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October 1, 2018

TO: State Public Charter School Authority Governing Board

COPY: Patrick Gavin, Executive Director, State Public Charter School Authority

FROM: Steve Canavero, Ph.D., Superintendent of Public Instruction 

SUBJECT: State Public Charter School Authority-Sponsored Rising Stars Schools

On September 14, 2018 the Nevada Department of Education published the list of 2018 Rising Stars Schools, also known as Comprehensive Support and Improvement Schools under ESSA. Schools identified on the Rising Stars Schools List met at least one of the following criteria: 1) Performing in the bottom 5% of schools statewide 2) Achieving a 1-Star rating on the Nevada School Performance Framework, or 3) High schools graduating fewer than 67 percent of students.¹ The Comprehensive Support and Improvement designation requires the State to approve of school improvement plans and monitor progress.²

State and Federal laws and regulations delegate certain responsibilities to the Nevada Department of Education and, in the case of a charter school, the sponsor, concerning these schools. A list of immediate actions related to these responsibilities is on the subsequent pages of this memo Please note that some of these responsibilities require action no later than October 19, 2018

Thank you in advance for your attention and cooperation to ensure that these schools are provided with supports and interventions to improve performance and ultimately, student outcomes.

¹ Nevada's Federally Approved ESSA Plan

² ESSA Section 1111(d)(1)(B)(v-vi)

SPCSA-Sponsored Charter Schools

In 2017, the Nevada Department of Education sent Guidance Memo #16-06 (Attachment B) to the State Public Charter School Authority Governing Board outlining the district's responsibilities under NRS 388A.223 to monitor and take appropriate accountability actions towards low-performing charter schools under your sponsorship. These duties include but are not limited to a) monitoring the terms and conditions of charter contracts, b) monitoring the performance and compliance of each charter school, c) determining whether a charter contract merits renewal or denial, d) determining whether a charter contract should be terminated or restarted, and e) determining whether the governing body should be reconstituted. The State Public Charter School Authority responded to that memo in January of 2017 outlining a range of actions that the department found to "thoroughly fulfill its sponsorship obligations." These actions have resulted in Discovery Charter School improving from the bottom five percent to at least a 3-star rating, Beacon Academy participating in the Alternative Performance Framework and the closure of Silver State Charter School.

As detailed in following table, the Nevada Department of Education is requesting a response outlining the accountability actions that the State Public Charter School Authority will take with regard to SPCSA-sponsored charter schools on the Rising Stars List. In addition, we invite you to provide any additional details regarding successful actions taken with the 2016 Rising Stars Schools that can help to inform future charter school interventions by other sponsors.

SPCSA Responsibilities

- **Accountability Actions:** *[Action required by October 19, 2018]* Please outline any past, current or planned accountability actions in response to the performance of the SPCSA-sponsored charter schools that have been identified as a Rising Stars School over the last three years (see Attachment C for performance summary). No response is required for schools that achieved a 3-star rating or higher in 2018.

The Nevada Department of Education has outlined four possible actions:

- 1) The sponsor revokes or terminates the charter contract and re-assigns the students throughout the host district.
- 2) The sponsor initiates the process for school receivership with a third-party entity to manage remediation, planning, and transfer of authority.
- 3) The charter school chooses to seek a transformation partner and opt into to be considered by the Nevada Achievement School District.
- 4) For schools that have been identified for the first time, or have demonstrated significant and measurable progress based on the Nevada School Performance Framework, the sponsor requires the school to develop a remediation plan with clear student achievement targets that lead the school to achieve a 3-Star rating within three years.

Please submit your response by October 19, 2018.

Should you or your staff require consultation on accountability actions or your response to this request, you may work directly with Rebecca Feiden (rfeiden@doe.nv.gov) under direction of the Superintendent of Public Instruction.