

**NEVADA STATE PUBLIC CHARTER SCHOOL AUTHORITY**

**December 13, 2019**

Nevada Department of Education  
700 East 5<sup>th</sup> Street  
Board Room  
Carson City, Nevada

Nevada Department of Education  
2080 East Flamingo Road  
Board Room  
Las Vegas, Nevada

**MINUTES OF THE MEETING**

**BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT:**

**In Las Vegas:**

Member Soifer  
Member Cyr  
Member Randolph  
Member Moulton  
Vice Chair Kirner  
Chair Mackedon

**In Carson City:**

**BOARD MEMBERS ABSENT:**

Member Holmes-Sutton

**AUTHORITY STAFF PRESENT:**

**In Las Vegas:**

Rebecca Feiden, Executive Director  
Ryan Herrick, General Counsel  
Mark Modrcin, Educations Programs Director  
Lisa Dzierbicki, Education Programs Professional

**In Carson City:**

Danny Peltier, Management Analyst I

**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 Mackedon called the meeting to order at 9:01am, with attendance reflected above.

### **Agenda Item 2 – Approval of the State Public Charter School Authority (SPCSA) Board Action Minutes - November 1, 2019, Authority Board Meeting.**

Chair Mackedon asked if the Board had any comments or concerns regarding the minutes and then asks for any public comment regarding the minutes.

*Member Kirner moved to accept the minutes of November 1, 2019.*

*Member Moulton seconded the motion.*

*The motion carried unanimously.*

### **Agenda Item 3 – Shining Star Schools: Mater Academy of Northern Nevada**

Chair Mackedon said that we will do all the Mater Academy of Northern Nevada items on the agenda, one right after the other.

Rebecca Feiden, Executive Director, SPCSA, said that the SPCSA has been working on recognizing and sharing some of the successes they have seen with the schools over the past year.

Gia Maraccini, Principal of Mater Academy of Northern Nevada, said that the school works very closely together as a family and that they are going to share about what shifted them and moved them forward.

Vincent is 12 years old and in the 6th grade. The programs Springboard and i-Ready, helped them with their math and reading, by taking a diagnostic test that would give them lessons that were right for them. When things were challenging, Mr. H would help them.

Serenity said she is 12 years old and her, and her, classmates scored at 5-star rating for the 2018-2019 school year. She said that some of the things that helped them get a 5-star school were i-Ready, Mr. H, and Springboard.

Ashlyn said she is from Mater Academy and she is in 6th grade. Go Math, Wonders, and i-Ready helped her throughout the year. She briefly explained each of the programs.

Mr. Jacob Herringshaw, Middle School Math teacher, Mater Academy Northern Nevada, said that they have a data meeting weekly, using the different programs to individually assess each student.

Ms. Breanna Comphel, Elementary School Math Teacher, Mater Academy of Northern Nevada, said that one of the biggest things that has made them most successful as a school is the continued professional development.

Luke Welmerink, Board President of Mater Academy of Northern Nevada, said that the administration reports the academic performance of their students to the board, on a class by class, grade by grade basis.

Member Moulton asked Mater to tell more about the demographics.

Ms. Maraccini provided that they are 100% free and reduced lunch, their EL population, they bounce a little bit but right now are around 48%.

Member Soifer indicated that Mater's school had the average percentile for growth in middle school of 91%, which is the highest in the state to his knowledge, with a student population of 93% eligible for free or reduced-price meals and the vast majority being eligible for free meals. He asked what their secret is to be able to accomplish that.

Mr. Herringshaw shared that it's Academica, Mater, his administration, his peers, and mostly the students. The secret is both of their curriculums that they were able to use during their math last year, Springboard and i-Ready.

Member Kirner asked about the progress of the new facility.

Ms. Maraccini responded that she is so excited about that and they will move in on right around January 29th and the 30th.

No public comment in the north or south related to Agenda Item 3. No action was taken on this item.

#### **Agenda Item 4 – ESEA Distinguished Schools.**

Executive Director Feiden introduced Gabby Lamarre and Rhonda Hutchins of the Nevada Department of Education to announce the awarded ESEA distinguished school.

Gabby Lamarre, Title I Program Director and Federal Liaison, Department of Education, began speaking and introduced her colleague Rhonda Hutchins, Title I Educations Program Professional, and in the North, they have Kristina Côté and Colin Usher, Title I Education Program Professionals.

She said this morning we are here to recognize Democracy Prep at Agassi Campus Middle School and Mater Academy of Northern Nevada Middle School, as Nevada ESEA Distinguished Schools. Schools are selected by their state educational agency and must qualify under one of the following categories:

1. Exceptional student performance for two or more consecutive years,

2. Closing the achievement gap between student subgroups for two of more consecutive years,
3. Excellence in serving special populations of students, such as homeless, migrant, and English learners.

Each school is recognized for category (3).

No public comment in the north or south related to Agenda Item 4. No action was taken on this item.

**Agenda Item 5 – SPCSA Strategic Plan and Growth Management Plan.**

- a. SPCSA’s 2019 Strategic Plan
- b. SPCSA’s 2019 Growth Management Plan

Executive Director Rebecca Feiden said SPCSA staff and the Authority have been working on the development of the Strategic Plan and Growth Management Plan, pursuant to components within AB 462. In addition, statute requires that the Legislative Committee on Education (LCE) evaluate, review and provide comment on the plan and make recommendations to the SPCSA. She anticipates that to occur at the January 23, 2020 LCE meeting.

She began her presentation on Agenda Item 5(a) – Strategic Plan.

- i. On page 2 of the strategic plan an introduction has been added.
- ii. On page 5, the Vision and Mission statements, staff has refined the vision statement to include the theme of innovation.
- iii. SPCSA’s goals, on page 7, have the most substantial edits since the last meeting.

Executive Feiden proceeded to Agenda Item 5(b) – Growth Management Plan.

- i. Minor changes have been made based on feedback from the stakeholders, but the content has remained largely the same as the approved July version.
- ii. In the new schools section, they have removed the numeric target for the schools that would be approved in subsequent years, and shifted to a percentage rate.

Executive Director Feiden concluded her presentation.

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

*Member Moulton moved to accept the SPCSA’s 2019 Strategic Plan and SPCSA’s 2019 Growth Management Plan, as presented.*

*Member Soifer seconded the motion.*

*Chair Mackedon called the vote; motion carried unanimously.*

## **Agenda Item 6 – Charter School Contract Amendment Applications.**

### **a. Doral Academy of Nevada (Doral) – facilities financing/acquisition**

Mike Dang, Manager of Financial and Organizational Performance, SPCSA, stated that the SPCSA team reviewed the financial aspects of these requests for amendments. Doral is currently leasing their Pebble campus and looking to issue about 13 million dollars for this project. The SPCSA reviewed the lease vs. buy analysis and it does support savings and will contribute to the financial strength of the charter school. Therefore, the SPCSA staff recommend approval of the request to issue bonds to acquire their Pebble campus.

No public comment in the north or south related to Agenda Item 5(a).

*Member Moulton purposed a motion that the Authority accept the vast recommendation to approve with conditions Doral Academy of Nevada's request to issue bonds to acquire the Pebble campus facility and lands that they have been leasing.*

*Member Randolph seconded the motion.*

*Chair Mackedon called the vote; motion carried unanimously.*

### **b. Pinecrest Academy of Nevada (Pinecrest) – Facilities Financing/Acquisition**

Mr. Dang stated that Pinecrest's Board of Directors is requesting the Authority to approve their request to issue bonds to acquire the Pinecrest Cadence campus which they have been leasing. They are looking to issue about 30 million dollars to acquire the campus. The SPCSA staff also looked at the eligibility requirements per the NRS and recommend approval of the request with conditions.

No public comment in the north or south related to Agenda Item 5(b).

*Member Moulton moved to accept staff recommendations to approve with conditions, Pinecrest's request to issue bonds to acquire the Cadence campus facility and lands they have been leasing.*

*Member Randolph seconded the motion.*

*Chair Mackedon called the vote; motion carried unanimously.*

### **c. Signature Preparatory – Enrollment Amendment**

Mark Modrcin, Education Programs Director, SPCSA, stated that Signature Preparatory seeks to amend their enrollment cap, which would allow them some room to grow but keeps them in compliance with provisions of their contract.

Gabe Shirey, Founder & Executive Director of Signature Preparatory, gave the Board an update with their demographic enrollment rates. He stated that the school is currently serving 80% FRL,

13% ELL, and 18% special education. 40% of students are African American, 20% are Hispanic, and less than 18% are white.

Carey Roybal-Benson, Principal and Mr. Shirey, of Signature Preparatory, said they are in the process of making adjustments and changes but are confident that their enrollment rate will go up as the neighborhood is becoming more aware of the charter school.

No public comment in the north or south related to Agenda Item 5(c).

*Member Moulton moved to accept staff's proposed recommendation to approve Signature Preparatory's request for a good cause exemption and modified enrollment cap without conditions for the current school year.*

*Member Soifer seconded the motion.*

*Chair Mackedon called the vote; motion carried unanimously.*

**d. Mater Academy of Northern Nevada – Enrollment Amendment**

Director Mark Mordcin, Education Programs Director, SPCSA, stated that this is an amendment for Mater Academy of Northern Nevada to amend its current enrollment cap. They are requesting this amendment to make sure the enrollment caps align with the current growth trajectory for the school and to adjust these to ensure compliance with their current contract.

No public comment in the north or south related to Agenda Item 5(d).

*Member Moulton moved to approve the modified enrollment caps, without conditions, for Mater Academy of Northern Nevada for the 2019-2020, 2020-2021, and 2021-2022 school years.*

*Member Kirner seconded the motion.*

*Chair Mackedon called the vote, motion carried unanimously.*

**e. Mater Academy of Nevada – Addition of Grade Levels (Proposing to Add Grades Kindergarten through 12th) at a Proposed 3<sup>rd</sup> New Campus (kindergarten through 9th eventually through 12th), and Facilities Financing/Acquisition (Bonanza campus)**

Director Mordcin gave an overview of the details of the school's proposed amendment requests. In regard to the proposed new campus, staff is recommending approval based on three main reasons:

1. The continued strong academic performance,
2. It is part of a national network of schools that demonstrated strong results at the high school level,
3. The school has a strong plan to successfully open a 3rd campus.

Mr. Dang spoke regarding acquiring the facility and that the request is feasible and staff recommends approval.

Member Moulton asked about the proposed location and if they have one.

Renee Fairless, Principal of Mater Academy Mountain Vista, stated that yes, the location is currently Mountain View Christian Academy located on Bonanza and will be ready to open in August of 2020.

Member Soifer asked how Mater Academy of Nevada's Board planned to serve an additional campus.

Lisa Satory, Board Member of Mater Academy of Nevada, responded that there is a lot of familiarity with their campuses and they feel comfortable with adding that campus.

Ms. Fairless confirms that the Board collaborates well and introduced Judy Marty, Academic Chief of Mater Academy from Florida.

No public comment in the north or south related to Agenda Item 5(d).

*Member Moulton moved to approve Mater Academy of Nevada's request for a good cause exemption and to approve Mater Academy of Nevada to add grade levels 9-12 at a proposed new, Kindergarten through 12th grade campus with conditions. The campus would open during the 2020-2021 school year in grades Kindergarten through 9th and add one grade per year until becoming a Kindergarten through 12th campus in the 2023-24 school year.*

*Member Cyr seconded the motion.*

*Chair Mackedon called the vote, motion carried unanimously.*

*Member Moulton moved to approve the request for a good cause exemption and approve with conditions Mater Academy of Nevada's request to issue bonds to acquire the Bonanza campus facility and land they have been leasing.*

*Member Cyr seconded the motion.*

*Chair Mackedon called the vote, motion carried unanimously.*

**f. Sports Leadership and Management Academy of Nevada (SLAM) – Enrollment Amendment, Addition of Grade Levels (Proposing to Add Kindergarten through Fifth Grades), and Facilities Financing/Acquisition**

Director Modrcin stated that SPCSA staff is recommending approval for amendment requests 1, 2, and 4, and is recommending denial for amendment request 3 to expand into new grade levels.

Director Modrcin continued with the number of concerns that remain about the proposal as presented.

Mr. Dang stated staff has reviewed the request #4 regarding the facility acquisition and it would improve their financial condition, which already meets standards, so the staff does support this request.

Tony Schwartz, Board Chairperson, of SLAM, responded that unfortunately, their academic plan was left out of their application but will be a part of the resubmitted request for amendment.

Dan Triana, Principal, SLAM, shared some demographics of Sports Leadership and Management Academy of Nevada.

Mr. Schwartz introduced Phil Bateman, Board Treasurer and Tiffany Bailee, Secretary of the Board, of SLAM.

Member Moulton asked if SLAM would be prepared for the motion going forward as recommended by staff to follow through on the appeals process.

Mr. Schwartz responded that if they were to resubmit and go through the appeals process, they would welcome that.

Mr. Triana, Principal of SLAM, asked that the Board table their decision after the academic plan is evaluated and a decision can be made at the next Board meeting.

Chair Mackedon responded that the Authority has never been in the business of approving schools without a fully identified academic plan.

Ryan Herrick, General Counsel, added that in regard to changing the public comment process a couple months ago, a public comment email was set up and an email had been received so they will go ahead and supply that to the Board and attach it to the minutes.

Public comments from parents of children and employees from SLAM were provided.

*Member Moulton moved for the approval of the modified enrollment cap, without conditions, for SLAM Academy for the current school year, to reduce the enrollment cap from 1,600 students to 1,096 students during the 2019-2020 school year.*

*Member Soifer seconded the motion.*

*Chair Mackedon called the vote, motion carried unanimously.*

*Member Moulton moved to approve of the modified enrollment cap, without conditions, for SLAM Academy for the 2020 – 2021 school year. This would reduce the enrollment cap from 2,520 students to 1,243 students during the 2020 – 2021 school year.*



*Member Soifer seconded the motion.*

*Chair Mackedon called the vote, motion carried unanimously.*

*Member Moulton moved to accept staff's recommendation to approve, with conditions, SLAM Academy's request to issue bonds to acquire the current campus facility and lands they have been leasing.*

*Member Kirner seconded the motion.*

*Chair Mackedon called the vote, motion carried unanimously.*

*Member Moulton moved to deny the request for SLAM Academy to expand to grades Kindergarten through 5th, beginning in the 2020-2021 school year due to the underdeveloped academic plan for the proposed elementary program and past performance of the middle and high school programs.*

*Member Cyr seconded the motion.*

*Chair Mackedon called the vote, motion carried unanimously.*

**g. Doral Academy of Northern Nevada – Addition of Distance Education Component, Enrollment Increase, Facilities Expansion, and Addition of Weighted Enrollment Lottery**

Director Modrcin stated that Doral Academy of Northern Nevada has submitted a good cause exemption request, staff recommends approval of that as well as approval of the amendments before the Authority.

Mr. Dang stated that the staff has reviewed the financial aspects for this buildout of an additional eight classrooms, just under two million, and that it supports this.

Indra Winquest, Chairperson of the Board of Directors, along with Angela Orr, Principal, and Danielle Cherry, Board Secretary, gave a presentation on behalf of Doral Academy Northern Nevada and their amendment requests.

Ms. Orr stated they have created pamphlets and brochures in advertising that they will be giving out to a larger area of their surrounding community.

Veronica Siminowski, parent of two children that attend Doral Academy of Northern Nevada, spoke in support of the Board's proposed amendments and gives a testimony involving her two children.

*Member Kirner, moved to approve the good cause exemption request and the addition of supplemental, distance education courses to be offered at Doral Academy of Northern Nevada beginning in the 2020 – 2021 school year, with conditions as outlined.*

*Member Moulton seconded the motion.*

*Chair Mackedon called the vote, motion carried unanimously.*

*Member Kirner moved to approve the good-cause exemption request and the proposed increase of the DANN enrollment caps for the 20-21, 21-22 and 22-23 school years as presented, with the two conditions as outlined above. First, that the school implement a weighted lottery, as approved by the DANN Boarded, for student seeking to enroll in the school for the 2020 -2021 school year. Second, that the school develop a communication plan, in collaboration with SPCSA staff, so that current and prospective parents are notified and informed about this important change.*

*Member Moulton seconded the motion.*

*Chair Mackedon called the vote.*

*Member Randolph opposed the motion.*

*Member Kirner proposed a third motion to approve DANN for good cause exemption and advance request for approval to acquire or construct a new or additional facility subject to conditions previously discussed.*

*Member Moulton seconded the motion.*

*Chair Mackedon called the vote, motion carried unanimously.*

Lunch taken at 11:45am. Meeting reconvened at 12:40pm.

### **Agenda Item 7 – Discovery Charter School Provides the Authority with a Written Report Regarding the Status of the School Under its Newly-Reconstituted Governing Body.**

Executive Director Feiden, stated that Tricia Wilbourne, Site Lead Administrator, Discovery Charter School, will be providing an update for the Board..

Ms. Wilbourne provided an update regarding leadership, the board of trustees, curriculum and instruction, data and assessment, as well as community engagement, and the outstanding PERS balance. Regarding the PERS balance, they've narrowed down their balance to \$115,000 from \$233,000 (numbers are rounded) of fees and interest that had accumulated. She has communicated her plan with their PERS representative, to give them \$10,000 a month, and now waits for it in writing, hoping to be free from their debt around this time next year rather than the 22-month plan.

No public comment in the north or south as to Agenda Item 7. No action was taken on this item.

**Agenda Item 8 – Quest Preparatory Academy Receivership Update.**

Executive Director Feiden provided brief context regarding the school.

Josh Kern, receiver for Quest Preparatory Academy, provided history of the school and gave some of the recent demographics. He closed with his recommendation of Quest Preparatory Academy charter not be renewed, unless they can reach a settlement with CSP Bridger by December 31, 2019.

No public comment in the north or south related to Agenda Item 8.

**Agenda Item 9 – Argent Preparatory Academy Receivership Update.**

Executive Director Feiden stated that Argent closed at the end of the 2017-2018 school year and has one remaining property to be sold. She turned it over to Mr. Kern to provide an update on that.

Josh Kern, receiver for Argent Preparatory Academy responded that the property is on the market listed for 2.35 million dollars, which is over half a million dollars under the assessed value, they are hopeful in getting it sold.

No public comment in the north or south related to Agenda Item 9.

Member Kirner left meeting for appointment.

**Agenda Item 10 – Nevada Connections Academy Charter School Contract Renewal Presentation.**

Executive Director Feiden introduced Nevada Connections Academy Charter School.

Chris McBride, Superintendent of Nevada Connections Academy, said they would be presenting on the importance of social emotional learning and how their school addresses the social and emotional needs of their students.

Presenting first, Misty Vaughan Allen, Coordinator of the Nevada Office of Suicide Prevention.

Next a presentation from Mollie Marti, Founder and CEO, National Resilience Institute  
[www.natioalresiliencinstitute.org](http://www.natioalresiliencinstitute.org)

The next presentation is from Christine Dzarnoski, Assistant Principal, Nevada Connections Academy.

Victoria Neer, High School Support Specialist, Nevada Connections Academy, gave her presentation.

Jessie Berry, Graduate from Nevada Connections Academy, gave a testimony regarding his experience with the charter school.

Member Soifer asked about the student participation rates in the social emotional learning mentor program, as well as the multi-tiered system of support and the procedure for that, as well as the frequency of the counselors reaching out.

Ms. Neer answered that the social emotional learning mentor program is the newest addition to their social emotional learning support and that it isn't necessarily whether the students participate, it's the school identifying the students that need the extra support and making sure they are matched with a good fit teacher. Teachers reach out weekly, biweekly, monthly, depending on the level of support necessary. She discussed their three different multi-tiered level of supports for their students; academic response to intervention (RTI), behavioral and truancy, and social emotional support, each with multi-tiered layers of support. All of their mentors are their teachers.

Member Soifer asked outside of the professional development, the mentoring and work itself, how that is funded.

Ms. Dzarnoski replied to the question of whether the mentors are being paid; it is volunteer based, and they receive grants through the state and the grant money goes towards the programs.

Member Soifer asked about the record keeping for the grants in the terms of entering sessions and frequency.

Ms. Dzarnoski responded that they have a log system for the record keeping they share with the state and it shows what the funds are used for and if they ask for specifics, they can provide them.

Chris McBride added that they also have a partnership with Truckee Meadows Community College, so students can be dually enrolled.

Member Soifer said that he would be interested in what their data tells them in regard to their students' rate of growth or completion that have been with them for consecutive years.

Matt Wicks, Efficiency of Research and Reporting of Nevada Connections Academy, stated that he does not have the absolute data points and he would be happy to provide it, but the progression and growth is seen similar.

Member Soifer said that he is troubled by the fact that the students of NCA have the lowest math longitudinal growth in the charter sector in Nevada and if NCA could speak to that.

Mr. Wicks replied that math is continued to be a struggle but two years ago they introduced an entirely new math curriculum.

No public comment in the north or south related to Agenda Item 10.

**Agenda Item 11 – SPCSA Executive Director’s Report. Executive Director Feiden will provide the Authority with updates regarding the following:**

- a. SPCSA’s 2019-2020 school year demographic information
- b. SPCSA’s high school graduation rates (class of 2018-2019)
- c. Letters of Intent for January 15, 2020, new charter school application window
- d. Senate Bill 441 regulation update (Department of Education)
- e. SPCSA staffing update

Executive Director Feiden provided the following updates:

- i. Enrollment numbers for 2019 represent a 16.74% increase of enrollment than the prior year.
- ii. Graduation rates have increased by over 7% and an increase in almost every student group, 14 out of 17 of the high schools reported graduation rates above 85% and four schools had a perfect 100%.
- iii. There are 13 letters of intent, with actual applications due on January 15.
- iv. Senate Bill 441, which pertains to virtual charter schools, staff anticipates a workshop that will be held in the coming months.
- v. Staffing update, Brandon Gayton, the newest Education Programs Professional. In addition, staff is working on filling current vacancies.

No public comment in the north or south related to Agenda Item 11.

**Agenda Item 12 – Long-Range Board Calendar.**

Executive Director Feiden, stated that looking ahead for the January meeting, the staff anticipate multiple renewal recommendations and have proposed going into March the schools would be coming back to report for those that are on a notice of breach. She believed there to be four schools that would be reporting on their progress regarding their school performance plan.

Chair Mackedon responded that they can probably work it out next time as she thinks there will be some resubmissions from today and those should probably get put on the March agenda.

Executive Director Feiden replied that it looks like they do have some potential Board meeting dates on the 5th, 6th, or 14th of February. She asked Board members look at their calendars and let staff know if those are options.

No public comment in the north or south related to Agenda Item 12.

**Agenda Item 13 – Public comment**

No public comment in the north or south related to Agenda Item 13.

**Agenda Item 14 – Adjournment**

Meeting Adjourned at 2:38pm.