STATE PUBLIC CHARTER SCHOOL AUTHORITY



2018 CHARTER SCHOOL AMENDMENT REQUEST

Schools Requesting to Offer Dual-Credit Programming in Partnership with a Community College, State College, or University

Amendment Requests Due October 1 - October 15, 2018 and April 1 – April 15, 2019

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# Introduction

Dear Charter School Governing Body,

On behalf of the State Public Charter School Authority and our incredible students, we thank you for your interest in amending your written charter or charter contract to expand a high-performing school in Nevada to serve additional students on your current campus or campuses. We understand the tremendous amount of work and commitment required to expand a quality school and achieve operational excellence across multiple sites while maintaining fidelity to your mission, vision, and academic model.

The development and release of this Amendment Request format reflects the sweeping education reforms adopted during the 2015 Legislative Session and our recognition of the opportunities and challenges that many of our operators have faced as they have grown their schools. Charter schools are often large, complex public entities which may serve thousands of students and employ hundreds of staff. The 2015 Legislature recognized this reality and requires that an authorizer review the track record of the charter school with relation to academic, financial, and organizational performance and determine whether the school has the capacity to serve additional students with a high degree of quality and consistency across all domains.

We have designed this process to allow governing bodies and leadership teams to assist in this process through an evaluation of their own capacity and determine where they will need to invest additional resources to ensure success. As with all submissions to the State Public Charter School Authority, this amendment request is intended to be a document which is the result of deep, thoughtful engagement by the governing body and staff employed by the school. While the Authority acknowledges and appreciates the contribution of vendors and contractors, including education management organizations, to the growth and vitality of the state’s charter school movement, it is important to emphasize that the sole legal accountability for the promises and commitments made by the school to students, parents, families, the surrounding community, and to the people of Nevada and their authorized representative, the State Public Charter School Authority, lies with the governing body of the school and it’s direct, authorized employees.

The SPCSA is committed to quality in every aspect of our operation, and we firmly believe that quality authorizing leads to quality schools. We are committed to granting expansion amendments only to those schools who clearly demonstrate the academic track record and financial and operational capacity and business planning necessary to govern and operate high-performing networks of schools. We particularly welcome amendment requests from schools that seek to serve at risk students in our urban core, develop intentionally diverse populations in our growing suburbs, and the underserved populations of our rural and Native American communities.

Our statutory responsibility compels us to provide our students and families with the very best options the charter community can provide. We are confident that we have created a demanding, thorough, and transparent amendment request and review process.

As you complete your amendment request, please feel free to contact our team with any questions. Again, thank you for your interest in recommitting to this vital work and investing more of your time and talents in our effort to build and deliver a high quality public school option to every student in Nevada.

Sincerely,

Patrick J. Gavin

Executive Director

# Instructions

Operator Applicant Instructions

* Notices of Intent are due 45 days prior to the date of submission. As R089-16A requires that amendments be submitted between October 1 and October 15 and between April 1 and April 15, notices of intent are due to the Authority no later than March 1 and September 1 of each year.
* Please do not include the Cover Page, Section II: Introduction, or Section III: Instructions sections of this document. The first real page of your document, following any unnumbered cover page you may choose to add, should be first page of the narrative.
* It is the responsibility of the applicant to ensure that the content is complete, detailed, and easily understood and followed by reviewers; external experts; and parents, families, and the general public.
* This request may be completed with responses following each question (e.g., the questions following the headings. Please leave the text of the question in the document to facilitate review and public transparency.
* All narrative elements of the application must be typed with 1-inch page margins and 11-point Cambria font, single-spaced.
* All headings must be in 11, 12, or 14 point Cambria font.
* Tables may be in either 11 or 10 point Cambria font.
* All pages must be consecutively numbered in the footer, including all attachments.
* The table of contents must identify the page number of each major section of the narrative and each required attachment.
* Schools are encouraged to utilize Microsoft Word’s cross-referencing features to allow for automatic updates to page numbers within the document for any element discussed in more than one section. Simply referring reviewers to content in another section or expecting reviewers to seek out and infer an answer from information which may or may not be found in an attachment is unacceptable and will be deemed unresponsive. Petitioners are expected to exercise appropriate judgement in balancing responsiveness with excessively duplicative content. It is highly advisable to answer the question posed and refer the reviewer to additional contextual information that will inform review with transitional and referential phrases such as “As discussed in greater detail in the Section \_\_ beginning on page \_\_, the school will...” and “Reviewers seeking more information on \_\_\_ may wish to refer to the section labeled \_\_\_ beginning on page \_\_\_. More specifically, the school will...”
* References and citations should be placed in the footer.
* The name of each major section and attachment, e.g. “Attachment 1,” etc. must be placed in the footer to facilitate easy review and navigation of the materials. Bookmarking of individual sections and attachments in Acrobat is strongly encouraged to enhance readability and facilitate a thorough review.
* Applicants are reminded that all requests for amendments are public records and are posted on the SPCSA web site. Once a request is approved, it is expected that the complete charter application and the approved amendments will be posted on the school’s web site or will otherwise be made available via electronic means upon request from any member of the public. State regulations and federal law require that all submissions are compliant with accessibility standards as set forth in section 508 of the Rehabilitation Act. To ensure the broadest range of accessibility for public documents, the SPCSA strongly encourages applicants to consult the Accessibility Guidance offered by our peer authorizer, the Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education: <http://www.doe.mass.edu/nmg/MakingAccessibleDocuments.pdf> and <http://www.doe.mass.edu/nmg/accessibility.html>. Schools are encouraged to use Microsoft Word’s styles features (<http://shaunakelly.com/word/styles/stylesms.html>) to increase compliance with accessibility requirements. Styles permit users to manage formatting, provide for bookmarking and cross-referencing, and facilitate the generation of the table of contents and other features through the heading styles functionality. Note that submissions that do not comply with these accessibility standards will be rejected.
* Applicants MUST submit amendment requests electronically in Epicenter, the statewide document management center for school submissions to the State Public Charter School Authority. All documents, other than budget documents and data submissions better suited to Excel, must be submitted as accessible PDF documents. All PDF documents, other than those individual pages containing signatures or facilities documentation, which must be remediated with fully compliant auto text to ensure accessibility to persons with disabilities, must be submitted as converted (not scanned) documents.

Submission Instructions

1. **Schools must submit their complete amendment request into the Charter Amendment section of Epicenter by 5:00 pm PT on October 15, 2018 and on April 15, 2019**
2. In order to complete and submit your request, you will need to meet the following minimum technology requirements:
3. A local copy of Microsoft Office Word 2007 or later and Microsoft Office Excel 2007 or later
4. A local copy of Adobe Acrobat Standard or Professional to allow for converting, combining, and consecutively paginating files into portable document format—note that neither the vast majority of third party PDF software and online services not the print or save to PDF functionality in Office create documents which comply with applicable accessibility requirements.
5. A local copy of Microsoft Office Project and Microsoft Office Visio or other software or a school-selected suitable web-based equivalent (e.g. Lucidchart for flowcharts) with the capacity to produce detailed Gannt charts, flowcharts, and explanatory graphics for inclusion in the narrative or the requested attachments
6. Microsoft Internet Explorer Version 9 or above OR Google Chrome Version 40 or above
7. A reliable Internet connection
8. A laptop or desktop computer with at least 50 Mb of free space to store downloaded amendment request documents and local copies of your submission
9. Schools may upload amendment requests up to 5:00 pm PT on October 15, 2018 and April 15, 2019. Once the request is submitted, schools will be unable to access, edit, or revise the documents

Guidance and Resources for Applicants

Schools are encouraged to familiarize themselves with **current** Nevada law and regulations relating to charter schools. As Nevada’s statutes and regulations are continuing to evolve, it is advisable to monitor and evaluate all changes to ensure that any proposed changes to the charter meet current expectations. The Authority does not have the capacity or the statutory authority to provide individual guidance or legal advice. Charter schools are encouraged to consult the Charter School Association of Nevada and an attorney who is well versed in charter school law for guidance in interpreting those elements of statute and regulation for which the Authority has not incorporated its policy expectations in this document.

Nevada Revised Statutes: NRS 388A contains the vast majority of law pertaining to charter schools: https://www.leg.state.nv.us/nrs/NRS-388A.html. Charter schools seeking to add dual-credit coursework should also consult chapter NRS 389.

Nevada Administrative Code: As a state with a biennial legislature, Nevada relies heavily on its regulatory framework to provide guidance on the interpretation and execution of its laws. The provisions of NAC 386.010 through 386.47 govern the administration of the state’s charter school program: <https://www.leg.state.nv.us/NAC/NAC-386.html>.

Additional Guidance and Resources for Schools

The Nevada charter school movement and the SPCSA have undergone dramatic changes in the past four years as a result of legislative changes in the 2013 legislative session and the sweeping education reforms adopted during the 2015 and 2017 legislative sessions. As noted above, the policy and operating landscape for charter schools has undergone significant shifts, including some changes which have yet to be codified into regulation and standard practice.

In light of these changes and the Authority board’s deep commitment to accountability and continuous improvement, the expectations and standards for charter application approval and for ongoing operation and expansion have continued to evolve and our process has become increasingly more rigorous. Consequently, schools are strongly cautioned against excessive borrowing of language from “boilerplate” Nevada charter application material and sample resources that are widely available on the internet, including legacy materials on a variety of state web sites, including documents maintained for a subset of existing schools on the SPCSA website.

Schools are encouraged to avoid quoting entire statutes or regulations, or including documents that could just as well be referred to rather than provided in their entirety in the application. Do not simply print materials off the Nevada Department of Education’s website or the State Public Charter School Authority’s website for inclusion in the amendment request; the Review Team can access those websites if necessary. Including documents and statutes and regulations in their entirety will result in an unmanageably large submission. Rather than quoting or including the entire text of statute, regulation and/or documents in the application or excerpt or summarize the statute, regulation or document. Do not hesitate to provide citations of relevant statutes or regulations along with content that reflects the governing body’s understanding of the requirements along with a thoughtful, original discussion of ***how*** the school intends to implement the requirements of the law, regulation, or process in a way which is ***fully aligned*** with the mission, vision, and program outlined in the application. In designing their policies, processes, and procedures, schools are encouraged to consider the who, what, where, when, and why for each element in the school’s operating system.

Overview of the Fall 2018 Expansion Amendment Cycle

The State Public Charter School Authority views the granting of the charter as an investment of public dollars and the public trust in the service of public schoolchildren. The evaluation of each application and each applicant revolves around the same essential question: will this school be an academic, organizational, & financial success?

Schools should be aware that the timeline for amendment approvals will likely not permit the school to offer until the fall of 2019, as there is insufficient time for a school to address all approval conditions and execute the amended charter contract in time for the spring semester.

Schools that are unable to submit an amendment request which meets their own high standards during the Fall round are strongly encouraged to begin working on an application for the spring 2019 cycle as soon as possible. While there are likely to be some changes to the timeline, process, and format, the essential questions will remain the same.

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| Please keep in mind that your amendment request is a professional document. The quality of the document that you submit should reflect the quality of the school that you propose to expand. Review teams will be able to navigate well-organized, effectively edited documents easily, thereby focusing their energy on reviewing the content of each application. Grammar, spelling, and formatting all make an impression on a reviewer. Responsive answers are critical: ensure that you have fully answered the question and have thoroughly researched the relevant section of law, regulation, and policy. Organization and clarity are essential: use of appropriate cross-referencing by page number and, where appropriate, sub-section headings to linked areas of the application when elaborating on or demonstrating alignment to a key strategic element of the proposal will limit the possibility that an essential point is missed by a reviewer due to a lack of clarity and specificity. |

# Amendment Request Narrative

### DUAL-CREDIT PARTNERSHIPS

1. Please identify the date and location of the governing body meeting or meetings at which this completed amendment request and the application for dual credit approval by the State Board of Education were approved by the governing body. Please specifically identify the agenda item(s) in the agenda provided as Attachment 1A and identify specific page numbers on which the approvals can be found in the minutes provided as Attachment 1B.
   1. Please certify that the school has provided a copy of the formal agenda(s) for the governing body meeting during which this completed amendment request and the complete application for dual credit approval to be submitted to the State Board of Education were approved by the governing body as Attachment 1A.
   2. Please that the school has provided a copy of the approved minutes of that meeting or those meetings as Attachment 1B.
2. As required by NRS 389.160(2), please provide as Attachment 2 a list of the specific courses for which dual credit may be received and the amount of credit allowed by both the charter school and college or university for the completion of these courses. This list must be identical to the list that will be submitted to the State Board of Education for approval pursuant to NRS 389.160 following approval of the amendment request and should use the template provided at <http://CharterSchools.nv.gov/uploadedFiles/CharterSchoolsnvgov/content/Grocers/Dual_Credit_Worksheet_for_Submission_to_SBOE.xlsx>. If you are submitting a request for more than one college or university, please ensure that this list is sorted by college/university name and then by course number and name. Please certify in this narrative that the school has provided this information as Attachment 2.
3. Provide as an attachment 3 a draft memorandum of understanding between the charter school and the college or university through which the credits will be earned. If you are providing materials for more than college or university, please label these in both the header/footer and in the file name as Attachment 3A, 3B, etc. Please certify in this narrative that the school has provided this information as Attachment 3.
4. Provide as Attachment 4 a term sheet confirming the commitment of both entities to the specific terms outlined in this amendment application. If you are providing materials for more than college or university, please label these in both the header/footer and in the file name as Attachment 4A, 2B, etc. Please certify in this narrative that the school has provided this information as Attachment 4.
5. Provide as Attachment 5 a copy of the proposed cooperative agreement with the community college, state college, or university. If you are providing materials for more than college or university, please label these in both the header/footer and in the file name as Attachment 5A, 5B, etc. Please certify in this narrative that the school has provided this information as Attachment 5.
6. Provide a copy of the proposed application for enrollment in a dual credit course prescribed by NRS 389.300(2) as attachment 6.
7. Identify any employees of any proposed college or university partner who will serve on the governing body of the charter school and demonstrate, including by citing specific page numbers in the minutes provided at Attachment 1B, how the employee addressed the requirements of Chapter 281 of NRS.
8. Describe the proposed duration of the relationship between the charter school and each college or university and the conditions for renewal and termination of the relationship and identify by page number and, as appropriate, quote supporting evidence for the claims made in the narrative based on the materials found in Attachments 3, 4, and 5.
9. Describe in detail in this narrative the roles and responsibilities of the governing body of the charter school, the employees of the charter school, and each college or university. Please identify by page number and, as appropriate, quote supporting evidence for the claims made in the narrative based on the materials found in Attachments 3, 4, and 5.
10. Discuss the scope of the services and resources that will be provided by each college or university. identify by page number and, as appropriate, quote supporting evidence for the claims made in the narrative based on the materials found in Attachments 3, 4, and 5.
11. Provide an overview of the financial provisions of this relationship between the charter school and college or university partner.
    1. Explain the manner and amount that the college or university will be compensated for providing such services and resources, including, without limitation, any tuition and fees that pupils at the charter school will pay to the college or university. Identify by page number and, as appropriate, quote supporting evidence for the claims made in this narrative based on the materials found in Attachments 3, 4, and 5.
    2. Please specify in this narrative under what circumstances the charter school will pay for all costs associated with the course and under what circumstances a pupil is responsible for paying all or a portion of the costs for the dual credit course. Identify by page number and, as appropriate, quote supporting evidence for the claims made in this narrative based on the materials found in Attachments 3, 4, and 5.
    3. Please specify under what circumstances and for what specific courses the charter school will use funds from grants from NDE to pay for some or all of the costs of the course. Identify by page number and, as appropriate, quote supporting evidence for the claims made in this narrative based on the materials found in Attachments 3, 4, and 5.
    4. Please also specify under what circumstances and for what specific courses the charter school will use funds from grants from NDE to pay for some or all of the costs of the course. Identify by page number and, as appropriate, quote supporting evidence for the claims made in this narrative based on the materials found in Attachments 3, 4, and 5.
    5. Please specify any other funding sources, including federal funds or private philanthropy, which will be used to pay for some or all course costs and under what circumstances. Identify by page number and, as appropriate, quote supporting evidence for the claims made in this narrative based on the materials found in Attachments 3, 4, and 5.
12. Describe the manner in which the college or university will ensure that the charter school can effectively monitors pupil enrollment and attendance and the acquisition of college credits. Explain in detail how the school will ensure that the charter school will adopt, and, as necessary, revise the academic plan developed for each pupil pursuant to NRS 388.205 to incorporate these dual credit courses on at least an annual basis. Identify by page number and, as appropriate, quote supporting evidence for the claims made in this narrative based on the materials found in Attachments 3, 4, and 5.
13. Describe how the charter school will provide a unique identification number for each student enrolled in the dual-credit course and explain how the charter school will ensure that student progress, grades on assignments, attendance, and other required information will be updated in Infinite Campus and with what frequency. Identify by page number and, as appropriate, quote supporting evidence for the claims made in this narrative based on the materials found in Attachments 3, 4, and 5.
14. Describe how the college or university partner will retain and use the unique identification number discussed in question 13. Identify by page number and, as appropriate, quote supporting evidence for the claims made in this narrative based on the materials found in Attachments 3, 4, and 5.
15. Describe in detail how the charter school and the college or university partner will ensure that the student remains eligible for interscholastic activities. Identify by page number and, as appropriate, quote supporting evidence for the claims made in this narrative based on the materials found in Attachments 3, 4, and 5.
16. Provide an overview of the academic and non-academic supports that the charter school and/or college/university partner will provide or otherwise arrange for required and appropriate levels of academic supports and support services necessary to ensure that special populations are able to access, participate in, and successfully complete the dual-credit program(s) at the same rates as other students.
    1. Citing page numbers and, as appropriate, quoting supporting evidence based on the materials found in Attachments 3, 4, 5, and 6, provide a narrative detailing how the charter school and/or university partner will meet these expectations for Students with IEPs:
    2. Citing page numbers and, as appropriate, quoting supporting evidence based on the materials found in Attachments 3, 4, 5, and 6, provide a narrative detailing how the charter school and/or university partner will meet these expectations for Students who are eligible under Section 504:
    3. Citing page numbers and, as appropriate, quoting supporting evidence based on the materials found in Attachments 3, 4, 5, and 6, provide a narrative detailing how the charter school and/or university partner will meet these expectations for Students who are ELL:
    4. Citing page numbers and, as appropriate, quoting supporting evidence based on the materials found in Attachments 3, 4, 5, and 6, provide a narrative detailing how the charter school and/or university partner will meet these expectations for Students who are FELL:
    5. Citing page numbers and, as appropriate, quoting supporting evidence based on the materials found in Attachments 3, 4, 5, and 6, provide a narrative detailing how the charter school and/or university partner will meet these expectations for Students who are homeless/McKinney-Vento eligible:
    6. Citing page numbers and, as appropriate, quoting supporting evidence based on the materials found in Attachments 3, 4, 5, and 6, provide a narrative detailing how the charter school and/or university partner will meet these expectations for Students who are in foster care:
    7. Citing page numbers and, as appropriate, quoting supporting evidence based on the materials found in Attachments 3, 4, and 5, provide a narrative detailing how the charter school and/or university partner will meet these expectations for Students who are FRL-eligible:
17. Explain the timeline and process that the charter school will use to solicit, review, and approve applications from students to take dual-credit coursework in a manner that ensures equity, access, and non-discrimination and how the governing body will monitor equity, access, and non-discrimination on a regular basis.
18. Please explain the timeline for submitting the application for dual-credit approval to the Department and the State Board following sponsor approval of this amendment, the likely date of submission and approval, how the charter school will notify the sponsor of SBOE approval and execute the charter contract amendment, and the anticipated semester when the charter school will begin offering dual-credit coursework following SBOE approval and contract execution.