



## NEVADA STATE PUBLIC CHARTER SCHOOL AUTHORITY

Monday, October 7, 2022  
9:00AM

The State Public Charter School Authority board meeting was conducted in-person and virtually.

### MINUTES OF THE MEETING

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

Vice Chair Sheila Moulton  
Member Tonia Holmes-Sutton  
Member Tamika Shauntee Rosales  
Member Jackson Olsen

#### **BOARD MEMBERS ABSENT:**

Member Lee Farris  
Member Maureen Schafer

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

Chair Melissa Mackedon

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

Mark Modrcin, Director of Authorizing  
Jennifer King, Administrative Assistant IV

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

Rebecca Feiden, Executive Director  
Ryan Herrick, General Counsel  
Selcuk Ozdemir, Education Programs Supervisor  
Brandon Gayton, Education Programs Professional

#### **AUDIENCE IN ATTENDANCE IN-PERSON:**

Michael O'Dowd  
Steve Albrecht  
Jessica LaNeave  
Paul Ballou  
Mariella Bueno  
Travis Keys  
Braxton Pacette  
Denise Pacette  
Heather Stinnett  
Kristine Kais  
Tricia Wilbourne

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

Sandra Kinne  
Ercan Aydogdu  
Tiffany Bailey  
Anthony Vu  
Jami Curtis  
Frank Perez  
Carryn Bellomo Warren  
Emil

**Agenda Item 1 – Call to Order and Roll Call, and Pledge of Allegiance [00:00:54]**

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

**Agenda Item 2 – Public Comment #1 [00:02:15]**

Ryan Herrick said they received written public comment and that it has been posted to the website with the supporting materials and a couple more will be posted as soon as they sync with the state server. All the public comments are related to agenda item 7(a).

Public comment on the phone:

1. Sandra Kinne, related to agenda item 7(b).

**Agenda Item 3 – Approval of August 29, 2022 SPCSA Board Meeting Action Minutes [00:06:44]**

*MOTION: Vice Chair Moulton made the motion to approve the August 29, 2022 SPCSA board meeting action minutes. Member Holmes-Sutton seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.*

**Agenda Item 4 – SPCSA Charter School Governing Body Governance Standards [00:07:18]**

Chair Mackedon spoke about the SPCSA Charter School Governing Body Governance Standards today and she chose to focus on standard number one: Focus on Student Growth, Achievement, and Social and Emotional Wellbeing, bullet point number three: Set ambitious and attainable goals for student academic growth and achievement that aim to ensure the success of all students. She wanted to focus on that because they are going to be looking at student data today and this is the time when all public schools in Nevada are working on their school improvement plans and are writing those goals.

**Agenda Item 5 – Executive Director’s Report [00:08:24]**

**a. Initiatives Related to Serving All Students Equitably**

Rebecca Feiden, Executive Director began with an update regarding the recruitment and enrollment plans that the Authority required fourteen schools to develop. The plans were due on September 30 and all fourteen plans were submitted. SPCSA staff has begun the review of these plans and they have seen a range of strategies included in those plans. She talked about what some of the strategies are focused on, which included raising awareness, providing a supportive environment for all learners, diversity, equity, and inclusion training for staff, tutoring and other supports for students, retaining students that are enrolled in their schools and ensuring that is inclusive of all types of students, and being more intentional about learning from students and families that are at their schools as well as those potentially leaving their schools. They look forward to sharing more details on the plans during their November meeting.

**b. Legislative Session: Interim Committees and Planning [00:11:02]**

Executive Director Feiden said the Interim Education Committee has wrapped up the interim session. At this point in the year, there are Bill Draft Requests (BDRs) and those are being posted in the state’s legislative system and they will continue to track those as they prepare for the legislative session that will begin in early February.

**c. 2023 SPCSA Board Meeting Dates [00:12:02]**

Executive Director Feiden said she wanted to share that after consulting with staff and board member availability, they have moved the October 2023 meeting back by one week (to October 13). The calendar for next year’s meetings is posted to the SPCSA’s website.

Vice Chair Moulton asked, as the recruitment and enrollment plans come in, will they be able to share them, one with another, in case there are some innovative ideas that other schools might think are a good fit? Executive Director Feiden said yes, part of this process is figuring out how they can learn from what their schools are doing and how schools can learn from each other. In addition, they have asked the schools to be prepared to collect

some data on the effectiveness of those strategies so staff can collect that data and determine which strategies seem to be most effective and share that information with the Authority and schools.

Member Olsen asked what the level of scrutiny is that they are applying to the recruitment and enrollment plans in reviewing effectiveness? Executive Director Feiden said this is the first year that the Authority has leveraged the regulatory authority to require these plans, as a result they took a very supportive approach. Staff plans to review all of the plans and provide feedback, there isn't really a mechanism for approval. Given this was the first time leveraging the data they get next year, this will give them more teeth around the types of strategies to recommend and encourage schools to leverage once they have a better sense of which strategies appear to be more effective.

**Agenda Item 6 – Academic Performance Review for the 2021-22 School Year. [00:17:08]**

**a. Overview of Nevada School Performance Framework and results for the 2021-22 School Year**

Selcuk Ozdemir, Education Programs Supervisor, began with the overview of the presentation which can be found in the supporting materials. Next he provided the refresher of the Nevada School Performance Framework (NSPF). He discussed the analysis of all SPCSA schools, SPCSA schools by level, and schools across Nevada that match the 3-star threshold. He also discussed how SPCSA schools compare to the state. The last slide provided the SPCSA NSPF adjusted index score changes from school year 18-19 versus 21-22.

Brandon Gayton, Education Program Professional, examined the Math/ELA proficiency rates for SPCSA schools by level, by student group and compared to the state for school year 21-22. Next he examined the Math/ELA growth for SPCSA schools by level and the additional growth measure Adequate Growth Percentiles (AGP). He provided the various disclaimers to apply to the 21-22 school year data and the key take aways.

Member Shauntee Rosales asked staff about slide fifteen regarding the state breakdown by race and ethnicity, if this information could be broken down by county? Dr. Gayton said they can get that information to the board.

Vice Chair Moulton asked about the percentage of their students that were tested last year, as compared to other districts, particularly Clark and Washoe for the last year they received data. Chair Mackedon and Mr. Herrick provided clarification regarding the growth data numbers. Vice Chair Moulton asked about the growth targets on slide twenty-two and how they are made. Dr. Gayton said the targets are set by the Nevada Department of Education annually for each student across the state based on their prior score history. Vice Chair Moulton asked if this data is shared with families? Dr. Gayton said yes, the data is provided to schools and schools can download the data and use them as they wish and the SPCSA provides guidance on how that data can be used.

Member Olsen said he is concerned about the data on slide ten, as pointed out by Dr. Ozdemir, there were schools that decreased in their index score from last year to this year but not enough to significantly impact the star ratings, he's curious if staff have a theory as to where this slip came from and how we are monitoring that moving forward. Executive Director Feiden said she wanted to point out that this is compared to the 18-19 school year which was the last regular school year, and she thinks that is important to keep in mind. This is the first year NDE has issued index scores. While they are appropriately concerned, given the circumstances of the last few years, this data is not necessarily surprising and not necessarily different from other schools statewide.

Member Holmes-Sutton said she wanted to acknowledge the children that are not meeting their goals and not necessarily meeting proficiency. She asked about the goals the SPCSA has with regard to growth. Executive Director Feiden said in their strategic plan they have a goal related to growth, specifically a proficiency goal that is related to ensuring that all of their subgroups are outperforming the state's overall goal and they also have a goal around the median growth percentile (MGP) and that goal is focused on the percent of schools for which they are seeing the MGP exceed the respective MGP for the state. They will be reporting on those pieces once they get to the state of the SPCSA presentation in January. She is hoping they can lean into a sense of urgency for the children who are not proficient and who are challenged to meet the goals and make adequate growth to be able to graduate college and career ready.

**b. Overview of the SPCSA’s Academic Performance Framework [00:56:29]**

Dr. Ozdemir began the presentation with the refresher of the SPCSA Academic Performance Framework. Dr. Gayton detailed the high-level overview of the Academic Framework. He examined the ratings in the SPCSA Academic Performance Framework before pointing to the resources. The next steps include SPCSA staff sharing the school-level results for both the 2021-22 school year SPCSA Academic Performance Framework and the NSPF at the November board meeting and with the results of the SPCSA Academic Performance Framework and the NSPF, staff may recommend board action on November 18, 2022 to lift notices due to prior academic performance concerns at schools and to Require certain schools to develop remediation plans due to academic performance concerns.

A 10-minute convenience break was taken.

**Agenda Item 7 – Charter Contract Amendment Applications [01:16:29]**

**a. Coral Academy of Science Las Vegas – Eastgate Campus. Change in grade levels offered for the 2023 – 2024 school year.**

Director Modrcin said Coral Academy of Sciences Las Vegas has submitted a good cause exemption request and an amendment request to adjust the grade configurations at the Eastgate campus, eliminating grades 6 and 7 and to have a grade configuration of K-5 in the 2023-24 school year. If approved, the changes would not affect the enrollment caps at any Coral campus nor would it force any students out of the network due to a lack of current seats, all students would be accommodated and would be offered the option to attend the Windmill or Cadence campuses starting the 23-24 school year. He provided some background on the school. SPCSA staff has met with school staff and determined that implementing an in-network lottery for Eastgate students would be the most equitable and transparent way to determine the matriculation of students to either the Windmill or Cadence campuses during the upcoming school year and beyond. Staff for the Coral team has agreed with this assessment and is planning to adopt an updated lottery policy if approved today to reflect the new grade configuration change and its matriculation order noting that an internal lottery may be required depending on student and family demand. Overall, staff is supportive of the request for the amendment and recommends that the authority approve today’s request with the condition that the school adopt that updated lottery policy to reflect the change in its matriculation order between campuses and noting that internal network lottery may be required. He noted the public comment that is posted with the supporting materials that are related to this agenda item.

Ercan Aydogdu, Executive Director, Coral Academy of Science Las Vegas, said he is joined by their Eastgate Principal, Tiffany Bailey, Anthony Vu and Dr. Carryn Warren, Board Member. He talked about the new Cadence campus. At the Eastgate campus which is K-7, there is a very small number of middle school students, and that also limits them to offer, which is also their mission, more advanced and to all levels of courses to each grade level and with the small number of students in the grade levels it is a challenge to offer different levels of curriculum. When they eliminate the 6 and 7 grades and have K-5, they will have more sections in each grade level and their teachers and administration can offer advanced level courses. Ms. Bailey provided further comment.

Member Olsen clarified that if a parent has a student in the Coral system, they are not going to be excluded from the system, there will be changes or inconveniences.

**Motion:** *Member Shauntee Rosales made the motion to Grant the Good Cause Exemption Request and approve the amendment request of CASLV to change the grade configuration of the Eastgate campus to K – 5 starting in the 2023 – 24 school year on the condition that the school adopt an updated lottery policy to reflect this grade configuration change in its campus matriculation order, noting that an internal network lottery may be required depending on student and family preferences. Vice Chair Moulton seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.*

**b. Pinecrest Academy of Nevada. Expansion to a new campus for the 2023 – 2024 school year.**

[01:29:36]

Director Modrcin said Pinecrest Academy of Nevada (Pinecrest) has submitted a good cause exemption request and an amendment request to open a seventh campus beginning in the 2023-24 school year that will ultimately serve students in K-12. The amendment application states that Pinecrest is seeking to open a new campus in the central part of Las Vegas, specifically the communities surrounding the Springs Preserve and Meadows Mall. The amendment proposes that the school will locate at 4000 Meadows Lane Las Vegas, NV 89107, and goes on to note that the school anticipates primarily serving students in the 89102, 89106, 89107, 89108, and 89146 zip codes. He provided some of the strengths and weaknesses of the application. SPCSA staff has reviewed the application and recommends that the Authority grant the Good Cause Exemption and conditionally approve the amendment request.

Member Holmes-Sutton asked school leadership if they were able to provide some preliminary duration of what a plan would look like to reach those additional 500 students who reside in the zone of attendance of a 1- or 2-star school.

Michael O'Dowd introduced those present on behalf of the school; Mariella Bueno, Paul Ballou, serving from Academica, Steve Albrecht, Assistant Principal at Pinecrest Inspirada, who will be coming over to open the new campus as well, Travis Keys, Board Chair, and Jessica LaNeave, the high school mentor. To Member Holmes-Sutton's question, in the past they have conducted numerous events, and then they started zeroing in on specific apartment complexes and neighborhoods. Some preliminary thoughts they've had that are not board approved yet, they'd like to take advantages of the holidays that are coming up and social media blasts and try to get word out specifically to these zip codes. He believes once they get approval, they will see things move forward quickly as it relates to families of interest. There was further discussion between Member Holmes-Sutton, Mr. O'Dowd, Mr. Albrecht, Mariella Bueno regarding the school's preliminary outreach efforts. Member Shauntee Rosales and Mr. O'Dowd discussed the proposed location. Member Olsen asked if transportation plans have been discussed for the campus, Mr. O'Dowd said they do not have plans to provide transportation on a regular basis at this time. There was further discussion regarding the proposed weighted lottery between school representatives, SPCSA staff and board members.

**Motion:** *Member Holmes-Sutton made the motion to Grant the Good Cause Exemption Request and approve the expansion of Pinecrest Academy of Nevada as presented in the amendment submission with the following conditions:*

1. *That by December 1, 2022 the Pinecrest Academy of Nevada board:*
  - *Provide a detailed plan, approved by the PAN governing board, to reach an additional 500 students who reside in the zone of attendance of a 1- or 2-star school within the identified zip codes.*
2. *That by February 10, 2023 the school provide:*
  - *Evidence that it has reached the additional 500 students (per condition #1 above) who reside in the zone of attendance of a 1- or 2-star school within the identified zip codes;*
3. *That the PAN Board provide SPCSA staff with evidence that the network has entered into a lease for the address described in the amendment (4000 Meadows Lane) on or before February 1, 2022*
4. *That the school complete the SPCSA pre-opening process for new schools and campuses, which includes meeting requirements under NRS 388A.360.*

*Member Shauntee Rosales seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.*

**c. Pinecrest Academy of Northern Nevada. Change in lottery preferences and consideration of articulation agreement with the Reno-Sparks Indian Colony Head Start [02:04:25]**

Director Modrcin said Pinecrest Academy of Northern Nevada (PANN) has submitted a good cause exemption request and an amendment request to approve the school to enter into an Articulation Agreement with the Reno-

Sparks Indian Colony (RSIC) Head Start program and to change its lottery preferences to incorporate the agreement with the RSIC. The requested lottery change proposes priority enrollment for children who are enrolled in, or have ever been enrolled in, the RSIC Head Start program. Also, according to the application, the updated lottery policy states that after students qualifying for priority enrollment slots are determined, all remaining applicants will have an equal chance of being admitted through a random lottery selection unless the student qualifies under the PANN Weighted Lottery Policy. The application goes on to state that the potential change will be communicated with PANN families beginning in Winter 2022 upon approval from the SPCSA. SPCSA staff has reviewed the application and recommends that the Authority grant the Good Cause Exemption and approve the amendment request. There was brief conversation between the board and Jami Austin, Principal at PANN.

**Motion:** *Member Holmes-Sutton made the motion to Grant the Good Cause Exemption request and approve Pinecrest Academy of Northern Nevada to adopt modified enrollment preferences and to enter into an articulation agreement with the Reno-Sparks Indian Colony Head Start Program permitted under NRS 388A.456(1)(d). Member Olsen seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.*

**Agenda Item 8 – Charter School Contract.** [03:47:04]

Mr. Herrick said they are seeking approval of the charter school contract today. He talked about the standard forms, new charter school contract, amended charter school contract and renewed charter school contract. All are based off the one in the supporting materials today. He walked through the charter contract and the proposed changes.

**Motion:** *Vice Chair Moulton made the motion to accept the charter school contract as presented by staff. Member Homes-Sutton seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.*

**Agenda Item 9 – Revisions to New Charter School Application and Rubric** [02:32:02]

Executive Director Feiden said today they are going to discuss the possible revisions to the SPCSA new charter school application and rubric. She began the presentation (which can be found in the supporting materials) by providing the background on the statutory authority for the application review and approval as well as the requirements for those processes. Moving forward, she detailed the procedures and criteria for soliciting and evaluating charter school applications. She talked about how they currently have their charter applications structured. SPCSA staff has already started engaging in the revision process and in doing so has identified some priorities she spoke to before turning it over to the Authority for input.

Chair Mackedon reiterated that what NACSA says is best practice and looking at other authorizers that not only have a high performing portfolio but a high performing portfolio with a diverse study body.

Vice Chair Moulton said in thinking about what she has heard recently from charter school parents, one of them has been the responsiveness by charter board members and why the board of the charter school has not got back to them or listened to them. Looking in education recently, one thing most concerning to her is the mental health of all involved and if there is there some way to incorporate mental health and mental strength into some of the things they do. Another thought she had, it is very clear in the charter contract that they are independent schools and the decisions and things they do are their responsibility.

Member Olsen said he wanted to better understand how much of their application process, their application itself, could be bias towards a certain archetype or paradigm they have of the charter application process. As a board they don't necessarily reflect the full community in terms of their race and demographics and as a staff, as a leadership team, that is also not reflective. He's wondering for applicants who come from a different background, for applicants that have a stronger community connection to the Latinx community in Las Vegas, or the African American community, and he is not saying they are bias but have they done an equity check and equity pause within their application process to see if there are gaps or things that they are not doing that are unintentionally

causing harm to be sure they are being as equitable as possible. Executive Director Feiden said that is one of the reasons they are seeking external feedback on this, in an effort to remove their own perspectives. She thinks they definitely could do some outreach with authorizers in other states to become aware of their own biases.

Vice Chair Moulton asked if they have a survey the applicants fill out for feedback as they work through that application process from the applicants. Executive Director Feiden said they don't have a formal survey but can certainly look at doing that.

Member Holmes-Sutton said she would appreciate a prioritization regarding the diversity of leadership and that there would be a prioritization of a reflection of the student demographics within the community in which the charter seeks to be established. Executive Director Feiden confirmed that the diversity of leadership meant the school board as well.

Chair Mackedon asked about the process over the last few years or cycles, and if there are certain areas of the rubric that they think are the most difficult for people to understand? Executive Director Feiden and Director Modrcin spoke to some examples of those areas and where revisions have been made.

Member Holmes-Sutton made a comment about the engagement of families and the community, in addition to listing off the partners in the community, the consideration of further articulating the importance of engagement for applicants versus any specific activity regarding informing the vision or development of the charter school. Director Modrcin said they are aware and are looking forward to putting forth language in their rubric and application template that illuminates some of the issues that the lack of clarity can cause.

Member Olsen said in the applications he reviewed this year, he does not remember reading anything about a school's plan to develop those teachers that they are supposed to be hiring. A lot of these schools are probably hiring new or untested teachers and how they should think about a strategic development plan that they adopt or develop on their own. Director Modrcin said they were discussing this yesterday and there is definitely room for improvement on this front.

Member Shauntee Rosales commented if there is a possibility to include where they are being intentional with the diversifying of the staff and being more intentional with that recruitment. Executive Director Feiden said she thinks that these pieces will go into the part of how they will revise the rubric to be abundantly clear about what they are hoping to see in some of these responses.

#### **Agenda Item 10 – 2023 Academic and Demographic Needs Assessment [02:58:37]**

Executive Director Feiden said as the Authority knows, their needs assessment is inextricably linked to their application and so in addition to the discussion on the application rubric, they want to discuss the needs assessment as they plan to bring those forward to the board together, in order to be able to move this work forward. She began the presentation, which can be found in the supporting materials, with the background and context of the needs assessment. She talked about the relationship the needs assessment has with the current charter school application. Specifically, they currently ask about the needs assessment in the section titled targeted plan. That said, the yellow bullet points reflect areas where there is a natural nexus to the needs assessment. Before she turned it over for discussion. She discussed the current needs assessment and the details of what they did last year with regard to the feedback received from their community working group and the Authority.

There was further discussion between Chair Mackedon and Executive Director Feiden regarding the transportation and geographies pieces.

There was further discussion between Member Holmes-Sutton and Executive Director Feiden regarding the plans necessary if an applicant is going to propose to operate in a community where they are going to serve students from 1- and 2- stars schools, versus if they were going to be in a community where majority of students were

coming from 3- and 4- star schools. Executive Director Feiden said she thinks there is room to further articulate that.

Member Olsen said he wanted to go back to transportation, he wondered if part of the problem is conceived that the application process with transportation is so optional. He wonders if there is a differentiated approach that they take for schools that are already approved and operating versus new school applications because if you tell a school in their budget to submit for an application for a school that doesn't exist yet that they need to account for transportation, applicants will find a way.

Vice Chair Moulton asked for clarification around whether charter schools receive funds for transportation. Executive Director Feiden said at this time charter schools are excluded from the funding for transportation in the Pupil Centered Funding Plan. The important thing she would note is the funding commission, importantly recommendation in their recommendations that transportation to charter schools be added to the Pupil Centered Funding Plan. The earliest this would happen is 2024 school year. Effectively, that would mean charter schools would receive funding that would cover the cost of transportation based on the program of transportation offered. There are a lot of specifics but ultimately if that recommendation were to be adopted, she would see a much greater opportunity to push their schools.

There was further brief conversation regarding the needs assessment.

**Agenda Item 11 – Long-Range Calendar [03:51:37]**

The Authority had no requests to add items to the long-range calendar.

**Agenda Item 12 – Public Comment #2 [03:53:13]**

1. Braxton Pacette, regarding Nevada Connections Academy.
2. Denise Pacette, regarding Nevada Connections Academy.
3. Heather Stinnett, regarding Discovery Charter School.
4. Kristine Kais, Discovery Charter School.
5. Tricia Wilbourne, Discovery Charter School.
6. Emil, Discovery Charter School

Mr. Herrick said they received several written public comments as it relates to Discovery Charter School during the meeting and those will be posted on their website.

**Agenda Item 13 – Adjournment [04:12:36]**

The meeting was adjourned at 1:10PM.