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BRIEFING MEMORANDUM

TO: SPCSA Board

FROM: Patrick Gavin, Executive Director
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SUBJECT: Agenda Item #6: Performance Update for Beacon Academy of Nevada and Performance Framework modifications

DATE: August 24, 2018

Beacon Academy of Nevada is a public charter school serving students in grades 9 through 12. The school currently serves 384 students. The school was originally approved by the State Board of Education and operated under a written charter from 2008 to 2014. In 2014, the charter school applied for renewal and a new charter and was approved. Due to persistent performance issues related to the school's graduation rate, the Authority issued a Notice of Intent to Terminate the school's charter contract in October 2016 pursuant to [NRS 388A.330](#). Subsequently, Beacon and the Authority entered into a mutually agreed-upon settlement which expires at the end of the 2019-2020 school year, at the end of the current contract term.

As a result of this settlement, Beacon agreed to limit its service area to Clark County and to make the enrollment policy decisions necessary to become the first charter high school in Nevada to transition to operate under the state's performance framework for alternative schools. Following this settlement, the school engaged a third-party expert, Momentum Strategy and Research, that was approved by Authority staff. Momentum leadership partnered with the school and Authority staff in the development of the framework. During the SPCSA board meeting on February 24, 2017, Tambre Tondryk, Beacon school leader, in conjunction with Authority staff, proposed the final amendment to the charter contract required under the settlement agreement, an academic performance framework designed to track the performance outcomes expected of a high-quality school serving a population that is exclusively made up of students eligible for alternative education settings. The newly-developed performance

framework for Beacon was formally adopted by the Board. Additionally, Beacon, at the request of Authority staff, has engaged Momentum both as a third-party validator of the data reported in this framework and to provide additional insights related to the performance of the school in comparison to similar schools in other states.

The approved SPCSA Alternative Education Performance Framework for Beacon includes several measures such as achievement status, growth, college & career readiness measures, and student engagement. Both the achievement status and growth measures use Northwest Education Association's Measures of Academic Progress (NWEA MAP) in reading and mathematics. The college and career readiness metric includes, but is not limited to, an average number of credits earned, percent of students to complete high school diploma, and cohort graduation. The student engagement measure includes student retention and student attendance.

Under the Beacon framework, the school is currently tracking two separate populations: the students enrolled prior to Beacon becoming an exclusively alternative education program in December 2016 and the exclusively alternative education students that were admitted to Beacon following the transition. The school also reports on the total student population.

It is important for the Authority to note that the transition from an open-enrollment school that was particularly attractive to alternative education-eligible to students to an exclusively alternative education program is an ongoing process. At the end of the 2016-2017 school year, a substantial portion of the student population were "legacy students" who were not alternative education-eligible. This population, with performance characteristics that are more similar to students who graduate at or close to on-time, significantly skewed the overall performance profile of the school on this framework during that year. Over the past year, however, Beacon has made substantial progress in recruiting and enrolling a large number of alternative education-eligible students. Indeed, it is noteworthy that Beacon was recently approved for the Alternative Performance Framework (APF) by the Nevada Department of Education beginning in the 2018-2019 school year due to successfully passing the minimum statutory threshold of 75 percent alternative education-eligible students during the most recent school year.

During this agenda item, an overview on the school's **results from 2016-2017** will be provided. It is important to note that the school will be sharing an independently validated analysis of both schoolwide performance based on the approved framework and separate analyses of the performance of the legacy population and the new alternative education population. As the school has moved from a smaller alternative education population to pass the 75 percent threshold and continues to make progress toward serving 100 percent alternative education students, staff would caution board members to avoid the temptation to compare schoolwide performance over successive years, as this is not truly an apples-to-apples comparison. Instead, the report card for the initial limited 2016-2017 alternative education population provides early information on the likely performance profile of future students. However, the soon-to-be released 2017-2018 data on the first full year of alternative education enrollment will be the most appropriate initial baseline for comparing school performance year-over-year.

Beacon SPCSA Performance Framework:

Under the framework adopted by the Authority Board for Beacon Academy, student proficiency as compared to the national average in reading and mathematics on the MAP counts for 20 percent of a school's rating. The 2016-2017 proficiency data on Beacon's contractual Alternative Education Framework demonstrates that students are performing "exceptional" in both reading and math in NWEA MAP data when their results are compared with national average.

Beacon's Alternative Education Framework emphasizes student growth over proficiency. This category makes up 30 percent of the school's rating. The school received a math growth score indicating that students performed in the 53rd percentile when compared to pupils enrolled in alternative education programs in other states that also utilize the MAP assessment. This level of performance is considered adequate based on the expectations the Board approved in the performance framework. In contrast, students scored in the 44th percentile for reading, which is below the expectation set forth in the framework, meriting an "approaches" designation. It is important to note that this is the only category of the framework under which the school-wide results did not either meet or exceed the framework expectation.

College and career readiness and student engagement respectively make up 40 percent and 10 percent of the framework score. After examining the college and career readiness (CCR) and student engagement measures, the school-wide data shows that Beacon performed at an adequate or better level in every measure (including credit attainment, transition success, participation, and retention rate etc.).

Overall, the school-wide report card validated by Momentum shows that the school received 74.4 out of a possible 100 points, which is considered Adequate according to the standards as outlined in the framework; adequate would be considered 4 out of 6 in school's performance rating.

When the analysis is focused on the performance of the exclusively alternative education students, Beacon's contractual Alternative Education Framework demonstrates that students are performing at very low levels in both reading and math proficiency in NWEA MAP data when their results are compared with the national sample. This initial level of proficiency results in a "critical status" rating under the contractual framework.

It is important to note that the school did show some growth in both reading and math, with mathematics growth meeting the expectations set forth in the contractual framework. Beacon received a math growth score indicating students scored in the 55th percentile when compared to students enrolled in alternative education programs in other states that also utilize the MAP assessment. This level of performance is considered adequate based on the expectations the Board approved in the performance framework. In contrast, students scored in the 39th percentile in reading, which is below the expectation set forth in the framework, meriting an "unsatisfactory" designation. In contrast, the school-wide data on college and career readiness shows that Beacon performed at an "exceptional" and "exceeds" in transition success and participation measures. On the other hand, the credit attainment score is 55.9 percent, which is considered "approaches" based on the framework expectations. Additionally, the school

demonstrated high levels of attendance and retention (student persistence in school), receiving “exceeds” and “exceptional” designations in these respective areas.

Overall, the school-wide report card for alternative students only shows that the school received 47 out of a possible 100 points, which is considered “approaches” according to the standards as outlined in the framework; approaches would be considered 3 out of 6 in school’s performance rating.

It is important for the board to note that this performance level represents less than six months of implementation as the school began the transition from being an open-enrollment charter school serving a more general education population to a more high-need student body. That said, it will be important to monitor the results from the first full-year implementation when they become available, and for the Authority to carefully examine the results generated during this school year in the lead-up to a renewal decision in the fall of 2020. As the Authority is aware, existing regulation requires that the Authority, “when considering an application for renewal of a charter contract...[w]ill not give any one factor more weight than the academic performance of pupils; and...[w]ill, on each subsequent application for renewal, give the academic performance of pupils a greater weight than that assigned to it on the first renewal.”

Historical Performance, Enrollment, and Demographic Information:

Nevada School Performance Ratings – Beacon Academy of Nevada

School Year	Rating
2012	2 – star
2013	1 – star
2014	3 – star
2015	3 – star (continued)
2016	No star ratings released
2017	NA
2018	<i>To be released in September</i>

School Demographic Changes since 2015

Year	Total Enrollment¹	A	B	C	H	I	M	P	IEP	ELL	FRL
15-16	548	2.1%	11.3%	44.3%	33.2%	0.7%	6.0%	2.1%	12.0%	1.6%	46.8%
16-17	402	3.7%	12.4%	43.2%	31.0%	0.7%	5.7%	2.9%	15.4%	3.7%	50.4%
17-18	384	2.0%	17.9%	33.5%	37.5%	1.0%	4.6%	3.1%	18.2%	9.8%	57.2%

- A – Asian
- B – Black
- C – Caucasian
- H – Hispanic
- I – American Indian/Alaskan Native
- M – Mixed/Two or more races

¹ Enrollment as of Validation Day each year (October 1).

P – Pacific Islander

IEP – Individualized Education Plan –A student with a disability/special education student

ELL – English Language Learner

FRL – A student who qualifies for Free or Reduced-Price Lunch