

NEVADA STATE PUBLIC CHARTER SCHOOL AUTHORITY

November 1, 2019

Nevada Department of Education
700 East 5th Street
Board Room
Carson City, Nevada

Nevada Department of Education
2080 East Flamingo
1st Floor Board Room
Las Vegas, Nevada

MINUTES OF THE MEETING

BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT:

In Las Vegas:

Tonia Holmes-Sutton
Don Soifer
Mallory Cyr
Sheila Moulton
Sami Randolph
Randy Kirner

In Carson City:

Melissa Mackedon

AUTHORITY STAFF PRESENT:

In Las Vegas:

Rebecca Feiden, Executive Director
Mark Modrcin, Director of Authorizing
Lisa Dzierbicki, Education Programs Professional

In Carson City:

Ryan Herrick, General Counsel
Danny Peltier, Management Analyst I
Susan Hanshew, Legal Assistant

AUDIENCE IN ATTENDANCE:

In Las Vegas:

(See attached sign-in sheet.)

In Carson City:

(See attached sign-in sheet.)

Agenda Item 1 – Call to Order, Roll Call, and Pledge of Allegiance

Chair Melissa Mackedon called the meeting to order at 9:00 a.m. with attendance as reflected above.

Chair Mackedon began the meeting by saying that “Public Comment” is going to be done differently at this meeting. She asked Mr. Herrick to explain the exact procedure.

Ryan Herrick, General Counsel, State Public Charter School Authority (SPCSA). Mr. Herrick said that the SPCSA has changed its procedure for public comment. He referenced page 1 of the Notice of Public Meeting with the sub-heading “Public Comment”. The Open Meeting Law requires multiple periods of public comment will be provided. Mr. Herrick explained the two ways it can be done to comply with the requirements of the Open Meeting Law. The first is to have public comment at the beginning and the end of the meeting. Generally, the public comment at the beginning relates to agenda items and at the end of the meeting it relates to anything within that public body’s jurisdiction which is anything that relates to charter schools that is not on the agenda.

Since the next few meetings will have numerous new applicants, amendments and renewal applications, which are school-specific agenda items, the SPCSA decided to have public comment after each agenda item and at the end of the meeting. Each agenda item may contain a presentation by SPCSA staff, any school’s or applicant’s testimony, discussion by the Board and then any public comment related to that agenda item and then the Board will vote if any action is needed.

The public comment cards now include the agenda item and name of the school the public comment applies. The individual on the card will be called to comment after the applicable agenda item has been heard.

Agenda Item 2 – Approval of the October 4, 2019 SPCSA Board Meeting Action Minutes

Member Soifer moved to approve the October 4, 2019 minutes. Member Holmes-Sutton seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

Agenda Item 3 – Strategic Planning and Growth Management Plan

Rebecca Feiden, Executive Director, State Public Charter School Authority. Executive Director Feiden said that she expects a robust conversation about the Strategic Plan and Growth Management Plan (GMP). She began her PowerPoint presentation regarding these two plans and it can be found with the supporting

materials for this agenda item. These two plans are interconnected. The Strategic Plan is the over-arching, public-facing 5-year plan for the agency and for our schools and the GMP is one of three implementation plans. It is more technical and describes the details of how the SPCSA will accomplish the authorizing component of the Strategic Plan and is required under Assembly Bill (AB) 462. It also includes a detailed articulation of milestones for internal tracking and management. The GMP will be treated as a public document whereas the other implementation plans will not contain as much context and background.

Slide 4 sets forth six components of the Strategic Plan which include: vision; mission; values, goals; strategies and measures. Vision, mission and values were discussed at the last Board meeting and revised versions will be presented today. Goals, strategies and measures will be seen by the Board for the first time at this meeting.

A draft of the Strategic Plan has been put together in a glossy version that contains the current content so the Board can see how this information will come together when it is complete. It can be found with the supporting materials for this agenda item.

The proposed mission and vision took into consideration the comments from the Board members at the last meeting and are set forth on slide 5 of the presentation. The proposed values with complete definitions are contained on slide 6. The student-focused description now brings in the concept of families. Excellence through improvement now contains a little more detail as to what it means to the SPCSA internally and the schools we work with. Transparency remains similar to the last version. The language has been tightened up for accountable autonomy. Equity and diversity are similar to the last iteration. Leadership has changed the most to include our growth and development.

Chair Mackedon asked for any comments from the Board about the definition of “vision”.

Member Randolph said as it relates to “vision” in terms of the aspirational component, she still feels strongly about the innovation aspect being left out which is originally what the charter school motto contained. She still wants that included. Otherwise, she was pleased with the adjustments.

Executive Director Feiden responded that the word “diverse” was used instead of “innovation”. She asked the Board if they wanted the word “diverse” changed to “innovation”.

Member Moulton asked if it could say “equitable access to diverse and innovative high-quality”. She likes the idea of having the word “innovative” added.

Member Holmes-Sutton concurred that the word “diverse” should remain as part of the vision conceptualizing “diversity” broadly and noting and discerning a distinct difference between the two words.

Chair Mackedon asked if there would be a motion to approve this agenda item.

Executive Director Feiden replied that there could be a motion, but her intent was to bring the final version to the Board in December.

Chair Mackedon said that adding the word “innovative” after “diverse” for the definition of “vision” would be all that is needed.

Chair Mackedon asked if there were any comments about “mission”. She said she thinks the definition hits the nail on the head and it captures the comments from the last Board meeting. There were no further comments from the Board.

Chair Mackedon asked about the six proposed values as set forth on slide 6 of the presentation. The Board did not have any questions; however, Member Moulton was very impressed with the definition for “accountable autonomy”.

Executive Director Feiden moved on to slides 7 through 9 of the presentation with the proposed goals and measures. There are three over-arching goals that have been outlined and below each goal are measures and specific numeric targets. These are 5-year goals.

Goal #1 is focused on providing families access to high quality schools and the measures and specific numeric targets are listed in paragraphs A, B and C.

Goal #2 is focused on a much-discussed topic which is the demographics of the students that are served by the SPCSA. The goal is to increase the diversity of students served by SPCSA schools. Executive Director Feiden went into detail and provided examples regarding paragraphs A and B which are the accompanying measures, including percentages.

Goal #3 is focused on ensuring that not only are we serving a diverse population of students, but we are doing so effectively and that every SPCSA student succeeds, including those from historically under-performing subgroups. This goal posed the most struggles and was difficult to create measures for and she hopes there will be substantial conversation on this goal and its measures. She went over the measures contained in paragraphs A and B.

Member Moulton mentioned that they should be focusing on engagement and attendance. Every school has a challenge with students’ attendance. She was not sure if it is being monitored somewhere else, but she would like it to be incorporated. She feels strongly about how important it is to have families and students in attendance.

Executive Director Feiden confirmed her agreement and asked the Board to consider if that is a target we want to aim for or a strategy to leverage in order to move student achievement numbers. She feels it belongs somewhere and is probably absent at this time.

Member Moulton said that it is something that we must aim and strive for and asked for other members comments.

Member Kirner commented that he is not sure if attendance is an SPCSA goal or a local school board goal. He is not sure where the line gets crossed in micro-managing issues like attendance.

Member Kirner wanted to know as to Goal #1, how these numbers are arrived at using a 65% 4-Star or better when we are already at 64%. Why do we settle for a 1% increase over the next 5 years? Why don't we have more stretch goals?

Executive Director Feiden replied that the SPCSA struggled as well and they had extensive discussions. Performance to date has been relatively strong and the weakest part of our work has been the degree to which we have created equitable access to some of our traditionally underserved subgroups. Because these groups have historically underperformed in our state, which is also a national trend, it is important to effectively try to continue to incrementally improve our performance by diversifying and maintaining that level of performance which poses a significant challenge. There were internal conversations about whether the 3-Star or better goal should be 85% and how much these numbers should be moved. What the numbers should be is an important conversation for the Board to have in the context of how to achieve a shift in the next few years.

Member Kirner mentioned Alternative Performance Framework (APF) schools with lower graduation rates. Virtual schools could also have lower numbers. Given the unknowns and how things change over a 5-year period, would these performance targets change on an annual basis?

Executive Director Feiden replied that the intention is to map out year over year goals and anticipate updating these targets when the GMP is updated, which is approximately every two years, and the Strategic Plan would be updated in parallel to make sure they line up.

Member Kirner said that based on that explanation, it was his understanding that these numbers are not in concrete and they would change every two years. He also said we are pegging ourselves against Nevada and should we be more aggressive when pegging ourselves nationally?

Chair Mackedon said she understood Member Kirner's question as to whether we should have more aspirational goals. We should consider if we are going to do the work to grow in our diverse underserved populations, we also need to be aware this is an outward facing document and we do not want to set super aspirational benchmarks that we may not be able to meet. We should also consider how the Legislature will view this and the possibility they may conclude that the goals and objectives were not met.

Chair Mackedon asked where the SPCSA is currently as to the numbers.

Executive Director Feiden showed slide 7 of the GMP which is a comparison to statewide ratings. Currently, we are at 64% at 4-Stars or better and rounded to 78% at 3-Stars or better. These goals do not move the needle significantly in terms of the performance levels. It would be aiming to effectively maintain strong performance while diversifying the demographics of students served. We could change those numbers and there has been significant internal debate in this regard.

Chair Mackedon said it may only change our overall portfolio numbers by 1% or 2% but it definitely changes an individual students' educational experience if under-performing students find themselves in 3- or 4-Star schools.

Member Randolph asked about SPCSA's current graduation rates.

Executive Director Feiden replied that the class of 2017-2018 was 70% and we will have the class of 2018-2019 data in December. If the numbers are accurate, there would be a 15% increase in the graduation rate which is significant.

Member Holmes-Sutton recognizes that student engagement and attendance can be an opportunity as a strategy for academic achievement. She also noted the potential difficulties in maintaining the level of success but is challenged in processing how we message our ambition given our diversity. She wants to ensure that we do not say we cannot be ambitious because we are going to diversify. She recognizes that is not the intent of the SPCSA. She just is not sure how it will be received by the community. Member Holmes-Sutton said she just had the opportunity to engage colleagues in a conversation and the message they received is that schools are not doing as well because they have children in subgroups that traditionally have not done well. She has looked at the performance information and considered where we are with regards to academic achievement and the work that needs to be done.

Executive Director Feiden said she appreciated that Member Holmes-Sutton raised that concern and we certainly want to make sure that the message is that we believe all students have the opportunity and can be successful. Looking at the graph of the Title I schools, one option would be to think about combined measures where we look at our existing overall performance and also think about Title I schools. She wants to make sure that we are ambitious in the ways that we talk about the performance of our schools and all our students. If the Board feels we should push the targets up she can get behind that. We started with a relatively conservative approach, but each measure could be moved up by possibly 5% and potentially add some sub-measures around some of our Title I schools.

Member Holmes-Sutton expressed her appreciation and the willingness to consider that since it is important to all students and families.

Member Kirner stated that just because a student falls into a subgroup does not mean that performance will suffer. He thinks that if the goals are stretched a little that would be helpful. He asked if "All Nevada Public Schools" as shown on the Title I chart incorporate charter schools or all other public schools.

Executive Director Feiden replied that we always include our schools in the all Nevada public schools.

Member Moulton agrees that she puts her goals a little higher and thinks that pushes us and shows that we are sincere in doing our best.

Chair Mackedon said we do not necessarily want to break out the Title I schools for this document. The information is important as a Board, but we do not need to have sub-goals for other populations. She would be supportive of raising some of the percentages.

Member Soifer suggested the Board consider a subgroup analysis as part of the conversation.

Member Holmes-Sutton said we need to be aggressive and there is a sense of urgency that exists for children now. She recognizes the reality and believes we need to change that reality. We are past accepting and acknowledging this is where we are. She feels the messaging should not just be holding the schools responsible, it should also be holding students, families and educators responsible as well. We need high expectations for everyone. She would rather the goal be set higher than just being able to meet the goal.

Executive Director Feiden said she feels it is important to ensure that students from all our schools, regardless of background and having the opportunity to achieve, is the potential and should be the reality.

Discussion continued as to percentages contained in the measures of proposed Goal #1 contained on slide 7 of the Strategic Plan PowerPoint presentation.

Chair Mackedon opened the discussion to Goal #2 contained on slide 8 of the presentation.

Member Soifer said that he would like to see the students with disabilities quantified as to percentages, funding, etc. but it may be premature. He would like to see progress in the next five years as to that goal.

Member Randolph asked if the current data is referenced as to how high of a goal 90% is versus where we currently stand.

Executive Director Feiden referenced slide 8 of the GMP. There were internal discussions about whether this should be 90% or 100% but it was decided it is what we can accomplish within the 5-year target.

Chair Mackedon opened the discussion as to Goal #3 contained on slide 9 of the presentation.

Member Kirner recommended maybe there should be a paragraph C under Goal #3 that addresses every SPCSA student succeeding. None of these goals address a population that does not fit into one of these subgroups.

Chair Mackedon said that maybe the SBAC and ACT goals could be broken out as separate goals as far as national and statewide averages.

Member Soifer made some observations about Goal #3 and recommended possibly adding safety and parental satisfaction surveys. He also talked about innovation and accountability. It is important that we figure out an accountability system that does not disincentivize schools from going out of their way to serve these students well. To whatever extent it can be factored in, he thinks that embraces the spirit of Goal #3 that every student succeeds.

Member Holmes-Sutton expressed her appreciation for the consideration of achieving and setting goals above the respective averages for Nevada and also agreeing to looking at the ACT in other states. Member Holmes-Sutton sat on the board when the decision was made to add the ACT and that other states had already been doing that. Also, she appreciates the recognition of where we are and having endeavored to providing that opportunity to our students and acknowledging the inclusion of the school climate.

Executive Director Feiden said they struggled with this and when the state created its Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) plan a couple of years ago it set some incremental targets year over year for specific numbers these subgroups would hit. Some of those targets have been missed. The SPCSA struggled with the question of whether doing better than our counterparts is an ambitious enough goal. Are we in a position to set realistic and ambitious numeric goals? Executive Director Feiden asked what the right way is to measure our progress in this category and requested the Board's insights?

Member Soifer would also like to focus on growth as much as proficiency and achievement levels because the Median Growth Percentile (MGP) more than the Annual Growth Percentile (AGP) tells us more about the quality of the schools' programs than the child's background. Focusing on growth as well as proficiency levels may be a tool that helps us in this endeavor.

Chair Mackedon asked if the recommendation is to include "will achieve SBAC proficiency and MGP rates at above the respective Nevada averages.

Member Soifer said that was what he was intending.

Member Cyr asked a question about the ACT results and if we are approaching the schools that are testing this and how they feel about the goals for the SPCSA.

Executive Director Feiden replied that the SPCSA is anticipating inviting schools the week of November 11th or the 18th to view and weigh in over virtual meetings prior to the final submission to the Board. We will be asking for their opinion as to the strategic plan as well.

Chair Mackedon said we are looking at how our students do on the ACT compared to the national average and not the Nevada average since it is a better target to aim for. She is also pleased that students are now taking the ACT in Nevada and feels it is one of the best things that has happened for Nevada education.

Executive Director Feiden returned to her PowerPoint presentation starting with slide 10. There are four proposed strategies. These strategies are over-arching and encompass a series of initiatives and actions that are sub-bullets to these strategies. The intent is to clarify the strategies and staff will bring more specific initiatives and actions that will be components.

Executive Director Feiden presented the 4 strategies contained on slides 11 through 14 which are proactive oversight, strategic growth, expanded support and reward progress. She asked for input from the Board as to the strategies.

Chair Mackedon requested input as to the first strategy and thought including "non-profit boards" was a good addition to the definition.

Member Kirner asked for clarification of "non-profit boards".

Executive Director Feiden answered that all SPCSA governing bodies act not for profit. It is also a clarification since some people believe that SPCSA schools are for profit; however, Nevada Statutes require that charter schools are not for profit. They may contract with for profit entities.

Chair Mackedon moved on to strategic growth. She asked for an explanation of “clarify qualifying standards for schools wishing to expand” in the definition of strategic growth. She asked if it meant that if schools are not meeting the targets then they are not eligible to expand or there will be other stipulations in the agreement for them to expand?

Executive Director Feiden said she is suggesting considering formalizing the qualifications for expansion and to be more transparent about what warrants expansion.

Member Moulton said she thinks it is a big challenge to clarify this definition.

Executive Director Feiden replied that only ideas are in the parentheses and they need to work with the Board to articulate what they should be.

Chair Mackedon asked for an explanation of the strategy “expanded support”.

Executive Director Feiden explained that the intent was as a local education agency, we are responsible for the distribution, oversight and monitoring of federal grants that traditionally serve underserved populations. If we can improve our support and technical assistance, then we can better support the schools in their endeavors to meet the needs of those students effectively.

Chair Mackedon moved on to the definition of “reward progress”. She added that we need to clarify the information in the parentheses as to what the reward will be for schools with strong academic results.

Member Cyr said it appears the first part of the definition is for the support side and the second is describing progress that is being rewarded. This may be better placed in another strategy.

Executive Director Feiden thinks that this was an opportunity in sharing best practices that schools take a lot of pride in. We have the opportunity through site evaluations and other mechanisms to highlight the great work of the schools and teachers and this is a type of reward and in some ways is a type of technical assistance. This is open for discussion.

Executive Director Feiden asked if the four strategies in combination will move the SPCSA to the changes we seek to achieve.

Chair Mackedon likes the four strategies and they encompass what the SPCSA will do when a school is under-performing and when a school is performing well.

Member Moulton would like to encourage the Legislature in expanding the SPCSA support system with staff.

Member Holmes-Sutton acknowledged the hard work of SPCSA staff, specifically, as it relates to proactive oversight. She appreciates the engagement with the sponsored schools and looking at how that relationship exists in order to provide support and be responsive to the schools.

Member Randolph said that in thinking about rewarding progress and the dissemination of best practices, is there some way to have a more collaborative process with the sharing of ideas? She is not sure how broad the language should be or where it should be located. She feels it will help to move forward in achieving the goals that are being set.

Executive Director Feiden asked Member Randolph if she was referring to the SPCSA sharing with schools or sharing school to school as well.

Member Randolph said it could encompass both.

Member Soifer provided additional strategies that could provide an equitable opportunity in terms of high-quality education and assist in achieving these goals.

Executive Director Feiden responded that these types of ideas fall into initiatives. There may be some nuance of things that can be incorporated based on the Boards' comments.

Chair Mackedon said historically the SPCSA has taken the stance that they do not have a staff member who has that role or the funding. Sharing and collaborating is more the role of the Charter School Association of Nevada (CSAN). The Authority does provide opportunities for things like special needs at meetings but have not historically been designing meetings for that exact purpose. She is not saying it is right or wrong, but it would be a pretty big shift and would have a big impact on staffing.

Executive Director Feiden said staff will look at where our capacity lies. We can figure out where our role fits in and bring that back to the Board in December.

Executive Director Feiden moved on to the Growth Management Plan (part 2 of the presentation) which is one of the implementation plans. The plan is required under AB 462 and it presents an opportunity to build on our academic successes. Executive Director Feiden provided an overview of slide 16. An outline of the GMP is contained on slide 17 and there is a 24-page draft of the proposed plan as part of the materials contained for this agenda item. The bulk of her presentation was focused on Sections Four and Five.

Executive Director Feiden first provided a brief description of all five sections. Section One is context and is a public-facing document and an implementation plan. Section Two is about where we are today. Section Three is the Needs Assessment with the updated demographic and academic data. Section Four is the future of the sponsored schools and Section Five is the future of the SPCSA as to operations and practices over the next few years.

Slides 18 and 19 can also be found in Section 2 of the Growth Management Plan Draft. Performance has been strong and we need to continue to increase access in some of our traditionally underserved subpopulations.

Member Kirner stated that AB 462 sets forth requirements for the Growth Management Plan but does not specify exactly what it should look like. This appears to be the staff's view and ultimately the Board's view. Is that a correct assessment?

Executive Director Feiden responded that AB 462 specifically requires projected growth, including new charter schools, additional campuses for existing schools, grade level expansion, and anticipated charter renewals. It also requires the SPCSA address statewide pupil performance, including data for specific groups and subgroups, and the academic needs of students in geographic areas of the state. Those are the specific requirements of AB 462.

Member Kirner said he thinks the Growth Management Plan is set up based on the goals and is detailed and thorough and staff did an excellent job.

Slide 20 shows growth moving forward and is grounded in our goals. This slide reiterates the three goals mentioned and discussed earlier in the presentation. A working group of external stakeholders was formed that weighed in on these goals.

Executive Director Feiden provided a detailed overview of Section Four and its subsections of the Growth Management Plan which are shown on slide 21 of the presentation. Slide 22 is the plan for future growth and to continue to learn from community stakeholders. Going forward, the SPCSA will seek opportunities to collaborate with local stakeholders to identify and address specific, localized educational needs.

Executive Director moved on to Section Five. The future of the SPCSA policies are contained on slide 23. They are broken out by goal, as to existing and proposals and Executive Director Feiden provided an overview of this slide. She went into more detail as to the procedures contained on slide 24 which also includes existing and proposed goals. Slides 25 and 26 contain information as to capacity as it relates to existing and proposed as they relate to the three goals. Slide 27 shows existing and proposed goals for financial resources. Executive Director Feiden provided a brief overview of this slide.

Chair Mackedon said that there is a ton of information in the materials provided for this agenda item. As far as the financial resources and the Charter School Program grant, she said that we need to stay on top of the new funding model that is being explored in Nevada. There are a lot of charter schools that stand to lose upwards of 20% of their Distributive School Account (DSA) which is catastrophic, and we need the grant for new schools to expand and current schools to have adequate funding. She would like to see something added to the proposals in this regard.

Member Randolph said the section as to planning for future growth relates back to the collaborative process that she mentioned earlier. She commended Executive Director Feiden for the community outreach portion and for her collaboration with community members, parents and organizations which are at a localized level in terms of what they want to see for their children and members of their individual

communities. This has been the missing piece. In reaching the goals, there must be input from the communities we serve.

Member Soifer addressed helping the schools manage their paperwork so the Authority is not putting an undue burden of compliance on them. He would like to revisit improvements that have been integral in the past. We are in the second half of the site evaluation process and we may need to optimize that process which is part of the continuous improvement as to organizational excellence. Member Soifer also talked about capacity building. He recommended a few more resources that can be included.

Member Moulton concurred with comments of the Board members and wants to continue to collaborate with the school districts and sharing information.

Chair Mackedon agreed that anything we can do as the Authority to assist with the capacity building is needed.

Public Comment as to Agenda item #3

Renee Fairless, Principal, Mater Academy. Ms. Fairless stated that there has been a tremendous amount of collaboration from Executive Director Feiden and staff. She wanted to caution the board about star ratings as to poor performing schools. There is too short a window for the children to perform in at risk populations. She is concerned about the time limit as to achieve star ratings due to their population. When setting standards, she feels there needs to be an understanding that the achievement didn't happen overnight in the Mater Academy campuses.

Tambre Tondryk, Executive Director of Operations, Beacon Academy. She commended Executive Director Feiden and SPCSA staff. Ms. Tondryk was a member of the working group and it was a great experience to hear from people from the different districts and communities. She wanted to speak on behalf of the Alternative Performance Framework (APF) schools. Beacon Academy is the only APF school within the SPCSA. One of the goals is to maintain strong performance on star ratings. She feels that goal should have a disclaimer. She explained if APF schools are expected to take the ACT, it could negatively impact the SPCSA in that area. She would also like to have a discussion with the SPCSA about the statute that says if a school has a 1-Star rating for three consecutive years that the charter is mandatorily terminated.

Chair Mackedon asked what the process is going forward with these documents.

Executive Director Feiden said there will be significant edits on the Strategic Plan and Growth Management Plan based on all the feedback. They will be brought back at the December 13th meeting for Board approval. The Growth Management Plan needs to go to the Legislative Counsel Bureau by January 1, 2020.

Chair Mackedon called a 10-minute convenience break at 11:03 a.m. The meeting was reconvened at 11:13 a.m.

Agenda Item 6 – Beacon Academy of Nevada. Charter Contract Renewal

Mark Modrcin, Director of Authorizing, State Public Charter School Authority. Director Modrcin began by discussing renewal recommendations and why they are important in the strategic plan. Many of the elements in the current strategic plan and some of the elements in the new strategic plan are tied to renewals.

First is the commitment to opening and sustaining high quality schools that reflect their demographics in our community. It is important that we maintain that quality bar. Second, we remain committed to ensure that all our schools, especially on renewal, have fulfilled their public obligations and we monitor schools throughout their lifecycle. We look at schools that are managing public funds effectively and they are following applicable laws. The charter school lifecycle starts with an application and continues with pre-opening and authorization. Once a school is open, their performance is monitored, and they are held accountable and the SPCSA provides proactive oversight. Then there is the option to renew or the potential of not to renew.

Director Modrcin talked about the renewal recommendations. First, we look at the academic, financial and organizational performance. All sponsored schools are afforded a high level of autonomy. In exchange for the autonomy comes accountability. Charter school boards commit to achieving academic goals and manage public funds responsibly and in compliance with legal obligations. These schools have much more flexibility and autonomy and we look at how they have done as it relates to that autonomy against performance goals. We monitor throughout the term and verify how they are performing against financial reports, audits and compliance with federal and state statutes. The SPCSA also reviews items that were submitted by the school in their renewal application. The renewal process is outlined within each recommendation memo. The renewal report is also explained in the memo.

New legislation allows for sponsored schools to be renewed for variable term lengths which is a change from prior years. Previously, the only term length was for 6 years and now the Authority may renew schools anywhere from 3 to 10 years. Staff has taken this into account when making today's two recommendations. We feel schools consistently earning 4 and 5 Stars over a term should be renewed from 7 to 10 years and those schools that are consistently at 3 stars should be renewed for 6 years. Schools that have had inconsistent performance over the term or have fallen short of the 3-Star mark should fall into the 3 to 5-year category or possibly not renewed.

Director Modrcin moved on to the specifics of Beacon Academy of Nevada and referred to the briefing memorandum which is part of the supporting materials for this agenda item. The current charter for Beacon Academy expires in June of 2020. They operate one campus in Las Vegas. A school's academic, financial and organizational performance provide the foundation for staff's recommendation. A detailed analysis of Beacon Academy is contained on page 3 of the briefing memo.

Beacon Academy is the first charter high school in Nevada to transition to operate under the state's Alternative Performance Framework (APF). Results under this framework for 2018-2019 are posted alongside this item. Under this framework, Beacon only enrolls students that meet specific criteria. These criteria allow Beacon to be classified as an APF school and therefore they can only accept certain types

of students and this is not the case for any of the other Authority sponsored schools. The school also had to have their own specific framework incorporated into its contract. The results of that framework for the past two years are contained on page 4 of the memo.

Despite the issuance of a Notice of Intent to Terminate, Beacon Academy of Nevada has shown commendable academic improvement since 2016 and appears to be on an upward trajectory. This is particularly true under the school's specific academic framework as well as organizational performance in its initial charter term. The school is also financially viable with strong enrollment, and SPCSA staff is confident the school will continue its current trajectory and performance outcomes.

Page 5 contains the school's demographics since 2015. The school's projected enrollment for the upcoming term shows a possible expansion. To date, staff has not received an amendment.

This upward trajectory supports staff's recommendation that the Authority renew Beacon Academy of Nevada for a six-year term beginning July 1, 2020.

Ms. Tondryk thanked the Board for serving alternative education students with high needs. The school's population requires a lot of social, emotional and academic support and staff works hard in these areas so the students are successful.

Chair Mackedon has enjoyed watching Beacon Academy over the last nine years and congratulated them for their success. Since there is no public comment in the north or south, she asked for a motion.

Member Holmes-Sutton made a motion for the renewal of Beacon Academy of Nevada for a six-year term, beginning July 1, 2020. Member Moulton seconded the motion.

Member Moulton asked that the members from Beacon Academy introduce themselves.

Andrea Demore, Executive Director of Academics, Beacon Academy and Sarah Sherman, Treasurer, Beacon Academy Board.

Member Holmes-Sutton stated that Beacon Academy has changed the lives of some of the students. The students are now living successful lives because the school made a difference in a way that they were not able to achieve in other schools.

Chair Mackedon acknowledged Beacon Academy and their team.

The motion carried unanimously.

Agenda Item 4 – Shining Star Schools: Mater Academy of Nevada

Executive Director Feiden briefly provided context with a presentation that is included for this agenda item. This meeting as well as the next will focus on the Shining Star Schools that are designated by the Department of Education. They serve a high percentage of students in poverty and achieving a 4- or 5-Star

rating. The Title I schools are also doing significantly well in comparison to the state. There are 9 shining star schools that are sponsored by the SPCSA. The star ratings and reports are available online for Mater Academy Mountain Vista and for Mater Academy Bonanza Campuses.

Renee Fairless, Lead Principal, Mater Academy of Nevada. Ms. Fairless said she has been on this journey for about 7 years as well as Member Moulton. Ricardo Jasso is the Board Chair and he also started in the very beginning. Ms. Fairless said she is blessed with amazing students, parents and staff. Today is a celebration. Both campuses are being recognized at this meeting. Ms. Fairless said the presentation today will mainly be conducted through students, teachers and staff.

Ms. Fairless began her PowerPoint presentation with the report card data for Mater Academy Mountain Vista. The presentation is included in the materials for this agenda item. Looking at the demographic is very important and is a multi-faceted journey due to the variety of students.

Amy Gronna, Principal, Mater Academy Bonanza. Campus. The campus is three years old. At that time, the students were 2 to 3 years below grade level. They came from all over and had varying backgrounds. The first year the school was a 1-Star and there were many struggles. Positive changes have been made and the school is very aligned and collaborative.

Ricardo Jasso, Board Chair, Mater Academy. Mr. Jasso expressed his appreciation to Ms. Fairless and the team for their hard work and dedication.

Jamie Kenyon, 5th Grade Math Teacher, Mater Academy Mountain Vista. Ms. Kenyon began by saying that Mater Academy is a data driven school. Last year they were able to see the rewards of their efforts in the school's report card and star rating. The students made huge strides last year because the teachers were able to target their weak areas and make them strong by using various tools. The most critical tool in the classrooms is the computer program i-Ready. The growth targets need to be hit consistently for the students to pass the SBACs. Ms. Kenyon provided an overview of a day in her classroom.

Emily, 5th Grade Student, Mater Academy. Emily came to Mater Academy as a 5th grader. Her math and reading were at a first-grade level. Ms. Kenyon was very helpful and she was able to pass the SBAC and raised her reading and math level. She is really proud of herself and Ms. Kenyon.

Sarah Jansen, 8th Grade ELA Teacher, Mater Academy. Ms. Jansen stated that interventions for students really do matter as shown on slide 5 of the Mater Academy presentation. All middle school students have two classes of math and two classes of reading. She explained best practices and other forms of intervention.

Enrique, Student, Mater Academy. When Enrique came to Mater Academy from Mexico, he was in 6th Grade. He did not understand when people talked to him in English. When he came to Mater the double dose classes really helped as well as working in small groups. When he took the i-Ready reading diagnostic he was at kindergarten level. When he took the test in December, he was at a 7th Grade reading level. The reading class helped him with his learning goals.

Alejandra Fernandez, Kindergarten Teacher, Mater Academy. Ms. Fernandez is Haley's kindergarten teacher and said that Haley was going to go over the data binder which shows how they are doing and being responsible at school. Every student has their own data binder.

Haley Ramos, Kindergartner, Mater Academy. Haley said her data binder shows how she is doing at school. Haley pointed in her data binder to where she is now and her stretch goal. She is 5 years old.

Olivia Carbajal, Assistant Principal, Mater Academy Mountain Vista. Ms. Carbajal gave a description of professional development which is contained on slide 6 of the presentation. Collaboration and being completely aligned as to the needs of both campuses is important for the success of Mater Academy.

Ms. Fairless talked about attendance and how it matters which is set out on slide 7. The report card shows that the school has improved attendance by 10%. They provide incentives such as t-shirts and celebrations. They also provide a full-time nurse. Ms. Fairless went into detail as to why being at school every day is important.

Ms. Jansen went over slide 8. She explained why WIDA data matters. A sample of the Individual Student Report is shown on the slide. A vocabulary word wall is required in every classroom. They also have interventionists that target student's language development and assists students and their families. There is also a color coordinated cue system that helps the students understand their progress.

Enrique said that Mr. Santos helped him to feel comfortable with his English and corrected him when needed. He would translate to help him understand. Ms. Carbajal also helped in letting him know that he had a place in the school and that he would improve. All the teachers made him feel comfortable in the school like a family.

Torrence Whalum, 7th Grade Math Teacher, Mater Academy. Mr. Whalum described his experience when he first started at Mater Academy. It wasn't what he originally expected. He decided to be the hero in his story. He then realized he wasn't their hero and that he provided a role and a piece in the student's entire life puzzle. The students started to change their mindset because they were given actionable steps. Mr. Whalum is thankful for being able to work with Ms. Fairless, the students and staff.

Emily, Student, Mater Academy. Emily had trouble with math before coming to Mater. At Mater, she had teachers that wouldn't give up on her. Mr. Whalum said there is a solution to every problem. No one should ever give up on themselves. Don't be afraid to ask for help or raise your hand. At Mater, students don't make fun of each other. She enjoys coming to school because of being able to learn. Emily wrote a quote that states "When you have a question; questions lead to answers and answers lead to knowledge."

Mr. Whalum said that he realized that when he started at Mater, he wanted to be the likeable teacher and all that accomplishes is diluting the curriculum. He then began to have the students take ownership of their learning which gave them the tools they needed.

Ms. Fairless wrapped up the presentation by explaining the meaning of the school's motto which is rigor, relevance and relationship.

Chair Mackedon thanked them for coming to the meeting.

Member Moulton said that Mater not only changed the lives of the students but also the community. It was a homeless community filled with shopping carts and poor people and now there is housing and resources. She recommended that anyone visiting the school will be impressed with the culture and climate. She congratulated the school and the students for their achievements.

Member Randolph asked about the concept of growing your own and how it is put to practice.

Ms. Fairless said they are 100% Free and Reduced Lunch and they apply for every single grant that is available. They have been able to hire interventionists for most of the elementary grade levels. She encourages people that are interested in education to stay with Mater.

Ms. Fernandez was an interventionist for three years. She saw what worked and what didn't. She doesn't want her students to fall through the cracks.

Executive Director Feiden asked Ms. Fairless to explain the alternative right to licensure.

Ms. Fairless explained that Mr. Whalum had a degree in engineering. Even though he hadn't gone through a traditional teaching program, he was able to step into a classroom and go through the process and obtain an alternative right to licensure. When she sees someone that is committed to the school and the students, she tries to get them involved in the alternative right to licensure. It doesn't work for everyone but can be a powerful resource.

Member Soifer said they are thoughtful about growth and assessing growth and asked do they handle special needs, especially ELA?

Ms. Kenyon said the growth was really high in the elementary school and not as high in the middle school. They are aligning the best practices from the elementary school for the middle school.

Ms. Fairless is concerned about the expectations by the state as to specialized populations and small groups and the target keeps being set higher. Teachers work excellently with the students to reach their potential.

Member Holmes-Sutton expressed her appreciation. She was an alternative right to licensure teacher. She appreciates Ms. Fairless' passion in her leadership role and all that she has done.

Public Comment for Agenda Item 4

Victor Salcido, Executive Director, Charter School Association of Nevada. Mr. Salcido expressed his appreciation and congratulated, on behalf of the Association, how proud they are not just of Mater Academy but of all the Shining Star Schools. There are enormous challenges in this sector and it is worth fighting for.

Agenda Item 5 – Mater Academy of Nevada. Charter Contract Renewal

Director Modrcin stated this is a recommendation regarding the renewal of Mater Academy of Nevada. The briefing/recommendation memorandum is included for this agenda item. The Mater charter expires on June 30, 2020. They currently operate two campuses on the east side of Las Vegas. A thorough review of the historical data as to academic, financial and organizational performance provides the foundation for staff's recommendations on renewal.

Director Modrcin shared some key highlights about Mater Academy. While performance in the most recent year is strong, there have been some academic performance concerns in prior years. Mater Academy received four ratings this past year. The Mountain Vista campus earned a 4-Star rating for the elementary program and a 5-Star rating for the middle school while the Bonanza campus earned a 3-Star rating for the elementary school while the middle school earned a 4-Star rating. The improved performance at the Bonanza campus resulted in this body returning the school back to good standing last month. This was a huge achievement and required a tremendous amount of work. The academic performance for both schools' initial term as well as the current term are outlined on pages 3 and 4 of the memoranda. The final page of the memorandum contains the schools' demographics.

Director Modrcin said it is noteworthy that the school has served historically underperforming subgroups well since its inception. SPCSA staff is confident the school will continue its current trajectory and performance outcomes. They currently have strong enrollment and are financially viable. This upward trajectory supports staff's recommendation that the Authority renew Mater Academy of Nevada for a five-year term beginning July 1, 2020.

No public comment in the north or south as to Agenda Item 5.

Member Moulton made a motion to approve the charter renewal of Mater Academy of Nevada for a five-year term beginning July 1, 2020. Member Kirner seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

Agenda Item 7 – New School Application Process

Director Modrcin provided an overview of the new school application process. The PowerPoint presentation is included in the supporting material for this agenda item. Staff received nine completed new charter applications during this cycle and plans to bring recommendations regarding those applications at the December 17 Board meeting.

Director Modrcin began with slide 2 of the presentation. The application process is a challenge in that it balances an applicant's vision with reality. Slide 3 provides an outline of what the process looks like from start to finish which includes letter of intent, application, completeness check, application review, capacity interview and recommendation to the board. District input is considered during this process and it occurs concurrent with steps 4 and 5 of the application review and capacity interview. Public comment is also considered and occurs during the same time frame.

Slide 4 shows the approximate timeline of the application process. Before the authorizing team was fully staffed, the application review could take up to 11 months and it is now down to 5 months. It is an improvement and staff are working on shortening the process even further.

Slides 5 through 10 go over the application requirements which include the letter of intent timeline. Slide 6 sets forth the key elements of an application and schools receive ratings on each element. These elements are evaluated against a public-facing rubric that can be found on the SPCSA website. It is important for the Authority, as well as the public, to understand these decisions and recommendations are made under published standards. Training is also provided to all applicants as to what these standards mean.

Slide 7 summarizes the completeness check. The next slide provides an overview of the application review. Director Modrcin highlighted some of the key items on this slide. Slide 9 goes over the capacity interview. The findings of the initial review and the capacity interview are used to formulate a recommendation to the Authority and that is presented in a public meeting for action by this body. The next slide provides an overview of how the application process fits within the charter school lifecycle. The renewal term lengths can now be varied but the initial charter term remains at six years.

Slides 12 and 13 show what a strong application should include. Director Modrcin provided some key points regarding these slides.

A detailed outline of how the needs assessment fits into the process is provided on slide 15. Director Modrcin provided a summary of this slide.

Executive Director Feiden added that when looking at needs, we are looking at both their ability to meet one of the needs and demonstrate the commitment to doing that and the capacity to execute. She provided more information about slide 15 as to meeting the needs of the assessment.

Slide 16 shows a breakdown of the key sections and all the elements of the application. Each of them is evaluated by the reviewers throughout the process. The next slide shows the three ratings for each of these components. If an applicant is approaching the standard and we feel they are meeting the need and they are close enough, there could be additional conditions that an applicant group could execute in the incubation year leading up to a proposed opening.

Member Kirner said we have nine applications and presumably there are different levels of quality in the nine. Would we, as the Board, receive all nine or might there be a point that you might go back to an applicant and say we do not think it meets standards and invite the applicant to withdraw.

Director Modrcin said that staff always works to be transparent. After the capacity interview, before any formal recommendation would be published, we meet with all the applicants to discuss what staff found and why we are recommending or proceeding in the direction we feel is most appropriate. In this way, they can make an informed decision as to what steps they would like to take. If an applicant was found to be weaker because they did not have a quality application on the actual content or because they did not meet the need, we would sit down and explain why staff found that and explain possible next steps and then they can proceed accordingly.

Member Kirner asked if they could remediate a shortcoming?

Executive Director Feiden said they do not have an opportunity to remediate the shortcoming during the application process. There is an appeal process that kicks in and they are given the opportunity to correct or hear anything that was not meeting the standard.

Member Kirner asked about the timing if they want to appeal.

Director Modrcin asked Mr. Herrick to confirm. Director Modrcin thinks that if an applicant is denied they can appeal within 30 days to correct any deficiencies outlined by the Authority and there may be a couple of other steps in the process.

Mr. Herrick said that Director Modrcin was correct in his statement about the appeal process.

Chair Mackedon said schools have pulled their applications and some have appealed.

Member Moulton asked about external reviewers and national experts and how they are found and how often are they used.

Director Modrcin said that external reviewers are found through professional networks. The Authority almost exclusively uses people who have worked in public education and charter schools and sometimes look to other authorizers and other agencies similar to the charter school authority. They need a strong level of knowledge looking at governance practices and financial management.

Member Moulton asked if our staff assists other states in reviewing their applications.

Executive Director Feiden thinks they have in the past but not at the current time. Several external reviewers are either current or former authorizers either at a state or district.

Member Soifer said that other jurisdictions compete for approved and experienced operators with things like facilities but also qualifications such as expedited or streamlined timelines or processes. How do we look at that possibility?

Director Modrcin said there are opportunities for operators that may wish to come to Nevada or current operators in Nevada to use or rely upon the proven provider. He believes it is regulated and would have conditions such as someone with a proven track record. There is a pretty high bar for the external reviewers.

Executive Director Feiden said this has not been used but we have tentative materials associated with external reviewers.

Chair Mackedon asked if staff recommends that a request be denied, does staff go through their recommendation and then the school does a presentation.

Director Modrcin said that during capacity interviews the applicants have already been made aware of the December 17 meeting and staff would be making recommendations at that time and they should attend the meeting to make comments as to the application.

Chair Mackedon said schools have come forward wanting the board to go against the staff's recommendations for a denial and want to clear up staff's concerns. She wanted to know if they can come forward at the meeting and address their concerns.

Executive Director Feiden said they are not contemplating presentations but expect comments and questions.

Chair Mackedon clarified they will not be making formal presentations and will just be prepared to answer any questions that the Board may have.

Executive Director replied that is currently the plan, but other options can be addressed.

Chair Mackedon said it has been done both ways and was asking so she would know what to expect.

Mr. Herrick said the statute contemplates is upon denial of an application, the Authority has 30 days to let the applicant know in a written notice that sets forth the deficiencies and relevant information as to the denial. The applicant then has 30 days to correct the deficiencies and resubmit the application. Staff recommendations are typically posted a week in advance of the meeting and staff will be reaching out to those applicants so it won't come as a surprise.

Member Soifer asked if in response to the capacity interview or prior to the meeting, the applicant provides a memo with information, is there an opportunity for staff to review that information prior to the Board taking action.

Executive Director Feiden said that it would have to be decided if the information crosses the threshold of what needs to be resolved.

Mr. Herrick said that under our regulations, the application is incorporated and becomes part of the charter contract. When referring to memos and supplemental information it becomes complicated since most of the information is gleaned from the application.

Director Modrcin said that he believes the best course of action to address this type of situation, and if they feel they can correct the deficiency, is during the appeal process. That is the time they can go through the staff's recommendations and see if they can address the deficiencies.

No public comment on Agenda Item 7.

Agenda Item 8 – SPCSA Executive Director's Report

Executive Director Feiden provided her report as follows:

a. Contract Amendments

Seven schools submitted contract amendments. Staff is working quickly to bring those to the December 13 meeting. It is possible that some may carry into January 2020. Some schools asked for multiple types of changes, but we will hear from 7 schools.

b. Contract Renewals

The Board has opted to renew two of the seven contracts that are expiring this year. The majority will be heard in December but at least one will carry into January.

c. Site Evaluation Progress

The SPCSA received a letter of intent and one of the items in the letter from the Legislature in 2017 had to do with our site evaluations. Our final response to that letter of intent was submitted earlier this summer and the Interim Finance Committee reviewed the letter of intent and they asked how is the SPCSA going to complete the remaining evaluations.

Executive Director Feiden shared the information at the meeting and will share SPCSA's progress at this meeting. Eighteen site evaluations were conducted last year and we have 42 this year. We have 16 scheduled before the winter holiday and of those we have conducted 9 of them; 2 were conducted this week. The team is building efficiencies when evaluating multi-site campuses. There are 7 remaining between now and the winter break. A number of them will be scheduled from January through May. The team has done incredible work to do the evaluations thoughtfully and efficiently.

d. Data Update: Anticipated 2019-2020 school year student demographics based on October 1, 2019 count day (also referred to as validation day).

We received the star ratings in September. We are anticipating demographic data to be released today if the timeline that was originally published is the one that is followed. Graduation rates will come out in December. We are planning on doing a state of the SPCSA in the January meeting where we wrap all those pieces together. We anticipate getting the data on demographics and will present it in a similar format to star ratings where we send the Board members a preview and will do a presentation.

No public comment on Agenda Item 8.

Agenda Item 9 – Long-Range Board Calendar

Executive Director Feiden shared a couple of updates. Two meetings are scheduled in December. December 13 will be our business meeting with the regular agenda items. December 17 will be specifically for new school applications and possibly there may be one stray item. We have established the 2020 calendar year and it is included in the long-range calendar which is attached for this agenda item. The Board needs to continue to keep updating Executive Director Feiden and staff on anticipated absences for upcoming board meetings.

Member Kirner asked about the governance dates.

Executive Director Feiden said we are looking at completing Silver State Governance training where all members can attend.

No public comment on Agenda Item 9.

Agenda Item 10 – Public Comment

No public comment on Agenda Item 10.

Agenda Item 11 – Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 12:53 p.m.

DRAFT