

Charter School Application Report

Girls Athletic Leadership School (G.A.L.S.)

Recommendation for the Resubmitted Summer 2019 Charter Application Cycle

General Information

Proposed Name	Girls Athletic Leadership School (G.A.L.S.)
Proposed Mission	To provide high quality education as measured by 4 and 5 stars in a supportive environment that fosters the academic mastery and personal development necessary for every girl to become a powerful advocate for herself and a leader of her community.
Proposed CMO	Girls Athletic Leadership Schools, Inc. (G.A.L.S.)
Proposed Grade Configuration	Opening: 6 th grade Full-Scale: 6 th - 8 th grade
Proposed Opening	August 2020
Proposed Location	89104, 89102, 89107, 89101 and 89169, 89119, 89120 and 89109 zip codes

Process/Key Dates for G.A.L.S.

- New Charter Application Training
- March 15, 2019 – Notice of Intent is received
- July 15, 2019 – Application is received
- August 7, 2019 – AB 462 Addendum is received
- October 31, 2019 - Capacity Interview is conducted
- December 17, 2019 – Application is denied by the Authority
- January 5, 2020 – Resubmitted application is received by the Authority¹
- January 15, 2020 – SPCSA staff discussed resubmission with applicant team

¹ The GALS Committee to Form requested three additional meetings prior to January 5, 2020 to further discuss the deficiencies within the initial charter application.

Planned Enrollment Chart

	<u>2020-21</u>	<u>2021-22</u>	<u>2022-23</u>	<u>2023-24</u>	<u>2024-25</u>	<u>2025-26</u>
<u>K</u>						
<u>1</u>						
<u>2</u>						
<u>3</u>						
<u>4</u>						
<u>5</u>						
<u>6</u>	135	135	135	135	135	135
<u>7</u>	0	135	135	135	135	135
<u>8</u>	0	0	135	135	135	135
<u>9</u>						
<u>10</u>						
<u>11</u>						
<u>12</u>						
<u>Total</u>	135	270	405	405	405	405

Executive Summary, Process and Recommendation

During the December 17, 2019 Authority meeting, SPCSA staff presented the findings of the initial review committee and SPCSA staff for the Girls Athletic Leadership School (G.A.L.S.) charter application. The initial application was found to exhibit shortcomings within three of the four components of the submitted application. The review committee and SPCSA staff found that the proposed academic, organizational and financial plans did not meet the standards as outlined in the charter application rubric. The review committee and SPCSA staff found that the proposed G.A.L.S. charter school had satisfactorily met the Geographic component of the Academic Needs within the SPCSA Academic and Demographic Needs Assessment. The applicant demonstrated an intent to create a 4 and 5-star school in a community that has multiple 1 and 2-star schools, and also provided a number of Intent to Enroll forms as well as community letters of support that are tied directly to the proposed community in which the school intends to locate.

A second committee comprised of SPCSA staff reviewed the resubmitted G.A.L.S. application after it was received on January 5, 2020. The review committee approached rating the resubmission with two primary concentrations:

- To determine if the applicant had corrected the original deficiencies found in the original application; and
- To verify that the applicant's resubmission did not change the rating of any component of the rubric that was determined to previously Meet Standard

Upon resubmission, the review committee determined that a number of deficiencies within the original application had been addressed, and met the standard within the respective application component. Significant improvements were found within the operations and financial sections. The G.A.L.S. Committee to Form altered the proposed Master Service Agreement with the G.A.L.S. network, and made modifications within the proposed budget to address teacher salaries and grant funding. The Committee to Form has also modified their plan for a school leader, with a strong emphasis on experience with at-risk students.

Because this is a replication of an existing model, results of the original G.A.L.S. school are scrutinized as past performance is an indicator of future success. A shortcoming of the proposed school are the recent results within the G.A.L.S. network. The academic performance gaps exist in critical subgroups. While the school has adopted specific plans from affiliate schools in Los Angeles and Denver to address these concerns, and these plans have a relatively higher track record with the identified populations, the review committee recommends additional conditions be attached to any approval of the G.A.L.S charter application so that the school and Authority can more proactively address any issues. These conditions can be found below.

Despite this concern, the review committee has determined that the application has 'Met the Standard' in a sufficient number of application components to be recommended for approval with conditions. These conditions can be found in the proposed motion below.

Proposed motion: Approve the Girls Athletic Leadership School charter application as resubmitted during the 2019 Summer Application Cycle, with conditions outlined below, based on a finding that the applicant now meets the requirements contained in NRS 388A.249(3).

1. Provide End of Year performance results for programs and models the school is seeking to replicate, specifically from other schools within the G.A.L.S network in Los Angeles and Denver;
2. Submit NWEA-MAP results from the beginning, middle and end-of-year assessments for the 2020 – 2021 school year so that SPCSA staff can monitor the academic progress of students attending the school, specifically those that are at-risk;
3. Provide results of the GALS network bi-annual assessment of the GALS Las Vegas school;
4. Present confirmation that GALS Las Vegas has hired a school leader which meets the revised job criteria no later than March 2020; and
5. Submit a revised budget, on or before March 31, 2020, that includes any grant funds or philanthropic dollars awarded.

Summary of Application Section Ratings

The State Public Charter School Authority is required to assemble a team of reviewers and conduct a thorough evaluation of the application, which includes an in-person interview with the applicant designed to elicit any necessary clarification or additional information about the proposed charter school. The SPCSA is required to adhere to its policies and practices, namely the application guidance, training and rubric, regarding evaluating charter applications. Ultimately, the SPCSA must base its determination on the documented evidence collected through the application process.

Rating options for each section are Meets the Standard; Approaches the Standard; Does not Meet the Standard. These are defined as follows:

- **Meets the Standard:** The response reflects a thorough understanding of key issues. It addresses the topic with specific and accurate information that shows thorough preparation; presents a clear, realistic picture of how the school expects to operate; and inspires confidence in the applicant's capacity to carry out the plan effectively in a way which will result in a 4- or 5-star school.
- **Approaches the Standard:** The response meets the criteria in many respects but lacks detail and/or requires additional information in one or more areas.
- **Does Not Meet the Standard:** The response is undeveloped or incomplete; demonstrates lack of preparation; or otherwise raises substantial concerns about the viability of the plan or the applicant's ability to carry it out.

The rubric is broken into four major sections as outlined below and detailed descriptions of each rubric item can be found in the full rubric located on the SPCSA Application website:

http://charterschools.nv.gov/OpenASchool/Application_Packet/

<u>Application Section</u>	<u>Initial Rating</u>	<u>Resubmission Rating</u>
Meeting the Need	Meets the Standard	Meets the Standard
Targeted Plan	Meets the Standard	Meets the Standard
Parent and Community Involvement	Meets the Standard	Meets the Standard
Academic Plan	Approaches the Standard	Approaches the Standard
Mission and Vision	Meets the Standard	Meets the Standard
Transformational Change	Approaches the Standard	Approaches the Standard
Curriculum & Instructional Design	Approaches the Standard	Approaches the Standard
Distance Education Requirements	N/A	N/A
Pre-K Requirements	N/A	N/A
High School Graduation Requirements	N/A	N/A
Driving for Results	Approaches the Standard	Meets the Standard
At-Risk Students and Special Populations	Does Not Meet the Standard	Approaches the Standard
School Structure (Culture)	Approaches the Standard	Approaches the Standard
School Structure (Student Discipline)	Approaches the Standard	Meets the Standard
School Structure (Calendar and Schedule)	Approaches the Standard	Meets the Standard
A Day in the Life & Scenarios	Approaches the Standard	Approaches the Standard
Operations Plan	Does Not Meet the Standard	Meets the Standard
Leadership Team	Approaches the Standard	Approaches the Standard
Leadership for Expansion	N/A	N/A
Staffing	Does Not Meet the Standard	Meets the Standard
Human Resources	Does Not Meet the Standard	Meets the Standard
Scale Strategy	N/A	N/A
Student Recruitment and Enrollment	Meets the Standard	Meets the Standard
Board Governance	Approaches the Standard	Meets the Standard
Incubation Year Development	Approaches the Standard	Approaches the Standard
School Management Contracts	Does Not Meet the Standard	Meets the Standard
Services	Approaches the Standard	Approaches the Standard
Facilities	Meets the Standard	Meets the Standard
Ongoing Operations	Approaches the Standard	Meets the Standard
Financial Plan	Approaches the Standard	Meets the Standard

Meeting the Need Section

As previously stated, the applicant team determined that the initial application had ‘Met the Standard’. Previous strengths were determined to have remained in place upon resubmission, and are detailed again below.

However, the Committee to Form (CTF) made a few noteworthy enhancements to its charter application to bolster the plan. First, the CTF plans to execute a recruitment plan that intentionally markets to families within a two-mile radius of the proposed school site. Additionally, the CTF has made an additional connection with a third-party that has significant experience as a retired Principal in the community. Specifically, this individual will continue to advise and assist the G.A.L.S. CTF and school leaders as they seek to implement their proposed model.

Areas of Strength

- The applicant provided a clear description in the application about how the proposed school would meet the need, specifically the geographic need as described in the SPCSA’s Demographic and Needs Assessment. The applicant proposes to locate in an area of Las Vegas where 15 schools in the surrounding area are all one or two star schools. This commitment was reaffirmed during the capacity interview.
- During the capacity interview, the applicant noted that the community in which the school proposes to locate has a high dropout rate, which is another need as describe in the Demographic and Needs Assessment. The Committee to Form believes that the school aims to equip students with the skills to succeed and persist in school.
- The proposed location is close to UNLV which is an important component of their community engagement plan. Additionally, the CTF has identified a temporary facility, proposing to locate within the Boys and Girls Club. This is a well-established organization in the area that confirms that the applicant team has engaged with the community.
- During the capacity interview, the applicant substantiated that a large number of the Intent to Enroll forms received thus far come from the immediate community, a sign that the Committee to Form has been actively working to build their name, brand and reputation in the area. This also reaffirms their commitment to serving this community.
- The CTF stated that door-to-door outreach is underway to engage families as well as meetings at the community center in the neighborhood. Additionally, the applicant recognizes that that the community has a large immigrant population, so there are efforts to establish relationships with key community organizations to ensure the school is seen as a trusted provider in the neighborhood.

Areas of Concern

None

Academic Section

The initial charter application was rated as 'Approaches the Standard'. Previously identified strengths within the academic component of the application were determined to have remained in place, and are detailed below.

While there were a number of modifications that were made, notable changes were made to this portion of the plan. Specifically, the CTF provided additional information to clarify enrollment practices and reiterated that the proposed school was open to all students. The applicant also provided modified performance goals that are tailored to the SPCSA Performance Framework, and are therefore also aligned to the Nevada School Performance Framework (NSPF). The resubmitted application also provided clarity on attendance goals, clear processes for behavior interventions, and policies and structures for how these would be implemented. Ownership of each of these application components is clearly presented.

However, despite additional clarification on resubmission regarding the replication of existing programs and instructional models at existing GALS schools in Denver and Los Angeles, the performance results from these affiliate schools within the GALS network continue to raise concerns. In particular, performance of at-risk populations at these schools still raise concerns about the proposed model despite the resubmission "borrowing" best practices from more successful schools. By way of example, the GALS Las Vegas proposes to implement practices from its affiliate school in Los Angeles which is relatively more successful. While the plan describes in detail how some of these concerns might be allayed with the right school leader, this individual has not yet been identified, making it difficult to determine if there is sufficient capacity to be successful with these populations.

Areas of Strength

- The proposed school has strong mission and vision statements. Both in the application and during the capacity interview, the Committee to Form clearly articulates that it will be open to all students, and will not discriminate based on gender or gender identity.
- Within the application, the applicant provides research that supports a single-sex model approach to education. Additionally, the application outlines a number of key pieces within their instructional model to support students, including: exit tickets, academic assessments, team meetings and customized interventions.
- The Committee to Form clarified during the capacity interview that the GALS network has two different types of schools: service schools and model-inspired schools. The proposed school is a service school, one that will contract for services and implements components of the model. The CMO explained that historical data indicates that services schools outperform model-inspired schools, thus supporting the model as proposed.
- The Committee to Form plans to implement practices around ELL and SPED students from the affiliate schools within the GALS network that are having a high degree of success. Specifically, the school proposes to utilize practices from the Los Angeles school to best serve ELL students while employing SPED practices from the Denver school
- Revised academic performance goals are specific, detailed and align to both the new SPCSA Academic Performance Framework as well as the NSPF.

Areas of Concern

- The applicant spoke to the recent academic performance results in Denver, Colorado during the capacity interview. The school is currently rated as “Accredited on Watch” by Denver Public Schools which is defined as a “school that demonstrates results in some areas and/or has several areas in need of improvement.” While the resubmitted application provided an explanation for these results and action steps to proactively address potential achievement gaps, the review committee found this to be an area to focus on and closely monitor under any approval. This will help ensure quality results.
- While the applicant plans to implement practices that have been relatively more successful from affiliate schools, results will hinge on the identified school leader and effective implementation.

Operations Section

This section of the initial application was rated as 'Does Not Meet the Standard'. While there were a few strengths identified within this component, namely a firm facility plan and a successful demonstration of community support from prospective students, there were a large number of deficiencies that prevented this rating from being rated higher. Primary drivers of this initial rating were an underdeveloped and weak staffing plan, concerns about leadership capacity to effectively serve at-risk populations, and the proposed Master-Service Agreement, which did not effectively empower the proposed Board.

Upon resubmission, however, a number of the identified concerns were satisfactorily addressed. The Committee to Form has reevaluated their leadership team's capacity to effectively serve at-risk students, developing a plan to hire a new Principal. Additionally, the staffing plan has modified so to clearly delineate roles and primary responsibilities of full-time staff. Materials provided on resubmission also demonstrate that the proposed contract between the school and the G.A.L.S. network has been revised.

While there are still concerns within this section that stem from the proposed incubation year plan, and that a school leader is yet to be identified, this section of the application is now rated as 'Meets Standard'.

Areas of Strength

- The Committee to Form clarified during the capacity interview that the proposed location for the school in year 1 would be a temporary location. The applicant team further clarified that they are in close communication with representatives from the Boys and Girls club, and are confident that this facility will come to fruition. This was clear evidence of a strong facility plan.
- When asked questions about student enrollment, the Committee to Form indicated that the school has obtained approximately 80 intent to enroll forms, showing significant support of the proposed model. The applicant further clarified that over half of these likely reside within the two-mile radius of the school during the capacity interview.
- The proposed Board is diverse, includes members that reside in the community and demonstrated an understanding of its role as a governing body that it is not charged with day-to-day management of the school.
- While a school leader has yet to be identified, the CTF has altered their plan and job description so as to more effectively attract an individual with experience in serving at-risk students. A time-certain recruitment plan has been developed with project leads identified. Additionally, the CTF provided evidence that this plan is already underway, with 12 qualified individuals in the hiring pool at the time of submission. This was clear evidence that the leadership plan has been improved to address the community in which the school plans to locate.
- The revised Master Service and Licensing Fee agreement reaffirms that all final decisions lie with the local GALS Las Vegas board. The roles and responsibilities between the local school and GALS network are clarified.
- The revised teacher salaries are more competitive with the local school district (CCSD), and

differentiate between the pay of novice and master teachers. The applicant shared that they believe teacher applicants will be attracted to working at the proposed school due to the autonomy they will enjoy as professionals, and reiterated that it will be mission critical to hire for the right fit for the school. The review committee believes that these revised numbers will allow the school to attract highly-experienced staff to instruct students.

Areas of Concern

- The staffing plan relies on a very small amount of money (\$50,000) to provide additional supports to SPED, ELL students and/or other students that may have exceptional needs. While the applicant indicated that this is on-par with other schools within the GALS network, this amount may be understated and does not provide evidence of a high likelihood of success. Moreover, other GALS network schools have experienced academic performance gaps in the exact demographics for which these monies aim to support.
- The incubation year plan still lacks detail in terms of ownership and individual milestones.
- The school does not have an identified school leader, which will limit the amount of training and engagement the selected individual will have with the community prior to opening. Furthermore, this may create capacity issues for the Committee to Form and Executive Director with regards to the Incubation Year plan. For example, it may be difficult for the school to hire teaching staff without an identified school leader in place.

Financial Section

The initial submission of this section was rated as 'Approached the Standard'. While the budget was conservative, there were concerns about specific amounts of money allocated to adequate supports for EL and SPED students given the proposed community in which G.A.L.S. intends to locate. The initial submission also exhibited deficiencies related to low levels of staff compensation and a lack of commitment letters pertaining to grant funding. In some cases, the grant or philanthropic dollar sources were not clear.

After reviewing the resubmitted application, the review committee found that many of the prior deficiencies have been satisfactorily addressed. Specifically, the application now provides a high-level of clarity around grants and philanthropic dollars that are being pursued while remaining within the presented budget. The financial plan also includes increased salaries for entry level and master teachers that more closely align to the local school district, and are likely to draw stronger teacher applicants. Lastly, the staff plan now more adequately supports at-risk student populations. For these primary reasons, this section is now rated as 'Meets the Standard'.

Areas of Strength

- During the capacity interview, the applicant indicated that they had budgeted conservatively, and that there was a likelihood that additional funds could be made available to the school in the coming months. During the capacity interview, the applicant named the Charter School Program (CSP) grant as well as possible funding from Opportunity 180 as additional funds, neither of which are included in the proposed budget. The applicant also demonstrated an understanding of the specific requirements of a CSP grant during the capacity interview.
- The applicant team was able to identify contingency plans during the capacity interview should the school face financial shortcomings or constraints. The Committee to Form cited the possibility of applying for a Revolving Loan, seeking additional grants, or pursuing Medicaid reimbursables to pay service providers to help cover additional costs not currently in the budget.
- Salaries for teaching staff now more closely align to the compensation levels of both the local school district and other charter schools in Las Vegas. This will help the school attract high-quality talent that are committed to the unique academic model offered that the proposed school.

Areas of Concern

- The final budget, as presented, calculates an ending fund balance of less than \$1000. While the applicant makes clear that it is pursuing additional grants and philanthropic dollars, and that these amounts are not included in the budget (such as CSP), failure to be awarded any grants raises concerns. This balance is very low and will require close monitoring by the Committee to Form.

Capacity Interview Summary

Based on the independent and collective review of the application, the review committee conducted a 90-minute in-person interview of the applicant to elicit any necessary clarifications or additional information about the proposed charter school and determine the ability of the applicants to establish a high-quality charter school. The capacity interview for Girls Athletic Leadership School was conducted on Thursday October 31. All but one of the proposed members of the Committee to Form attended on behalf of the applicant. Additionally, the one representative the proposed CMO – Girls Athletic Leadership Schools, Inc. – attended the capacity interview. Questions during the capacity interview were developed by the team of reviewers to specifically address the details of the GALS application and focused primarily on four key areas:

- The ability of the applicant to meet one or more of the academic or demographic needs as outlined in the SPCSA Academic and Demographic Needs Assessment.
- The operations plan, including student recruitment, organizational chart, staff recruitment and proposed vendors.
- The academic plan, including curriculum, remediation, student support services and assessments.
- The financial plan, including the proposed budget, prospective facilities, staff recruitment, proposed vendors, and alignment to the proposed academic model.

Information gleaned from the capacity interview were coupled with the initial review of the application to determine final ratings on the rubric. Relevant information from the capacity interview is incorporated in the findings outlined above.

Meet and Confer

The GALS Committee to Form met with SPCSA staff to discuss the deficiencies on multiple occasions prior to the January 5, 2020 resubmission. During these meetings, the applicant team asked a number of questions and sought clarity about the identified deficiencies.

District Input

Per Assembly Bill 462 (2019), the SPCSA solicited input from the Clark County School District regarding this application.² The timeline regarding this request for input is below and the response provided by the Clark County School district is attached.

- September 16, 2019 – Memo sent to CCSD soliciting input.
- November 6, 2019 – Presentation by CCSD staff to CCSD Board of Trustees regarding input.
- November 13, 2019 – Written input provided from CCSD to SPCSA.
- January 14, 2020 – Written notification from the SPCSA to CCSD regarding the resubmission of this application.
- January 23, 2020 – Written notification from the SPCSA to CCSD regarding timeline for possible action on the G.A.L.S. resubmitted application.

² Assembly Bill 462 (2019) section 6.3, subsection 1, paragraph (d): “The proposed sponsor of a charter school shall, in reviewing an application to form a charter school...If the proposed sponsor is not the board of trustees of a school district, solicit input from the board of trustees of the school district in which the proposed charter school will be located.”