and concerns of historically marginalized groups, students with disabilities and English language learners.

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:

Not applicable. SPLC 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:

Over the course of the current Contract term Southwest Preparatory Learning Center has had two repeated “Working to Meet Standard” ratings and a single rating of “Does not Meet Standard.” The first repeat finding relates to indicator 1c of the Organizational and Financial Performance Framework, Rights of Students with Disabilities. A review of student files during the annual site visit in school year 2019-2020 revealed that the denominator for determining service and setting levels was inconsistent as the total hours of instruction utilized varied from 26.75 to 30 hours. An explanation regarding the total instructional hours per week and the common denominator to be used moving forward was provided to the Charter School Division and no repeat findings related to instructional hours have occurred. In a recent inquiry, CSD was unable to provide a rationale to support the 2020-21 Indicator 1c rating of "Working to Meet Standard". This rating conflicted with the school's response to the required 2020-21 Performance Indicator Assurances signed by the Head Administrator and Governing Council President on 8/4/2021 affirming that SPLC ". . . complies with the performance framework items listed." The school received 2021-22 and 2022-23 ratings of "Meets Standard" for Indicator 1c which clearly indicates that any possible issues have been addressed and corrected.

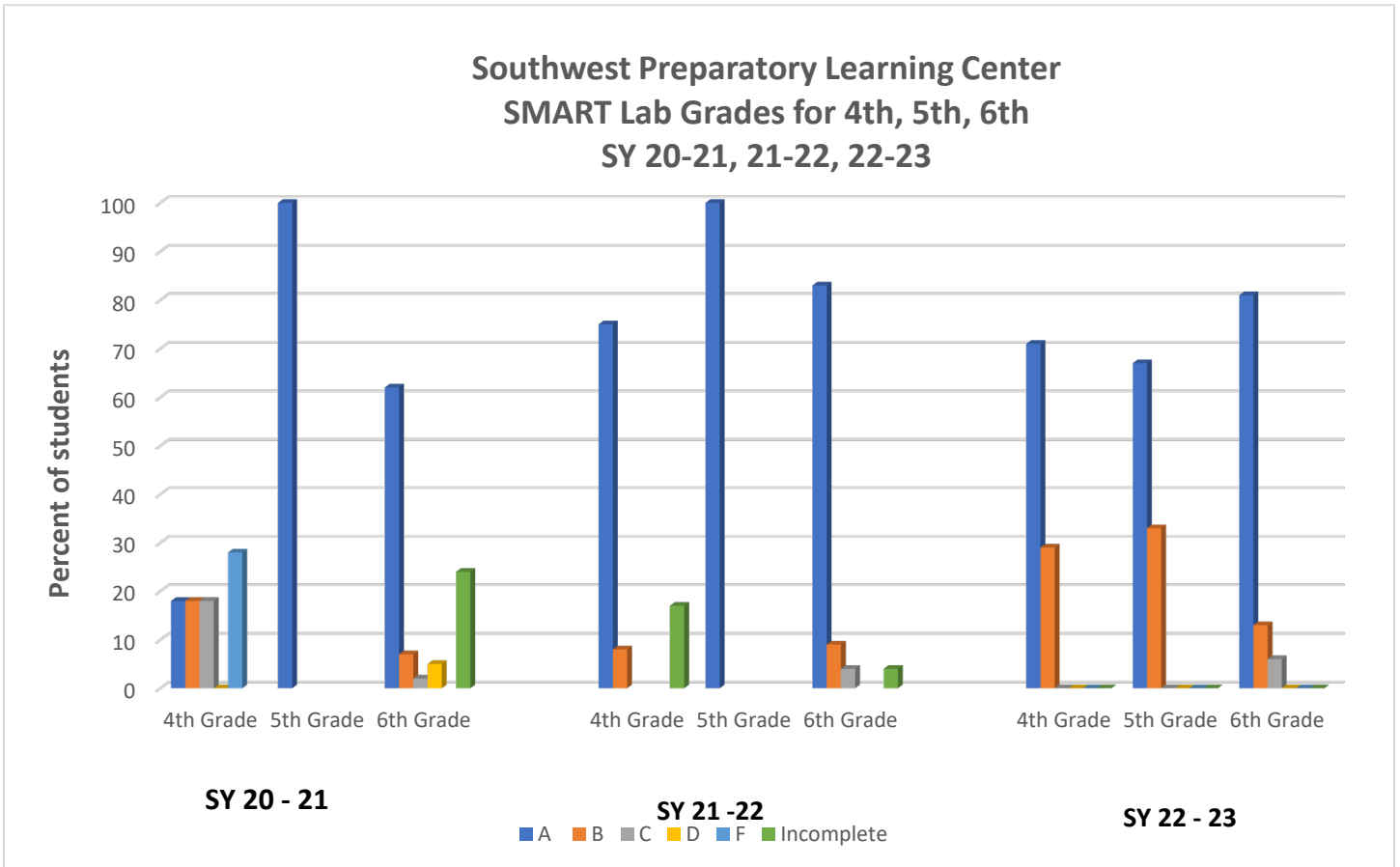
The second repeat finding of “Working to Meet Standard” relates to Performance Framework Indicator 2a, Financial Reporting and Compliance. In 2019 a deficiency in Internal Control over Financial Reporting occurred when it was found that two reimbursement funds had a positive and a deficit balance when they should maintain a \$0 balance at the end of the fiscal year. In response to finding number 2019-0001, the school implemented a year end process to ensure reimbursement funds have a zero balance as required. The positive amount was paid back to the PED at the end of 2019 and a cash transfer was submitted to the PED for the deficit balance. All reimbursement funds have been zeroed out at the end of the fiscal year since this finding occurred. The repeat occurrence is identified as an audit finding for fiscal year 2020. Finding 2020-001 was a Purchasing error that rose to the level of Other Noncompliance. As noted in the Annual Performance Report a purchase order was created after the purchase was made. No

corrective action plan was required at the time as the Report stated, “this was a small charge of less than \$50, but the school is aware of the issue and has taken steps to correct this issue for the future.”

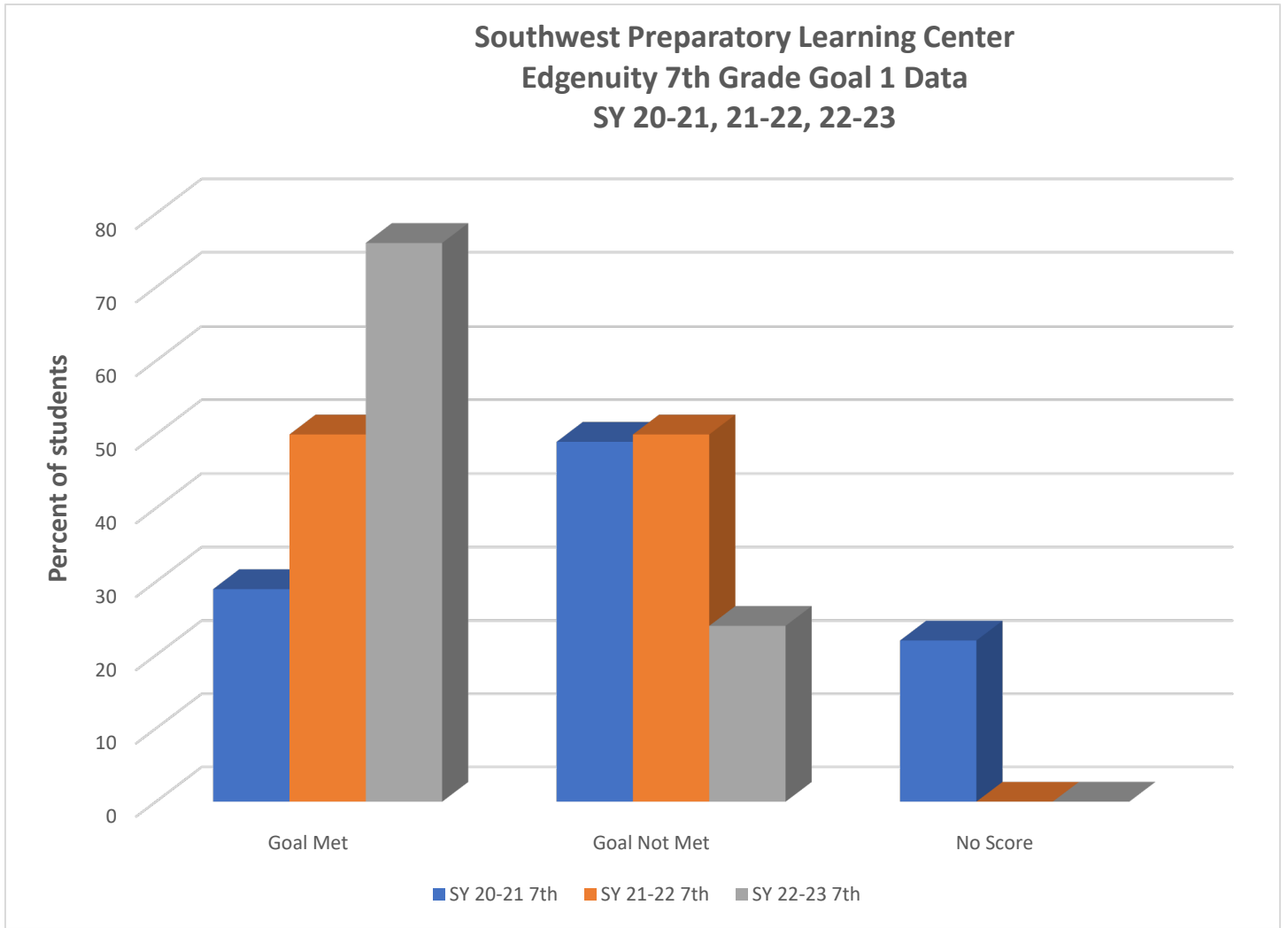
In fiscal year 2021 two significant deficiencies were identified, please refer to section B.2.b. Financial Compliance above for an explanation of those occurrences.

Appendix A-2 Mission Goal Data

Goal 2: 4th, 5th, and 6th grade SMART Lab Data



Goal 1: 7th Grade Edgenuity Data



Goal 1: 8th Grade Edgenuity Data

