

Evaluation Rubric

The University of St. Thomas (UST) Accountability System, including the Evaluation Framework and Evaluation Rubric will be used on an annual basis to evaluate schools, and whenever formal decisions are made about the effectiveness of a charter school in meeting its stated mission and objectives as well as the expectations set forth in its contract.

The Accountability System will be used by authorizing program staff and by the UST Charter School Authorizing Board to assess authorized schools' suitability for Contract Renewal, program expansion, and to evaluate any charter school seeking a change of authorizer.

Please note that the rubric below represents a template that will be modified to enable UST to appropriately evaluate each of its authorized schools.

SECTION I – IS THE LEARNING PROGRAM A SUCCESS?

1.1 3rd Grade MCA Reading Proficiency: Are students proficient in reading?

1= Does not meet standard	Less than 40% of are proficient in reading
2 = Approaching standard	40-55.0% of students are proficient in reading.
3 = Meeting standard	55.1%-75.0% of students are proficient in reading.
4 = Exceeds standard	More than 75% of students are proficient in reading.

SY2025-2026 Rating (Based on academic results from SY2025)

Rating: 1

Comments/Evidence:

The 3rd Grade MCA reading proficiency increased by 3.8%. 21.4% of third grade students at Spero were proficient in reading on the MCA. The proficiency at the state level was 46.1%.

SY2024-2025 Rating (Based on academic results from SY2024)

Rating: 1

Comments/Evidence:

17.6% of third grade students at Spero were proficient in reading on the MCA. The proficiency at the state level was 46.5%.

SY2023-2024 Rating (Based on academic results from SY2023)

Rating: 1

Comments/Evidence: 10.3% of third grade students at Spero were proficient in reading on the MCA. The proficiency at the state level was 48%.

Data Source: Minnesota Department of Education School Report Card, Test Data spread

State Accountability Goal:

1.2A Are students in the special education subgroup meeting or exceeding state proficiency levels for the same subgroup in both reading and math?

1.2B Are students in the Free/Reduced price meals subgroup meeting or exceeding state proficiency levels for the same subgroup in reading and math?

1.2C Are students of color at Spero Academy meeting or exceeding state proficiency levels for students of color at the state level?

1.2a Reading

1.2b Math

1 = Does not meet standard More than 10 percentage points below the statewide subgroup

2 = Approaching standard 6 - 10 percentage points below the statewide subgroup

3 = Meets standard Within 5 percentage points of the statewide subgroup

4 = Exceeds standard Exceeds the statewide subgroup by more than 5 percentage points

SY2025-2026 Rating (Based on academic results from SY2025)

Rating:

1.2A Reading: 2

1.2A Math: 1

1.2B Reading: 1

1.2B Math: 1

1.2C Reading: 1

1.2C Math: 2

Average of reading scores: 1.33

Average of math scores: 1.33

Overall average: 1.33

Comments/Evidence:

	Special Education	Free/Reduced	Students of Color
Spero	Reading:15.1% Math: 13.6%	Reading: 12.8% Math: 15.2%	Reading: 14.5% Math: 17.02%
State	Reading: 25.1% Math: 24.3%	Reading: 32.6% Math: 26.5%	Reading: 29.86% Math: 22.47%

Overall, there has been a significant proficiency decrease in math and reading in all three demographic groups.

SY2024-2025 Rating (Based on academic results from SY2024)

Rating:

1.2A Reading: 3

1.2A Math: 3

1.2B Reading: 1

1.2B Math: 3

1.2C Reading: 1

1.2C Math: 3

Enter the average of the reading scores: **2.5**

Enter the average of the math scores: **3**

Enter the overall average of these scores: **2.75**

Comments/Evidence:

	Special Education	Free/Reduced	Students of Color
Spero	Reading:23.1% Math: 24.3%	Reading: 17.4% Math: 26.1%	Reading: 21% Math: 34.2%
State	Reading: 25.5% Math: 24.7%	Reading: 33.4% Math: 27%	Reading: 36.4% Math: 30.8%

SY2023-2024 Rating (Based on academic results from SY2023)

1.2A Reading: 3

1.2A Math: 3

1.2B Reading: 1

1.2B Math: 2

1.2C Reading: 1

1.2C Math: 4

Enter the average of the reading scores: 1.7

Enter the average of the math scores: 3

Enter the overall average of these scores: 2.35

Comments/Evidence:

	Special Education	Free/Reduced	Students of Color
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Spero	Reading: 22.9% Math: 24.4%	Reading: 17.9% Math: 20.5%	Reading: 18.7% Math: 28.7%
State	Reading: 25.7% Math: 24.6%	Reading: 33.9% Math: 27.3%	Reading: 31% Math: 22.8%

Source: MDE Report Card; Northstar Report

1.3 District Assessment Progress: Are students increasing their academic achievement, as measured by authorizer-approved district assessments?

1.3a Reading 1.3b Mathematics

1 = Does not meet standard	Less than 35% of students are increasing their academic achievement as measured by authorizer-approved district assessments.
2 = Approaching standard	35-50% of students are increasing their academic achievement as measured by authorizer-approved district assessments.
3 = Meets standard	51.1-65% of students are increasing their academic achievement as measured by authorizer-approved district assessments.
4 = Exceeds standard	More than 65% of students are increasing their academic achievement as measured by authorizer-approved district assessments.

SY2025-2026 Rating (Based on academic results from SY2025)

1.3a Reading District Assessment Progress

	Reading Assessment	Score (see criteria for 1-4 above)
Charter School (CS) total	45/133 = 33.84%	1
Mpls Total Students	27/68 = 39.71%	2
BP Total Students	18/65 = 27.69%	1
Overall Reading Score: 1.33		

1.3b Math District Assessment Progress

	Math Assessment	Score (see criteria for 1-4 above)
Charter School (CS) total	64/142 = 45.07%	2
Mpls Total Students	38/81 = 46.91%	2
BP Total Students	26/61 = 42.62%	2
Overall Math Score: 2		

1.3a Reading: 1.33

1.3b Math: 2**Overall Rating: 1.67****Comments/Evidence:**

The reading district assessment progress was lower than previous year's assessment progress from 37.14% to 33.84%, while the math assessment progress shows a significant increase from 33.3% (AY25) to 45.07%(AY26)

SY2024-2025 Rating (Based on academic results from SY2024)**1.3a Reading District Assessment Progress**

	Reading Assessment	Score (see criteria for 1-4 above)
Charter School (CS) total	26/70 = 37.14%	2
Mpls Total Students	10/37 = 27.03%	1
BP Total Students	16/33 = 48.48%	2
Overall Reading Score: 1.67		

1.3b Math District Assessment Progress

	Math Assessment	Score (see criteria for 1-4 above)
Charter School (CS) total	27/81 = 33.3%	1
Mpls Total Students	12/48 = 25%	1
BP Total Students	15/33 = 45.45%	2
Overall Math Score: 1.33		

1.3a Reading: 1.67**1.3b Math: 1.33**

Enter the overall score produced by the average of these two scores: 1.5

Comments:

Even though academic achievement remains low, in comparison to AY23 there have been significant gains in both math and reading assessment progress. Reading academic progress increased from 13.6% (AY23) to 37.14% (AY24) and math academic progress increased from 13.3% (AY23) to 33.3% (AY24).

1.3a Reading District Assessment Progress

	Reading Assessment	Score (see criteria for 1-4 above)
Charter School (CS) total	13.6%	1
Mpls Total Students	18.2%	1
BP Total Students	9%	1
Overall Reading Score: 1		

1.3b Math District Assessment Progress

	Math Assessment	Score (see criteria for 1-4 above)
Charter School (CS) total	13.3%	1
Mpls Total Students	12.4%	1
BP Total Students	14/.2%	1
Overall Math Score: 1		

1.3a Reading: 1

1.3b Math: 1

Enter the overall score produced by the average of these two scores: 1

Comments:

Source: Annual Report

1.4 Mission-Specific Academic Goal: District SEL Assessment Progress: Are students increasing their Social/ Emotional Learning achievement, as measured by authorizer-approved district SEL assessments?

1 = Does not meet standard	Less than 35% of students are increasing their SEL achievement as measured by district assessments.
2 = Approaching standard	35-50% of students are increasing their SEL achievement as measured by district assessments.
3 = Meets standard	51.1-65% of students are increasing their SEL achievement as measured by district assessments.
4 = Exceeds standard	More than 65% of students are increasing their SEL achievement as measured by district assessments.

SY2025-2026 Rating (Based on academic results from SY2025)**1.4 SEL District Assessment Progress**

	SEL District Assessment Progress	Score (see criteria for 1-4 above)
Charter School (CS) total	131/270 = 48.52%	2
Mpls Total Students	75/147 = 51.2%	3
BP Total Students	56/123 = 45.53%	2
Overall SEL Score : 2.33		

Rating: 2.33

Comments:

Overall, there was significant growth in SEL. Both campuses made gains from the previous year.

SY2024-2025

1.4 SEL District Assessment Progress		
	SEL District Assessment Progress	Score (see criteria for 1-4 above)
Charter School (CS) total	63/225 = 28%	1
Mpls Total Students	49/141 = 34.75%	1
BP Total Students	14/84 = 16.67%	1
	Overall SEL Score : 1	

Rating: 1

Comments:

SEL district assessment progress indicates that the students' growth has maintained at 28% of students showing SEL progress. It is interesting to note that the MPLS campus made positive gains in SEL while the BP campus's SEL progress declined from the previous year.

SY2023-2024

1.4 SEL District Assessment Progress		
	SEL District Assessment Progress	Score (see criteria for 1-4 above)
Charter School (CS) total	28.7%	1
Mpls Total Students	25.3%	1
BP Total Students	32%	1
	Overall SEL Score : 1	

Rating:

Comments:

Source: Spero Academy Annual Report

1.5 Academic IEP Goals: Are students meeting their annual Individualized Education Plan (IEP) goals as measured by the Special Education Department?

1.5a Reading IEP Goals

1.5b Mathematics IEP Goals

1 = Does not meet standard Less than 35% of students are meeting their IEP goals.

2 = Approaching Standard 35-50% of students are meeting their IEP goals.

3 = Meets Standard 51.1-65% of students are meeting their IEP goals.

4 = Exceeds standard More than 65% of students are meeting their IEP goals.

SY2025-2026 Rating (Based on academic results from SY2025)

	% students meeting Reading IEP goals	% Students meeting Math IEP Goals
Charter School (CS) total	100%	98%
Mpls Total Students	100%	100%
BP Total Students	100%	96%

Rating

1.5a Reading: 4

1.5b Math: 4

Overall Average: 4

Comments:

The majority of students at Spero Academy are meeting their math/reading IEP goals and/or making adequate progress on their math/reading IEP goals.

SY2024-2025

	% students meeting Reading IEP goals	% Students meeting Math IEP Goals
Charter School (CS) total	99%	98%
Mpls Total Students	98%	96%
BP Total Students	100%	100%

Rating

1.5a Reading: 4

1.5b Math: 4

Enter the overall average of these scores: 4

Comments:

The majority of students at Spero Academy are meeting their math/reading IEP goals and/or making adequate progress on their math/reading IEP goals. students at Spero Academy are

meeting their math/reading IEP goals and/or making adequate progress on their math/reading IEP goals.

SY2023-2024

	% students with Reading IEP goals	% Students with Math IEP Goals
Charter School (CS) total	73.5%	79%
Mpls Total Students	68%	77%
BP Total Students	79%	81%

Rating

1.5a Reading: 4

1.5b Math: 4

Enter the overall average of these scores: 4

Comments: The majority of students at Spero Academy are meeting their IEP goals in both reading and math.

Source: Annual Report, Quarterly Reports

1.6 District English Language Learning State Assessment Progress: Are English Learners (ELs) increasing their ACCESS/Alternate ACCESS assessment scores?

1 = Does not meet standard	Less than 35% of ELs are increasing their ACCESS/ Alternate ACCESS assessment scores
2 = Approaching Standard	35-50% of ELs are increasing their ACCESS/ Alternate ACCESS assessment scores.
3 = Meets Standard	51.1-65% of ELs are increasing their ACCESS/ Alternate ACCESS assessment scores.
4 = Exceeds standard	More than 65% of ELs are increasing their ACCESS/ Alternate ACCESS assessment scores

SY2025-2026

Rating: N/A

Comments:

Count too small to report

SY2024-2025

Rating: N/A

Comments:

Count too small to report

SY2023-2024

Rating: N/A

Comments: Count too small to report

Source: Data provided in the Spero Academy Academic Department Annual Report; MDE Report Card

1.7 Early Learning: Are preschool and/or prekindergarten students performing at or above target levels on their final assessment, as measured using the school's selected preK and/or kindergarten readiness assessments?

1.13a Spero Academy Emergent Literacy (SAEL) Results

1.13b Spero Academy Math Inventory (SAMI) Results

1 = Does not meet standard	Less than 35% of kindergarten students are maintaining or increasing their achievement as measured by the SAEL and SAMI
2 = Approaching Standard	35-50% of kindergarten students are maintaining or increasing their achievement as measured by the SAEL and SAMI.
3= Meets Standard	51.1-65% of kindergarten students are maintaining or increasing their achievement as measured by the SAEL and SAMI.
4 = Exceeds standard	More than 65% of kindergarten students are maintaining or increasing their achievement as measured by the SAEL and SAMI.

SY2025-2026

1.7a Kindergarten SAEL Results

	SAEL Results	Score (see criteria for 1-4 above)
Charter School (CS) total	16/29 = 55.17%	3
Mpls Total Students	8/16= 50%	3
BP Total Students	8/13 = 61.54%	3
Total SAEL: 3		

1.7a Kindergarten SAMI Results

	SAMI Results	Score (see criteria for 1-4 above)
Charter School (CS) total	8/29=27.59%	1
Mpls Total Students	3/17 = 17.65%	1
BP Total Students	5/12=41.67%	2
Total SAMI: 1.33		

1.7a SAEL: 3

1.7b SAMI: 1.33

Overall Rating: 2.17**Comments:**

The kindergarten results were mixed with reading growth at 55.17% up from last year's 48%; while the math reading growth at 27.59% was significantly down from last year's 76%.

SY2024-2025

1.7a Kindergarten SAEL Results		
	SAEL Results	Score (see criteria for 1-4 above)
Charter School (CS) total	12/25 = 48%	2
Mpls Total Students	9/17 = 52.94%	3
BP Total Students	3/8 = 37.5%	2
	Total SAEL: 2.33	
1.7a Kindergarten SAMI Results		
	SAMI Results	Score (see criteria for 1-4 above)
Charter School (CS) total	19/25 = 76%	4
Mpls Total Students	13/17 = 76.47%	4
BP Total Students	6/8 = 75%	4
	Total SAMI: 4	

1.7a SAEL: 2.33**1.7b SAMI: 4****Enter the overall average of these scores = 3.17**

Comments: Students showed stronger growth in mathematics with 76% of students reaching their math target while 48% of students reached their literacy target.

SY2023-2024

1.7a Kindergarten SAEL Results		
	SAEL Results	Score (see criteria for 1-4 above)
Charter School (CS) total		
Mpls Total Students		
BP Total Students		
	Total SAEL:	
1.7a Kindergarten SAMI Results		
	SAMI Results	Score (see criteria for 1-4 above)

Charter School (CS) total		
Mpls Total Students		
BP Total Students		
	Total SAMI:	

1.7a SAEL: 1
1.7b SAMI: 1
Enter the overall average of these scores:

Comments: This information was not submitted thus received a score of 1.

Source: Data provided in the Spero Academy Academic Department Annual Report

SECTION 2: FINANCIAL VIABILITY – DOES THE SCHOOL EXHIBIT STRONG FISCAL HEALTH?

2.1 Does the school have an active finance committee or committee of the whole that meets regularly and reports to the full board?	
1 = Does not meet standard	The school has no active finance committee
2 = Approaching standard	The school's finance committee meets only as needed and only to review financials and/or the finance committee does not report its findings to the full board.
3 = Meets standard	The finance committee meets monthly, examines financial statements, and provides a thorough report of its findings to the full board.
4 = Exceeds standard	The finance committee meets at least monthly and examines financial statements, as well as short and long-range financial issues. Thorough reports of findings are provided to the board.
SY2025-2026 Rating: 4 Comments: The Finance Committee oversees the creation of the annual budget, accounts for spending, controls contract bids, and works with the Executive Director to achieve long-term financial goals and success. This committee also ensures adequate internal controls over spending, oversees the fund balance, and communicates financial data to stakeholders. Standing members of the Finance Committee include Jenny Abbs, Finance Manager (Creative Planning); the Accountability Director, the Executive Director and Special Education Director; two board members with backgrounds in finance and business, and the Treasurer of the Board of Directors.	
SY2024-2025 Rating: 4 Comments: The Spero Academy Finance Committee works closely with Creative Planning to ensure that all budgets and monthly reports are accurate and reflect not only current trends and figures, but future goals and plans based on enrollment and staffing needs for expansion. Monthly, the board reviews and analyzes all budgets, expenditures, and bank statements, and provides quarterly financial statements to the authorizer.	
SY2023-2024 Rating: 4	

Comments: The Finance Committee works closely with Creative Planning to ensure accuracy of all reports and reflect current trends. Future goals and plans are based on enrollment and funding sources and are reported to the full board on a monthly basis.

Source: Monthly board packets; Annual Report, Site visits

2.2 Does the board have a fund balance policy that includes fund balance goals over time?

1 = Does not meet standard	The school board does not have a fund balance policy
2 = Approaching standard	The school board has a fund balance policy but it does not include established goals over time
3 = Meets standard	The school board has a fund balance policy including goals over time
4 = Exceeds standard	NOT APPLICABLE.

SY2025-2026

Rating: 3

Comments:

Spero has a Board-approved Fund Balance Policy (Policy 404) that establishes a target unreserved general fund balance of 10% of annual general fund expenditures, while recognizing the goal of increasing the fund balance as financial and operational conditions permit. The Board reviews the fund balance annually based on the audited financial statements and discusses the results in relation to future fund balance goals. These discussions take into consideration factors such as strategic initiatives, enrollment trends, budget performance, and other operational priorities.

SY2024-2025

Rating: 3

Comments:

Spero has a fund balance policy (404). The policy states that the Board will maintain a targeted fund balance of 10% of general fund unreserved fund balance as a percentage of annual general fund expenditures, with an eye toward growing the fund balance as operational conditions allow. The Board reviews the fund balance computed each year based on the audited financial statements, and discusses that balance and future goals for fund balance while taking into account current strategic initiatives, enrollment, adherence to budget, etc.

SY2023-2024

Rating: 3

Comments: The fund balance policy stipulates maintaining a minimum of 10% general fund balance.

Source: Monthly board packets; Board policy manual, Quarterly Report

2.3 Does the school have a clean audit with no major findings?

1 = Does not meet standard	The audit is not “clean” OR has at least one of the following: (1) a material weakness on internal controls, (2) a finding on compliance with state law, or (3) three or more other finding
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2 = Approaching standard	The audit has two findings, other than internal controls or compliance, but is considered “clean”
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3 = Meets standard	The audit is “clean” and has one finding, other than internal controls or compliance
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4 = Exceeds standard	The audit has no findings and is “clean”
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SY2025-2026

Rating: 3

Comments:

The school has one finding Day Cash on Hand was 7.2 days as of June 30, 2025, which is out of compliance with bond convenance. The school receives holdback money at the beginning of July which always increases their Days Cash on Hand.

SY2024-2025

Rating: 2

Comments:

There were two findings in the June 2024 Annual Audit. The first finding was several payments were made late in comparison with the timeframe set forth by state statutes. The second finding was the cash on hand coverage did not meet the minimum requirements of their debt covenants. The school has an action plan for the late payment. The cash on hand will continue to be a finding as the school receives holdback money in July which is after the covenant deadline.

SY2023-2024

Rating: 2

Comments:

There were two findings in the SY23 audit. Timely payments not made and credit card payments unsupported by invoices.

There is a corrective action plan for both findings and the school is aware of the issues.

Source: Annual financial audit

2.4 Does the school establish and maintain a balanced budget?

- Budget is approved before June 30;
- Includes a cash flow projection for the year showing a positive cash flow
- Is adjusted in a timely fashion when needed;
- Meets established fund balance policy goals; and
- Does not require major* program cuts)?

**Major program cuts are defined as cuts that impact a school's ability to deliver its core programming to students in a way that negatively impacts student experience.*

1 = Does not meet standard	A budget is not approved by June 30; the budget is not adequately detailed; no cash flow projection is established; lower than expected enrollment requires major budget adjustments; or the budget does not meet the fund balance policy goals set forth by the board.
2 = Approaching standard	A detailed budget is approved before June 30 but may not include a cash flow projection for the year; established budget may require adjustment due to lower than expected enrollment; budget meets the fund balance policy goals set forth by the board.
3 = Meets standard	The detailed budget is approved before June 30 and includes a cash flow projection for the year; established budget is based on realistic enrollment; and is adjusted if needed. The budget meets the fund balance policy goals set forth by the board and allows for maintenance of core programming.
4 = Exceeds standard	NOT APPLICABLE

SY2025-2026

Rating: 3

Comments:

Each year in the spring, a budget is prepared by administration for the following fiscal year, with input and oversight by the Finance Committee, with underlying assumptions and estimates clearly documented. The budget is primarily based on state and federal educational funding. Spero Academy maintains a General Fund in which all the activity of the Charter School is recorded. In the fall, after enrollment numbers are stabilized and government funding levels are known, the Finance Committee reviews the underlying assumptions and modifies the operating budget to reflect known changes. This modified budget is presented to the Board.

SY2024-2025

Rating: 3

Comments:

Each year in the spring, a budget is prepared by the administration for the following fiscal year, with input and oversight by the Finance Committee. Within the budget, underlying assumptions and estimates are clearly documented. The budget is primarily based on state and federal educational funding. Spero Academy maintains a General Fund in which all the activity of the Charter School is recorded. A budget is prepared for the General Fund on the same basis of accounting as the year-end audited financial statements. Budgeted expenditure appropriations lapse at fiscal year-end. In the fall, after enrollment numbers are stabilized and government funding levels are known, the Finance Committee reviews the underlying assumptions and modifies the operating budget to reflect known changes. This modified budget is presented to the Board and adopted in the fall.

SY2023-2024

Rating: 3

Comments: A detailed budget is approved by the board prior to June 30 and is based on a conservative enrollment projection. The budget is revised as needed and is maintained carefully.

Source: Annual Report, Auditor Report, Financial Statements, Board Policies

2.5 Budgeted Enrollment Realization: Does the school's target ADM (as established by initial board-approved budget) match its actual ADM? (Calculated as actual ADM divided by budgeted ADM.)

1 = Does not meet standard	Enrollment realization is 90% or less.
2 = Approaching standard	Enrollment realization is 90-95%.
3 = Meets standard	Enrollment realization is greater than 95%.
4 = Exceeds standard	NOT APPLICABLE

SY2025-2026

Rating: 3

Comments:

Spero's budget in FY25 projected an ADM of 274; the actual ADM was 270 for an enrollment realization of 98.54%.

SY2024-2025

Rating: 3 Comments: Spero's budget in FY24 projected an ADM of 235; the actual ADM was 230 for an enrollment realization of 97.9%.
SY2023-2024 Rating: 3 Comments: The target ADM established on the budget was 235 and the actual ADM was 229 for an enrollment realization of 97%.
Source: Monthly board packets, UST site visits, UST meetings with business manager(s)

2.6 Does the school have sufficient cash on hand to meet its near-term obligations?	
1 = Does not meet standard	The school has fewer than 30 days cash on hand.
2 = Approaching standard	The school maintains 30-44 days cash on hand.
3 = Meets standard is	The school maintains a minimum of 45 days cash on hand or meeting the cash on hand requirements of its bond covenants, whichever is greater.
4 = Exceeds standard	NOT APPLICABLE
SY2025-2026 Rating: 1 Comments: On June 30th, 2025, Cash on Hand was equal to \$452,629, the equivalent of 3 operating days. Spero's bond covenants require a measurement of 20 days at the end of fiscal year, June 30th. Please note that as of July 15th, 2025, Spero received an additional \$1,415,875 in cash as part of the scheduled holdback payment, bringing Days Cash on Hand to 29 days.	
SY2024-2025 Rating: 1 Comments: Spero Academy ended the year on June 30, 2024 with 14 days of cash on hand.	
SY2023-2024 Rating: 3 Comments: Currently, Spero maintains 61 days cash on hand.	

Source: Annual Report, Auditor Report, Financial Statements, Board policies
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2.7 For established schools (in operation for at least 4 years) does the school have a sufficient fund balance?
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1 = Does not meet standard	The school's fund balance is less than 10% of annual expenditures.
2 = Approaching standard	The school's fund balance is between 10-15% of annual expenditures.
3 = Meets standard	The school's fund balance is between 15% of annual expenditures.
4 = Exceeds standard	The school's fund balance is more than 20% of annual expenditures AND overall academic outcomes fall within the 'meets standard' range.

SY2025-2026

Rating: 1

Comments:

The audited fund balance was 9.7%.

SY2024-2025

Rating: 2

Comments:

The audited fund balance was 11.2%.

SY2023-2024

Rating: 3

Comments: The current audit fund balance is 17.3%.

Source: Annual Report, Auditor Report, Financial Statements, Board policies
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2.8 Is the school meeting bond covenants (if applicable)?
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1 = Does not meet standard	The school is not meeting one or more bond covenants.
2 = Approaching standard	The school is meeting all bond covenants in the current year, but has been out of compliance with one or more covenants in the past three years
3 = Meets standard	The school has consistently met all bond covenants.
4 = Exceeds standard	Not Applicable

SY2025-2026**Rating: 1****Comments:**

The financial audit findings reported that the school did not meet bond covenants. The cash balance was under the 20-day requirement and was tested at 7.2 days as of June 30, 2025. Please note that Spero receive 75% of their previous year's holdback on July 15th which immediately puts the school over the required level of 20 days cash on hand.

SY2024-2025**Rating: 1****Comments:**

The financial audit findings reported that the school did not meet bond covenants. The cash balance coverage ratio was under the 20-day requirement and was tested at 12.1 days as of June 30, 2024. However, on July 15th of each year, Spero receives 75% of their previous year's holdback which immediately puts the school over the required level of 20 days cash on hand.

SY2023-2024**Rating: 3**

Comments: The school is currently meeting all bond covenants.

Source: Annual Report, Auditor Report, Financial Statements, Board policies

SECTION 3: IS THE ORGANIZATION EFFECTIVE AND WELL RUN?

3.1 Do all board members meet the statutory requirements for initial and ongoing training on board roles and responsibilities, governance, finance and employment practices?	
1 = Does not meet standard	Three or more board members are/have been out of compliance during the school year.
2 = Approaching standard	Two or fewer board members are/have been out of compliance during the school year.
3 = Meets standard	All board members meet training requirements
4 = Exceeds standard	NOT APPLICABLE.
SY2025-2026 Rating: 3 Comments: All new board members completed the required training. Throughout the year, the Board engaged in ongoing professional development on a variety of governance-related topics, including the budget development and financing process, data privacy law, Minnesota autism research, the school's annual financial audit, and academic and behavioral assessment results. The Board also participated in a retreat focused on risk mitigation and succession planning, demonstrating its commitment to continuous improvement and effective governance.	
SY2024-2025 Rating: 3 Comments: All the board members have met the statutory requirements for initial and ongoing training in board roles and responsibilities, including specific training requirements for governance, finance, and employment practices. Ongoing training has been provided. In addition, Spero has purchased an online Webinar training series through Charter Source.	
SY2023-2024 Rating: 3 Comments: The board members have stayed current with all initial training and have undergone ongoing training throughout the school year.	
Source: Monthly board packets, UST site visits, Statement of compliance sheet	

3.2 Does the board understand and comply with the Open Meeting Law and maintain orderly records including its bylaws, policies, board/committee minutes, and board packets?

1 = Does not meet standard	The board does not understand the requirements of the Open Meeting Law and has been out of compliance more than once in the last year and/or the board does not maintain its records in an orderly fashion
2 = Approaching standard	The board exhibits working knowledge of the requirements of the Open Meeting Law and has been out of compliance no more than once in the last year and maintains its records properly, with minor exceptions.
3 = Meets standard	The board understands and meets the requirements of the Open Meeting Law and maintains its records in an orderly fashion.
4 = Exceeds standard	NOT APPLICABLE.

SY2025-2026

Rating: 3

Comments:

The Board demonstrates a clear understanding of and adherence to Minnesota's Open Meeting Law requirements and maintains its records in an organized and accessible manner. Board meeting dates, times, and locations are publicly posted, and a designated public comment period is included in each meeting agenda. Information for attending meetings virtually is available on the school's website. Board and committee meeting minutes are also posted on the website, providing transparency and access to board actions. Meetings are conducted only when a quorum is present, votes are formally recorded in the meeting minutes, and all proceedings are carried out in accordance with the Board's bylaws.

SY2024-2025

Rating: 3

Comments:

The board understands and meets the requirements of the Open Meeting Law and maintains its records in an orderly manner.

- Board meeting times and location are published
- At each meeting, there is a specific public comment time
- Link to attend board meeting virtually is located on the school website
- Board and committee minutes are located on the school website

• Meeting is conducted only with a board quorum • Votes are recorded and part of minutes • Meetings are conducted in accordance with the board's bylaws.
SY2023-2024 Rating: 3 Comments: The board understands and complies with Open Meeting Law. Records are maintained in a physical binder as well as digitally.
Source: Board minutes, ongoing correspondence, UST site visit

3.3 Are all the school's educational staff appropriately licensed?	
1 = Does not meet standard	At least one educational staff is not appropriately licensed or does not hold appropriate and current waivers or variances.
2 = Approaching standard	At least one educational staff has been on a waiver or variance for more than one year.
3 = Meets standard	All educational staff are appropriately licensed.
4 = Exceeds standard	NOT APPLICABLE
SY2025-2026 Rating: 3 Comments: Licenses were verified using PELSB website and information provided in the annual report. All staff members were appropriately licensed.	
SY2024-2025 Rating: 1 Comments: One staff member is not appropriately licensed. PELSB notified the school in September 2024. On Spero's website, this staff member is still listed.	
SY2023-2024 Rating: <u>3</u> Comments: All staff are appropriately licensed.	
Source: MDE STAR Discrepancy Reports (self-reported data, crosscheck with licensure file checks) D-1	

3.4 Does the school complete criminal background checks in accordance with MN Statute and UST expectations?

1 = Does not meet standard	The school cannot certify that it completes criminal background checks of staff and the board.
2 = Approaching standard	The school certifies that it completes criminal background checks of the staff but not the board
3 = Meets standard	The school certifies that it completes criminal background checks of staff and the board, as required by school policy.
4 = Exceeds standard	NOT APPLICABLE

SY2025-2026

Rating: 3

Comments:

Prior to working with students, all Spero Academy employees and volunteers who have direct student contact or access to student property or confidential student information must complete a Bureau of Criminal Apprehension (BCA) background check.

SY2024-2025

Rating: 3

Comments:

All Spero Academy employees and volunteers who work directly with Spero Academy students, student property, or confidential file information are required to submit to a Bureau of Criminal Apprehension (BCA) background check with forms completed prior to working with children.

SY2023-2024

Rating: 3

Comments:

Spero Academy conducts background checks on staff, board members and volunteers who with students.

Source: UST site visit, board chair interview, background check policy

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3.5 Is the school compliant with other applicable law? Note that this measure includes, but is not limited to:

- Meeting admissions and enrollment practice/policy requirements
- Meeting governance model requirements
- Meeting Title IX regulations (e.g. policies/procedures, trainings, Title IX Coordinator)

1 = Does not meet standard The school is not in compliance with other applicable law.

2 = Approaching standard NOT APPLICABLE

3 = Meets standard The school is in compliance with other applicable law..

4 = Exceeds standard NOT APPLICABLE

SY2025-2026

Rating: 1

Comments:

Title IX policy was Board reviewed in January 2025 and compliant. Enrollment policy was updated in 2024 and is compliant with MN state statutes. The school is compliant with newly adopted state statutes. The school's website has a link to UST's Authorizing program and has posted the school's Board approved Language Access Plan.

Governance Structure is outlined in the board's bylaws. Spero's Board of Directors should consist of not fewer than five nor more than eleven and consist of roughly even mix of teachers, guardians/parents and community members. Based on the current board composition, the Board consists of three parent members, two community members, and one teacher member, which does not reflect the balanced representation described in the bylaws. In addition, Spero did not hold board elections during the spring of 2026, which would have provided an opportunity to address the current board composition and maintain alignment with the governance structure outlined in the bylaws.

SY2024-2025

Rating: 3

Comments:

The school is in compliance with applicable laws. All new legislative changes have been accounted for and policies updated.

Enrollment Policy was updated October 2024 due to MDE issuing a corrective action pertaining to Spero's enrollment policy. The enrollment policy is in compliance with state law.

Governance Structure is outlined in the board's bylaws. Spero's Board of Directors should consist of not fewer than five nor more than eleven and consist of roughly even mix of teachers, guardians/parents and community members. The SY24-25 board consisted of three community members, three parent members and one Spero teacher and one educator not currently teaching at Spero.

Spero Academy Board Policy 906 outlines Title IX Nondiscrimination policy, grievance, procedures and process was updated last year. It identifies the Executive Director as the Title IX coordinator.

SY2023-2024

Rating: 3

Comments:

Spero Academy is compliant with applicable laws including the most recent legislative changes as well as Title IX updates.

Source: Website compliance check, Quarterly Report, UST site visit, board chair interview.

3.6 Do all board members exhibit understanding of the role of the board and utilize nonprofit governance best practices including:

- **Understanding of board and school leader roles (governance vs. management)**
- **Annual board self-evaluation**
- **Annual school-leader evaluation**
- **Annual approval of professional development plan for school leader (if applicable)**
- **Annual evaluation of Educational Service Provider (CMO/EMO) if applicable**
- **Orientation process for new members**
- **Regular Strategic planning (at least once every five years)**

1 = Does not meet standard

At least some board members do not understand the role of the board and the role of the school leader. Board policies and practices are not transparent or not present. Board meetings often address issues not central to the role of the board and/or fail to address core functions such as leader evaluation and school financial/academic health

2 = Approaching standard

Some board members, but not all, exhibit understanding of their roles as board members and the role of the school leader. Board policies and practices are not always transparent and/or are not fully developed. The board inconsistently addresses issues central to its role such as leader evaluation, leader professional development plan approval (if applicable), and school financial/academic health.

3 = Meets standard

The Board exhibits understanding of its role and the role of the school leader. The board policies and practices are generally transparent and systems are in place to maximize Effectiveness of the board, including an orientation process for new members, annual board self-evaluation, annual leader (and EMO/CMO if applicable) evaluation, annual approval of Leader development plan (if applicable) and a plan for conducting and tracking initial and ongoing training. The

	board engages in regular strategic planning. The board is able to adequately sustain its membership through recruitment efforts.
4 = Exceeds standard	NOT APPLICABLE
SY2025-2026	
Rating: 3	
Comments:	
The Board Chair and Executive Director maintain a positive and collaborative working relationship characterized by regular communication, mutual trust, and a clear understanding of their respective governance and management roles. The Board Chair and Executive Director communicate frequently to discuss school operations, governance matters, and strategic priorities, helping to ensure that important issues are addressed in a timely manner. This ongoing partnership supports effective governance by allowing the Board to focus on policy, strategic direction, and long-term sustainability while the Executive Director oversees the day-to-day management of the school. The relationship reflects a shared commitment to the mission of Spero Academy and contributes to organizational stability and effective leadership. The board conducts an annual self-evaluation and actively uses the self-review process to identify areas for improvement and inform its ongoing development. Also, the Board conducts an annual evaluation of the Executive Director based on established competencies and key leadership responsibilities. Progress toward these goals is monitored throughout the year through monthly Executive Director reports, which align with the evaluation framework and provide updates on performance, accomplishments, and areas of ongoing focus. An annual professional development plan for the ED is updated each year. Newly appointed Board members participate in a comprehensive orientation led by the Governance Committee that includes training on charter school law, board responsibilities, policies, bylaws, committee work, meeting procedures, and the school's strategic goals. In addition, new members follow a structured onboarding plan and are paired with an experienced Board member who serves as a mentor during their first several months of service. Spero Academy operates under a five-year Strategic Plan covering 2024–2029, which was developed through a collaborative process led by the Board and leadership team and informed by a series of board retreats. Progress toward the plan's goals is reviewed regularly through board committee meetings, with each committee responsible for monitoring implementation and accountability within its assigned area of the Strategic Plan.	
SY2024-2025	
Rating: 3	
Comments:	

The Board Chair and the Executive Director partner together to support and lead the Board in defining its responsibilities, in setting the school's strategic direction and in keeping the Board operational on a policy level. The Executive Director handles the daily functions and management of the school and shares major decision-making questions with the Board Chair.

New board members receive an orientation meeting which includes training on charter school statutes, board/school policies, bylaws, board responsibilities/procedures, committee expectations, meeting protocols, and strategic planning goals. Each new member is mentored by an existing board member.

The board conducts an annual self-evaluation in March each year. The evaluation consists of 12 direct questions and is used to improve the Board's governing process and guide their work. The board is continuing to work with Regina Seabrook from American Dialogue Company on its strategic plan.

The ED is evaluated annually. Evaluation is based on assessments of core competencies and the ED responsibilities. The ED's Report to the board outlines the goals being worked on and provides a reference for the Board in their assessment of the ED. Each board member's evaluation of the ED is reviewed by the Board Chair and a copy of the evaluation is reviewed with the ED. The ED's development plan is updated annually.

SY2023-2024

Rating: 3

Comments: The school board completes an annual evaluation and uses this evaluation to improve the Board's governing process and guide the work of Board members. The board is working with Regina Seabrook from American Dialogue Corporation to develop a new strategic plan.

Source: Site visits, ongoing correspondence, board minutes, interview with board chair

3.7 Does the board regularly review, update, and approve its bylaws and policies such that they maintain compliance with state law and current best practices?

1 = Does not meet standard	Board policies and/or bylaws are outdated and not reviewed regularly.
2 = Approaching standard	Board policies and/or bylaws are reviewed and approved as needed, but are not comprehensively reviewed on a regularly scheduled basis.
3 = Meets standard	Board policies and bylaws are reviewed for content and legal compliance, updated, and approved on a regularly scheduled basis, no less than once every three years.
4 = Exceeds standard	NOT APPLICABLE

SY2025-2026

Rating: 3

Comments:

Board policies are reviewed on a 3-year cycle unless frequent review is required. Board has also approved a policy entitled “Development, Adoption, and Implementation of Policies.”

SY2024-2025

Rating: 3

Comments:

Board policies are reviewed on a three-year cycle (12 quarters), unless more frequent review is required. The Board policy entitled “Development, Adoption, and Implementation of Policies” sets forth the procedure to be followed when reviewing, changing and developing new policies. The review of different board policies is assigned to various Board Committees. State statutes are reviewed for amendments and legislative changes affecting a particular school policy. Each committee works on the policy and brings the updated policy to the full board for approval.

SY2023-2024

Rating: 3

Comments: Board policies are updated on a rotating basis and are assigned to various Board Committees. Each committee then works on the policy and brings the update to the full board for approval.

Source: Board minutes, board policies, Governance binder, Quarterly Report, UST site visit

3.8 Does the board submit a complete board packet (including agenda, minutes, director report, other relevant documents, check register, cash flow sheet, enrollment report, balance sheet and income and expense report), to be received by all members of the board, school leadership, and UST at least three days prior to all board meetings?

1 = Does not meet standard	Board packets are not submitted on time AND are incomplete
2 = Approaching standard	Board packets are submitted on time (more than 75percent of the time) but incomplete OR not submitted on time (less than 75 percent of the time) but complete
3 = Meets standard	Board packets are submitted on time (more than 75 percent of the time) and complete
4 = Exceeds standard	NOT APPLICABLE

SY2025-2026

Rating: 3

Comments:

Board packets are distributed to Board members, school leadership, and the University of St. Thomas at least three days in advance of each Board meeting to support informed decision-making and meeting preparation.

SY2024-2025

Rating: 3

Comments:

Spero Academy provides board packets to board members, school leadership and UST at least 3 days prior to all board meetings. All minutes are posted on Spero's website.

SY2023-2024

Rating: 3

Comments: Board packets are submitted on time and are complete.

Source: Monthly board packets; Board materials tracking document (G-1 CS info)

3.9 Is the school fulfilling its legal obligations related to access and services to English Learners (ELs)? This includes:

- **Following MN Standardized Statewide EL Procedures for identification**
- **Following MN Standardize Statewide EL Procedures for entrance and exit.**
- **Maintaining an established EL program with a written plan for service at all grade and proficiency levels**
- **Securing appropriate staffing levels with staff who hold appropriate licenses and have knowledge of current legislation and research based best practices for serving EL students.**
- **Supplying relevant professional development to all staff**
- **Ensuring that information on student EL status is available to all classroom teachers**
- **Providing staff with appropriate training.**

1 = Does not meet standard

The school is not fulfilling its legal obligations regarding ELs and requires substantial improvement

2 = Approaching standard

The school is fulfilling all of its legal obligations regarding ELs but requires some improvements

3 = Meets standard

The school is fulfilling its legal obligations regarding ELs and requires no considerable improvements.

4 = Exceeds standard

NOT APPLICABLE

SY2025-2026

Rating: 3

Comments:

Spero Academy is fulfilling its legal obligations related to English Learner services. The school maintains a written Language Instruction Educational Program (LIEP) that outlines procedures for EL identification, placement, service delivery, progress monitoring, exit, and post-exit monitoring. The school follows Minnesota Language Survey and WIDA screening requirements, utilizes ACCESS results for annual monitoring and exit decisions, and provides individualized English Language Learner Plans for students receiving services. Spero employs a licensed ELL teacher and demonstrates ongoing collaboration among the ELL teacher, classroom teachers, speech therapists, and other support staff to meet student needs. Spero serves a small population of English learners, 4% of enrolled students (12 students), and all identified English learners receive special education services. The school's special education and instructional professional development includes practices that support these students, such as explicit instruction, structured literacy, progress monitoring, curriculum adaptation, communication supports and behavior supports. While the professional development is not specifically focused on English learners, it provides staff with strategies that can support the needs of the school's identified EL students.

SY2024-2025

Rating: 2

Comments:

Spero uses a home language questionnaire as well as the WIDA screener to identify students for EL services. After initial identification, a LIEP placement based on additional data is used to determine what amount or type of service is needed. Spero's EL program consists of Pull-out services and Push-in services. Each EL student receives an English Learner Plan outlining their language goals and current ACCESS scores. The Academic Director and the EL licensed teacher coordinate with the Special Education team and Speech Therapists to effectively work with the students who are dually identified as Special Education and ELL. The EL student population is 5.1% (14 students). There is one licensed EL instructor. The EL procedure for exiting students from EL services was not outlined in Quarter 3 report and cannot be located on Spero's website.

SY2023-2024

Rating: 3

Comments: Approximately 5% of students at Spero Academy receive EL services. Each EL student has a Learner Plan that is specific to their learning needs. The two models utilized for

EL instruction include content-based collaborative teaming and pull-out in small groups or 1:1. There is one licensed ESL instructor on staff.

Source: S: UST site visits, Reference EL Packet, Formalized complaints at MDE, or Critical Elements review (SP-1)

3.10 Is the school fulfilling its legal obligations related to access and services to students with individual education plans (IEPs)? This includes:

- **Having a school-specific TSES manual that is board-approved.**
- **Engaging a special education director who is actively involved in working with special education staff and school leadership.**
- **Securing appropriate staffing levels with staff who hold appropriate licenses and have knowledge of current legislation and research based best practices for serving students with IEPs.**
- **Contracting with entities to provide effective services to students when necessary.**
- **Completing annual IEP meetings on time.**
- **Having been subject to no investigations related to special needs students that resulted in findings.**
- **Having no findings related to special education funding on annual financial audit.**
- **Providing staff with appropriate training.**

1 = Does not meet standard	The school is not fulfilling its legal obligations regarding students with special needs and requires substantial improvement.
2 = Approaching standard	The school is fulfilling all of its legal obligations regarding students with special needs but requires some improvements
3 = Meets standard	The school is fulfilling its legal obligations regarding students with special needs and requires no considerable improvements.
4 = Exceeds standard	NOT APPLICABLE

SY2025-2026

Rating: 3

Comments:

Over 93% of students at Spero Academy qualify for special education services. The school demonstrates substantial staffing capacity to serve its specialized population. Spero employs 44 teachers, 22 are dual licensed, and 20 are licensed in special education only. The school has 95 paraprofessional staff, seven full-time speech and language pathologists, five full-time occupational therapists, two licensed school psychologists, and a full-time social worker. They

also have contracts for the following services/professionals: DH/H Teacher, Speech Language Pathologists, Audiologist, Teacher of the Physically Impaired, Physical Therapist, and Mental Health Therapists. The school also employs full-time Special Education Director.

The school maintains a school-specific Total Special Education System (TSES) manual that outlines procedures for Child Find, evaluation, eligibility determination, service delivery, due process protections, restrictive procedures, and staff training. The school utilizes a Child Find process that follows state and federal requirements for identification and eligibility determination and meets regularly to review student needs. The school provides individualized programming based on student needs through a variety of service delivery models, including multidisciplinary teaching, small-group instruction, direct and indirect services, pull-out and self-contained settings, one-on-one services, and homebound instruction. Students who do not qualify for special education services receive interventions and personalized learning supports.

SY2025-2024

Rating: 3

Comments:

Over 90% of students at Spero Academy qualify for special education services. Spero Academy has a board approved TSES manual which is posted on their website. The school has one full-time Special Education Director. Spero employs 37 teachers, 16 are dual licensed in general and special education, 20 are licensed in special education only, and one licensed EL teacher. The school has 95 paraprofessional staff, five full time speech/language pathologists, five full time occupational therapists, two licensed school psychologists, and a full-time social worker. They also have contracts for the following services/professionals: DH/H Teacher, Speech Language Pathologists, Audiologist, Teacher of the Physically Impaired, Physical Therapist, and Mental Health Therapists.

In October 2024, Spero was found in violation 20 U.S.C § 1414(d)(2)(A) and Minn. Stat. § 125A.08 when the District did not ensure that it had an individualized education program (IEP) in effect for the Student outlining the Student's needs and the special education instruction and services to be provided at the beginning of the District's 2023-24 school year. In response to this violation, Spero Academy administration and board revised Spero Academy's Enrollment policy in October 2024. .

In 2024-2025 MDE completed its annual review of the district's special education programming and recognized Spero Academy's ability and commitments to implementing special education programs that meet or exceed minimum compliance requirements.

SY2023-2024

Rating: 3

Comments: Over 90% of students who attend Spero Academy receive special education services. Students who do not come to Spero on an IEP may be referred by parents or teachers and are brought forward to the Child Study Team. There is a special education director on site. 11 teachers have a dual license in special education and general education; 22 teachers have a

license in special education only. One teacher is on special assignment and has a special education variance. 66 paraprofessionals help to assist students in classrooms.

There are 6 full time speech therapists on staff as well as 4 full time occupational therapists. One full timeschool psychologist and one full time social worker also support students. Contracted services include DH/H, audiology, school psychology, physical therapy and mental health therapy

Source: Quarterly report, UST site visits, Reference: special education investigation search on MDE website and special education training materials; Special education director interview

3.11 Is the school fulfilling its legal obligations related to the delivery of a quality Prekindergarten instructional program. This includes:

- Ensuring Early Childhood Health and Developmental Screening is completed.
- Securing appropriate staffing.
- Supplying relevant professional development to all staff.
- Implementing culturally responsive comprehensive child assessment/s.
- Utilizing the Early Childhood Indicators of Progress (ECIPs).
- Supporting an effective transition to Kindergarten.
- Referring students to community-based resources as needed.

1 = Does not meet standard	The school is not fulfilling its legal obligations regarding preK students and requires substantial improvements
2 = Approaching standard	The school is fulfilling all of its legal obligations regarding preK students but requires some improvements
3 = Meets standard	The school is fulfilling its legal obligations regarding preK students and requires no considerable improvements
4 = Exceeds standard	NOT APPLICABLE

This does not apply to the school based on the grades served.

Source: Site Visits, Interviews, Quarterly Reports

3.12 Does the school have a high attendance rate?

1 = Does not meet standard	The attendance rate is less than 85 percent
2 = Approaching standard	The attendance rate is between 85 and 89.9 percent
3 = Meets standard	The attendance rate is 90-94.9 percent
4 = Exceeds standard	The attendance rate is more than 95 percent

SY2025-2026

Rating: 4

Comments:

The consistent attendance rate for Spero Academy per the MDE report card is 100% which is a 30% increase from the previous year.

SY2024-2025

Rating: 1

Comments:

The consistent attendance rate for Spero Academy per the MDE report card is 70.7% which is a 10% increase from the previous year.

SY2023-2024

Rating: 1

Comments: The consistent attendance rate for Spero per the MDE Report card is 60%

Source: Annual reports, MDE website (data downloads)

3.13 Is the school able to maintain a high percentage of teacher retention?

1 = Does not meet standard	Fewer than 70 percent of teachers remained at the school last year (excluding retirements)
2 = Approaching standard	Between 70 and 84 percent of teachers remained at the school last year (excluding retirements)
3 = Meets standard	More than 85 percent of teachers remained at the school last year(excluding retirements)
4 = Exceeds standard	Over the course of the contract (or at least 3 years) teacher retention has consistently remained high (>85 percent)

SY2025-2026

Rating: 2

Comments:

The retention rate for Spero Academy was approximately 71.4%, which was a significant decrease from SY25.

SY2024-2025

Rating: 2

Comments:

The retention rate for Spero Academy was approximately 80.5%

SY2023-2024

Rating: 3

Comments: The retention rate for Spero Academy was approximately 86%.

Source: Annual report

3.14 Are the school's teachers and staff participating in a broad base of professional development in service of students' academic and behavioral needs and supportive of the school's mission? Types of development opportunities include, but are not limited to:

- **Required health and safety trainings.**
- **IX training processes.**
- **Supporting students with IEPs.**
- **Supporting English Learners.**
- **Mission-related.**
- **Equity and cultural relevance.**

1 = Does not meet standard

The school a limited number of training opportunities. Participation in professional development is low, with less than 50% of staff participate in the opportunities.

2 = Approaching standard

The school offers a menu of development opportunities that include required trainings. Participation in most or all of these trainings is presented as optional resulting in low participation (less than 50% of staff participate).

3 = Meets standard

The school offers a menu of development opportunities that include required trainings as well as learning opportunities that forward the school's academic, behavioral and mission-related priorities. Participation is mandated for required trainings

4 = Exceeds standard

The school offers a robust menu of development opportunities that include required trainings as well as learning opportunities that forward the school's academic, behavioral and mission-related priorities. Including opportunities for subject-area and curriculum-specific trainings. Participation is mandated for required trainings.

SY2025-2026

Rating: 3

Comments:

Spero Academy continues to evaluate its Teacher Development Evaluation (TDE) to ensure it aligns with the school's mission and instructional priorities. In the SY26, the school implemented *The 5 Dimensions of Teaching and Learning* model. Spero provides numerous professional development workshops and opportunities throughout the school year. The following outlines some of the PD opportunities: PBIS, Responsive Classroom, Data Privacy, Mandated Reporting, Para 101, Behavior 101, Curriculum/Assessment Training, FastBridge Progress Monitoring, Adapting Wonders Literacy, Inspire Science Curriculum, OT Refresh, AAC Implementation, Anti-Bullying, IEP Progress Report Training, CPI Training, Everyday Math, CAREIALL.

SY2024-2025**Rating: 3****Comments:**

Spero Academy adopted Teacher Development Evaluation (TDE) program distributed through MDE. Informal class observations take place throughout the year so that the evaluator is familiar with the teachers' methods and the students before a formal observation. A 90-day TDE is implemented for all newly hired teachers. Spero follows a three-year cycle for summative evaluations for continued teachers. Teacher mentoring program is in place for probationary teachers. Spero provides numerous professional development workshops and opportunities throughout the school year. The following outlines some of the PD opportunities: PBIS, Data Privacy, Mandated Reporting, Para 101 for Teachers/Paraprofessionals, Behavior 101, Special Education 101, Curriculum/Assessment Training, ASD overview, Collaborative Teaming, Handwriting w/o Tears, AAC Device Training, IEP/Evaluation Workshop, Report Card/Progress, CPI Training, Anti-bullying, Suicide Prevention, Mental Health, CAREIALL, Addressing Educational Burnout.

SY2023-2024**Rating: 3**

Comments: New teachers receive an evaluation within 90 days of starting and this evaluation helps to determine the needs the new teacher and help with a development plan. Spero Academy has a teacher mentoring program to help new teachers as well as teachers who need more support. A great deal of professional development is offered on behavior management, reading instruction, de-escalation techniques and other trainings specific to the individual needs of the students.

Source: Annual report (Professional Development Tracking Chart)

3.15 Does the school generally retain its students from October 1st through the close of the school year?

1 = Does not meet standard	Student retention rates are more than 10% below the school's agreed-upon target rates.
2 = Approaching standard	Student retention rates are 5-10% below the school's agreed-upon target rates. .
3 = Meets standard	The school is consistently fully enrolled. Student retention rates are within 5% or above the school's agreed-upon target rates
4 = Exceeds standard	NOT APPLICABLE
SY2025-2026 Rating: 3 Comments: Student retention rate was 97.8%. Also, there was an increase of students from SY24 (231 students) to SY25 (269 students).	
SY2024-2025 Rating: 3 Comments: The student retention rate was 97.5%.	
SY2023-2024 Rating: 3 Comments: 204 students started the school year and 198 students completed the full school year. This equates to a 97% student retention rate.	
Source: Annual report, renewal application	

3.16 Does the school exhibit a high level of parent satisfaction as measured by the following?

3.16a The percentage of parents surveyed who “agree” or “strongly agree” that they are satisfied with the school overall.

3.16b Survey response rate

1 = Does not meet standard

3.16a Less than 70% of parents surveyed indicate they are satisfied with the school overall.
3.16b The school's survey response rate was less than 20%.

2 = Approaching standard

3.16a 70-85% of parents surveyed indicate they are satisfied with the school overall.

3.16b The school's survey response rate was 20-25%

3 = Meets standard

3.16a 85.1-95% of parents surveyed indicate they are satisfied with the school overall.

3.16b The school's survey response rate was more than 25-30%.

4 = Exceeds standard

3.16a 95% or more of parents surveyed indicate they are satisfied with the school overall.

3.16b The school's survey response rate was greater than 30%.

SY2025-2026

3.16a Rating: 3

3.16b Rating: 1

Overall Rating: 2.5

Comments:

The percentage of parents surveyed who "agree" or "strongly agree" were:

- NE MPLS Campus – 94%
- Brooklyn Park Campus – 91%
- District – 93%

Spero families were surveyed in the Winter of 2023 and Spring of 2024. The Minneapolis averaged survey response rate 15%, and the Brooklyn Park averaged response rate was 11%. The combined average response rate for the 2 campuses was 13%.

SY2024-2025

3.16a Rating: 3

3.16b Rating: 2

Overall Rating: 2.5

Comments:

Spero families were surveyed in the Winter of 2023 and Spring of 2024. The survey was shared in the community newsletter, direct email, and through individual teacher communication platforms.

In the annual report, the Minneapolis campus included an overall satisfaction indicator. On this indicator, Minneapolis parents were 93% (winter results) and 96% (spring results) satisfied with the school with a combined average of 94.5%.

The Minneapolis campus response rate was 17% (winter) and 35% (spring) for an average 26% response rate. Brooklyn campus response rate was 20% (winter) and 13% (spring) for an average 16.5% response rate. The combined average response rate for the two campuses was 21.25%.

SY2023-2024

3.16a Rating: 4

3.16b Rating: 1

Overall Rating: 2.5

Comments: The response rate for the survey was 18%. 98% of this response group indicated that they are satisfied with the school overall.

Source: Annual report, School parent satisfaction survey--overall satisfaction indicator

3.17 Is the school's physical plant safe and conducive to learning? This includes:

- Providing adequate security.
- Meeting health and safety code requirements.
- Providing accessibility for all students.
- Ensuring the facility, furniture and equipment is clean and well-maintained.
- Providing appropriate sized spaces for enrollment and student-teacher ratios.
- Layout and design meet the academic and social needs of students, teachers, staff, families and the community. Does the school exhibit a high level of parent satisfaction?

1 = Does not meet standard

The facility requires much improvement in order to provide a safe environment that is conducive to learning. Significant health and safety requirements have not been met OR the school lacks many conditions such as the following: a) a design well-suited to meet the curricular and social needs of its students, faculty, and community members; b) a size appropriate for the enrollment and student-teacher ratios in each class; c) adequate maintenance and security; d) well-maintained equipment and furniture that match the educational needs of the students; e) accessibility to all students..

2 = Approaching standard

Significant health and safety requirements are being met, but the facility needs some improvement in order to provide a safe environment that is conducive to learning. It partially – but not fully – provides conditions such as the following: a) a design well-suited to meet the curricular and social needs of its students, faculty, and community members; b) a size appropriate for the enrollment and student-teacher ratios in each class; c) adequate maintenance and security; d) well-

	maintained equipment and furniture that match the educational needs of the students; e) accessibility to all students.
3 = Meets standard	Significant health and safety code requirements are being met AND the facility generally provides a safe environment that is conducive to learning, based on conditions such as: a) a design well-suited to meet the curricular and social needs of its students, faculty, and community members; b) a size appropriate for the enrollment and student-teacher ratios in each class; c) adequate maintenance and security; d) wellmaintained equipment and furniture that match the educational needs of the students; e) accessibility to all students.
4 = Exceeds standard	All health and safety code requirements are being met AND the facility generally provides a safe environment that is conducive to learning, based on conditions such as: a) a design well-suited to meet the curricular and social needs of its students, faculty, and community members; b) a size appropriate for the enrollment and student-teacher ratios in each class; c) adequate maintenance and security; d) well-maintained equipment and furniture that match the educational needs of the students; e) accessibility to all students. Additionally, the facility meets the mission of the school

SY2025-2026

Rating: 4

Comments:

Spero Academy has intentionally created a learning environment designed to meet the diverse needs of its students. Each grade level is organized into three instructional settings—Grade Level (GL), Academic Support (AS), and Personalized Learning Support (PLS)—with class size limits established for each setting. Students may receive instruction in different settings depending on their academic, social, and behavioral needs, allowing for flexible movement between levels of support as they grow and develop. Each classroom is staffed by a licensed special education teacher and supported by paraprofessionals based on student needs.

The learning environment reflects a thoughtful and consistent approach to supporting students. Classrooms include individualized supports such as visual schedules, alternative seating options, and sensory tools. Classroom layouts are intentionally designed to minimize distractions, with wall displays limited to instructional resources that support academic, social, and behavioral learning. Each room includes a calming corner with visual reminders and strategies to support self-regulation.

Spero Academy also implements its STAR behavior framework (Safe Choices, Try Your Best, Acceptance, Respect, and Responsibility) consistently throughout the school. During the fall and spring site visit, STAR tickets were observed being used with fidelity in classrooms. Instruction incorporates multiple opportunities for repetition, small-group learning supported by teachers and paraprofessionals, visual timers, and planned brain breaks. The school's commitment to meeting student needs extends beyond the classroom, with school-wide activities, such as the Fall Festival and school concerts, intentionally designed to be accessible and inclusive for all students.

SY2024-2025

Rating: 4

Comments:

Spero Academy has created a learning community focused on meeting each student's needs. There are three classrooms dedicated to each grade level so that each student receives the appropriate level of support: Grade Level (GL), Academic Support (AS) and Personalized Learning Support (PLS). There is a class size limit for each. Based on a student's need, they may be in one room for one subject but a different room for another subject. This structure allows students to move from differing levels of support based on their academic, social, and behavioral growth and needs. Within each class, a licensed SPED teacher is supported by Paras based on the needs of the students. Also, students have different physical supports (rubber band on chair, schedule with visuals taped on desk, rocking chair, etc.). The room's layout is consistent from classroom to classroom and designed with intention. The posters and displays on classroom walls are limited to resources needed to teach academic, social and behavior skills so that students are not visually overwhelmed by unnecessary classroom displays. In each classroom, there is a calming corner which has visual reminders on strategies to help regulate their body. The use of STAR systematic approach to behavior (safe choices, try your best, acceptance, respect & responsibility). It was noted that in the fall site visit, STAR tickets were used with fidelity within the observed classrooms. The lessons have multiple opportunities for repetition and break out into small group stations supported by either a teacher or para. Visual timers are used, and brain breaks are planned between learning activities. Additionally, school events like the fall festival are carefully planned to ensure the event is inclusive of all students.

SY2023-2024

Rating: 4

Comments: Both campuses were designed with the needs of the students in mind and include facilities such as a room specific to Occupational Therapy, a running/walking track, a large number of small group spaces, calming spaces for students and an outdoor lounge area for teachers. All health and safety codes are up to date and the facility is well-maintained.

Source: Authorizer observation

3.18 Does the school have systems and structures in place, including an effective multi-tiered system of support (MTSS), to effectively identify and support students needing academic and/or behavioral supports in a timely fashion? This includes:

• A clear process to identify students needing support, understood and implemented consistently. • A robust system of tiered supports. • Timely execution of these supports. • Use of data to evaluate the effectiveness of supports and the system. • Effective communication between stakeholders (teachers, school staff, families, and students)	
1 = Does not meet standard	The school does not have adequate systems to identify students needing supports. When students are identified the systems in place move slowly, taking weeks or months to execute the eventual support. Communication within systems is poor and internal/external stakeholders (teachers, school staff, parents, students) do not always receive timely or adequate communication.
2 = Approaching standard	The school has systems to identify students needing supports, but they may not always work as designed. When students are identified the systems in place move at a moderate pace, taking several weeks to a month to execute the eventual support. Communication within systems is patchy and internal/external stakeholders (teachers, school staff, parents, students) receive communication, but it may not always be timely or adequate.
3 = Meets standard	The school has systems to identify students needing supports, which work reliably and are understood and used regularly by individuals throughout the system (teachers, paraprofessionals, administrators, counselors, parents, etc.). When students are identified the systems in place move efficiently, taking days or weeks to execute the needed support. Communication within systems is reliable and internal/external stakeholders (teachers, school staff, parents, students) receive all necessary communication in a clear and timely fashion.
4 = Exceeds standard	The school has systems with built in redundancies (multiple opportunities for reporting) to identify students needing support. The systems work reliably and are understood and used regularly by individuals throughout the system (teachers, paraprofessionals, administrators, counselors, parents, etc.). When students are identified the systems in place move efficiently, taking hours or days to execute the needed support unless mandated timelines are longer. Communication within systems is reliable and internal/external stakeholders (teachers, school staff, parents, students) receive all necessary communication in a clear and timely fashion.

SY2025-2026

Rating: 4

Comments: Students who do not qualify for special education services receive support through targeted interventions and individualized learning goals. These students have access to the full continuum of educational services available at the school, with supports and programming tailored to their unique needs. Educational service options are determined on an individual basis and are informed by each student's current levels of academic, social, and behavioral performance.

SY2024-2025

Rating: 4

Comments: Students who do not qualify for special education services are given support through interventions and personalized learning goals. They have access to a full range of educational service alternatives. Appropriate program alternatives are determined on an individual basis. The choice of specific program alternatives is based on the student's current levels of performance.

SY2023-2024

Rating: 4

Comments: Students who do not qualify for special education services are given support through interventions and personalized learning goals.

Source: Quarterly report, Site visits, ongoing correspondence, interviews

3.19 There are opportunities and structures in place for families to engage in their child's education that include the following:

3.19a Processes to communicate academic performance and other pertinent school information that are accessible to families including the consideration of language needs (e.g. conferences).

3.19b Processes to elicit feedback from families are accessible and seek to reach the broader school community including consideration of language needs. Feedback processes include but are not limited to an annual survey and participation in curriculum review cycles.

3.19c Opportunities for parents/guardians to support their child's education and/or the school (e.g. volunteering, field trips, parent organization, family events)
1 = Does not meet standard a. The school does not have a plan to communicate academic performance and other pertinent school information. Communication is not available in languages other than English. b. The school does not have a plan to elicit feedback from families or the plan reaches only a limited set of families. c. Less than 25% of families/guardians participated in any engagement opportunity.
2 = Approaching standard a. The school has a plan to communicate academic performance and other pertinent school information, however the implementation of this plan is inconsistent or in the development phase. b. The school has a plan for eliciting feedback from families representing the broad school community, however, implementation of this plan is inconsistent or in the development phase. c. Between 25.1 - 40% of families/guardians participated in an engagement opportunity.
3 = Meets standard a. The school has a comprehensive plan to communicate academic performance and other pertinent school information with families, which is consistently executed. The plan includes an awareness of the language preferences and needs of families and strategies for providing communication multiple languages as needed. b. The school has a comprehensive plan to elicit feedback from all families. The plan includes an awareness of the language preferences and needs of families, strategies for providing communication multiple languages as needed and methods for ensuring representation from the broad school community c. Between 40.1 - 55% of families/guardians participated in an engagement opportunity.
4 = Exceeds standard a. The school has a comprehensive plan to communicate academic performance and other pertinent school information with families, which is executed with fidelity. School survey data and interviews with families provide evidence of parent satisfaction with home-school communications. b. The school has a formalized process to elicit feedback from families reflective of the broad school community, which is executed with fidelity. The school is able to demonstrate how family feedback is reviewed and utilized in a timely manner. School survey data and interviews with families provide evidence of parent knowledge of and satisfaction with feedback opportunities. c. More than 55% of families/guardians participated in an engagement opportunity
SY2025-2026 Rating a: 3

Rating b: 3

Rating c: 4

Overall Rating: 3.33

Comments:

Spero Academy communicates academic performance and other important school information with families through a variety of methods, including family-teacher conferences, IEP progress reports, report cards, email, phone calls, and parent communication platforms such as Seesaw. Translation and interpretation services are provided as needed to ensure families have access to information in their preferred language. Written communications are translated when possible, and interpreters are available for conferences, IEP meetings, and other meetings as needed.

During the 2025–2026 school year, Spero Academy implemented a Language Access Plan to establish consistent procedures for identifying families’ preferred languages and providing timely translation and interpretation services. The plan supports the school’s efforts to ensure all families have access to academic information and school updates and are able to participate in their child’s education.

Spero families were surveyed in the winter and spring with intent of measuring family satisfaction in a variety of areas. The annual report provided a summary that outlined both successes and areas of growth. The successes indicated that parents are highly satisfied with teacher and programming, teacher communication, and staff respectful support of difficult behaviors. Areas of growth noted were concerns with individual teachers, a need for more communication from therapists and specialists, and mid-year teacher transitions.

Spero Academy hosts an annual Family Involvement Week, beginning with National African American Parent Involvement Day (NAAPID). During the week, families are encouraged to engage in a variety of school activities, including classroom visits, a school-wide art project, a classroom supply drive, a virtual family connection event, and Lunch with a Loved One in partnership with the Parent Teacher Group. Spero also has a fall festival, fall parent/teacher conferences, winter & spring concerts, field days, and kindergarten & 6th grade graduations. These activities provide meaningful opportunities for families to connect with the school community and participate in their child's educational experience.

SY2024-2025

Rating a: 3

Rating b: 3

Rating c: 3

Overall Rating: 3

Comments:

Spero families were surveyed in the winter and spring with intent of measuring family satisfaction in a variety of areas. The school survey focused on the following areas: Safe & Welcome Schools, Schools & Learning, School Environment, and Personalized Learning. Survey results are reviewed by the school’s administrative team and the Board’s

Accountability Committee and used to inform the school's efforts toward continuous improvement.

There were two questions that pertained to communication. 95% (Minneapolis) and 90% (Brooklyn Park) families were satisfied with communication from the student's teacher and felt well informed. 95%(Minneapolis) and 73% (Brooklyn Park) families were satisfied with school-to-home communication and felt well informed.

Between the two campuses 105 surveys were returned from families for the school year, which was a response rate of approximately forty-five percent, district-wide; however, it is not known how many families took both the winter and spring survey. The school has a parent/teacher group which families can belong to. Spero also has a fall festival, fall parent/teacher conferences, winter & spring concerts, field days, and kindergarten & 6th grade graduations. Additionally, school leadership reached out to families to involve them in advocating against the changes to charter school special education funding.

SY2023-2024

Rating a: 3

Rating b: 3

Rating c: TBD

Overall Rating: TBD

Comments: No information regarding family engagement opportunities and involvement was included in the annual report. Please submit this information so this benchmark can be scored.

Source: Site visits, ongoing correspondence, interviews

3.20 Is the school committed to creating a welcoming, inclusive, and equitable environment that is open to all students? This is evidenced by the following:

3.20a. Marketing/outreach targets socioeconomically and racially diverse populations, which includes having materials available in multiple languages.

3.20b. Enrollment policies and practices are accessible and transparent. Supports are available to families as needed to navigate the application and enrollment process.

3.20c. The school demonstrates a commitment to cultivating a board and staff that is reflective of the student population.

1 = Does not meet standard

- a. The school's marketing strategy marginalizes or ignores students from diverse backgrounds and/or those who are low income. Materials are only available in English.
- b. Enrollment policies and practices are not transparent and/or result in accessibility barriers for low income students and students of color.

c.	The board and staff are not representative of the students the school serves.
2 = Approaching standard	
a. The school's marketing strategy includes a plan to recruit students from diverse backgrounds and/or those who are low income. However, implementation of the plan is inconsistent, and materials are only available in English. b. Enrollment policies and practices are transparent. However, families encounter challenges navigating the enrollment process. c. While the board and/or staff are not representative of the students the school serves, the school is committed to recruiting board members and staff who are representative and has identified recruitment strategies to this end.	
3 = Meets standard	
a. The school's marketing strategy includes an actionable plan to recruit students from diverse backgrounds and/or those who are low income. The plan is actively utilized. Materials are available in multiple languages. b. School enrollment policies and practices are clear and easily navigated by families. Methods for accessing support for families needing assistance are readily apparent. c. The school employs strategies to recruit and retain board members and staff who are representative of the student population. Board and staff composition reflect these efforts.	
4 = Exceeds standard	NOT APPLICABLE
SY2025-2026 Rating a: 3 Rating b: 3 Rating c: 3 Overall Rating: Comments: Spero Academy's Strategic Focus Area, Strategic Communication & Partnerships, focuses on strengthening communication, community engagement, and awareness of the school's mission. Goals within this focus area include developing a communication structure to engage both internal and external stakeholders, creating an updated Spero promotional video featuring student and family testimonials, establishing community partnerships that support the school's mission and commitment to racial, cultural, and social equity, implementing an annual marketing campaign aligned with the school's mission and vision, and	

recruiting board members who bring diverse perspectives and experiences to support the school's governance and strategic direction.

Spero Academy's marketing and outreach efforts reflect the school's commitment to equity, inclusion, and individualized student support. While the school maintains a lengthy waitlist and therefore does not rely heavily on extensive marketing efforts, the school's website and communications intentionally portray students and staff from a variety of backgrounds and experiences. As a special education school, Spero's focus remains on meeting the unique needs of each student through individualized programming, personalized support, and learning opportunities designed to help students progress at their own pace.

Spero Academy's enrollment procedures are clearly outlined on the school website. The enrollment page includes application instructions, important enrollment information, links to student applications, and the school's enrollment policy, making the process transparent and easy for families to navigate.

SY2024-2025

Rating a: 3

Rating b: 3

Rating c: 3

Overall Rating: 3

Comments

Spero's Strategic Focus Area: Strategic Communication & Partnership focuses on the marketing of Spero Academy. The following goals were set up:

- Create a communication structure to inform and engage both internal and external stakeholders,
- Produce a new Spero video and add student/family testimonials,
- Create community partnerships to support Spero's mission and racial, cultural, & social equity in the school community,
- Create a yearly, focused marketing campaign using a word or phrase from Spero's mission or vision to root storytelling & staff recruitment,
- Identify & recruit board candidates to ensure well-rounded and diverse voices are guiding the school mission & vision.

Spero Academy's Enrollment procedures are clearly laid out on the school's website. On the enrollment page are instructions on how to apply, important details to be aware of, 2026-2027 Student Applications and Spero Academy's Enrollment policy.

SY2023-2024

Rating a: __3__

Rating b: _3____

Rating c: _3____

Overall Rating: _3_

Comments:

Spero Academy has developed a marketing plan and committee to diversify recruiting efforts. Enrollment policies have been updated and are easily navigated. Spero has also put a great deal of effort into the recruitment and retention of staff.

Source: Quarterly report, Site visits, ongoing correspondence, interviews