



STATE PUBLIC CHARTER SCHOOL AUTHORITY

1749 North Stewart Street Suite 40
Carson City, Nevada 89706-2543
(775) 687 - 9174 • Fax: (775) 687 - 9113

BRIEFING MEMORANDUM

TO: SPCSA Board

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

SUBJECT: Nevada State High School –Amendment to add One Additional Campus under the Flagship Charter Contract, Relocate the Henderson Campus and Open One Administrative Office

DATE: July 26, 2019

Summary of Request:

The Board of Nevada State High School, operating under a charter contract, seeks an amendment to its flagship charter school to do the following:

1. Expand into one new location in Henderson beginning in the 2020 – 2021 school year. This campus would be located in the 89015, 89120, 89121 or 89122 zip codes and would support the small-site model of Nevada State High School, adding only a small number of seats each year. See page 4 of this memo for more details.
2. Relocate the NSHS-Henderson campus to one of the following zip codes: 89074, 89014 or 89012. The current NSHS-Henderson campus served 323 students in the 2018 – 2019 school year.
3. Open one new administrative office for NSHS personnel.

According to the amendment application, in January 2019 the NSHS Board approved the expansion of the school into two additional campuses in Henderson to open no earlier than the 2020 – 2021 school year. However, NSHS has tabled the second expansion at this time and plans to bring a request back to the Authority when there are more concrete plans.

As discussed below, SPCSA staff recommends that the Authority approve the request of NSHS, with conditions, to expand to one additional campus in Henderson, relocate the current Henderson campus, and open one new administrative office for NSHS personnel.

Background Information

NSHS is currently operating under three charter contracts. This amendment would be to the flagship charter contract, which expires on June 30, 2022.

The amendment application outlines a number of reasons for the additional campuses and new administrative building:

1. There is a need to relieve the current school locations from having to host administrative offices.
2. The Henderson campus' lease comes due at the end of the 2020 fiscal year. Approving this amendment will allow the school to freely negotiate with the renewal of the upcoming lease.
3. The NSHS system desires to enroll more underserved students in the Henderson community who will benefit from having the school's new 1200 – 1500 square foot one room school house model in closer proximity to their neighborhoods.

Nevada State High School has four expansion locations under its flagship charter contract. According to the amendment application, in 2004, the school started with 40 students working out of one single office at Nevada State College in Henderson. NSHS did not expand until 2014 when the school expanded operations into Summerlin. Expansion to other parts of the county came from the school's Governing Body recognizing that 60% of the students served at active locations are within one zip code of the school and the Governing Body used this as a strategy for succession by grooming a pipeline of next generation leaders in smaller locations.

Legal Authority and Requirements Related to Amendment Requests

[NRS 388A.279](#) requires that:

1. The State Public Charter School Authority, the board of trustees of the school district or a college or university within the Nevada System of Higher Education, as applicable, which sponsors a charter school may hold a public hearing concerning any request to amend a written charter or a charter contract of the charter school it sponsors, including, without limitation, a request to amend a written charter or charter contract for the purpose of:
 - a. Expanding the charter school to offer instruction in grade levels for which the charter school does not already offer instruction.
 - b. Increasing the total enrollment of a charter school or the enrollment of pupils in a particular grade level in the charter school for a school year to more than 120 percent of the enrollment prescribed in the written charter or charter contract for that school year.
 - c. Reducing the total enrollment of a charter school or the enrollment of pupils in a particular grade level in the charter school for a school year to less than 80 percent of the enrollment prescribed in the written charter or charter contract for that school year.
 - d. Seeking to acquire an additional facility in any county of this State to expand the enrollment of the charter school.
 - e. Consolidating the operations of multiple charter schools pursuant to [NRS 388A.282](#).

Staff Recommendation: Approve with Conditions

For all of these reasons, SPCSA staff is recommending that the Authority approve the request of Nevada State High School, with conditions, to add one new campus in Henderson, relocate the existing Henderson Campus, open one Administrative Office and adjust the enrollment cap for the flagship charter contract as defined on page 4 to respond to modest changes in demand at existing campuses. Additionally, staff recommends that the Authority attach two conditions to this approval:

1. Nevada State High School must demonstrate that it has faithfully executed on its plan to locate the expansion campus in Henderson in one of the following zip codes: 89015, 89120, 89121 or 89122. This can be done by providing authority staff with a copy of a lease agreement.
2. Nevada State High School – Henderson may relocate within any of the following zip codes: 89074, 89014 or 89012. The enrollment cap for this campus would be 275 students in 2020 – 2021 and then 210 students beginning with the 2021 – 2022 school year.

SPCSA staff will work with the Nevada State High School Board and staff to see that these requirements are fulfilled in preparation for the 2020 – 2021 school year.

Nevada School Performance Ratings (NSPF) – Nevada State High School

| <u>School Year</u> | <u>Rating(s)</u> |
|---------------------------|--|
| 2014 – 2015 | 5 stars |
| 2015 – 2016 | No Star Ratings Released |
| 2016 – 2017 | NA |
| 2017 – 2018 | NSHS – Henderson: 5 stars NSHS – Summerlin: 5 stars |

Nevada State High School Historical Enrollment – Flagship Charter (as of Validation Day)

| <u>2016 – 17</u> | <u>2017 – 18</u> | <u>2018 – 19</u> |
|-------------------------|-------------------------|-------------------------|
| 434 | 492 | 645 |

Proposed Enrollment of Flagship Charter if Approved¹

| | Net Additional Seats Added Under this Amendment | Total Student Population Cap |
|--------------------|--|-------------------------------------|
| 2018 – 2019 | N/A | 645 ² |
| 2019 – 2020 | N/A ³ | 790 |
| 2020 – 2021 | 90 ⁴ | 970 |
| 2021 – 2022 | 70 ⁵ | 1070 |

¹ Flagship Charter includes the following campuses: Henderson, Downtown, Summerlin, Northwest, Southwest and if approved, Henderson Campus #2

² This is the actual enrollment for NSHS (Flagship Charter) as of October 1, 2018

³ Additional seats at a new Southwest Campus were already approved by the board in Jun 2018

⁴ Additional seats at a new Northwest Campus were already approved by the board in June 2018

⁵ Additional seats at the Northwest Campus were already approved by the board in June 2018

Demographic Breakdown

| Year | A | B | C | H | I | M | P | IEP | ELL | FRL |
|--------------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|------------|------------|------------|
| 15-16 | 7.3% | 6.5% | 49.3% | 27.6% | 0.6% | 8.5% | 0.3% | 0.6% | 0.9% | 31.7% |
| 16-17 | 5.3% | 6.7% | 49.8% | 26.7% | 0.5% | 10.8% | 0.2% | 1.2% | 0.2% | 30.6% |
| 17-18 | 8.7% | 4.3% | 47.0% | 30.7% | 0.0% | 9.1% | 0.2% | 0.8% | 2.2% | 27.4% |
| 18-19 | 7.5% | 8.6% | 37.4% | 36.0% | 0.4% | 9.0% | 1.1% | 1.1% | 3.8% | 43.9% |

A – Asian

B – Black

C – Caucasian

H – Hispanic

I – American Indian/Alaskan Native

M – Two or more races

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

Attachment 1



Matthew Fox, Esq.
Chair

Wendi Hawk, EdD
Chief Executive Officer

July 23, 2019

Mark Modrcin, Director of Authorizing
State Public Charter School Authority
2080 E Flamingo Road
Las Vegas, NV 89119

Dear Mr. Modrcin:

Nevada State High School (NSHS) would like to recognize you and Executive Director Fieden for taking our input on a plan for growth as requested in AB 462. You wasted no time at getting started on the plan to better serve the academic needs of students in specific geographic locations and asking us to narrow the focus of our expansion just the same.

In the charter school amendment that was submitted to your office on Sunday, April 14, 2019, NSHS requested your approval of the following: 1) expanding two new locations in east and west Henderson (open 2020-21), 2) relocating the current flagship school (open 2021-22), and approving a central administrative office (open 2019-20).

NSHS is kindly requesting that the State Public Charter School Authority consider an update to our charter school amendment with a more narrowed focus on geographic locations to better serve the academic needs of students in those areas including:

- 1) Expanding one "new" location to potential zip codes: 89015, 89120, 89121, or 89122.
This will serve as the network's east Henderson expansion to open in 2020-21.
- 2) Opening one "new" administrative office (*central location for all staff*).
- 3) Relocating one "current" location to potential zip codes: 89074, 89014, or 89012.
This will serve to potentially relocate the current school that resides in zip code 89074.
- 4) Expanding one "new" location.
This will serve as the network's west Henderson expansion to open in 2020-21 or 2021-22. It is requested that NSHS and SPCSA be given more time to consider the best area for this location.

Sincerely,

John Hawk, COO

APPROVED
By Johnathan D. Hawk at 2:54 pm, Jul 23, 2019

Matthew Fox, Esq., Chair of Nevada State High School
Rebecca Feiden, Director at the State Public Charter School Authority

Synopsis

Nevada State High School at Henderson served 330 students 2018-19 and plans to serve 350 students SY1920 with a capacity of 400 students. This flagship location (5,800 SF) is currently leased at \$1.58/SF with a lease expiring 4/30/2021. The current market in the area is showing a range of \$2.00/SF to \$2.50/SF, and the given circumstances NSHS projects to be priced out of the building. NSHS is asking the SPCSA to expand with two new smaller locations, relocate the flagship location if the school is unsuccessful at renegotiating its lease, and open a central office. This could potentially lead to having three smaller locations (1,000 to 1,500 SF). The three smaller locations would combine to serve a total of 630 students in 3,000 to 4,500 SF in three separate geographic locations (east, west, and central) in the city of Henderson.

After speaking with the staff at the SPCSA, the school has decided to narrow its request to serve the academic needs of students in “specific” geographic locations. This has made changes to the schools planned enrollment numbers at each location and across the network (see table 1).

Table 1: Planned enrollment

| Location | Grade | 2019 – 20 | 2020 – 21 | 2021 – 22 | 2022 – 23 | 2023 – 24 | 2024 – 25 |
|------------------------|------------------|--|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|
| Henderson (HND) | 11 th | 190 | 150 | 160 | 160 | 170 | 170 |
| | 12 th | 160 | 125 | 130 | 135 | 135 | 140 |
| Summerlin (LAS) | 11 th | 130 | 130 | 130 | 130 | 140 | 140 |
| | 12 th | 100 | 105 | 110 | 115 | 110 | 115 |
| Downtown (LAS) | 11 th | 60 | 70 | 70 | 80 | 80 | 80 |
| | 12 th | 40 | 50 | 60 | 57 | 64 | 71 |
| Southwest (LAS) | 11 th | 60 | 80 | 90 | 90 | 100 | 100 |
| | 12 th | 50 | 60 | 70 | 80 | 79 | 88 |
| Meadowood (RNO) | 11 th | separate charter contract | | | | | |
| | 12 th | | | | | | |
| Northwest (LAS) | 11 th | planning & development | 50 | 70 | 80 | 90 | 90 |
| | 12 th | | 40 | 50 | 70 | 68 | 76 |
| Sunrise (LAS) | 11 th | separate charter contract | | | | | |
| | 12 th | | | | | | |
| Expansion 1 (east HND) | 11 th | planning & development | 60 | 70 | 80 | 90 | 100 |
| | 12 th | | 50 | 60 | 70 | 80 | 90 |
| Expansion 2 (west HND) | 11 th | working with SPCSA on best geographic location | | | | | |
| | 12 th | | | | | | |
| Totals | Henderson | 350 | 385 | 420 | 445 | 475 | 500 |
| | Flagship | 790 | 970 | 1070 | 1147 | 1206 | 1260 |

Conclusion

NSHS is asking that the SPCSA staff include these updates as recommend changes to the previously submitted charter amendment for approval at the July 2019 meeting.

Attachment 2



**Nevada State Public
Charter School
Authority**

To: Matthew Fox, Board President, Nevada State High School
Dr. Wendi Hawk, Chief Academic Officer, Nevada State High School
From: Mark Modrcin, Director of Authorizing, State Public Charter School Authority
CC: Jason Guinasso, Chair, State Public Charter School Authority
Rebecca Feiden, Executive Director, State Public Charter School Authority
Date: May 24, 2019
Re: Site Evaluation Report for Nevada State High School – Summerlin

**SITE EVALUATION REPORT
Nevada State High School – Summerlin**

Site Evaluations are a critical accountability component to the oversight of schools by the Nevada State Public Charter School Authority (SPCSA) and are fundamental to charter schools' autonomy. As approved by the Legislature [NRS-388A.150] the Authority is to *“provide oversight to the charter schools that it sponsors to ensure that those charter schools maintain high educational and operational standards, preserve autonomy and safeguard the interests of pupils and the community.”*

Site Evaluations allow the SPCSA to assess schools' student achievement, progress to goals, and fulfillment of their mission, vision, and educational program outlined in their charter. Improving the learning of pupils, and, by extension, the public education system; increased opportunities for learning and access to quality education; and a more thorough and efficient system of accountability for student achievement in Nevada are all foundational elements of the SPCSA's mission, the legislative intent of charter schools and are central elements of the Authority's on-going evaluation of charter schools.

The SPCSA conducts multiple visits and evaluations throughout schools' charter terms. The cumulative evidence through multi-year oversight measures become part of the record that help inform recommendations put forth by SPCSA staff, specifically renewal recommendations to the Authority Board. The Board of the Nevada State Public Charter School Authority makes all final charter renewal decisions. Site Evaluations are just one criteria considered for renewal; student achievement, financial prudence, and fulfillment of the program outlined in the approved charter are also evaluated by the Authority when making renewal decisions.

Attached is the Site Evaluation Report for Nevada State High School - Summerlin, which was conducted by Mark Modrcin and Mike Dang on April 4, 2019. The optional school response is also included. The school is currently in its 3rd year of its 3rd charter term, which expires on June 30, 2022.

Please contact the Team Lead for this Site Evaluation, Mark Modrcin, with any questions.

SITE EVALUATION REPORT: NEVADA STATE HIGH SCHOOL

Campus Name: Summerlin Campus

Grade Levels: K – 12

School Leader: Dr. Wendi Hawk

Purpose of Site Evaluation: Year 3, third charter term

Date of Authorization: July 2003

Evaluation Date: Thursday, April 4, 2019

Conducted By: Mark Modrcin & Mike Dang

SUMMARY OF SITE EVALUATION

The mission of Nevada State High School is to support students in a college environment with personal, academic, and social skills.

During our Site Evaluation, the team observed this mission being lived out on campus through the following:

- Consistent reminders for students regarding the importance of the three pillars described within the mission statement: personal, academic and social skills. The observed spoke to this throughout the lesson and detailed why each is important to a college student.
- Staff members recognize and spoke to their specific role to ensure that NSHS students can be successful to and through college. Staff members that are more student-facing recognized that they play an important role as the 'entry point' for a student's college trajectory. Back-office personnel recognize that their role is critical to operations and help ensure a conducive working environment is possible.
- NSHS provides students with individualized supports and supplementary courses, such as the observed Study Skills classroom, that imitates a college-like environment.

Site Evaluation team members observed instruction in the lone class, Study Skills, offered at the Summerlin campus that day. Staff observed 18 students actively participating in the Study Skills class. An additional 10 students were present in the classroom space to receive additional help. The SPCSA evaluation team observed the Study Skill class for a combined total of 124 minutes. Evaluators were able to observe the class during the middle and end of period.

Observers noted that students also appeared actively engaged and familiar with expectations while on campus. No behavior issues were observed.

Note:

Due to the unique structure of Nevada State High School, SPCSA staff only observed one classroom to adhere to the Authority-approved site evaluation protocol. The ratings on the following pages, therefore, represent a smaller than normal sample size and instruction delivered by one teacher (Educational Advising Coordinator). SPCSA staff looks forward to evaluating the remaining NSHS sites in the 2019 – 2020 school year to develop a more representative school-wide rating.

I. CLASSROOM ENVIRONMENT

| Classroom Environment | Evidence Observed | School-wide Rating |
|--|---|---|
| Creating an Environment of Respect and Rapport | The Educational Advising Coordinator (EAC) maintains positive communication when instructing and supporting students both in whole group and individual settings. In one instance, the EAC worked with a student who is behind in their work, politely reminding the student that there are ways to prevent this situation from recurring. Additionally, students are on-task and respectful of one another, whether working on the Study Skills lesson or in the back of the room receiving support. | Distinguished Proficient Basic Unsatisfactory Not Observed |
| Establishing a Culture of Learning | The EAC exhibited a strong desire to instruct and support students as evidenced by her individual check-ins with all students throughout the class period to assess progress and identify deficiencies. Additionally, the classroom featured the personal and social goals for students, which mirror the student scorecard. This indicates the school is aligned to its mission and emphasizing its importance on a regular basis. | Distinguished Proficient Basic Unsatisfactory Not Observed |
| Managing Classroom Procedures | Observers did not observe any loss of instructional time. Only minor instances of disruptions or off-task behavior were noted by the team, such as side conversations unrelated to the lesson among students. The EAC actively moved around the room to address and any of these situations from escalating. | Distinguished Proficient Basic Unsatisfactory Not Observed |
| Managing Student Behavior | Observers did not note any misbehavior that warranted reprimands or redirection by the EAC. On two occasions, the EAC did remind the students of their time constraints within the lesson and an impending due date, but these were not in response to misbehavior. The teacher did move around the room frequently so as to effectively monitor student behavior. | Distinguished Proficient Basic Unsatisfactory Not Observed |

II. INSTRUCTIONAL OBSERVATION

| Instructional Observation | Evidence Observed | School-wide Rating |
|---|---|---|
| Communicating with Students | The EAC delivered directions, content and support throughout the lesson clearly and accurately. The teacher's tone in her communication was positive and she worked to connect individually with all students as evidenced by her movement around the room and tailored questions to specific students based on their knowledge and performance within that lesson. | Distinguished Proficient Basic Unsatisfactory Not Observed |
| Using Questioning and Discussion Techniques | During the observation, the teacher employed a mixture of low-level and high-level questions to challenge and support students. Most high-level questions were asked in a one-on-one setting. For example, the EAC starts a line of questioning about | Distinguished Proficient Basic Unsatisfactory Not Observed |

| | | |
|--|--|--|
| | health habits in college with basic recall questions and builds to analyzing and application questions on the same topic. | |
| Engaging Students in Learning | Students were actively engaged throughout the lesson. For example, students appeared on-task throughout and were working collaboratively to complete the assignment, asking questions when necessary, and were heard conversing about the lesson. The instruction and materials provided to students appeared appropriate and aligned with one another. The pace of the lesson allowed most students to complete for their work. | Distinguished Proficient Basic Unsatisfactory Not Observed |
| Using Assessment in Instruction | SPCSA staff did not have sufficient evidence to rate this indicator. | Distinguished Proficient Basic Unsatisfactory Not Observed |

III. OPERATIONS

| Instructional Observation | Evidence Observed | School-wide Rating |
|---------------------------------------|---|--|
| Mission-driven Operations | Operations for both staff and students are executed seamlessly and with a sense of urgency that ties to the school's mission. The Educational Advising Coordinator (EAC) starts class promptly, leading with the day's objective which ties to the mission of the school. Meanwhile, approximately 10 students are in the back of the same room working with a tutor to support their progress in college courses. This is clear evidence that students and staff are focused on utilizing class time efficiently with a priority on the lesson and supporting students seeking extra help. | Distinguished Proficient Basic Unsatisfactory Not Observed |
| Managing Schoolwide Procedures | Schoolwide routines and procedures are evident as all students, including those that are here only for additional support, know where to sit and how to conduct themselves during their time on campus. | Distinguished Proficient Basic Unsatisfactory Not Observed |
| Maintaining a Safe Environment | Staff has clearly worked to establish a safe and secure working environment, as evidenced by the posted emergency exits and plans for evacuation. There were no security or procedural issues observed. | Distinguished Proficient Basic Unsatisfactory Not Observed |

IV. FOCUS GROUP SUMMARY

| Group | Number of Participants | Duration |
|---------------------------|------------------------|------------|
| Governing Board Members | 2 | 45 minutes |
| School Leadership Team | 5 | 60 minutes |
| Parents / Families | 3 | 45 minutes |
| Students ¹ | 9 | 45 minutes |
| School Staff (w/teachers) | 6 | 45 minutes |

¹ The student focus group included some students from the NSHS – Henderson and NSHS – Downtown campuses.

Site Evaluation team members conducted five Focus Groups, one each with the following groups: Governing Board, school leadership team, parents/families, students, and school Staff. Participants were asked a series of questions, including common questions across all Focus Groups, with a range of 5 to 15 questions, depending on the group. The staff focus group included a mix of instructional and non-instructional staff.

In general, the following themes developed from each of the following Focus Groups:

Governing Board

- The Board indicated that they are very familiar with the current performance of the school and how they are progressing against their academic goals as well as the school's stated mission. One Board member illustrated this in detail: "We get reports on student performance regularly. These reports use a tiered system—red, green and yellow. This is very detailed, broken down by campus, with some commentary and explanation from the school leadership team. We also look at graduation rates."
- The Board recognizes the difference between their role for oversight and the school leadership team's role of management. Both Board members stated that they desire to be as responsive and accessible for the leadership to address the needs of the school but to not micromanage the execution of the program. One Board member provided the example of the current Executive Director search, indicating that the current leadership team was struggling to fill this role. The Board has been leveraged in this process to extend the school's reach and offer assistance.
- Board members spoke about receiving a great deal of information regarding Nevada State High School and met with the school leadership team before becoming official Board members. Additionally, Board members stated that there is some annual training, but it is provided by school leadership.

School Leadership Team

- The leadership team believes that the school is faithfully executing on its mission statement to successfully transition students to and through college. One leadership team member said, "We use the three pillars of success—academic, personal and social—throughout the semester during class, and tie it to every assignment." Other leadership team members agreed that one of the biggest strengths of the school is to offer college courses to high school students.
- The leadership team has implemented a rigorous hiring process to help them find the right educators. One staff member spoke to this in detail: "We do a lot of advertising through Indeed, Teacher2Teacher, EdWeek, and NASA (Nevada Association of School Administrators) to get the word out. Under our new process, we weed out a lot of people because we do a culture fit contract and interview for each position to which they are applying. This gives [the school leadership team] an idea if this person is the right fit for the school. The candidate also observes classrooms and the day-to-day operations to get a glimpse of the day."
- Weekly staff meetings, trainings, the master calendar and email are all leveraged by the school in order to promote strong communication. The leadership team stressed the multiple forms of communication help because they must support multiple campuses, each with a separate staff.
- School leadership prioritizes consistency in the coaching and evaluation of teachers. One member of the team noted, "We give teachers time to rotate so they can look at other teachers and observe them. Site administrators do evaluations, but those of us from other

sites are brought in as well. If there are inconsistencies, we recognize that we need to re-norm as a team which could involve additional training.”

Parents / Families

- All parents agreed that NSHS provides their students a comfortable, yet challenging, environment for their children to be successful as they transition to college. One parent described the school this way, “NSHS is a perfect setting. [My student] has never fit in at the regular high school. He seemed to get lost as it was so large. This particular setup allows [him] to be more in control of his education and meet his goals.”
- Parents expressed strong support of the communication provided by the school regarding individual student progress. Specifically, one parent commented that the regular meetings with the school counselor really help them understand the upcoming semester. S/he said, “I have to meet with the counselor along with my student, but I am told what classes they are enrolled in, and everything is explained to both me and my student. This is helpful, and I feel fully aware.” All parents added that they always feel welcome at the school.
- There was consensus among the parents that NSHS is preparing their students for success beyond high school graduation for multiple reasons. One parent summed it up this way, “The on-campus experience has been very positive for my student. He can go up and ask questions and has grown comfortable doing this over time. For him to be able to do this is remarkable. While there is a wide variety of students in these courses, no one knows he is actually in high school.”

Students

- Students overwhelmingly endorsed the school’s ability to prepare them for college. Multiple individuals stated that NSHS teaches them responsibility, how to be independent, and prepares them to be successful upon graduation and after college. One comment from a student was particularly telling: “A lot of people are shocked I have a resume [at my age], but I know that a job interview is more than just the actual interview.”
- There was some shared frustration among students about the availability of current textbooks and classroom resources outside of the university. While students recognized that they are always available on campus, individual NSHS campuses may not offer the same textbooks to borrow from campus sites, and editions may not be the correct one. This can be an added cost to students which can get cost-prohibitive.
- Multiple students in the focus group commented how safe they feel on campus, especially given some of the current events across the country. One student stated, “Some schools can be crazy and dangerous. I don’t feel like a target in this school, I’m not intimidated when I come here, and I don’t worry about fitting-in. These differences make this place special.”
- Students echoed the sentiments shared during the parent/family focus group about college preparedness. Students indicated that they feel very prepared due to the number of college courses they have completed, their familiarity with the expectations of college professors, and the basic differences between high school and college.
- The majority of students in the focus group shared comments and frustration regarding the school’s policies on CAP forms, the consequences of not following courses, and the fines for dropped courses or those that are not passed. Students commented that CAP forms are important, but that it requires near perfection to avoid school or college fines. When asked how fines work if you do not pass a course, multiple students chimed in unison: “If we fail, we have to pay for it unless it can be demonstrated that [we] tried every avenue to correct the problem.”

School Staff

- Like respondents in other focus groups, school staff members gave high praise to NSHS for closely adhering to their stated mission and helping prepare its students for college and beyond. Multiple staff members said that the greatest strengths of NSHS are the core values and the attention and support students receive when they are on-campus due to the smaller class sizes.
- Staff expressed optimism that the new, restructured staffing structure that incorporates the EOS model will continue to foster improvement for all staff. One participant in the focus group stated: *“The transition to the new system has been a challenge, but communication has begun to improve. We need to continue to work on this so that our improvement trickles down to benefit students.”*
- School staff reiterated the importance of communication, particularly with the District Site Administrators (DSAs), which helps provide feedback to employees while also keeping everyone apprised of priorities for the entire NSHS system.

V. OVERALL STRENGTHS OF PROGRAM

1. The school boasts a positive culture that reflects the mission and vision of the school

All stakeholders – parents, staff, students, leadership – expressed their satisfaction with the school’s culture, and attributed this to the school consistently working towards fulfilling its mission on a daily basis. Members of both the leadership team and staff commented that this is one of the biggest strengths of the school. Parents validated this sentiment

2. Robust human capital and performance systems reinforce high expectations and provide unique opportunities for staff development

Multiple members of the leadership team spoke to the unique professional development system used by NSHS as a way to effectively drive improvement in a very tailored manner. Specifically, staff is required to submit their professional development twice a year off of a menu of options which includes annual conferences to published articles/literature. When coupled with the robust and extensive employee performance incentive system, it is clear that the school has benefitted from systems and training that focus on motivating and developing staff. All staff indicated that they are very content with the professional development opportunities made available to them, and that the new EOS system has helped them become a more cohesive unit.

3. NSHS offers strong instruction that focuses on instilling habits of success

The environment imitates a college atmosphere, where students are responsible for seeking out help, and ties to the school’s mission. During the classroom observation, both the students in the back of the room and those that were receiving instruction in the Study Skills class understand classroom expectations as evidenced by their execution of procedures during class and work independently. The EAC was actively engaged in the learning of the students and tied the lesson to the three pillars of the school at the beginning, middle and end of the lesson. These skills, and frequent reminders of the importance of academic, social and personal success, are critical to the development of successful individuals.

4. Students are provided with a safe learning environment

During the student focus group, multiple students voiced that they feel safe and comfortable while at the NSHS – Summerlin campus. Parents also shared that they are satisfied with their students’ experience given the small setting. Given school safety headlines both in Nevada as well as nationally, SPCSA staff believes this is important and speaks to the efforts of staff to provide a welcoming environment where students are comfortable, but also feel

safe. This type of conducive atmosphere allows students to focus on the task removes the possibility of some safety distractions.

VI. RECOMMENDATIONS & ACTION ITEMS

1. **Formal Board governance training should be provided by an external third-party and occur on at least an annual basis**

It was confirmed during the Board Focus Group, and the evaluation debrief at the end of the day, that the full NSHS Board undergoes a brief, 20-minute governance training annually. This training is provided by a member of the NSHS team. SPCSA staff does not believe that there are any governance issues present at NSHS, but best practices suggest that Board training should be delivered by a third-party that can speak to a variety of topics such as the fiduciary responsibilities of Board members, school leader evaluations, etc. A stronger, annual training in addition to a formal orientation for Board members can only benefit the school as the composition of the NSHS Board changes. Effective training can also provide the school a safety net during times of unexpected transition.

Action Item

In collaboration with SPCSA staff, identify possible service providers of governance training in advance of the 2019 – 2020 school year. An external training will help current and future Board members understand their roles and responsibilities as the legal holders of the charter contract. NSHS Board members may also consider speaking with Board members of other, unaffiliated public charter schools to determine what may be the best path forward.

2. **Serve more at-risk students in future years, especially as the NSHS footprint expands to new campuses**

As verified by email communication following the site evaluation, the student population at NSHS – Summerlin lags behind in two demographic categories when compared to the averages for the state of Nevada, Clark County School District and/or the SPCSA portfolio. Specifically, 2% of NSHS – Summerlin students have an IEP, 3% are English language learners. There are a few additional students that have a 504 plan or that are on an ELL ‘watch list’.

Recommendation

In collaboration with SPCSA staff, develop a plan prior to July 1, 2019 to increase the diversity of NSHS-Summerlin prior to the 2020 – 21 school year. This plan may include pursuing an aggressive school marketing and recruitment plan in multiple languages across the Las Vegas metropolitan area to different student demographics, moving or expanding to areas that are underserved, and/or implementing a weighted lottery at the Summerlin campus for admissions in the 2020 – 21 school year. The SPCSA recognizes the value of having diverse schools that are representative of the community in which they are located.

3. **Continue to reflect and look at the NSHS staffing model, including the possibility of consolidating all campuses to one charter**

SPCSA staff heard from multiple staff members a sincere appreciation for the new NSHS staffing model, and how communication appears to be improving as the school leverages multiple platforms and avenues to keep staff apprised of upcoming events and deadlines. At the same time, NSHS – Summerlin staff expressed some concern that the school may not continue to reflect so as to make future adjustments, especially as the school continues to add seats in the coming academic years.

Recommendation

In collaboration with staff and the Governing Board, NSHS leadership should continue to evaluate the staffing model and governance model so as to be responsive to needs and improvements on at least an annual basis, if not more frequently. SPCSA staff is confident this work is already underway. As the NSHS footprint grows across the state, the SPCSA evaluation believes that this work will serve the whole NSHS system well in both the short and long-term.

4. Modify the Student and Parent Handbook and the NSHS Student Scorecard to ensure compliance with regulations and to reinforce a college-like atmosphere

As NSHS personnel is aware, SPCSA staff has expressed some concerns regarding language currently included within the NSHS Student/Parent Handbook as well as the NSHS Student Scorecard. Specifically, these issues center around student enrollment and the ability for a charter school to levy fines for failure to abide by an academic program.

Action Item

By August 1, 2019, modify the NSHS Student/Parent Handbook, Student Scorecard, NSHS website and all enrollment materials to ensure compliance with regulations and statutes. SPCSA staff directs the school to make the following changes effective the 2019 – 2020 school year:

- Remove all language and references to student fines issued by NSHS for a student's inability to follow a Course Approval Form (CAP) or earn a passing grade. Use of the term fine must be replaced with language that comports with [NRS 389.310](#), and must provide specific examples as to when a pupil could be asked to pay for all or part of their tuition for a dual credit course. SPCSA staff believes it is permissible for NSHS to pass along tuition costs to a student enrolled in a dual-credit course *after* completing and signing a CAP form. In this circumstance, tuition costs passed along to the student may not be excessive or above the actual cost of the individual course. Lastly, NSHS may not pass along tuition course costs to students that remain enrolled at NSHS that fail a course or earn a passing grade.
- Add clarifying language to the NSHS Student Scorecard stating that all students classified as an 11th or 12th grader are eligible to attend NSHS no matter their incoming GPA. The current Student Scorecard assigns a point value for incoming high school GPA but can be interpreted to be a barrier to entry for students. SPCSA staff suggests adding a footnote to the scorecard to provide a detailed explanation about how incoming GPA is used by the school, but NSHS leadership may propose an alternative solution to this concern.

The SPCSA authorizing team commits to working proactively with the NSHS leadership team to address both of these concerns prior to the August 1, 2019 deadline. Additionally, SPCSA staff plans to evaluate all other NSHS campuses during the 2019 – 2020 school year and looks forward to working with NSHS leadership to ensure that this is done in a seamless manner that adheres to the Authority-approved site evaluation process.

Note

SPCSA School Support Team members will follow-up on each of these recommendations during their next site visit, unless otherwise noted.

###



Matthew Fox, Esq.
Chair

Wendi Hawk, EdD
Chief Executive Officer

May 15, 2019

Mark Modrcin, Director of Authorizing
State of Nevada, State Public Charter School Authority
9890 South Maryland Parkway, Suite 200B
Las Vegas, Nevada 89183

Dear Mr. Modrcin:

I am in receipt of your draft "Site Evaluation Report for Nevada State High School – Summerlin" sent to me on May 10, 2019. During your correspondence, you invited the school to include option school responses which are provided for your review and insertion into the report including:

- General – Nevada State High School is requesting that this report name Downtown and Henderson as was indicated would be the case prior to the site evaluation.
- Board Training – The SPCSA is requesting formal annual board training
ACTION – BOARD TRAINING IS BEING SCHEDULED EARLY NEXT SCHOOL YEAR
- Serve More Underserved – It appears that the SPCSA was not reporting on Summerlin data as the Summerlin data is different than the report suggests given that over 50% of the students in Summerlin are FRL. NSHS has a lottery system approved by requirement, but does not have need for a lottery system due to the dual credit nature of the school as students are not on the NSHS campus continually. NSHS does not have a plan to exclude ANY student from the school with a weighted lottery. Furthermore, if all data for the sites that were supposed to be observed including Downtown and Henderson, the SPCSA would see that the Summerlin population is one of the most diverse campuses with 29% White students (per the Nevada Report Card for 17-18 the White population was 32.47% state-wide and 44.05% for the SPCSA portfolio) and 50% FRL. Furthermore, Downtown is 7% White with over 65% FRL. The Henderson campus represents the same if not more diversity than its feeder high schools in Henderson that are also overcrowded. Black and Hispanic students and FRL students are deemed to be "underserved" by NDE in which NSHS has already proved the commitment to serve all students as proven through the opening of locations in low socio-economic areas. NSHS showed evidence that great effort has been taken to reach out to Hispanics and targeted underserved low-socio economic areas through mailers and Spanish advertising and events. All 10th and 11th graders are targeted for Southern and Northwestern parts of Nevada
ACTION – NSHS WILL CONTINUE EFFORTS TO RECRUIT AND ENROLL ALL INTERESTED 11TH AND 12TH GRADE STUDENTS ESPECIALLY UNDERSERVED

- Single Charter Consolidation – SPCSA is recommending to consolidate into one charter ACTION – NSHS SUPPORTS THIS ITEM AND WOULD LIKE TO MOVE FORWARD WITH THE SPCSA RECOMMENDATION ON HOW TO ACCOMPLISH THIS SUGGESTION.
- Modify Student Handbook – The word “fines” will be removed from the handbook and cap form and replaced with a reference to NRS 389.310 regarding passing on tuition costs to families. This action item from the SPCSA as stated oversteps the interpretation of the NRS they reference which does not specify the outlined limitations and directly contradicts NRS 388a.366.1.(c) and other evidence that was provided in an earlier response regarding the ability of NSHS to pass on tuition costs if the local district is authorized to charge.
ACTION – NSHS WILL FOLLOW THE LAWS AS OUTLINED IN NRS 389.310 AND NRS 388a.366.1.(c) AND CHANGE THE FINE TERMINOLOGY TO PASS ON TUITION COSTS
- Scorecard with gpa – NSHS does not see that a scorecard report that is first reported to families in October leads to any indication that the school is screening students at admissions. Historically and national data shows that gpa, math levels, test scores etc. have an impact on a student’s successful progress in college. Incoming data and initial assessment data taken during the first two weeks at the school help the staff target those in need of interventions. The scorecard also has no impact on graduation – it is only an intervention tool. Mandating the removal of this item that is part of an essential intervention tracking system is an intrusion on the school’s autonomy and poor educational practice.
ACTION – NSHS WILL PROTECT THE INTEGRITY OF THE STUDENT REGARDING THE SCORECARD GPA AND WILL PLACE A CLARIFYING STATEMENT IN THE HANDBOOK REGARDING INCOMING DATA AND SCORECARD COLOR DO NOT IMPACT HIGH SCHOOL GRADUATION.

Nevada State High School takes your correspondence seriously and shall be taking the above actions to protect the integrity of the student and the overall operations of Nevada State High School while comporting to the laws of Nevada. Please contact me directly if you have any questions at whawk@earlycollegenv.com or (702) 332-5063.

Sincerely,



Wendi Hawk
Chief Executive Officer