



## NEVADA STATE PUBLIC CHARTER SCHOOL AUTHORITY

**October 1, 2021**

The State Public Charter School Authority Board Meeting was conducted virtually and at the following physical location:

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

### **MINUTES OF THE MEETING**

#### **BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT IN-PERSON:**

Member Erica Mosca  
Member Tamika Shauntee Rosales  
Member Mallory Cyr  
Vice Chair Sheila Moulton  
Chair Melissa Mackedon

#### **AUTHORITY STAFF IN-PERSON:**

Rebecca Feiden, Executive Director  
Jennifer King, Administrative Assistant IV

#### **BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT VIRTUALLY:**

Member Trujillo  
Member Lee Farris  
Member Tonia Holmes-Sutton

#### **AUTHORITY STAFF PRESENT VIRTUALLY:**

Ryan Herrick, General Counsel  
Selcuk Ozdemir, Education Programs Supervisor  
Brandon Gaytán, Education Programs Professional

#### **AUDIENCE IN ATTENDANCE:**

Michael O'Dowd (in-person)  
Jeremy Christensen  
Lance Bohne  
Kathy Rudd  
Katie Krackhardt  
Chantae Readye  
Jennifer Emling  
Nathalie Burgess  
Katy Larrabee  
Shannon Manning  
Christina Threton  
Kate Lackey  
Jessica Scobell  
Chris McBride  
Lee Esplin  
Cesar Tiu

John Bentham  
Christine Dzarnoski  
Jessica Barr  
Mary Scott  
Jai Mallory  
Sandra Kinne  
Jennifer Braster  
Kathy Rudd  
Jill Shreidl  
Kara Hendricks

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

Melissa Mackedon, State Public Charter School Authority (SPCSA), Board Chair, called the meeting to order at 9:02am and noted that Board Member Sami Randolph has resigned from the board. She thanked her for her service and expertise. She then asked everyone to stand for the pledge and to take a moment of silence in remembrance of the victims of October 1, 2017.

**Agenda Item 2 – Public Comment #1 [00:02:44]**

Written public comment received:

1. Amy Jefferys, parent of Pinecrest students, wrote in opposition of any vaccine mandate for students or staff at charter schools, attached hereto.

Chair Mackedon asked the new Board Member, Javier Trujillo to introduce himself. Member Trujillo said it is his pleasure to join the committee and looks forward to the opportunity. There was no further public comment on the line or in the board room.

**Agenda Item 3 – Approval of August 27, 2021 Board Meeting Action Minutes. [00:05:25]**

*MOTION: Vice Chair Moulton made the motion to approve the August 27, 2021 board meeting action minutes. Member Holmes-Sutton seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.*

**Agenda Item 4 – SPCSA Executive Director’s Report. [00:05:58]**

**a. National Blue Ribbon School Designation – Pinecrest Academy Inspirada**

Rebecca Feiden, Executive Director, said our first item today is very exciting and she is thrilled to announce that Pinecrest Academy’s Inspirada campus was just recently named a National Blue Ribbon School in the category of exemplary high performing schools. Pinecrest Academy Inspirada is one of three Nevada schools to receive this recognition in 2021. Pinecrest Academy Inspirada is the first charter school in the state of Nevada to receive this recognition. The National Blue Ribbon School program has been around for 30 plus years and so this is truly an honor. Today they have Pinecrest Academy Inspirada’s principal here to speak about how their school has achieved such a tremendous award and what it means for their school community.

Michael O’Dowd, Principal, Pinecrest Academy Inspirada, said they were thrilled to get the award. He has been a principal for over 20 years and an educator for 32 years, and it has always been a goal of his to become a National Blue Ribbon School. It’s been a huge team effort; their whole campus has been working very hard. The school has been opened for 6 years and schools must be open for 5 years to be eligible to be nominated to receive the award. They are especially excited to be the first charter school in Nevada to receive this award.

**b. Initiatives related to Serving All Students Equitably [00:10:46]**

Executive Director Feiden said with regard to their equity initiatives, it was her intention to have a focus on schools item this month but unfortunately this did not come to fruition for October. They are working to identify a school presenter for one of the upcoming meetings. In other areas, they will be reviewing some school level data today and staff continues to work to disaggregate data by student group to understand any disparities in performance and experience between student groups. Additionally, staff is in the process and working with schools and community partners to ensure all their schools have in place a policy regarding the rights and needs of persons with diverse gender identities or expressions as required under Nevada law. She thanked the Nevada Alliance for Student Diversity which has provided some training and resources for their school leaders.

**c. Proposed Regulatory Changes (Nevada Administrative Code 388A.260) [00:11:56]**

Executive Director Feiden said on September 13, 2021 she conducted a regulatory workshop regarding proposed changes to Nevada Administrative Code 388A.260 which deals with the process for applications to form a charter school, including the letter of intent and application itself. Specifically, they are proposing three changes: first, the timeline for the notice of intent from 120 days prior to the application to 90 days prior to the application; second, detailing the required contents of the notice of intent; and third, moving from two application cycles per year to single cycle with applications due by April 30th of each year. There was no official public comment provided

during the regulation workshop about these proposed changes. In addition, this topic has been discussed at two previous SPCSA board meetings and we have not received any comment through that form either. Finally, staff has also reached out to some of their key stakeholders and none of them have raised any concerns. At this point, staff plans to move forward with the next step which is the regulation hearing to be held at their November 5, 2021 board meeting. As a reminder, any regulations approved by the Authority would also need to go to the legislative commission for approval as well.

**d. COVID-19 Update [00:13:14]**

Executive Director Feiden began by talking about COVID-19 cases at their schools. As of last Friday, schools have reported 490 cases amongst student and staff this year. This includes cases where the individual was on campus as well as cases where they were off campus and there were no potential individuals that had contact. As a result of these cases, schools have reported a total of 1,615 students and staff exclusions or quarantines. While these numbers are substantial and have no doubt impacted school operations and student learning, the good news is they are seeing a significant decline over the last couple of weeks.

As she mentioned last month, the Charter Authority has been prioritizing expanding access for schools to COVID-19 testing. Their rapid testing program with the BinaxNow tests has expanded from 14 schools last year by adding 11 campuses this year. There are also other schools that have shown interest and staff plans to conduct another training in October. Additionally, through federal funding, the Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) has contracted with a vendor to provide onsite weekly PCR testing, which started two weeks ago, and they have 13 schools participating in that program all of which are in Clark County.

Finally, they are in the process of exploring avenues for additional access to personal protective equipment (PPE) and they are working with schools to understand their needs. She reiterated that staff does remain in close communication with the local health districts and to remind the board that health inspections conducted annually by our local health districts also include a review of compliance with state-wide directives, so there are multiple ways that they are staying on top of and monitoring how schools are handling COVID-19 this year. She paused for questions.

Vice Chair Moulton asked about the 490 COVID-19 cases, and if they could be broken down to students vs. staff. Executive Director Feiden replied that 407 were student cases and 83 were staff cases. Vice Chair Moulton asked if there would be a way to determine which of those students were under 12 and not eligible for the vaccine. Executive Director Feiden said she would be happy to work with their team to get some estimates.

**e. Update on the Summer Cycle for New Charter School Applications [00:16:52]**

Executive Director Feiden said they received 9 applications by the July 15th deadline and initial reviews of the applications are complete and review teams are in the process of conducting capacity interviews for each applicant. So far, they have completed 5 and 4 are scheduled for next week. They expect to bring recommendations regarding each of the applications to the November 5th meeting.

**f. Update on Winter 2022 Letter of Intent for new charter applications [00:17:30]**

Executive Director Feiden said while it's still the summer application cycle, the letter of intent timeline or notice of intent timeline for the winter cycle does overlap and so September 15th was the letter of intent due date for the January 15th application submission deadline. They received 14 letters of intent for potential charter school applications in that winter cycle and the list of those letters of intent or notice of intent can be found alongside the materials for this agenda item.

**Agenda Item 5 – Academic Performance Review for the 2020-21 School Year. [00:18:22]**

Selcuk Ozdemir, Education Programs Supervisor, said he is joined by Brandon Gaytán, Education Programs Professional, and today they will present the most recent available data for the academic performance of SPCSA schools. Before they dive into the data, they provide several disclaimers.

Due to:

- The impacts of COVID-19 pandemic on learning;
- Lower assessment participation rates in the 20-21 school year (federal waivers eliminated the required 95% assessment participation rate); and
- A federal waiver of the annual Nevada school star ratings (NSPF) for the 20-21 school year.

The Nevada Department of Education (NDE) has stated:

- 20-21 school year results do not provide a comprehensive view of Nevada student performance.
- Comparing 20-21 school year data to previous years is not recommended.
- 20-21 school year star rating data are unofficial and informational only.

Staff also provided additional disclaimers beyond those from the NDE and can be found in staff's presentation in the supporting materials alongside this agenda item.

Dr. Ozdemir expanded on the 2020-21 assessment participation rate for the SPCSA, state and Clark County School District (CCSD). Generally, the SPCSA was close to 95% participation in ELA and math assessments, and again the 95% participation requirement was waived by the federal government for this past year. The state was about 68% but this was due to CCSD's low participation of 54%. Excluding CCSD, the state was around 93% which is a similar rate of the SPCSA.

Staff's presentation today has three main parts. (1) providing an overview of NSPF scores; (2) Math/ELA proficiency; and (3) Math/ELA growth. Dr. Ozdemir provided an NSPF refresher before digging into the data.

Staff's analysis of NSPF data, included in the presentation, shows the percentage of SPCSA schools that were above or below the 50-index score threshold for a 3-star rating by year. The 2018-19 school year data is official, while the 2020-21 data was calculated in-house. He reiterated the disclaimers and spoke to the SPCSA NSPF adjusted index score changes from the 2018-19 school year vs. the 2020-21 school year. The chart shows that over 60% of SPCSA schools experience some sort of decrease in their NSPF score. About 1/3 of schools experienced an increase. While many experienced decreases in scores, the decreases were not enough to move the needle on overall scores needed to maintain 3-star ratings. Dr. Ozdemir turned it over to Dr. Gaytán for the Math/ELA proficiency piece.

Brandon Gaytán, Education Programs Professional, said next we will examine a large component of the NSPF index scores, Math/ELA proficiency, which awards 25% of a school's score in the NSPF star rating system. He went over the NDE graphic of the star rating system for an elementary school in the presentation (slide 10).

Slide 11 displays official NSPF ELA/Math proficiency rates for 2018-19 and unofficial rates for 2020-21. The NDE calculates proficiency using Smarter Balanced Assessments (SBAC) for 3rd-8th graders. The Nevada Alternative Assessment (NAA) (3rd-8th, 11th graders), and the ACT (11th graders). He reiterated the disclaimers previously provided. Overall, and at the elementary and middle school levels, ELA proficiency unofficially decreased by about 6 or 7 percentage points. While math decreased by at least 10 percentage points. At the high school level however, proficiency increased by about 4 percentage points in ELA and about 3 percentage points in math. ACT participation was close to a normal year because of the graduation requirement in Nevada. This data is likely more reliable than the SBAC.

Another important item to consider is the performance of various student groups (slide 12). Note that these data do not use the NSPF or star rating rules and the numbers may therefore be slightly different than those on previous slides. In align with the data that showed unofficial decreases in proficiency for elementary and middle

schools, all student groups from grades 3rd-8th also experienced unofficial decreases in ELA proficiency. The most drastic unofficial decreases were in the American Indian/Alaskan Native FRL and ELL student groups.

In align with the data that showed unofficial proficiency increases for high schools, the majority of students in 11th grade experience unofficial increases in ELA proficiency except for students identifying as Hispanic/Latino and students with IEP who both saw an unofficial decrease.

Finally, they looked at the student group proficiency vs. State data for the 2020-21 school year. For the ELA SBAC, the SPCSA unofficially outperformed the state and each SPCSA student group outperformed their respective state student group.

Next in the presentation, are the Math/ELA growth data. For elementary and middle schools growth is also a large part of the NSPF, up to 55% of their score. Dr. Gaytán gave a quick refresher on how the NDE calculates growth before breaking down the data in slide 17.

The first analysis they will look at is school median growth percentiles (MGPs) in the NSPF the MGP measure for a school is the median of all Student Growth Percentile (SGPs) at the school. Here however, staff is not showing school MGPs but instead displaying the ELA/Math median growth overall for the SPCSA and at the elementary and middle school levels. These data show, that unofficially median growth increased across the board in both content areas.

Dr. Gaytán moved on to the SPCSA NSPF meeting growth targets for school year 2018-19 vs. 2020-21 (slide 18). In the NSPF, the Adequate Growth Percentiles (AGP) is the percent of students that met their growth target at that school. In the analysis here, they again are not showing individual school rates, but instead displaying the overall growth target or AGP met rates for ELA/Math for the SPCSA as well as elementary and middle school levels. These data show unofficially the percentage of students meeting their growth target decreased from 2018-19 in both the ELA/Math content areas. He provided the summary of the information provided today.

Vice Chair Moulton said looking at the increase in high school, significantly, she's wondering if some students dropped out or went somewhere else, and if there was a rationale around why that occurred. She also asked if this data was similar in other states and if the parents are made aware of it. Chair Mackedon asked if they had any new high schools that came on board last year as their first year.

Dr. Gaytán said with regard to high schools, in 2018-19 it looks like they had 15 high schools and in 2020-21 they had 21 high schools. From 2018-19 to 2020-21, there were some NSHS campuses that came online and there may have also been schools that added grade levels which ended up in the school being rated. High schools to be rated need to have Math/ELA proficiency (11th graders) and a graduation rate (12th graders) and some of their high schools when they open are only K-9 or K-10 and they add grades so that could also be the case. Beyond that, it is a very difficult question to answer. Dr. Ozdemir said for the second part of the question, they didn't have a chance to look at other states, but they will definitely check and report back on that. Member Moulton said she didn't need all states but perhaps the commonality of states that are similar to Nevada. Executive Director Feiden said in a typical year, parents do see the SBAC or ACT report, certainly the ACT data students would have, but she does not know whether the state has released the SBAC reports to parents this year, Chair Mackedon may know, Chair Mackedon said yes, they did.

Member Cyr made a comment about the gap of 2019-20, but the students were in school the majority of that time from August to March, is there any sort of data on that year that can be presented or shared? Or not because there weren't the final results of the end of year assessments? She recalls sending her child to an appointment to take the test that year, but it has blurred in her mind. Executive Director Feiden said they may have additional information to share, but briefly, the high school ACT assessment is given in February so they did the 2019-20 ACT assessment, prior to the March 15 or so shutdown and they may be able to pull that data and so they decided

to use the 2018-19 because it had information universally across all three. The Smarter Balanced assessment was partially administered before the March 15 timeline and very few students had taken it at that point and so that is why they do not have the SBAC data. Many of their schools have MAP assessment data and other data points that can be used. With that said, it is different from school to school. As Dr. Ozdemir will note in the next agenda item, the Authority has particularly focused on those schools with historical underperformance in their follow ups, so they did ask for some additional reports from their schools that had some challenges in the past to understand what their data was showing and an important note is we expected students not to do as well this year, but inherently this has been a substantial impact to their kids, while she thinks it is important to know how kids have done and where there's been improvement, a lot of the data in that is valuable at the school level in the classroom compared to our role which is accountability driven. From an accountability standpoint she thinks it's important they understand the data, look at the data, and talk about it but mostly they equipped schools to be able to use the data to be effectively as possible to bounce back next year when they expect to have official star ratings. She said something to keep in mind is the conversations they have with schools during site evaluations where they dig into the data and discuss the trends they are seeing. Dr. Ozdemir added for the ACT for their high schools, they provided the report including the 19-20 school year, so they have universally three years of data specifically for high schools and this can be provided also.

#### **Agenda Item 6 – Academic Performance Review for Sponsored Schools Operating Under a Notice.**

[00:50:30]

Dr. Ozdemir provided a couple of remarks before the school presentations. He gave a quick refresher on Notices and the Authority's three levels of intervention: (1) Notice of Concern; (2) Notice of Breach; (3) Notice of Intent to Terminate. Today they will talk about Notice of Concern and Notice of Breach. Notices of Concern are issued to schools with weak academic performance and those not meeting standards. Typically, this means schools that were rated below 3-stars by the NDE. A Notice of Concern is often the first step when there is an academic concern. Notices of Breach are issued to schools with consecutive years of low performance. If the school receives a Notice of Concern, possible outcome consequences include a corrective action plan, site evaluations and schools may be required to provide a written report for their academic performance and plan moving forward. Because of the uniqueness of the last two school years, the NDE did not public official NSPF for 2019-20 and 2020-21 and instead carried over results from the 2018-19 school year. While they have unofficial performance data, the last star ratings are from the 2018-19 school year and that is the last time the Authority issued notices and those notices have carried over. As part of ongoing oversight, they have been closely monitoring schools under notice this includes collecting mid-year data and conducting site evaluations. For today's board meeting we asked those school operating under a notice of concern to include a written report, which is included in the supporting materials for this agenda item. These schools were not asked to be here today and instead they will bring any questions from the board back to them and provide updates. Schools operating under a notice of breach were asked to present their academic performance and plan to move forward to the board.

##### **a. Notice of Concern (written report).**

- **Amplus Academy Elementary School**
- **Democracy Prep Elementary School**
- **Discovery Sandhill Elementary School**
- **Coral Academy, Nellis Elementary School**
- **Elko Institute for Academic Achievement Elementary School**
- **Legacy Traditional Cadence Elementary School**
- **Nevada Prep Elementary School**
- **Quest Preparatory Academy Elementary School**
- **Somerset Academy**
  - **Aliante Campus Elementary School**
  - **Losee Campus Elementary and Middle School**

**b. Notice of Breach (presentation): [00:54:51]**

- Legacy Traditional North Valley Elementary School

Dr. Ozdemir gave a provided a brief overview of Legacy Traditional North Valley Elementary School and what brought them here today before turning it over to the school to discuss their presentation.

Katy Larabee, Board Member, Jennifer Emling, Superintendent of Academics, and Nathalie Burgess, Leadership Coach, provided the update on behalf of the school. Ms. Emling provided the introduction and spoke to some of the school's roadblocks: administrative changes, first school in Nevada so there was an adjustment period, students coming to them with a lot of academic deficiencies, and high staff turnover. Ms. Burgess shared some of their most current academic data which can be found in their presentation in the supporting materials. The three school representatives discussed the school's improvement strategies before turning it over to the board for questions.

Member Shauntee Rosales asked about the part of numbers attributed to turnover and admin changes, and what the cause of turnover was in staff. Ms. Emling said in her opinion when they first came to Nevada she does not know that they did a great job of really explaining their expectations of teachers and their curriculum to their new staff. They have an extensive recruiting team now that understands what they do in a school day and able to make sure teachers understand that. Member Shauntee Rosales asked about the slide with the decrease in SBAC testing from 2021, your 8<sup>th</sup> grade went up 2% in SBAC data, what does the school think that was from? Ms. Emling replied it was from a phenomenal teacher at the North Valley campus and was really invested in students understanding the content.

Member Mosca said regarding teacher vacancies, what are the current vacancies are for teachers? Ms. Emling said offhand she does not know, probably four. Member Mosca asked if perhaps the school could send her offline the MAP/SBAC data by subgroups. Ms. Emling replied absolutely.

Vice Chair Moulton asked who runs the CTM? Ms. Burgess said it has been a part of the school before she began their in April of 2020 but she came with some experience and they further developed the CTM cycle and process.

Vice Chair Moulton asked particularly at the North Valley campus, what percentage is ELL? Ms. Emling replied 9%. Vice Chair Moulton asked about the Saturday and spring break schools, who teaches those? Ms. Emling said teachers volunteer and the school pays additionally per hour.

Member Cyr said she was looking back at the report from two years ago when the school visited the Authority and shared some goals and one of the notes here was about family engagement and providing more resources in the home and she didn't see any touch on that. Thinking about attendance and participation in the Saturday schools and bootcamps, how are you engaging with differently or uniquely with your community/families?

They are 100% back in-person, been very welcoming to have families back on campus. They had a curriculum meeting and parents came in and could go through their schedule and understand the curriculum. They are actively inviting them onto campus and also participating in an attendance improvement program this year and working with families to identify roadblocks to getting students to school. There are social workers on campus and school psychologist. They have been focusing on social emotional and meeting needs of students. Students are struggling with getting back to the school routine and the social aspect.

There was further discussion between the Authority and school representatives. A 5-minute convenience break was taken before the next agenda item.

- **Freedom Classical Elementary School [01:37:09]**

Dr. Ozdemir gave a brief overview of Freedom Classical Elementary School and what brought them here today before turning it over to the school to discuss their presentation.

Lance Bohne, Board President of Freedom Classical Academy, introduced himself before turning it over to Principal, Jeremy Christensen.

Mr. Christensen provided the update and began with the review of the data for their elementary school (grades 3rd-6th) ELA performance going back to their first year. As the data shows, their school had growth up until the year of COVID-19 when they got shut down. They were progressing and excited to prove they were a 3-star school and during the shutdown, online school did not do well for their elementary students, and they saw a decrease in performance in their ELA. He spoke to the challenges the school faces: remediating learning loss from last year, re-establishing school culture, severe staffing shortage, and ongoing COVID cases/exclusions. Their school improvement plan can be found on slide 4 of the school's presentation which can be found in the supporting materials for this agenda item and includes identifying student needs, targeted intervention and supports, increase teacher proficiency, and align curriculum.

Vice Chair Moulton asked how many teachers/staff members the school was short? Mr. Christensen replied they did not renew 2 staff members, but many staff left the profession for personal reasons or moved out of state or were promoted to other positions. They had to hire for about 10 positions and usually spend about \$5,000 a year for recruitment and they've been spending \$5,000 a month. Vice Chair Moulton asked if they had any long-term subs or are they all qualified licensed teachers? Mr. Christensen said yes, they still have a handful of long-term subs. Vice Chair Moulton said with regard to the backup assessment material submitted by the school for the beginning of the year 2020-2021, does the school want to comment on those at all? Mr. Christensen said they've taken their MAP assessments for this fall and as seen the numbers aren't terrible and they are optimistic they can grow those numbers. Vice Chair Moulton said looking at the previous scores, has the school compared those? Mr. Christensen said he is happy to send them.

Member Cyr asked about the parent advisory committee being open to all families that was discussed from a couple years ago, she wanted to know what this looked like this year. Mr. Christensen said they did open it to all parents that was difficult last year but our school improvement plan was heavily informed by parent input. Member Cyr asked about the school's absenteeism. For this year, they are seeing some truancy, but it isn't as bad as last year. Member Cyr asked how the school is blending some of the adjustments to their curriculum with their focus on a classical education. Mr. Christensen said as a classical school they do not rely heavily on technology and that's partly why online learning was difficult for them, so the online platforms are primarily used for supplementary to their main thing which is direct instruction. Member Mosca said one thing she pulled up which is great is their increase in ELL, and if they saw the same increase in the FRL population? Mr. Christensen said yes they went to FRL this year to better serve their population and have seen an increase. Member Mosca asked when Mr. Christensen send Vice Chair Moulton the breakdown of MAP scores from previous years, if he could also send her a demographic breakdown by subgroup.

Member Shauntee Rosales asked about the reestablishment of school culture and what that looks like. Mr. Christensen said it relates to the students being away from the campus and the students not used to the school setting and routines.

- **Nevada Connections Academy** [02:10:01]

Dr. Ozdemir gave a provided a brief overview of Nevada Connections Academy and what brought them here today before turning it over to the school to discuss their presentation.

Chris McBride, Superintendent of Nevada Connections Academy, provided the presentation overview. He began with the celebrations before moving to the past performance. He discussed the school's performance framework targets to ensure the school makes a 3-star rating for the 2021-22 school year.



Christine Dzarnoski, Principal, said their school's improvement plan is centered around the 5 indicators of the NSPF. A lot of these things may have been shared at the July meeting but she provided some brief updates related to their academic achievement. Dr. McBride discussed the star 360 benchmark testing results. Ms. Dzarnoski spoke to their college and career readiness (CCR) program which began last year they are continuing to work and implement.

Member Mosca said she is curious if there has been a significant increase in enrollment because students did not want to go back to brick and mortar and how has that affected your school? Dr. McBride said yes and no, because this year was the first year they did not have a 8th grade class to roll up to their freshmen class so because of that they have seen a decrease. However, since the school year has started, they are enrolling students on a daily basis, and about 250 students are in their enrollment pipeline. For the pink status of unknown, what are some things they are doing to reach out to the youth, and the CCR standards, when it was confirmed complete or the difference between that and participant. There was further conversation around the truancy policy and procedures.

- **Somerset Academy, North Las Vegas Elementary School** [02:37:37]

Dr. Ozdemir gave a provided a brief overview of Somerset Academy, North Las Vegas Elementary School and what brought them here today before turning it over to the school to discuss their presentation.

Christina Threton, Principal of Somerset Academy North Las Vegas, joined by their Board Chair, John Bentham, shared some updates related to the school and their journey over the last year. She shared their ELA and math as well as the school's data compared to the school in their communities. The data shows they are outperforming those schools. Jessica Barr jumped in and said they did look closely at their medians and growth and it's usually their first indicator. Overall, they did have quite a few students missing for comparison. Ms. Threton spoke to their overall MGP and subgroup highlights. They realize there are some groups they need to serve better and are not immune to the national trends they saw. They spoke to their academic performance focus.

Member Moulton asked the percentage of IEP students at the school. Ms. Threton replied about 12%. Member Cyr asked about the comment mentioned about adding 10 new students a week, has that been a trend since the school has been open or is it because the school is under enrolled or is it losing that many kids because it's a transient school? Ms. Threton said their waitlist is not as long and so families will use them to hop in and get into the system so to speak, and then get accepted to another campus that is closer to their home or other siblings. They also have a lot of military families that come and go.

Dr. Ozdemir asked if the Authority had any questions related to the written updates. Chair Mackedon said the Authority would compile their questions and send them to staff to get the follow up from schools. For any schools listening, it's clear the Authority likes to get the breakdown of the demographic data so please provide us that on the up front.

**Agenda Item 7 – Technical Changes to the Site Evaluation Process.** [03:07:58]

Executive Director Feiden said as a reminder at their last meeting the Authority approved the 2021-22 Site Evaluation Handbook and at that time there were some comments, so staff has made some additional changes, relatively technical, in response to the feedback received. The first piece of feedback had to do with schools that had not yet received a star rating but are in a contract year where they would not typically receive an evaluation. In the case of a school that has not yet received a star rating but wouldn't typically be on their list for a site evaluation, staff is proposing that they use a multi-tiered process where they first collect any available academic data that may include some state assessment data. For example this year they have some schools that would have received a star rating except the data this year is unofficial so they have some data they can refer to, as well as request information from the school or any internal data they have. She believes staff has already reached out to this schools for this information and will use this as a starting point. Depending on the data, we may have the school also provide a virtual presentation to them like the presentation during the site evaluation but with a very targeted focus on their academic performance and plans for monitoring and continuous improvement. Those

schools where the data does indicate that the school is not on track or they don't feel they have sufficient information, they will conduct a targeted site evaluation. Those changes are on pages 5 and 8 and highlighted in yellow (see supporting materials for the handbook with updates).

The second response to comments was in regard to student focus groups for abbreviated site evaluations. In this case staff is proposing that they first look at the climate data available for the school. If the data is insufficient, meaning it is not representative and they don't have a large population of students represented, and/or that data indicates some concerns about the school climate then they will include the student focus group. However, if there is sufficient data and that data is positive, they would not conduct a student focus group. This change can be found highlighted on page 9. She thanked the Authority for their deep involvement in this process and asked for any questions.

Vice Chair Moulton asked if they have received an input or reflection from schools on these changes? Executive Director Feiden said this was a quick turn around and they did not get additional insight from schools, that said, she would expect they would appreciate staff looking at the data before making a uniform decision.

**MOTION:** *Vice Chair Moulton made the motion to accept the changes provided on the Site Evaluation differentiation process. Member Holmes-Sutton seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.*

The Authority took a 30-minute lunch break.

**Agenda Item 8 – Update on approved new charter schools for Fall 2022.** [03:34:12]

Executive Director Feiden said while it is just October, we are starting to look ahead at the schools opening in the fall of 2022. As the Authority knows, we did see some schools struggle to launch this year so they are looking to initiate the pre-opening process earlier and this includes ensuring the board is aware of progress they are making towards opening. We expect these schools to report at least on a quarterly basis and probably more often beginning next summer.

Today we will begin by hearing from the Sage Collegiate team and they will also take agenda item 9 as that also relates to Sage Collegiate.

**d. Sage Collegiate**

Member Cyr and Member Mosca recused themselves from this agenda item.

Executive Director Feiden provided a brief overview of the school. She turned it over to the Sage Collegiate team to first to provide their update before she provides brief remarks regarding the amendment.

Sandra Kinne, Executive Director, said she is joined by Jennifer Braster their Board Chair. She provided some comments related to the update sent to the board (see supporting materials for the update). They have begun their community outreach and relaunched their enrollment and recruitment. They are in the process of interview and hiring for their family community and engagement role. With regard to partnerships, she had a conversation with Teach of America and expects to get a letter to the SPCSA from them within the next month. They anticipate having a lottery this year also and look forward to that. They have also hired their director of operations this morning and they are thrilled about that. They have identified both a short term and long term facility.

**Agenda Item 9 – Sage Collegiate Charter Contract Amendment Application (request to adjust approved zip codes for location).** [03:42:43]

Executive Director Feiden provided an overview of the request for an amendment submitted by Sage Collegiate Charter School. Specifically, the request relates to the location of the school. The identified potential facility is located in the 89107 zip code area in which the school had already been approved for and is partially located in the adjacent 89102 which was not included in their initial approved zip codes. Therefore, they are requesting an

amendment in order to be able to occupy the facility. Staff has reviewed the request and finds it reasonable. The proposed location sits in close proximity to the zip codes originally identified and is not expected to significantly impact the school's plans for recruitment and enrollment. For these reasons the SPCSA recommends approval of the good cause exemption request and approve the amendment request with the expectation that the school fulfill the current conditions from the deferral granted on June 25, 2021. She also noted Sage Collegiate has submitted a request to the Authority for an adjustment to their enrollment numbers and this is a more complex review and staff is in the process of reviewing that and this should come forward at the November meeting. Ms. Kinne provided some brief remarks related to the location.

**MOTION:** *Vice Chair Moulton made the motion to grant Sage Collegiate a good cause exemption and approve the Sage Collegiate request to locate partially in the 89102-zip code, subject to conditions described herein. Member Shauntee Rosales seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.*

**b. Battle Born Academy [03:49:09]**

Executive Director Feiden provided a brief overview of the school before turning it over to representatives for the update.

Kathy Rudd, Principal of Battle Born Academy said she is joined by Katie Krackhardt, Assistant Principal, and Chantae Readye, Board Chair. Ms. Readye began with the school's introduction to their update. Ms. Krackhardt spoke briefly to their community outreach and partnerships. Their founding team has been conducting ongoing outreach and formalized partnerships. With regard to the student recruitment updates, the school continues to work through tabling and community events, phone banking, targeted social media, parent engagement and partnerships. They are currently at about 175 students interested in registering. Ms. Readye said their biggest recruitment updates are that they hired a principal and assistant principal, they are looking to hire an operations manager by January of 2022. Their hiring for instructional staff and a counselor opens up in November and they plan opening up to a nationwide search and really hoping to find teachers that believe in their mission and want to be in Las Vegas. Ms. Rudd talked about what they believe will be their permanent home. They are currently under contract on a building at 2800 Walnut Ave., in 89101, within their identified zip codes. She talked about the school's vision for the location. Last but not least, she talked about the finances. They've made progress toward establishing partnerships, board approved budgets, and additional funding sources were referenced. She asked if there were any questions from the board.

**c. Las Vegas Collegiate [03:59:04]**

Executive Director Feiden provided a brief overview of the school before turning it over to representatives for the update.

Jill Shreidl, Board Chair, said they are going to touch on all their milestones in the opening readiness. The school has done a lot of work in their target neighborhoods for recruitment but was waiting for their building so they could have an address to give to families. They are partnered with Premier School Operations who is writing a plan for them that will be ready in November. They continue to engage their core family group since the beginning through mailers. With regard to the facility, the contract has been signed for 5700 Vegas Dr. and renovations will be completed in phases with minor renovations required for year 1.

Their developer, that was on the call but had to drop, emailed their update which states they are in a 90-day due diligence and the proposals under review for property conditions and traffic and they are working to prepare the proper RFPs for architect and contractor. She provided brief updates related to the following:

- governing board
- curriculum and instruction
- financial management
- personnel

- food service
- health and safety
- community partnerships
- operations

Member Cyr asked for clarification regarding how far outside the zip code the school can be. She would like to know how close the school is with this site with their intended zip code. From the furthest point of 89106, it's 2.1 miles. Member Cyr asked about an update in their transportation plan. The bus has been budgeted since they began the discussion about transportation. Ms. Gainous has a good relationship with Nevada Prep and is getting a lot of good direction from them. They are going to look to what parents say as far as the bus routes. There were no further questions from the Authority.

**a. Eagle Nevada [04:13:34]**

Executive Director Feiden provided a brief overview of the school before turning it over to representatives for the update.

Mary Scott, Board Member of Eagle Charter Schools of Nevada, said she is joined by Jai Mallory. They've completed their board training and are working on the grant application with Opportunity 180. Board member Nick Fleege has been replaced by Tyron Henderson and board member Mallory will be replaced by January 2022. They have looked at 6 potential building options. The cost of the commercial facilities in the targeted zip codes have increased significantly and they have been working with a realtor on this. Their financial options they are working with Moon Water Capital, American Charter Development, and RPC Capital Financing. They are also working on community support and partnerships. They are maintaining community outreach through their social media platforms and have developed a marketing plan. With regard to hiring, they have their job descriptions completed and will post their ads in November 2021 for the Principal to be filled by January 2022 and other staff thereafter.

Ms. Mallory said they have more of an update regarding the facility and have notified the SPCSA that they intend to submit a letter to request a change in zip code for consideration at the November 5th meeting. So that is there exciting news that they have narrowed down to one location in the last week. Jeff Smith, said they are also about to sign their development agreement with an opening with no more than 450 students as they believe it is the safest way and may just open with a K-4 rather than K-5. He believes it would be wise to go slower than to rush. That is the direction they would like to go.

Vice Chair Moulton asked if one of the six named in the back up material. Ms. Mallory confirmed that it is one of the six. Vice Chair Moulton said she may suggest a little more community support.

**Agenda Item 10 – Federal Emergency Grant Funding. [04:22:20]**

Executive Director Feiden said as the Authority knows the federal government has enacted three federal stimulus packages. In April she provided an overview of the federal emergency funding. At that time all funding from the first emergency stimulus bill, the Coronavirus, Aid, Relief and Economic Security (CARES) Act had been awarded to sponsored schools and schools had begun seeking reimbursement for approved expenditures. While sponsored charter schools had received allocations for the ESSER II funding from the second emergency stimulus bill, the Coronavirus Response and Relief Supplemental Appropriations Act (CRRSA Act), the application for these funds was still in progress. Additionally, the SPCSA had not yet received any information regarding the GEER II funding from the CRRSA Act. Finally, while the third emergency stimulus bill, the American Rescue Plan Act (ARP Act) had been signed into law and the SPCSA had received preliminary information regarding the ARP ESSER funding, the application for these funds had not yet opened.

With regard to the second emergency stimulus bill, at the end of May, the SPCSA submitted the application for ESSER II funding to the Nevada Department of Education (NDE), and following a series of requested revisions

from NDE, this application was approved on July 15, 2021. Thus, sponsored schools now have access to request reimbursement for approved expenditures under the ESSER II grant. The SPCSA has not received any additional information at this time regarding the GEER II funding under the CRRSA Act. When additional information is received, SPCSA staff will work to allocate these funds to sponsored schools.

Moving on to the third stimulus bill, on June 15, 2021, NDE provided the SPCSA and other Local Educational Agencies (LEAs) with allocations for approximately two-thirds of the anticipated ARP ESSER funding<sup>1</sup>. The SPCSA allocated this funding to each charter holder based on a straight per-pupil allocation plus a supplemental allocation for each charter holder with greater than 40% of students qualifying for free or reduced-price lunch reflected in the October 2020 validated count day data. Sponsored charter schools were required to submit their applications for ARP ESSER funding by August 16, 2021, and the SPCSA submitted the compiled application for ARP ESSER funding to NDE on September 10, 2021. In the supporting materials for this agenda item, is a summary of how schools are requesting to spend their ARP ESSER funds (page 3).

Additionally, through Assembly Bill 495, the legislature allocated an additional \$15 million from the ARP Act Coronavirus State Fiscal Recovery Funds (CSFRF) to Title I charter schools. SPCSA staff have been in frequent communication with the Governor's Finance Office regarding the timeline and process for allocating these funds. The SPCSA has also engaged with Title I schools through an informational meeting as well as a request for specific information regarding funding gaps that remain after allocation of the other emergency funding. The federal requirements for these CSFRF funds are quite extensive - much more than the funds from the CARES Act or the CRRSA Act. The Governor's Finance office is diligently working to balance the adherence of complex federal compliance and reporting requirements while also making access to these funds simple and rapid. SPCSA staff anticipate, in the coming weeks, the ability to work with the Governor's Finance on specific program details and compliance needs. Due to the intricacies and level of effort involved in this process, SPCSA staff anticipate it is likely to be a few months before receiving approval for a budget modification to begin administering these funds.

There was further conversation around the funds and how they can be used by schools.

**Agenda Item 11 – Governance Standards for Sponsored Charter Schools. [00:00:00]**

Executive Director Feiden said as the Authority is aware Assembly Bill 419 (2021) requires the SPCSA to develop governance standards for the schools they sponsor. Staff conducted research in July looking at both local and national examples of governance standards and studies on school board effectiveness. In late July and early August, they held three focus groups for board members of sponsored schools, and at the August meeting the Authority reviewed and provided feedback on the initial draft. They have also taken the draft and shared it with charter school board chairs via email. They've taken into account the feedback received and today present a version of the governance standards for board consideration. She highlighted the major changes.

Member Moulton asked if they could take time during their future meetings for a couple minutes and take turns as board members to address these bullet points and model for their own boards.

***MOTION:** Vice Chair Moulton made the motion to approve the Governance Standards for Sponsored Charter Schools as presented by staff today. Member Holmes-Sutton seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.*

**Agenda Item 12 – Long-Range Calendar. [04:52:33]**

Executive Director Feiden said looking ahead they have some items coming up. She reminded the Authority they will be considering new school applications at the November meeting. They may also see some contract amendment requests and it is possible they may have the data back for count day. She also noted they have the Safe Return for In-Person Learning and they are required by federal statutes to review that plan on a regular basis. During the December meeting they expect to have the graduation rate data and renewals to come as well.

**Agenda Item 13 – Public Comment #2 [05:01:25]**

There was no written public comment submitted, on the line, or in the board room.

**Agenda Item 14 – Adjournment [05:01:56]**

The meeting was adjourned at 1:59pm.