



NEVADA STATE PUBLIC CHARTER SCHOOL AUTHORITY

April 23, 2021

In compliance with the Governor's Emergency Directives related to COVID-19, the April 23, 2021 Meeting of the Nevada State Public Charter School Authority was conducted virtually and livestreamed as well as in-person.

MINUTES OF THE MEETING

BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT (via video):

Member Lee Farris (in-person)
Member Tamika Shauntee Rosales (via video)
Member Tonia Holmes-Sutton (via video)
Member Mallory Cyr (via video)
Sami Randolph (via video)
Member Sheila Moulton (in-person)
Vice Chair Randy Kirner (via video)
Chair Melissa Mackedon (in-person)

BOARD MEMBERS ABSENT:

Member Don Soifer

AUDIENCE IN ATTENDANCE:

Matt Brown
Ignacio Prado
Katrina Hashimoto
Judy Piccinininni
Bridget Phillips
Sandra Kinne
John Hawk
Jennifer McCloskey
Jesse Welsh
Traci Cheatham
Anne Weisman
Kathy Rudd
Chantae Readye
Keith Hightower
Katie Krackhardt
Elysa Arroyo

AUTHORITY STAFF PRESENT (via video):

Rebecca Feiden, Executive Director (in-person)
Ryan Herrick, General Counsel (via video)
Mark Modrcin, Director of Authorizing (in-person)
Danny Peltier, Management Analyst I (via video)
Michael Dang, Management Analyst IV (via video)
Michael Gawthrop-Hutchins, Management Analyst III

Agenda Item 1 – Call to Order and Roll Call, and Pledge of Allegiance [00:00:38]

State Public Charter School Authority (SPCSA), Board Chair, Melissa Mackedon called the meeting to order at 9:00am, with attendance reflected above and facilitated the pledge of allegiance.

Agenda Item 2 – Public Comment #1 [00:02:04]

Ryan Herrick, General Counsel, said that public comment was submitted via email (see email attached hereto):

1. Erin Capurro, wrote in regards to Emergency Directives 028 and 038, which state that face coverings are required for all students in grades K-12 (agenda item 5).
2. Rodney Saunders, Principal, Doral Academy – Pebble, wrote in regards to ESSER/ARC funds (agenda item 6).
3. Eileen Gilligan, Principal, Doral Academy – Saddle, wrote in regards to ESSER funds (agenda item 6).

Public comment on the line:

1. Pamela Goynes-Brown, Councilwoman, City of North Las Vegas, spoke in regards to the schools being considered today, Battle Born and PilotEd (agenda item 9).

Agenda Item 3 – Approval of March 19, 2021 Board Meeting Action Minutes. [00:06:03]

MOTION: Member Moulton made a motion to approve the March 19, 2021 board meeting action minutes. Member Randolph seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously. Motion carried unanimously.

Agenda Item 4 – SPCSA Executive Director’s Report. [00:06:47]

a. Initiatives related to Serving All Students Equitably

Rebecca Feiden, Executive Director, shared a few brief updates. The Community Working Group’s Subcommittee on Equity met earlier this month and provided some valuable input on training for their diversity, equity, and inclusion trainings that they are aiming to provide to schools. In coordination with their Project Aware Grant, they will be offering a range of trainings for schools next school year. This will include trainings on restorative justice practices, trauma-informed care as well as diversity, equity, and inclusion. As a note, there will also be other trainings on topics offered such as youth mental health and bullying prevention. In addition, they’ve made some modest updates to their website to clean up the parents page and make it more accessible and easier to navigate. They are also in the process of identifying opportunities to make parts of their website available in other languages. Earlier this month she sent a letter to the board chair of each of their charter schools outlining some of their recent work and urging them to also elevate their focus on equity. This letter is attached as an exhibit in the board materials. Later this month and early May she will have calls with board members to discuss further. SPCSA staff stand ready to help schools to identify ways that they can continue to elevate their focus.

Member Moulton asked if the letter to board chairs emphasized the equity of staff and if it is something that could be emphasized more. Executive Director Feiden said she believes there is an item on reviewing diversity of staff compared to students, but she wanted to emphasize that as well and the Department of Education, in coordination with NSHE, is going to be initiating a task force related to the teacher pipeline. This is not only a priority of the SPCSA but something she sees as a rising priority across the state but will certainly highlight in her conversations with board chairs.

b. Update on Summer 2021 Letter of Intent for new charter applications. [00:10:44]

c. Update regarding recent appointment of a new Authority Board member by the State Board of Education.

Executive Director Feiden provide the update for the above items. In terms of the letters of intent for new charter applications, the deadline for the notices was March 15. Posted with this agenda item is a list of the notices received.

Moving on to the update regarding recent appointment of a new Authority Board member, by statute Member Soifer’s term ends on June 30, 2021 and so the State Board of Education engaged in a process to select an

appointee for the upcoming term and last week they voted to appoint Erica Mosca to the seat currently held by Member Soifer which will be effective July 1, 2021. Unfortunately Member Soifer could not be here today but she wanted to thank him for his work on the board and said they will have two more opportunities to acknowledge his work and contributions before his term officially ends. They are excited to welcome Erica Mosca to the board in July.

Agenda Item 5 – COVID-19 Update. [00:12:59]

Executive Director Rebecca Feiden said on April 13th the Governor held a press conference and set a goal to open businesses across the state by June 1st. She began with summarizing Emergency Directive 044 which was signed on April 19th and lays out the details regarding that transition over the coming months. She walked through sections of the Directive that directly impact their schools and the SPCSA as described in her [recommendation memo](#). She spoke to the mitigations measures for SPCSA-sponsored schools in place for the remainder of the 2020-2021 school year as well as the current directives in place, which expire on April 30, 2021.

Having consulted with their schools, the Washoe County Health District and Southern Nevada Health District, she began to walk through her recommendation and noted that this is an evolving situation and so the recommendation she is proposing today, she is suggesting for the remainder of the 2020-2021 school year with the idea that the board will revisit prior to summer school and next school year.

In accordance with the current guidance from the Centers for Disease Control (CDC), her recommendation is that the SPCSA continue to require a minimum of 3 feet social distancing for students and 6 feet social distancing for adults for the remainder of the 2020-2021 school year. With regards to capacity limits, while statewide emergency directives have previously established capacity limits, the CDC does not provide guidance on maximum occupancy in schools. Therefore, she is not recommending that the SPCSA establish any maximum capacity limits for sponsored schools and instead, each sponsored school would be able to determine any capacity limits, so long as they do not exceed 250 people. Large gatherings over 250 people would require a Large Gathering Plan pursuant to Directive 044. Finally, each school's reopening plan contemplates sanitation protocols which have been in place at schools throughout the course of this school year. Therefore, she is not recommending that the SPCSA establish any sanitation protocols for sponsored schools and instead, each sponsored school would continue existing sanitation protocols and make adjustments in line with any updated public health guidance. Given the evolving nature of the COVID-19 pandemic, she expects the SPCSA to revisit the COVID-19 Mitigations Measures for sponsored schools in advance of any summer school programming and before the beginning of the 2021-2022 school year.

Member Moulton asked about the administration giving exemptions for mask wearing, could they say the whole school is exempt from mask wearing, would that be acceptable? Executive Director Feiden replied no it would not, the exemptions have to be based in a medical or special needs basis and so they do not have the authority to do that, and it is clearly outlined in Director 028 which is reaffirmed under Directive 044.

Member Farris asked about the larger gathering plans and submitting to Business and Industry, does that also come to staff to review so we have records that they have submitted one? Executive Director Feiden said yes this is a transition from the state control to local control, for the next month Business and Industry is reviewing those and that will transfer to local authorities and they have asked schools to send them a copy when they submit so they are aware of what is going on.

Chair Mackedon asked about the mandate to continue offering virtual education is through this school year and then NDE is going to give more guidance about next year is that correct? Executive Director Feiden said the language in the Directive is pretty broad, it's section 15, and it states all counties, school districts and charter schools must provide distance education options for all students through the remainder of the Governor's declared emergency. She expects to see more clarity in the guidance from the Superintendent of Public Instruction.

Member Moulton said at CCSD they've given a deadline for next year that they have to opt into distance learning, is that the case for charter schools as well? Executive Director Feiden said just to step back a bit, she wanted to remind everyone that all of these provisions that allow our typical brick and mortar schools to provide distance education, stem from the Governor's State of Emergency Declaration. If that is lifted, all the provisions that allow brick and mortar schools to provide distance ed, would go away. For a school district, like Clark County that has a program like Nevada Learning Academy, they have an approved distance education program they can convert those kids over potentially to that distance learning program. For our schools it's a little bit different if they don't already have a distance education approval so she's hoping the guidance from the Superintendent of Public Instruction will give them more clarity.

MOTION: *Member Moulton made the motion to:*

- *Require a minimum of 3 feet social distancing for students and 6 feet social distancing for adults at SPCSA-sponsored schools, including within school buildings, on school grounds, and within school transportation vehicles for the remainder of the 2020-2021 school year.*
- *Except for large gatherings of 250 people or more, which require a Large Gathering Plan pursuant to Directive 044, allow schools to establish any capacity limits.*
- *Allow schools to continue existing sanitation protocols as determined at the school-level and make adjustments in line with any updated public health guidance.*

Member Holmes-Sutton seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

Agenda Item 6 – Federal Emergency Grant Funding. [00:29:40]

Chair Mackedon said they are going to start with the agenda items as listed then they will have a panel type discussion where three school leaders are going to make some comments and then they will open this item up for public comment.

a. Overview of federal emergency grant funding

Executive Director Feiden said this item was prompted by discussions at our last meetings and as well as developments with regard to the most recent federal emergency funding package the American Rescue Plan. She began by providing a summary of the federal emergency grant funding. Before she talks about the details of the funds she pointed to the grant funding summary spreadsheet attached for item 6(b), here you will see each charter holder and the funds they received this fiscal year.

To date, congress has enacted 3 federal stimulus packages in response to the Covid-19 pandemic. Each of which allocates funding to K-12 education. She walked through each of the packages chronologically and provided allocation methodology details and updates as described in the [memo to the board](#).

- Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security Act (CARES Act), signed into law in March of 2020 and provided several types of funding for K-12 Education:
 - Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief Fund (ESSER Fund)
 - Governor's Emergency Education Relief Fund (GEER Fund)
 - Coronavirus Relief Fund (CRF)
- The Coronavirus Response and Relief Supplemental Appropriations Act (CRRSA Act) was signed into law on December 27, 2020 and provides several types of funding for K-12 Education:
 - Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief Fund (ESSER [2] Fund)
 - Governor's Emergency Education Relief Fund (GEER [2] Fund):
- American Rescue Plan Act (ARP Act) was signed into law on March 11, 2021 and provides several types of funding for K-12 Education:
 - Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief Fund (ESSER [3] Fund):

Member Moulton said budgets were cut initially, federal funds came in and have been dispersed, how much difference is there between those cuts and what schools have received from the Feds? Executive Director Feiden said ultimately the cuts that occurred were less severe and significant than they anticipated.

b. Summary of emergency funding allocated to schools through March of 2021 and information from a sampling of schools on how they intend to use these funds

Executive Director Feiden provided a brief summary of some of the allowable costs. She is excited to have representatives from three schools with them today from Equipo Academy, Futuro Academy and Doral Academy to provide some background.

Ben Salkowe, Principal, Equipo Academy, said he was here today to answer three questions: (1) what needs we see within their school community, (2) how they have used their ESSER funds thus far to address those needs; and (3) how they plan to use additional ESSER funds to address those needs going forward. Starting with the needs they see in their community, they're significant. As he shared at the last meeting, the crisis over the past year exposed many inequities that were already existing in their community. He provided additional scenarios regarding the needs in their community. These are the factors they considered when they were thinking about how they were going to use ESSER and CARES and other relief funding they were given access to. To address those immediate needs for safety and health and provide basic access to be able to see your teacher on a screen. Specifically, those environmental and other factors that were affecting staff and students' personal health and wellbeing. In terms of how they plan to use additional funds, they are looking what it is going to take to recover the learning loss and best strategies. He described what his team has priorities as far as addressing the needs which includes investing heavily in staffing for the next school year and potentially have a large cohort of instructional aides who can go on to become teachers. He talked about their second scenario which was infrastructure so they can get their students in front of the highest performing teachers.

Bridget Phillips, Chief Academic Officer, Doral Academy, said she joined by Judy Piccininni and Katrina Hashimoto. She began her presentation. During the pandemic the school saw many needs and decided to dig deeper so they could learn by their recent experience by revising their end-of-year surveys to include specific post closure information. This data gathered provided them with useful information for the ESSER 1 grant. The ESSER 1 grant included additional technology as they found many of their students were sharing devices. From there research they also found that students needed additional materials in their homes.

Ms. Piccininni provided the next portion of the presentation speaking to Doral Academy's efforts and initiatives related to addressing the needs at their school.

Ms. Hashimoto took over the next portion and said the ESSER funds tremendously helped their school be able to build teacher quality to be able to provide for the diverse needs of all their students. She spoke to the efforts the school made to reach all learners and closed with ESSER funds being instrumental in providing students and teachers the many needed resources during these challenging times.

Ignacio Prado, Executive Director, Futuro Academy, gave the presentation and commented that he sent some board materials to post alongside this item. He gave some context regarding Futuro Academy. He said they have some concerns about the way the funds have been allocated in comparison of how they were allocated with the Nevada Department of Education and provided some examples of what the differences look like. He talked through the choices they made with funding that was already in place with the original CARES Act. He said their plan going forward is a lot like Mr. Salkowe's, to be able to provide supplemental instruction. The only piece he would add is supplying supplement before or after school instruction for students that need additional support.

Further conversation ensued between the Authority, staff, and school representatives regarding staffing portion.

c. American Rescue Plan

- Information related to the SPCSA's Local Plan for the Safe Return to In-Person Instruction and Continuity of Services pursuant to Section 2001(i) of the American Rescue Plan
- Information related to grant funding provided under the American Rescue Plan

Executive Director Feiden said the American Rescue Plan is the 3rd stimulus package and provided details about the differences from the other packages. To meet the requirements for the use of ARP ESSER Funds as outlined by the ARP and guidance from the Nevada Department of Education, the SPCSA is soliciting feedback and input from the Authority on the attached Plan for the Safe Return of In-Person Instruction and Continuity of Services, which incorporates the reopening plans developed by SPCSA-sponsored schools, and priorities for the use of ARP ESSER Fund. The SPCSA is also soliciting public comment on the (attached in supporting materials) Plan for the Safe Return of In-Person Instruction and Continuity of Services.

Written public comment received for this agenda item:

1. Rodney Saunders, Principal, Doral Academy Pebble
2. Eileen Gilligan, Principal, of Doral Academy Saddle

Public comment on the phone:

1. Erin Bedich, Doral Academy of Nevada
2. Kim Hammond, Principal, Doral Academy Red Rock

Further conversation ensued between the Authority, staff and school representatives.

An 8-minute convenience break was taken.

Agenda Item 7 – Charter School Contract Amendment Applications. [02:35:00]

a. Nevada State High School – defer opening until the 2022-23 school year and facility location request

Mike Dang, Financial Manager, provided the Authority with a summary of Nevada State High School's (NSHS) request for a Good Cause Exemption and request for amendment. SPCSA staff recommend the Authority grant the Good Cause Exemption request and approve the amendment request as presented with a condition as outlined in [SPCSA staff's recommendation](#).

MOTION: *Member Moulton made a motion to grant NSHS a Good Cause Exemption and approve the NSHS requests, with conditions, to allow NSHS to:*

1. *Defer the opening of Campus #8 under the Flagship contract to the 2022 – 23 school year, and*
2. *Approve the school to be located in the 89031 zip code at the address listed within the application.*
 - a. *Condition: NSHS complete the SPCSA's Pre-Opening process for new and expanding campuses. SPCSA staff will work with school leadership to ensure that all requirements are completed in a timely manner, and well before the opening of the campus.*

Member Holmes-Sutton seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

b. Girls Athletic Leadership School (GALS) – facility relocation and adjustment to enrollment cap. [02:40:00]

Mike Dang, Management Analyst IV, provided the Authority with a summary of Girl Athletic Leadership School (GALS) request for a Good Cause Exemption and request for amendment. SPCSA staff recommend the Authority grant the Good Cause Exemption request and approve the amendment request as presented with conditions as outlined in [SPCSA staff's recommendation](#).

MOTION: *Member Moulton made a motion to approve the request of the Girls Athletic Leadership School (GALS) to:*

1. *Grant it a good cause exemption to hear this request today,*
2. *Relocate its campus to a new address into a prior SPCSA approved zip code listed in the Academics and Demographics Needs Assessment, and*
3. *Reduce its enrollment potential from an approved enrollment of 270 for the 2021-2022 school year to a not to exceed cap of 160 students for this period pursuant to a Clark County request; and*
4. *Submit final papers to staff for approval.*

Member Randolph seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

Agenda Item 8 – SPCSA Revolving Loan Applications. [02:49:28]

b. TEACH Las Vegas

Mike Dang, Management Analyst IV, provided some background on the school and their request for approval of the revolving loan application.

MOTION: Member Farris made a motion to approve the Revolving Loan Fund Application for \$162,500 for the TEACH Las Vegas Charter School pursuant to the repayment terms described in [staff's recommendation](#), on the condition that the school opens this fall and does not defer its opening from this year. Member Holmes-Sutton seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

a. Sage Collegiate Public Charter School [02:55:01]

Michael Gawthrop-Hutchins, provided some background on the school and their request for approval of the revolving loan application.

MOTION: Member Farris made a motion to approve the Revolving Loan Fund Application for \$84,000 for the Sage Collegiate Public Charter School according to the repayment terms described in [staff's recommendation](#). Member Shauntee Rosales seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

c. Las Vegas Collegiate [02:58:49]

Danny Peltier, Management Analyst, provided an overview of the school and their request for approval of the revolving loan application.

MOTION: Member Farris made a motion to approve the Revolving Loan Fund Application for \$81,000 for the Las Vegas Collegiate School according to the repayment terms described in this [staff's recommendation memo](#). Member Shauntee Rosales seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

Director Modrcin commented that staff will now be taking these approvals to the IFC in June and will keep the board apprised of those happenings.

Agenda Item 9 – New Charter School Applications. [03:02:37]

a. Battle Born Academy (Clark County, K-8)

Executive Director Feiden provided the overview of the Battle Born Academy Charter Application and [staff's recommendation](#) which is to approve the Battle Born Academy charter application as submitted and also attached alongside this agenda item.

School representatives were present and provided comments.

MOTION: Member Moulton made a motion to approve the Battle Born Academy charter application as submitted during the 2021 Winter Application Cycle, with conditions outlined below, based on a finding that the applicant meets the requirements contained in NRS 388A.249(3).

1. Submit a revised budget, on or before October 1, 2022, that includes any grant funding or philanthropic dollars awarded and any updated expense projections, such as facilities costs once a lease has been secured.
2. Provide evidence, on or before April 1, 2022, of a secured facility for at least the first year of operation, including evidence of work with the local jurisdiction to secure necessary zoning permits and to address traffic flow and pedestrian safety during student arrival and dismissal.
3. Provide monthly updates regarding enrollment progress by grade level beginning in February of 2022. This should include number of student applications received and number of students with completed enrollment paperwork.

4. *Complete the SPCSA pre-opening process for new charter schools. All conditions must be met to staff's satisfaction for the school to open for the 2022-23 school year. Vice Chair Kirner seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.*

b. PilotEd Schools: North Las Vegas (Clark County, K-5)

PilotEd schools withdrew their charter school application.

Agenda Item 10 – 2021 Legislative Update. [03:35:56]

Mr. Herrick gave the update and provided background regarding the movement of the bills and the timelines. A summary of the bills, their amendments and current statuses is attached in the supporting materials.

Agenda Item 11 – Long-Range Calendar. [03:52:13]

Executive Rebecca Feiden said they are anticipating Chair and Vice Chair elections at the June meeting. They will likely see amendments and new schools on the agenda for May.

Agenda Item 12 – Public Comment #2 [03:53:00]

There was no further public comment on the line or submitted via email.

Agenda Item 13 – Adjournment [03:54:15]

The meeting was adjourned at 12:51pm.