

NEVADA STATE PUBLIC CHARTER SCHOOL AUTHORITY

March 6, 2020

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

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

MINUTES OF THE MEETING

BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT:

In Las Vegas:

Member Lee Farris
Member Tamika Shauntee-Rosales
Member Don Soifer
Member Mallory Cyr
Member Sami Randolph
Member Sheila Moulton
Vice Chair Randy Kirner
Chair Melissa Mackedon

In Carson City:

BOARD MEMBERS ABSENT:

Member Tonia Holmes-Sutton

AUTHORITY STAFF PRESENT:

In Las Vegas:

Rebecca Feiden, Executive Director
Ryan Herrick, General Counsel
Mark Modrcin, Director of Authorizing
Jennifer King, Administrative Assistant IV
Lisa Dzierbicki, Education Programs
Professional
Michael Dang, Management Analyst IV

In Carson City:

Danny Peltier, Management Analyst I
Brandon Gayton, Education Programs
Professional
Selcuk Ozdemir, Manager of Academic
Performance

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 9:00am, with attendance reflected above.

Agenda Item 2 – Approval of the January 31, 2020 State Public Charter School Authority Board Action Minutes

Member Moulton moved to approve the January 31, 2020 State Public Charter School Authority Board Action Minutes. Member Soifer seconded. The motion carried unanimously.

No public comment related to this agenda item.

Agenda Item 3 – SPCSA Executive Director’s Report

SPCSA Executive Director’s Report. Executive Director Feiden will provide the Authority with information and updates regarding the following:

- a. Introduction to new Board Members
 - Members Tamika Shauntee Rosales and Lee Farris
- b. SPCSA Staffing Update
 - New staff members in Carson City
 - Kaylee Krupp, Administrative Assistant IV
 - Debbie Bowman, Administrative Service Officer III
 - Nicole Hardeman-Swindle, Administrative Assistant III
- c. 2020 Winter Cycle New Charter School Applications Update
 - One application submitted by the January 15th deadline
 - In process with this application expect to bring a recommendation to the Board at the April 24 meeting
- d. Update on the transition of former Achievement School District (ASD) schools to the SPCSA
 - Expect the transition to be fully complete by the beginning of the next fiscal year
- e. Update on new schools and expansions for Fall 2020
 - Growth graphs attached in supporting materials
 - SPCSA represents approximately 10% of public school students in Nevada
 - Approved 8 new schools for next year
- f. Regulatory Update (Senate Bill 441 (2019))
 - Continuing to work with Nevada Department of Education
- g. SPCSA process for responding to stakeholder concerns
 - HappyFox Complaint Management System implemented; link on SPCSA website
- h. Update regarding schools under Academic Notice of Concern
 - Mid-year reports received by these schools, staff reviewing/providing feedback
- i. Update on implementation of the SPCSA Performance Framework
 - Organizational framework is live
 - Creating informational reports to help familiarize schools

No public comment related to this agenda item.

Agenda Item 4 – Mid-Year Report for Schools with a Notice of Breach

a. Freedom Classical Academy (Elementary School)

Mark Modrcin, Director of Authorizing, provided an overview of the school’s background.

Jeremy Christensen, Executive Director and Julene Ballard, Member of School Board, Freedom Classical Academy, provided a brief overview of the school's history and an update regarding the action the school is taking to improve their ratings and accountability. See supporting materials for presentation. *No action on this item today.*

No public comment related to this agenda item.

b. Legacy – North Valley (Elementary School)

Director Modrcin provided an overview of the school's background.

Katy Larrabee, Board Member, Eve Breier, Interim Principal and Deputy Superintendent, Rick Phillips, Board Member, Legacy – North Valley, and Nicole Kirkley, Chief Academic Officer, Vertex Education and Legacy, were present on behalf of the school and provided the updates regarding their action steps and results from their goals set forth. See supporting materials for presentation. *No action on this item today.*

No public comment related to this agenda item.

c. Somerset – North Las Vegas (Elementary School)

Director Modrcin provided an overview of the school's background.

Gary McClain, Board Secretary, Christina Threeton, Principal, Lorraine DeAnda, Assistant Principal, Somerset – North Las Vegas and Idalia Flores, Somerset Academy South Florida were present on behalf of the school. The school provided an update regarding their 2019-2020 changes after receiving their 2-star rating. See supporting materials for presentation. *No action on this item today.*

No public comment related to this agenda item.

Agenda Item 5 – Schools Under Receivership or Previously Under Receivership

a. Argent Preparatory Academy Update

b. Quest Academy Update

Josh Kern, Receiver for Argent Preparatory Academy and Quest Academy, is not present today but provided a written update. Executive Director Feiden briefly summarized the key components of the update.

c. Discovery Charter School Update

Director Modrcin provided the Authority with an update regarding the transition from receivership to a fully constituted board.

Tricia Wilbourne, Interim Principal, Quest Academy, provided the school's recent directives and updates. She stated that the PERS balance should be fully paid off by September 2020.

No public comment related to this agenda item.

Agenda Item 6 – Beacon Academy of Nevada

Director Modrcin provided the Authority with information regarding Beacon Academy's performance under the Alternative Performance Framework.

Tambre Tondryk, Director of Operations, Beacon Academy, provided a presentation regarding the school's background.

Andrea Damore, Executive Director of Academics, Beacon Academy, took over for the next portion of the presentation. She talked about the student demographics and student performance of Nevada's Alternative Performance Framework, along with other information and updates.

No public comment related to this agenda item.

Lunch was taken at 12:50pm. Meeting reconvened at 1:39pm.

Member Farris left for the remainder of the meeting.

Agenda Item 7 – Pinecrest Academy of Northern Nevada

Executive Director Feiden provided a summary of the Authority's recent conditional approval of Pinecrest Academy of Northern Nevada's charter school application (opening for the 2020-2021 school year). She referenced the letter sent to the school outlining the conditions, which can be found in the supporting materials.

Executive Director Feiden said there are 6 items that fall into 2 groups: items that are yes/no items and then items that require evaluation of the substance. Her recommendation to the Authority is to delegate the yes/no items to staff and to focus the Authority's attention today towards the items that require the evaluation of the substance. She walked through the items describing which group they fall into and turned it over to the school to address some of the efforts they've had to date.

Jake Wiskerchen, Board Chair, and Jami Curtis, Principal, Pinecrest Academy of Northern Nevada, provided an update on the work the school has been doing related to the conditions. The school is seeking approval from the Authority for their Weighted Lottery, Marketing Plan, Transportation Plan, and the updated budget. He introduced their new Principal, Jami Curtis, who was hired at their February 10th board meeting.

Member Soifer asked for an update regarding their applications for enrollment to date.

Mr. Wiskerchen replied 491 as of yesterday, averaging at about 10-15 per day.

There was further discussion between Member Soifer and the school regarding enrollment, the weighted lottery and demographics.

Ryan Herrick, General Counsel, asked if the school could speak to the additional hires because of the significant leadership shift during the application process.

Mr. Wiskerchen said he will let Ms. Curtis speak to the new hires, but he wanted to acknowledge that they had a board member resign and his replacement is Frank Perez.

Ms. Curtis said that over the past 3 weeks she has interviewed over 30 candidates. She is excited to engage with the new Assistant Principal. She also has interviews this week for the EL Coordinator position.

No public comment related to this agenda item.

Member Soifer made a motion to approve staff to finalize satisfaction of the conditional approval in the four condition categories (refer to letter in supporting materials) as terms of this approval. Member Moulton seconded the motion. Motion carried unanimously.

Member Kirner moved to approve the marketing plan and the transportation plan as provided and delegate to staff any kind of adjustments to the implementation. Member Moulton seconded the motion.

Further discussion was had between the Authority and staff regarding the transportation plan.

Member Kirner withdrew his motion to focus on the two condition categories individually.

Member Kirner made a motion to approve the marketing plan and allow staff to make technical adjustments. Member Shauntee Rosales seconded the motion.

Further discussion was had between the Authority and the school regarding the marketing plan.

Member Mackedon called the vote via roll call.

Member Moulton: Yes.

Member Randolph: Yes.

Member Soifer: No.

Member Farris: Yes.

Vice Chair Kirner: Yes.

Member Cyr: Yes.

Member Shauntee Rosales: Yes.

Chair Mackedon: Yes.

Motion carried 7-1.

Further discussion was had regarding the transportation plan.

The Authority mutually agreed and requested that the school come back in April with updates regarding their transportation plan.

Agenda Item 8 – Resubmitted New Charter School Applications

Member Shauntee Rosales recused herself from this agenda item.

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

Executive Director Feiden, provided the overview of the initial and resubmitted charter school applications. She referenced the review committee's recommendation, to deny the resubmitted charter school application. Further details of staff's review can be found in the supporting materials.

Eren Martin-Beat, Chair of the Committee to form, along with other Members of the Committee to form of Alaka'i Heritage Academy, provided their statement to the Authority.

Further discussion was had between the Authority, staff and the school.

Member Soifer moved to Deny the Alaka'i Heritage Academy charter school application as resubmitted 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). Member Randolph seconded the motion.

Public comment:

Lisa Radler

Azia Milford

Tawnya Jennings

Devin Kahale

Dorinda Burnett

Further discussion was had between the Authority and school regarding their resubmission.

Member Mackedon called the vote. Member Cyr opposed. Motion carried 5-1.

b. Nevada Strong Academy (Clark County; proposed grades kindergarten through 10)

Director Modrcin provided an overview of the school's initial and resubmitted application. He provided staff's recommendation, to deny the charter school application. Further details of staff's review can be found in the supporting materials.

Annette Dawson-Owens, Founder, Nevada Strong Academy, provided a statement on behalf of the school. She also read a statement from Dr. Soner Tarim.

Andy Hafen, Proposed Chair of the Committee to form and other Members of the Committee to form, Nevada Strong Academy, were present. Mr. Hafen responded to the concerns of staff in each of the four sections of the rubric. Each Member of the Committee to form made comments on the four sections in the rubric.

There was further discussion between the Authority, staff, and the school regarding the resubmission.

Member Moulton made a motion to Deny the Nevada Strong Academy charter school application as resubmitted 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). Member Cyr seconded the motion.

Member Mackedon asked for public comment.

Mark Gardberg, the school's legal counsel, provided a response regarding the concerns of the inconsistencies raised by staff. He asked that the Authority continue this to April 24.

There was further discussion between the Authority, staff, and the school regarding the process.

Member Mackedon called the vote. Member Randolph and Member Kirner opposed. Motion carried 4-2.

c. Sage Collegiate Public Charter School (Clark County; proposed grades kindergarten through 8)

Executive Director Feiden provided an overview of the school's initial and resubmitted application. She provided staff's recommendation, to deny the charter school application. Further details of staff's review can be found in the supporting materials.

Sandra Kinne, Proposed Executive Director and Founder, along with other proposed Members, Sage Collegiate Charter School, were present on behalf of the school. Ms. Kinne responded to the points staff made in their resubmission application along with other details and information related thereto.

Further discussion was had between the Authority, staff and the school regarding the areas of concern.

Member Kirner moved to deny the Sage Collegiate Public Charter School application as resubmitted 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). Member Moulton seconded the motion. Motion carried unanimously.

No public comment related to this agenda item.

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

Director Modrcin provided an overview of the school's initial and resubmitted application. He provided staff's recommendation, to deny the charter school application. Further details of staff's review can be found in the supporting materials.

Dr. Justin Curnett and Dr. Maria Jerinic, proposed Board Members of the Committee to Form, Pahrump Valley Academy, were present.

Sable Marandi, proposed Executive Director, shared a letter from Assemblyman Gregory Hafen in support of proposed school.

The school spoke about their resubmission application and concerns raised by staff.

There was further discussion between the Authority and the school.

Public comment:

Rodie Vail
Ashley Curnett
Jose Rodriguez
Mark Gardberg
Andy Hafen

Member Moulton moved to deny the Pahrump Valley Academy charter school application as resubmitted 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). Member Soifer seconded the motion. Member Mackedon called the vote via roll call.

Member Soifer: Yes.

Member Randolph: Yes.

Member Moulton: Yes.

Member Kirner: No.

Member Cyr: No.

Chair Mackedon: No.

Member Kirner moved to accept the Pahrump Valley Academy charter school application as resubmitted during the 2019 Summer Application Cycle. Member Soifer seconded the motion. Member Mackedon called the vote via roll call.

Member Cyr said she would not be able to support the motion without conditions.

Member Cyr: No.

Member Kirner: Yes.

Member Moulton: No.

Member Randolph: No.

Member Soifer: No.

Chair Mackedon: Yes.

The motion did not carry, 2-4.

Agenda Item 9 – Explore Academy Charter School Contract Amendment Application

Michael Dang, Financial and Organizational Manager, SPCSA, provided an overview of the school's history. He stated that the school is requesting the Board approve their request to occupy a temporary facility (for first year of operation) outside of the 3 zip codes they had agreed to locate in. He closed with staff's recommendation for approval with conditions. Further details of which can be found in the supporting materials.

Gretchen Larsen, Executive Director, Explore Academy, provided the school's update regarding their search of the available properties within their approved zip codes. She said that their realtor is here to provide a response.

Keith Spencer, Realtor, CBRE Commercial, said that they are continuing to look and pursue options.

Annette Dawson-Owens, Member of the Board of Directors, Explore Academy, provided a supporting statement regarding the location.

Member Randolph said she is concerned about a public charter school leasing a space from a private school.

Mr. Herrick clarified that it is a cotenant.

Further discussion was had between the Authority and the school regarding the school's proposed temporary location.

Member Soifer asked staff about the prior charter school that the site housed, and if there were any other important considerations.

Michael Hiltz, Broker, representing the owner of the building, said that as of June 2020, the other school will no longer be there, and it will be an empty three buildings.

A 5-minute recess was taken.

Member Soifer moved to authorize the Executive Director at their discretion, approve for one year, with conditions, Explore Academy of Las Vegas' request to temporarily lease a facility in the 89130 zip code for the 2020 – 2021 school year only. The school must locate in the 89030, 89031 or 89032 zip codes beginning in the 2021 – 2022 school year. Member Moulton seconded the motion.

Chair Mackedon called the vote; Member Randolph and Member Shauntee Rosales opposed the vote. The motion carried 5-2.

No public comment related to this agenda item.

Agenda Item 10 – Growth Management Plan Feedback from the Legislative Committee on Education

Director Feiden provided the Authority with information and updates regarding the feedback from the Legislative Committee on Education regarding the Growth Management Plan. She said further updates would be provided at the April meeting.

Agenda Item 11 – Biennial Review of Statutes and Regulations

This item was pushed to next month's meeting.

Agenda Item 12 – Revisions to New Charter School Application

This item was pushed to next month's meeting.

Agenda Item 13 – Long-Range Calendar

This item was pushed to next month's meeting.

Agenda Item 14 – Public Comment

Andy Hafen

Agenda Item 15 – Adjournment.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:21pm.