

Audit Highlights



Highlights of performance audit report on Educational Strategies to Improve Student Outcomes for Clark County School District, Washoe County School District, and State Public Charter School Authority, issued on August 20, 2026.

Legislative Auditor report # LA26-16.

Background

Clark County School District (CCSD) is the largest district in Nevada with a total of 377 schools and 301,697 students at the beginning of the 2024-25 school year.

Washoe County School District (WCSD) had 114 schools and 63,559 students at the beginning of the 2024-25 school year.

State Public Charter School Authority (SPCSA) is a state agency that was created through legislative action in 2011 to provide oversight of state-sponsored charter schools. SPCSA had oversight over a total of 81 charter schools and 63,609 students at the beginning of the 2024-25 school year.

Purpose of Audit

The purpose of the audit was to evaluate CCSD's and WCSD's processes for selecting, implementing, and evaluating strategies to improve student proficiency in math, English language arts (reading and writing), and science; and the educational outcomes of students who are English learners, at-risk pupils, students receiving special education, and students enrolled in Title I schools. The purpose was also to evaluate SPCSA's processes for approving, monitoring, and evaluating school-selected strategies at charter schools to improve student proficiency in core subjects and educational outcomes for certain targeted populations. Our audit focused on activities during school years 2023-24 and 2024-25. We also reviewed certain related activities that occurred in prior years.

Audit Recommendations

This audit report contains seven total recommendations that improve processes related to educational strategies to improve student outcomes.

CCSD accepted the three applicable recommendations.

WCSD accepted the two applicable recommendations.

SPCSA accepted the two applicable recommendations.

Recommendation Status

CCSD's, WCSD's, and SPCSA's 60-day plans for corrective action are due on November 17, 2026. In addition, the 6-month reports on the status of audit recommendations are due on May 17, 2027.

Educational Strategies to Improve Student Outcomes

Clark County and Washoe County School Districts

Summary

Clark County School District (CCSD) and Washoe County School District (WCSD) generally had effective processes for selecting, implementing, and evaluating educational strategies aimed at improving student outcomes. Our testing included 10 strategies to improve student proficiency in math, English language arts (reading and writing), and science. In addition, we tested 16 strategies to improve educational outcomes for targeted student populations, including English learners, at-risk pupils, students receiving special education, and students enrolled in Title I schools. Although processes were generally effective, we identified opportunities to strengthen some of these processes to help ensure strategies at both districts were selected appropriately, implemented as intended, and evaluated effectively.

Because student outcomes are influenced by multiple strategies in effect at the same time, the impact of any individual strategy cannot be isolated without rigorous research or studies. For purposes of our audit, CCSD and WCSD leadership identified the strategies they considered significant from among hundreds of strategies reported to be in use during the audit scope period. Therefore, this report does not assess outcomes because we considered association between a specific strategy and student outcomes to be correlational rather than causal.

Key Findings

- CCSD did not document certain parts of the selection process for five strategies we tested. In addition, CCSD did not obtain school input when selecting three strategies. (page 11)
- WCSD did not fully complete the required selection process for the three supplemental material strategies we reviewed. WCSD policy requires a needs assessment, scoring guides, and a review committee. (page 12)
- WCSD can strengthen its process for monitoring the implementation of a strategy related to improving classroom interactions between teachers and students. WCSD indicated some informal walkthroughs were completed; however, no documentation was available to verify that they occurred. (page 13)
- CCSD did not have pre-established criteria to evaluate a strategy that addresses student academics and behavior before implementation took place. Without having pre-established evaluation criteria, CCSD cannot demonstrate that strategy evaluations are objective, consistently applied, and free from selection bias. (page 14)

State Public Charter School Authority

Summary

State Public Charter School Authority (SPCSA) had generally effective processes to approve, monitor, and evaluate school-selected strategies aimed at improving student outcomes. We performed testing of SPCSA's activities related to seven charter holders. Although processes were generally effective, we identified one area for improvement where SPCSA could expand its oversight efforts to ensure that school-selected strategies are implemented as intended.

Key Findings

- SPCSA does not monitor to ensure that schools are using the educational strategies listed in their charter applications. We also found that schools can change these strategies without notifying SPCSA. This prevents SPCSA from confirming that schools are operating consistently with the strategies approved in their charter applications and contracts. (page 16)
- SPCSA's strategy approval process complied with applicable policies, considered evidence for school-selected strategies, included proper oversight, and was documented. Specifically, we reviewed the educational strategy approval process for two of the four new charter contracts approved during school years 2023-24 and 2024-25. (page 18)
- SPCSA's strategy evaluation process was data driven, documented, included proper oversight and follow-up, and was properly communicated to appropriate stakeholders. We reviewed the strategy evaluation process performed as part of the renewal of five charter contracts. (page 18)