

**NEVADA STATE PUBLIC CHARTER SCHOOL AUTHORITY**

**December 17, 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 Holmes-Sutton**

**Member Soifer**

**Member Cyr (came in at 9:30am)**

**Member Randolph**

**Member Moulton**

**Vice Chair Kirner**

**Chair Mackedon**

**In Carson City:**

**BOARD MEMBERS ABSENT:**

**AUTHORITY STAFF PRESENT:**

**In Las Vegas:**

**Rebecca Feiden, Executive Director**

**Ryan Herrick, Staff Attorney**

**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)

**CALL TO ORDER; ROLL CALL; PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE**  
**Agenda Item 1 – Call to Order, Roll Call, and Pledge of Allegiance**

Chair Mackedon called the meeting to order at 9:00am, with attendance reflected above.

Ryan Herrick, Staff Attorney, Nevada State Public Charter School Authority (SPCSA), said that Member Cyr is running late and should be in at about 9:30am.

**Agenda Item 2 – Founders Academy of Las Vegas’ Charter School Contract Amendment Application**

Mike Dang, Manager of Financial and Organizational Performance, SPCSA. Founders Academy is requesting to acquire the campus that they are currently in and add about 10,000 square feet more in the form of nine classrooms. Staff has reviewed the eligibility requirements and the academic, financial, organizational performance as well as the feasibility of what they are proposing and find it to be satisfactory. Therefore, staff recommends approval.

Ronald Fick, CEO and Principal, Founders Academy, said that they have worked hard over the last couple years to improve their financial and academic framework and it can be seen. Mr. Fick also said they look forward to financing their building, which will be a significant savings for them.

No public comment in the north or south as to Agenda Item 2.

*Member Moulton moved to approve, with conditions, Founders Academy of Las Vegas’ request to issue bonds to acquire the campus it has been leasing and to implement its improvement and expansion plans for the facility only as described herein based on its application.*

*Member Kirner seconded the motion.*

*The motion carried unanimously.*

**Agenda Item 3 – Overview of New School Application Process and Standards**

Executive Director Rebecca Feiden gave an overview of the application process and standards, a process that the SPCSA goes through twice a year and relies on rigorous high standards that are outlined in statute, regulation, as well as our rubric and application guidance.

Member Kirner asked if staff shared their recommendation memos in writing when they met with the applicants several weeks ago, or if that was something provided more recent.

Executive Director Feiden replied that at the time they met with them staff allowed them to see a working draft of their documents and the recommendations were posted on the 6th of this month, at the point when which they were finalized.

Executive Director Feiden concluded her presentation with details regarding the appeal process.

Chair Mackedon asked about the timeline of the appeal process and the obligation on tightening the timeline up for these schools as they are looking at late spring before the denials are on a Board agenda.

Member Kirner asked if there is a possibility that they call a special meeting in February.

Executive Director Feiden replied that the staff has identified a potential set of dates.

Dan Tafoya, Director, CCSD Office of School Choice provided comment.

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

**Agenda Item 4 – New Charter School Applications from the SPCSA’s 2019 Summer Cycle:**

**a. Alaka’i Heritage Academy (Clark County; proposed grades kindergarten through 8)**

Member Holmes-Sutton recused herself from Agenda Item 4, per her developing partnership in her capacity as the State Director for Teach Plus as well as the Director for Nevada National Board for Professional Teaching Standards.

Eren Martin-Beat, Chair of the Committee to Form, Alaka’i Heritage Academy, and currently an Educator at Mater Academy Mountain Vista.

Lorraine DeAnda, Principal Select, Alaka’i Heritage Academy, and currently the Assistant Principal at Somerset Academy North Las Vegas.

Tiffanie Zuttermeister, Vice Chair of the Committee to Form, Alaka’i Heritage Academy, Registrar and Assistant to Head of School, Adelson Education.

Renee Cadaoas, Secretary of the Committee to Form, Alaka’i Heritage Academy, Management Assistant, LVMPD.

Executive Director Feiden stated that Alaka’i Heritage Academy is a proposed Kindergarten–8th grade, multicultural, arts integration school, that draws from the Hawaiian culture. She provided a brief summary of the school’s proposal and indicated that staff’s proposed motion is to deny the Alaka’i Heritage Academy application as submitted during the 2019 Summer Application Cycle based on a finding that the applicant has failed to satisfy the requirements contained in NRS 388A.249(3).

Ms. Martin-Beat shared the statement prepared by the school.

There was further discussion between the Board and the school regarding the school’s arts integration background, budget, curriculum, and the make up of their board.

No public comment in the north or south as to Agenda Item 4(a).

*Member Moulton moved to deny the Alaka'i Heritage Academy application as submitted during the 2019 Summer Application Cycle based on a finding that the applicant has failed to satisfy the requirements contained in NRS 388A.249(3), and identified Executive Director Rebecca Feiden and Director Modrcin as the staff members to work with them.*

*Member Soifered seconded the motion.*

*Motion carried unanimously with Member Holmes-Sutton abstained.*

**b. Las Vegas Collegiate Charter School (Clark County; proposed grades kindergarten through 5)**

Member Randolph abstained from this agenda item because prior to being appointed to this Board, she was invited to participate on that board and did attend one of their organizational meetings.

Leland Brandon, Proposed Board Chair, Las Vegas Collegiate, and is currently the Senior Director of Youth Market American Heart Association.

Bianté Gainous, Founder, Las Vegas Collegiate.

Kathleen Simon, Proposed Finance Committee, Las Vegas Collegiate, and is currently the VP of Finance and Controller at Influential Network.

Jill Shreidl, Proposed Board Secretary, Las Vegas Collegiate, and is currently an Education Consultant with Pearson Education.

Executive Director Feiden began with the background on this proposed school and indicated that overall and after careful consideration, the review committee unanimously recommended approval of this application, staff agrees with this assessment and recommends the Authority approve this application with conditions, based on a finding that the applicant meets the requirements contained in NRS 388A.249(3).

Executive Director Feiden summarized the application section ratings which were concluded by the review team.

Member Cyr asked if the conditions made prior to opening have any deadline in which they must be met, aside from day one of school.

Executive Director Feiden replied she would expect the first two items to be in short order, 30-60 days at the most.

Member Holmes-Sutton asked about the particular area of concern regarding the salaries proposed for the teachers and how the school planned to recruit highly skilled teachers with extra certifications for this low start salary, which is the year 1 step 1 salary for teachers with CCSD.

Ms. Gainous said a huge pillar of Las Vegas Collegiate is the way they train and develop teachers. They will be searching for highly qualified teachers, utilizing national organizations that they partner with such as Building Excellent Schools and they really focus on developing the teachers that they will have access to.

Member Moulton asked if Las Vegas Collegiate was open to reaching out to other schools like Democracy Prep, which is close in proximity.

Ms. Gainous replied that one of their letters of support came from Adam Johnson, Executive Director of Democracy Prep and plan to partner with schools on professional development.

No public comment in the north or south as to Agenda Item 4(b).

*Member Holmes-Sutton moved to approve the Las Vegas Collegiate application as submitted during the 2019 Summer Application Cycle, with the conditions outlined below, based on a finding that the applicant meets the requirements contained in NRS 388A.249(3).*

- 1. Submit an updated incubation year plan that clarifies how the board will monitor progress towards key milestones and the available supports to the proposed school leader.*
- 2. Provide either more detail as to how the existing staff will manage the range of administrative responsibilities in year 1 OR an alternative scenario that includes additional contracted support.*
- 3. Work with the local jurisdiction to address traffic flow and pedestrian safety during student arrival and dismissal.*

*Member Kirner seconded the motion.*

*Motion carried unanimously with Member Randolph abstained.*

**c. Pinecrest Academy of Northern Nevada (Washoe County; proposed grades kindergarten through 8)**

Megan Salcido, Proposed Vice Chair of the Board on the Committee to Form, Pinecrest Academy of Northern Nevada.

Angela Orr, Proposed Secretary of the Board on the Committee to Form, Pinecrest Academy of Northern Nevada.

Jake Wiskerchen, Proposed Chair of the Board on the Committee to Form, Pinecrest Academy of Northern Nevada.

Tiffany Bailee, Proposed Principal, Pinecrest Academy of Northern Nevada and currently the Principal at Pinecrest Academy Inspirada.

Elaine Clemente, Principal of Pinecrest Academy South in Miami Florida.

J. Steve Albrecht, Proposed Board Member on the Committee to Form at Pinecrest Academy of Northern Nevada and the Assistant Principal at Pinecrest Academy Inspirada.

Craig Seiden, Proposed Treasurer of The Board on the Committee to Form at Pinecrest Academy of Northern Nevada and currently serves on the board for Pinecrest Academy in Clark County.

Jessica LeNeave, current Principal of Pinecrest Academy Cadence Campus.

Director Modrcin gave staff's recommendation and a summarized overview of the school's application. He mentioned that there was a staff error in the initial posted memo that has since been corrected and the zip code on the posted memo is correct. Overall and after careful consideration the review committee unanimously recommended this application be denied.

Ms. Salcido gave a brief presentation response to the Board and staff requesting that their application be approved with strict conditions as follows:

1. Implement a weighted lottery
2. Implement a National School Lunch Program within the first year of operation
3. Model budget to adjust staffing to include a full-time EL Program Coordinator

Ms. Orr said their Board is highly committed to implementing a weighted lottery in day one and that there is no better way to ensure FRL population, EL population, and a population of students with IEPs into enrollment into vacant seats and they would like to be the first school to do so.

Ms. Salcido touched more on the targeted marketing they intend to do and the conversations they have been having with other communities in Northern Nevada.

Ms. Clement said they have about 12 Pinecrest Academy schools in Florida and they continue to grow. Her school is K-5, Pinecrest Academy South, serves 60% FRL and about 9% ELL, however her community is 95% Hispanic. The Pinecrest Academy of Nevada and Florida schools collaborate and meet a few times a year, discussing strategies and best practices using data monitoring and provide daily interventions.

Member Moulton asked Ms. Clemente what the per pupil spending was for Florida and added that she knows it is a lot more than Nevada's and she would like that put into perspective.

Ms. Clemente replied they receive about \$7,500 per student for FTE.

Member Moulton asked how many of their board members are directly affiliated with Pinecrest or Academica.

Mr. Wiskerchen said they currently have two individuals working with Pinecrest in some capacity, Steve Albrecht who is a Vice Principal in Las Vegas, and Craig Seiden who currently sits on Pinecrest Academy – Las Vegas’ board.

Ms. Orr said that she is a Principal at a school that is affiliated with Academica but ensured that Academica Nevada works for Pinecrest Academy of Northern Nevada and not the other way around. Also, in the last legislative cycle their per pupil funding amount has increased to \$7,400 per pupil spending in Washoe County.

Chair Mackedon said the school is taking on a huge burden in being the first school to implement a weighted lottery. She emphasized the seriousness of what the Committee to Form was saying they could accomplish and what the ramifications would be for other schools going forward.

Member Cyr asked what the school’s board effort was in reaching out to the Native American communities prior to AB 462.

Ms. Orr replied they started their outreach in April and the issue was the population had been historically underserved and is much less trusting of the public school system than many other populations and that it took PANN a while to have their outreach work.

Chair Mackedon added, as someone who does serve students from the Fallon Paiute Shoshone, it is a very difficult group of people to make inroads with and is impressed with their progress and acknowledged that it is not an easy thing to do.

Mr. Wiskerchen said one of their questions in the capacity interview was what their ongoing efforts were and that they assumed it would always be ongoing. They want to engage in perpetuity and, so for them, it wasn’t on their radar because it was just assumed until AB 462, in which they realized they needed to better articulate what they were doing.

*Member Moulton proposed to deny the Pinecrest Academy of Northern Nevada charter school application as submitted during the 2019 Summer Application Cycle based on a finding that the applicant has failed to satisfy the requirements contained in NRS 388A.249(3) and would assign Executive Director Feiden and Director Modrcin to work with them.*

*Member Randolph seconded the motion.*

Chair Mackedon asked for any public comment in the North.

Jesse Haw provided public comment. He said he is in support of the school’s application, not the motion, and that he started working with this group in October of 2018. His partners own the land that the proposed school is proposing to build on.

Chair Mackedon asked for public comment in the South.

Ryan Reeves, Chief Operating Officer of Academica Nevada said that at some point with AB 462 they are going to have to take on this experiment and there is no better model than Pinecrest

to take it on. They have the track record nationally and locally. He closed with Pinecrest Academy being a credible benefit with any community it enters.

*Chair Mackedon called the vote.*

*Mr. Herrick asked for a roll call vote.*

*Member Soifer: no.*

*Member Randolph: yes.*

*Member Moulton: no.*

*Member Mackedon: no.*

*Member Kirner: no.*

*Member Cyr: yes.*

*The motion does not carry, 4-2.*

Chair Mackedon said the next logical step is to talk about the conditions that the school put forth; (1) implement a weighted lottery, with a targeted marketing effort, that in her opinion, must include canvassing door to door; (2) implement a National School Lunch Program within the first year of operation; (3) model budget to adjust staffing to include a full-time EL Program Coordinator; (4) any class fees or athletic fees would be waived for students who qualify.

Member Soifer said regarding resources committed to transportation and/or targeted outreach, if perhaps the right thing to do is to pass that to the applicant and see if they have any thoughts or observations to add.

Chair Mackedon asked how the conversations initially went and if they seem promising, in regard to the outreach for transportation.

Ms. Orr replied that it is a commitment of theirs to make sure every student has access to their campus, but she is concerned about making a promise today that they might not be able to meet without further budget analysis.

Member Soifer said the comment from the applicant is that no financial resources would be applied to further outreach and would be dependent on volunteer outreach, but he cannot have confidence in that alone getting to a free and reduced lunch population consistent with page 32 of this strategic growth plan that this Board approved on Friday.

Ryan Reeves said PANN's outreach is ongoing, and they have explored financial analysis of what it would take. They want to see this succeed and have flexibility in what they do.

Chair Mackedon said she believed what Member Soifer was saying was that he would like to see some funding included in the targeted marketing effort.

Member Kirner said his proposal for the first condition that PANN must implement a weighted lottery in conjunction with a targeted marketing effort to ensure a student population that reflects



the broader Washoe County area. Further, this includes a transportation plan and a firm application or commitment of funds to this end.

Member Soifer asked if some specific reference to the free and reduced lunch population of Washoe County School District could be added.

Member Kirner said they can add that.

*Member Kirner made a motion to approve the Pinecrest Academy of Northern Nevada charter school application as submitted during the 2019 Summer Application Cycle with conditions as follows: (1) implement a weighted lottery in conjunction with a targeted marketing effort to ensure a student population that reflects the broader Washoe County School District, further, the marketing effort would include a transportation plan and a commitment of funds and would consider free and reduced lunch population; (2) implement a National School Lunch Program within the first year of operation; (3) model budget to adjust staffing to include a full-time EL Program Coordinator.*

*Member Moulton seconded the motion.*

Member Soifer asked about the suggestion for any additional school fees be waived for free and reduced lunch eligible students.

Member Kirner said it will be included as a 4th condition.

Executive Director Feiden asked for clarification regarding the revised budget and if it was in reference to the concern regarding the incubation year or in reference to the EL coordinator that has been proposed.

Chair Mackedon clarified that it is for the incubation year, the EL coordinator, as well as the marketing plan.

*Chair Mackedon called the vote via roll call.*

*Member Soifer: Yes.*

*Member Randolph: Yes.*

*Member Moulton: Yes.*

*Member Mackedon: Yes.*

*Member Kirner: Yes.*

*Member Cyr: Yes.*

*Motion carried unanimously.*

**Lunch taken for 20 min. Reconvene at 1:50pm**

**d. Nevada Strong (Clark County; proposed grades kindergarten through 10)**

Member Soifer recused himself on account of consultations he had with the applicant prior to joining this board.

Andy Hafen, proposed Board Chair on the Committee to form, Nevada Strong Academy.

Daniel Stewart, counsel for the applicant, said that they also have Dr. Soner Tarim on the phone, Co-Founder of Nevada Strong Academy.

Annette Dawson Owens, Co-Founder of Nevada Strong.

Mark Gardberg, legal counsel for the applicant.

Soner Tarim introduced himself over the phone.

Ms. Owens indicated that Amy Trombetti, from SPEDCO, proposed Board Member on Committee to form, was present but she had an appointment to go to and Carrie Buck, proposed Board Member on Committee to form, was on the phone.

Director Modrcin began with a summary of staff's recommendation regarding the Nevada Strong charter school proposal stating that substantial gaps exist within the organizational plan including a lack of clarity about the roles and responsibilities of the proposed EMO. He shared district input from Clark County School District and proceeded with an overview of the school's application. He indicated that staff's recommendation is to deny the Nevada Strong Academy charter school application.

Mr. Stewart said Nevada Strong is requesting a conditional approval and to overrule staff's recommendations as they have now identified their property, even though it was not submitted with the application. He further discussed their application's deficiencies and their objectives as well as other fundamental and technical issues.

Mr. Gardberg emphasized remarks from Mr. Stewart. He highlighted that the Clark County School District saw that they met standards.

Member Moulton asked staff the average percentage that the school pays for an EMO.

Mike Dang, Manager of Financial and Organizational Performance, SPCSA, said they see the fees range from 6-15%.

Mr. Tarim said the deficiencies in the application are small and correctable. In terms of management fees, he said they are a full-service organization and he has a team of people ready to assemble and be there as soon as the application is approved. He provided his background.

No public comment in the north or south as to Agenda Item 4(d).

*Member Moulton moved to deny the Nevada Strong Academy charter school application as submitted during the 2019 Summer Application Cycle based on a finding that the applicant has failed to satisfy the requirements contained in NRS 388A.249(3) and assigned Director Modcrin and Executive Director Feiden to work with the Committee to Form.*

*Member Holmes-Sutton seconded the motion.*

*Motion carried unanimously.*

**e. Sage Collegiate Charter School (Clark County; proposed grades kindergarten through 8)**

Sandra Kinne, Founder and Proposed Executive Director, Sage Collegiate Charter School.

Alejandro Rodriguez, Proposed Board Chair, Sage Collegiate Charter School.

Executive Director Feiden began with a summary of staff's recommendation regarding Sage Collegiate charter school. The review committee and SPCSA staff find that the application has shortcomings within all four components of the submitted application. For these reasons along with those outlined in the memo to the Board, staff's recommendation is to deny the Sage Collegiate Public Charter School Application.

Chair Mackedon asked staff to address the timing issues as far as transition from an SPCSA employee and what agreements were there.

Executive Director Feiden provided that Sandra Kinne previously worked for the SPCSA and was directed not to conduct business as part of an application process while working for the agency and she left the agency shortly before this submission was due.

Ms. Kinne added that upon recommendation she pursued a decision from the Ethics Commission and a decision was issued that there was not a conflict given that she was not a decision-making member of the staff nor a board member.

Ms. Kinne proceeded to give an overview of the application and while Sage disagree with some of the points, their team recognizes the importance of the process. She provided brief updates to the Board.

Mr. Rodriguez provided his background and affiliation with the proposed school.

Member Soifer gave the school an opportunity to respond relating to the budget.

Ms. Kinne said the SPCSA template for the budget does not allow for projections around Title I programming and additional Title funding that would provide support so there is a significant piece of their budget missing.

There was further discussion between the school and the Board.

No public comment in the north or south as to Agenda Item 4(e).

*Member Moulton moved to deny the Sage Collegiate Public Charter School application as submitted during the 2019 Summer Application Cycle based on a finding that the applicant has failed to satisfy the requirements contained in NRS 388A.249(3) and assigned Director Modcrin and Executive Director Feiden to work with the Committee to Form.*

*Member Soifer seconded the motion.*

*Motion carried unanimously.*

**f. Girls Athletic Leadership Schools (Clark County; proposed grades 6 through 8)**

Sarah Sherman, Proposed Principal, Girls Athletic Leadership Schools.

Jules Schoolmeester, Proposed Board Chair, Girls Athletic Leadership Schools.

Jennifer McCloskey, Founder, Girls Athletic Leadership Schools.

Lisa Windom, Proposed Board Member, Girls Athletic Leadership Schools.

Director Modcrin began with a summary of staff's recommendation regarding the Girls Athletic Leadership Schools' charter school proposal. He shared district input from Clark County School District as well as a piece of public input that noted a single sex school is an interesting concept and would be new to the area. He proceeded with a summary of the school application including both strengths and deficiencies. For these reasons along with those outlined in the memo to the Board, staff's recommendation is to deny the Girls Athletic Leadership Schools charter school application.

Ms. Schoolmeester provided the background of Girls Athletic Leadership Schools as well as the intent the proposed school has.

Ms. McCloskey talked about how Girls Athletic Leadership Schools responds to Nevada's needs as well as her recent efforts to address the concerns raised during their application process.

Member Holmes-Sutton left the meeting at 3:56pm.

No public comment in the north or south as to Agenda Item 4(f).

*Member Moulton moved to Deny the Girls Athletic Leadership School charter application as submitted during the 2019 Summer Application Cycle based on a finding that the applicant has failed to satisfy the requirements contained in NRS 388A.249(3), and assigned Director Modcrin and Executive Director Feiden to work with the Committee to Form.*

*Member Randolph seconded the motion*

*Member Cyr opposed the motion.*

*Motion carried unanimously.*

**g. Pahrump Valley Academy (Nye County; proposed grades kindergarten through 8)**

Ed Williams, Proposed Principal, Pahrump Valley Academy.

Sable Marandi, Founder and Proposed Executive Director, Pahrump Valley Academy.

Tom Waters, Proposed Board Member, Pahrump Valley Academy.

Director Modrcin began with a summary of staff's recommendation regarding the Pahrump Valley Academy charter school proposal. He shared district input from Nye County, which could be found as exhibit 6 alongside this item. He proceeded with a summary of the school application including both strengths and deficiencies. For these reasons along with those outlined in the memo to the Board, staff's recommendation is to deny the Pahrump Valley Academy charter school application.

Ms. Marandi provided response to staff's concerns and stated reasons why this charter school is necessary in their community.

Mr. Waters said that the community support is already there.

Mr. Williams provided his background and affiliation with the school. He served 22 years in the United States Army.

Chair Mackedon asked for public comment.

Mr. Waters provided his background and affiliation with Pahrump Valley Academy. He said he served 32 years in the United States Air Force, as a Master Sergeant prior becoming an Officer. He was an admissions counselor and understands education.

Mark Gardberg provided comment and said that he believes in Pahrump Valley Academy.

Kiumars Argami provided public comment on behalf of Pahrump Valley Academy.

*Member Kirner moved to deny the Pahrump Valley Academy charter school application as submitted during the 2019 Summer Application Cycle based on a finding that the applicant has failed to satisfy the requirements contained in NRS 388A.249(3), and assigned Director Modrcin and Executive Director Feiden to work with the Committee to Form.*

*Member Moulton seconded the motion.*

*Motion carried unanimously.*

**Agenda Item 5 – Long-Range Board Calendar.**

Executive Director Feiden said they spoke about this item Friday at the last meeting and asked if there is anything else the Authority would like to add to the January agenda.

There was further discussion between staff and the Board in regard to the resubmission process and the timeframe.

No public comment in the north or south as to Agenda Item 5. No action was taken on this item.

**Agenda Item 6 – Public Comment.**

(None)

**Agenda Item 7 – Adjournment.**

*This meeting was adjourned at 5:27pm.*