



STATE PUBLIC CHARTER SCHOOL AUTHORITY

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BRIEFING MEMORANDUM

TO: SPCSA Board

FROM: Mike Dang, Management Analyst
Mark Modrcin, Director of Authorizing

SUBJECT: Agenda Item 17: Somerset Academy of Las Vegas Amendment Request: Addition of Extracurricular Bus Transportation

DATE: December 14, 2018

Somerset Academy of Las Vegas, operating under a charter contract entered in 2011, is located in Las Vegas, Nevada, serves 8,626 students in grades K-12 across seven campuses. Somerset Academy schools have NSPF Star Ratings between 2 and 5 stars. The Somerset North Las Vegas Elementary School is currently operating under a Notice of Concern and Somerset Academy's Losee High School was not rated under of the 2018 Nevada School Performance Framework. A detailed breakdown of this information can be found on page 4 of this memo. As discussed below, Staff recommends approval of the amendment request, with conditions.

Summary of Request:

The mission statement of Somerset Academy is to prepare students to excel in academics and attain knowledge through life-long learning by dedicating ourselves to providing equitable, high-quality education for all students. Somerset Academy of Las Vegas promotes a culture that maximizes student achievement and fosters the development of accountable 21st century learners in a safe and enriching environment. To help achieve this mission, the school is seeking to provide transportation for enrolled students to and from field trips and extracurricular activities on bus(es) owned by Somerset Academy of Las Vegas. All transportation to be provided under this plan will be limited to the following:

- All trips will originate at a Somerset campus;
- From Somerset campuses, the bus will transport participating students and the supervising adults to the destination of the field trip and/or extracurricular activity. Following the field trip and/or extracurricular activity, the bus will transport all participating students back to the Somerset campus where they will either return to class or be picked up by their parent/guardian(s);
- Possible passengers will be limited to enrolled students in grades 6 through 12 and supervising adults. Current enrollment at Somerset is 8,626 students as of validation day (October 1st);

- Field trips will begin and end during school hours. Extracurricular activities using the bus(es) considered under this plan will be limited to locations in southern Nevada to ensure return times are not too late; and
- The bus(es) will not be used to transport students outside of Nevada.

This proposed amendment will allow the school to offer a wider range of field trips and activities to its students so as to enhance their overall educational experience. The proposed amendment does not contemplate transportation for students to and from school on a daily basis. Finally, if approved, the school seeks to implement this proposed enhancement to programming as early as January 2019. To staff's knowledge, Somerset Academy has already purchased the buses to be used for the Sky Point and Losee campuses.

Somerset makes a number of assurances related to student safety within its amendment proposal. The school also provides a bevy of information related to student safety, such as a Bus Safety Program and Bus Checklist. Somerset Academy has been engaged with Nevada Department of Education personnel extensively to confirm that proper steps are outlined within. These include:

- Inspections by the Department of Public Safety to ensure that the vehicle is mechanically safe and meets the minimum specifications established by the State Board;
- Compliance with [NRS 386.815](#), which ensures that the driver of the vehicle does not operate a vehicle for more than 10 hours;
- Compliance with [NRS 386.820](#), which ensures that Somerset conducts Bus Evacuation Drills at least twice a year, has a Bus Safety Program, and has a process to inform parents and bus riders of important safety information;
- Compliance with [NRS 386.825](#), which ensures that the driver of the school bus will meet the minimum qualifications under the law; and
- Compliance with [NRS 386.830 – 386.840](#), which ensures that buses meet certain federal safety standards for motor vehicles which were applicable at the time the bus was manufactured and delivered for introduction in interstate commerce and includes Vehicle Safety Checks and semiannual vehicle inspections by the Nevada Highway Patrol.

Legal Authority and Requirements Related to Amendment Requests:

Pursuant to [NRS 388A.276](#) and [NRS 388A.279](#), the Authority may, at a duly noticed public meeting, approve, approve with conditions, or deny a request to amend a charter contract. Per the current charter contract with Somerset, Authority staff believes that a change in the transportation to be provided to students constitutes a material amendment to the current contract for Somerset Academy pursuant to [NAC 386.3269](#).

Recommendation: Approve with Conditions

Somerset Academy of Nevada schools have NSPF Star Ratings between 2-stars and 5-stars under the 2017 – 2018 Nevada State Performance Framework. Staff believes that this amendment will help the school attract students and enhance programming but is not mission-critical to the success of the school.

Authority staff recommends approval, but with conditions, to ensure a smooth and safe implementation of transportation for field trips and extracurricular activities. The school should submit the following to Authority staff:

- Evidence of a successful bus inspection to confirm that the vehicle is mechanically safe and meets the minimum specifications established by the State Board;

- A year-end report of bus evacuation drills completed by students and staff. This will occur annually at the end of each school year, and staff will work with the school to determine the appropriate format of the report;
- An annual statement signed by the head of school verifying that Somerset Academy plans to abide by the Charter School Bus Checklist as presented within the amendment application;
- An annual statement signed by the head of school verifying that Somerset Academy has a current Driver Qualification File for each bus driver; and
- Evidence of successful semiannual vehicle inspections by the Nevada Highway Patrol.

Total Current Enrollment Across All Campuses:

Grade Level	Total Amount Across All Existing Campuses - Number of Students													
	2011 - 2012	2012 -13	2013 -14	2014 -15	2015 -16	2016 -17	2017 -18	2018-19						
								Aliante	Lon e Mtn	Los ee	NL V	Sk ye	Sky Pt	Step h
Pre-K	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
K	209	268	378	466	556	569	572	125	101	125	120	98	125	98
1	159	270	404	473	573	573	579	124	99	125	125	100	125	98
2	160	248	394	473	572	571	581	126	100	125	124	101	125	100
3	146	238	363	477	575	575	573	123	100	125	125	100	125	100
4	103	198	356	473	573	599	606	98	99	125	124	126	125	123
5	100	198	323	495	597	600	604	100	100	125	124	125	125	125
6	118	186	322	590	692	747	735	107	120	208	143	110	175	119
7	60	118	231	456	661	710	712	28	120	211	142	70	177	117
8	N/A	59	177	354	464	679	661	0	119	205	134	25	180	84
9	N/A	N/A	68	201	254	317	397	0	0	207	0	0	204	0
10	N/A	N/A	N/A	65	197	257	300	0	0	179	0	0	178	0
11	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	64	180	216	0	0	118	0	0	126	0
12	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	55	153	0	0	71	0	0	118	0
Total	1055	1783	3016	4523	5778	6432	6689	831	958	1949	1161	855	1908	964

Background:

Somerset Academy Academic Performance

Year	NSPF Rating
2012	Elementary: 5 Stars Middle School: 5 Stars High School: N/A
2013	Elementary: 4 Stars Middle School: 4 Stars High School: N/A
2014	Elementary: 5 Stars Middle School: 5 Stars High School: N/A
2015	Elementary: 5 Stars (frozen from 2014) Middle School: 5 Stars (frozen from 2014) High School: N/A (frozen from 2014)

2016	No star rating published by State
2017	Elementary: 4 Stars Middle School: 3 Stars High School: N/A
2018	North Las Vegas Elementary School: 2 Stars Losee Elementary School: 3 Stars Stephanie Elementary School: 4 Stars Lone Mountain Elementary School:4 Stars Sky Pointe Elementary School:4 Stars Sky Pointe Middle School: 3 Stars North Las Vegas Middle School: 3 Stars Losee Middle School:3 Stars Stephanie Middle School: 5 Stars Lone Mountain Middle School: 5 Stars Sky Pointe High School: 3 Stars Losee High School:N/A

School Demographics:

Somerset	A	B	C	H	I	M	P	IEP	ELL	FRL
15-16	3.2%	9.7%	51.7%	26.0%	0.2%	7.5%	1.4%	8.9%	4.6%	0.6%
Somerset	A	B	C	H	I	M	P	IEP	ELL	FRL
16-17	3.1%	10.6%	48.5%	27.8%	0.4%	7.8%	1.5%	10.9%	6.6%	16.9%
Somerset	A	B	C	H	I	M	P	IEP	ELL	FRL
17-18	3.4%	11.1%	45.2%	30.2%	0.2%	8.0%	1.5%	12.1%	6.0%	14.7%
Somerset Aliante	A	B	C	H	I	M	P	IEP	ELL	FRL
18-19	5.4%	11.4%	33.0%	35.7%	0.6%	10.5%	3.4%	8.7%	1.9%	17.9%
Somerset Lone MTN	A	B	C	H	I	M	P	IEP	ELL	FRL
18-19	2.6%	6.4%	50.8%	30.7%	0.5%	7.7%	1.3%	9.4%	3.0%	24.4%
Somerset Losee	A	B	C	H	I	M	P	IEP	ELL	FRL
18-19	4.1%	17.8%	23.1%	45.5%	0.4%	7.5%	1.6%	11.5%	8.5%	44.9%
Somerset NLV	A	B	C	H	I	M	P	IEP	ELL	FRL
18-19	4.0%	22.7%	19.9%	43.3%	0.0%	7.8%	2.2%	10.8%	10.2%	43.1%
Somerset Skye Canyon	A	B	C	H	I	M	P	IEP	ELL	FRL
18-19	1.2%	1.5%	18.1%	24.1%	0.0%	54.6%	0.5%	8.3%	2.2%	11.0%
Somerset Sky Pointe	A	B	C	H	I	M	P	IEP	ELL	FRL
18-19	2.1%	7.1%	61.8%	19.5%	0.3%	8.3%	0.9%	12.2%	1.6%	13.2%
Somerset Stephanie	A	B	C	H	I	M	P	IEP	ELL	FRL
18-19	5.3%	7.0%	47.6%	28.0%	0.5%	9.5%	2.1%	12.0%	3.6%	35.5%

I – American Indian/Alaskan Native

A – Asian

H – Hispanic

B – Black

C - White

P – Pacific Islander

M – Two or more races

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