



NEVADA STATE PUBLIC CHARTER SCHOOL AUTHORITY

November 6, 2020

In compliance with the Governor's Emergency Directives related to COVID-19, the November 6, 2020 Meeting of the State Public Charter School Authority was conducted virtually and livestreamed.

MINUTES OF THE MEETING

BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT (via video):

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

AUTHORITY STAFF PRESENT (via video):

Rebecca Feiden, Executive Director
Ryan Herrick, General Counsel
Mark Modrcin, Director of Authorizing
Danny Peltier, Management Analyst I
Michael Dang, Management Analyst IV

AUDIENCE IN ATTENDANCE:

Ron Fick
Nick Fleege
Sandra Kinne
Alejandro Rodriguez
Jon Haskel
Elysa Arroyo
Jennifer Braster
Mark Gardberg
Ashley Stephens
Jesusa Alcantara
Erin Bilbray
Kirby Lee Burgess
Nicolet Palmer
Oscar Cardona
Shubham Pandey
Monica Johnson
Kara Hendricks
Derrick Love
Jai Mallory
Mary Scott
Fatima Cotton
Joe Smith

Agenda Item 1 – Call to Order, Roll Call, and Pledge of Allegiance [00:00:34]

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

Agenda Item 2 – Public Comment #1 [00:01:27]

Ryan Herrick, General Counsel, spoke to the written public comment submitted via email:

1. Joseph R. Maridon, Jr. wrote regarding agenda item 5.
2. Anne Perkins wrote regarding agenda item 5.
3. Shannon Beal wrote regarding agenda item 5.
4. James Marticello wrote regarding agenda item 5.
5. Janella Riter wrote regarding agenda item 5.
6. Madison Meehan wrote regarding agenda item 5.
7. Rebekah Reyes wrote regarding agenda item 5.
8. Genevieve Langlois wrote regarding agenda item 5.
9. Mary Jane wrote regarding agenda item 5.

In addition, public comment was provided on the line during the meeting from the following participants:

1. Renee Fairless spoke regarding agenda item 5.

Agenda Item 3 – Consent Agenda [00:06:03]

- a. **Approval of October 2, 2020 Board Meeting Action Minutes.**
- b. **Founders Academy of Las Vegas Contract Amendment Application (change school's name to Founders Classical Academy of Las Vegas).**

MOTION: Vice Chair Kirner made a motion to approve the items on the consent agenda. Member Moulton seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

Agenda Item 4 – SPCSA Executive Director's Report. [00:06:45]

a. 2020 Summer New Charter School Application Cycle

Rebecca Feiden, Executive Director, said that as you can see there are four charter applications on the agenda today for consideration from the 2020 Summer new charter school application cycle. As a reminder, during the June meeting, the Authority approved a good cause exemption request for TEACH Las Vegas to submit their new charter application by October 1, 2020. Staff have received the application and assembled a review committee and expect to bring a recommendation to the Authority at one of the December meetings.

b. Initiatives related to *Serving All Students Equitably* [00:07:49]

Executive Director Feiden said in October the SPCSA team made updates to the new charter application which include (1) asking schools about their efforts to close opportunity gaps and address disproportionate discipline practices, (2) for applicants that already operate a school, the application requests academic and discipline data by subgroup, and (3) the application template continues to include questions on family and community engagement practices. The SPCSA also held an application training on October 26 and plan to have a Focus on Schools item at one of the December meetings to talk about school efforts related to directly addressing issues of equity.

On October 22, SPCSA staff convened their community working group; this included representatives from municipalities, school districts, charter school organizations and community organizations. During this meeting they began talking about the SPCSA Needs Assessment and other future topics the community working group will continue to engage in. They anticipate continuing to meet quarterly to provide input and guidance on how they can partner with communities and stakeholders to address equity as well as meet the educational needs of their communities.

Over the coming months SPCSA staff expect to continue to work on additional items including information from schools on current training on equity, diversity and inclusion and preparing some soon to be available data for the Authority that will allow them to look at equity through the lens of enrollment, discipline and graduation rates as well as make more information readily available on their website for families.

Member Randolph arrived at the meeting.

c. SPCSA staffing update [00:11:25]

Executive Director Feiden provided the brief update regarding the SPCSA's new staff member Patricia Malloy, Administrative Assistant IV.

d. Information related to validated demographic enrollment data for SPCSA-sponsored charter schools for the 2019-2020 school year. [00:11:53]

Executive Director Feiden said there is a big count that happens on October 1 and SPCSA staff has worked with their schools to successfully submit this data to the Nevada Department of Education (NDE). NDE continues to compile and prepare this data for release. SPCSA staff plans to bring this data and break it down at a future meeting once the information is public.

e. Preview of the 2021 Legislative Session [00:12:30]

Executive Director Feiden provided the update regarding the 81st Session of the Nevada Legislature which begins February 1, 2021. During the interim, SPCSA staff have worked with the Governor's Office to prepare for the upcoming session and participated in meetings of the Legislative Committee on Education. The SPCSA, in accordance with procedures set up by the Governor's Office has submitted a proposed bill draft request that seeks to create coherence and alignment in existing statutes and regulations pertaining to three critical activities of charter school sponsors. The proposals can be found in the memorandum from the supporting materials for this agenda item.

Member Moulton asked if SPCSA staff had heard anything about putting a moratorium on charter schools and if not to be watchful of that.

Executive Director Feiden does not believe she has heard any specific interest in that type of that legislation but being that it was proposed last session they are certainly keeping an eye out for it.

Agenda Item 5 – COVID-19 In-Person Learning Guidance [00:17:27]

Executive Director Feiden said as the Authority is aware, at the August 14 SPCSA board meeting, they approved the COVID-19 In-Person Learning Guidance that requires schools in counties that are subject to mitigation level 1 or 2, pursuant to the Governor's COVID-19 Mitigation and Management Taskforce, to operate under a distance education model with an option to provide a limited in person instruction up to 25% of the school's enrollment and a provision by which Executive Director Feiden could provide exemptions to the 25%.

In mid-October, Executive Director Feiden held focus groups that were open to SPCSA-sponsored charter school leaders and board chairs. These focus groups addressed three primary questions: (1) *What is working?* (2) *What are the challenges?* (3) *What direction would you like to go with your school?* Representatives from 32 of the 37 charter holders participated in the focus groups. Of the 32 charter holders that were represented in focus groups, 22 indicated that they would like to continue to increase the number of students learning in-person, six indicated that they weren't yet sure of the directions they would like to pursue, and four indicated that they do not intend to increase in-person learning any time soon.

Taking all of this information into account, and with a focus on safely returning students to in person learning, SPCSA staff is recommending that the Authority update the COVID-19 In Person Learning Guidance. Specifically, staff is recommending that the limit on in-person learning at schools located in counties that are subject to Mitigation Level I or II be increased from 25% of enrollment to 40% of enrollment.

Further discussion ensued between the Authority and Executive Director Feiden regarding the proposed updates to the COVID-19 In Person Learning Guidance.

MOTION: *Member Moulton made a motion to approve the updated and revised recommendation of the COVID-19 In-Person Learning Guidance presented by SPCSA staff. Member Farris seconded the motion.*

There was discussion between the Authority and Executive Director Feiden about ensuring this mandate provides the option for families to stay distance learning.

The motion carried.

Agenda Item 6 – State Public Charter School Authority Organizational Performance Framework Recommendations. [00:45:00]

Mark Modrcin, Director of Authorizing, presented the Board with the Organizational Performance Framework ratings PowerPoint for the 2019-20 school year. The PowerPoint can be found in the supporting materials.

Michael Dang, Management Analyst IV, spoke to the specific components of the framework, ratings and how points are awarded.

Mark Modrcin provided the remaining portion of the presentation including the interventions processes and staff's recommendation which is for the Authority to accept the 2019-2020 Organizational Framework Results as presented, and delegate to SPCSA staff the authority to provide final results to governing boards of each charter in the coming weeks.

MOTION: *Member Shauntee Rosales made a motion to approve the State Public Charter School Authority Organizational Performance Framework as presented and delegate to SPCSA staff the authority to provide final results to governing boards of each charter in the coming weeks. Member Soifer seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.*

A 10-minute convenience break was taken.

Agenda Item 7 – New Charter School Applications. [01:01:04]

Executive Director Feiden summarized the process related to new charter school applications and the what the proposed schools should expect related to next steps if approved or denied and the resubmission process, should any denied applicants wish to meet and confer.

a. Sage Collegiate Charter School (Clark County; proposed grades kindergarten through 8) [01:03:43]

Member Cyr recused herself from this item.

Executive Director Feiden began with the recommendation regarding the Sage Collegiate Charter School application. This applicant applied in the 2019 Summer cycle and was denied and opted to reapply and is with us today. She provided an overview of the school's applications both its merits and deficiencies. The review

committee, which included one member of the SPCSA staff and two external reviewers, unanimously recommends approval of the Sage Collegiate Public Charter School application with conditions as outlined in the recommendation memorandum and that the Authority delegate the review and approval of these conditions to staff, with the understanding that the school will provide updates to the Authority periodically throughout the incubation year.

Sandra Kinne, Founder and proposed Executive Director, Sage Collegiate Charter School, spoke to the school's process with the SPCSA. She said their team looks forward to the opportunity to work with the state to educate children. She addressed some of the concerns raised by SPCSA staff's recommendation.

Alejandro Rodriguez, proposed Board Chair, Sage Collegiate Charter School, said he is joined this morning by some of their other proposed board members. He spoke to the process and progress from the board's perspective related to the charter application submission and resubmission. They are excited to begin the work and hope the SPCSA Authority will grant them the approval to do so.

Further discussion ensued between the Authority and school representatives regarding their growth model.

Mr. Rodriguez, previously identified, and Jon Haskel, proposed Board Member, spoke to the question from Member Moulton regarding what their plan would be should current circumstances still exist when the school opens and what they will do to ensure student safety.

MOTION: *Member Kirner made a motion to approve the Sage Collegiate Public Charter School application as submitted during the 2020 Summer Application Cycle, with the conditions outlined below, based on a finding that the applicant meets the requirements contained in NRS 388A.249(3) and that the Authority delegate the review and approval of these conditions to staff, with the understanding that the school will provide updates to the Authority periodically throughout the incubation year.*

- 1. Provide an updated staffing plan and budget that addresses a scenario in which additional services are needed so as to meet the needs of special education students, English Learners, and students with behavior and/or social-emotional needs.*
- 2. Provide a specific timeline and action plan for selecting and preparing a facility and engaging with the local jurisdiction by January 31, 2021.*
- 3. Provide an updated list of proposed partnerships which also includes draft Memorandums of Understanding with each identified partner, and outlines deliverables and responsibilities of each party.*

Member Soifer seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

b. Las Vegas Montessori Charter Academy (Clark County; proposed grades kindergarten through 8) [01:29:57]

Director Modrcin began with providing an overview of the Las Vegas Montessori Charter Academy charter school application both its merits and deficiencies and SPCSA staff's recommendation which is to deny the Las Vegas Montessori charter application as submitted during the 2020 Summer Application Cycle based on a finding that the applicant has failed to satisfy the requirements contained in NRS 388A.249(3).

Kirby Lee Burgess, proposed Board Chair, Las Vegas Montessori Charter Academy, spoke to their request for a conditional approval of their application.

Erin Bilbray, proposed Vice Chair of the Board, Las Vegas Montessori Charter Academy, addressed the needs section of SPCSA staff's recommendation and the school's request for provisional approval.

Jesusa Alcantara, proposed Executive Director, Las Vegas Montessori Charter Academy, spoke to her background with the proposed school and to some of the deficiencies addressed in the recommendation memorandum.

Ashley Stevens presented information regarding the school's model, demographics, and curriculum.

Nicolet Palmer, Maupa Valley Paiutes, gave a statement in support of Las Vegas Montessori Charter Academy.

Further discussion ensued between the Authority and Las Vegas Montessori Charter Academy representatives.

***MOTION:** Member Soifer made a motion to deny the Las Vegas Montessori charter application as submitted during the 2020 Summer Application Cycle based on a finding that the applicant has failed to satisfy the requirements contained in NRS 388A.249(3) and designates SPCSA staff to meet and confer with school representatives should they choose to resubmit. Member Moulton seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.*

c. Pioneer Technology and Arts Academy (Clark County; proposed grades kindergarten through 12) [02:35:45]

Executive Director Feiden began with providing the overview of Pioneer Technology and Arts Academy charter school application both its merits and deficiencies and SPCSA staff's recommendation which is to deny the Pioneer Technology and Arts Academy charter school application as submitted during the 2020 Summer Application Cycle based on a finding that the applicant has failed to satisfy the requirements contained in NRS 388A.249(3).

Shubham Pandey, Founder, Pioneer Technology and Arts Academy, and Derrick Love, 100 Academy, spoke to the proposed charter school's efforts related to the feedback provided by SPCSA staff on their application and addressed some of the deficiencies described in the recommendation memorandum. He concluded with the request that the board to approve a conditional K-8 application and resubmit in January with the high school portion.

Further discussion ensued between the Authority and Pioneer Technology & Art Academy Nevada representatives.

***MOTION:** Member Moulton made a motion to deny the Pioneer Technology & Art Academy Nevada application as submitted during the 2020 Summer Application Cycle based on a finding that the applicant has failed to satisfy the requirements contained in NRS 388A.249(3) and designates SPCSA staff to meet and confer with school representatives should they choose to resubmit. Member Farris seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.*

d. Eagle Nevada (Clark County; proposed grades kindergarten through 8) [03:11:18]

Director Modrcin began with providing the overview of Eagle Nevada charter school application both its merits and deficiencies and SPCSA staff's recommendation which is to deny the Eagle Nevada charter school application as submitted during the 2020 Summer Application Cycle based on a finding that the applicant has failed to satisfy the requirements contained in NRS 388A.249(3).

Nick Fleege, Member of the Founding Team, Eagle Nevada, provided his background with Eagle Nevada. He spoke to the concerns addressed in the recommendation memorandum.

Mary Scott, proposed Board Member, provided her background with Eagle Nevada.

Fatima Cotton, proposed Board Member, provided her background with Eagle Nevada.

Jai Mallory, proposed Board Member, provided her background with Eagle Nevada and spoke to some of SPCSA staff's concerns.

Monica Johnson, proposed Board Chair, provided her background with Eagle Nevada. She also spoke to some of the concerns raised by staff in the recommendation memorandum.

There was further discussion between the Authority and Eagle Nevada representatives.

MOTION: *Member Moulton made a motion to : Deny the Pioneer Technology & Art Academy Nevada application as submitted during the 2020 Summer Application Cycle based on a finding that the applicant has failed to satisfy the requirements contained in NRS 388A.249(3) and designates SPCSA staff to meet and confer with school representatives should they choose to resubmit. Member Shauntee Rosales seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.*

Agenda Item 8 – Long-Range Calendar [04:01:28]

Executive Director Feiden provided the overview of the long-range calendar and noted the December 4th and 11th meetings next month. She highlighted that one of the meetings will likely be in the afternoon to touch back on the previous discussion from earlier in the year.

Member Randolph asked if there would be an item regarding the data points about approved charters and their zip codes before the legislative session to have a sense of which zip codes the SPCSA has approved or targeted. Her concerns were around oversaturation to the zip codes, where have schools been addressed according to AB 462 and which they particularly emphasized.

Member Soifer asked about following up with Promise 54 and getting that network on track.

Member Holmes-Sutton requested to see what our diversity looks like amongst existing charter schools in our portfolio and what efforts are being made in schools to diversify their teaching staff to service the state of Nevada.

Member Moulton flagged a session she participated in during the NACSA Conference, Embedding Equity and Racial Equity into Accountability Practices.

Agenda Item 9 – Public Comment #2 [04:09:39]

Mr. Peltier reported no additional numbers on the line for public comment. Mr. Herrick said no further public comments have been submitted.

Agenda Item 10 – Adjournment [04:10:17]

The meeting was adjourned at 1:09pm.