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ACTION MEMORANDUM

TO: SPCSA Authority Board
FROM: Mark Modrcin, Director of Authorizing, SPCSA
Danny Peltier, Management Analyst III, SPCSA
SUBJECT: **Pinecrest Academy of Nevada – Charter Amendment Request to Enter into an Articulation Agreement with Somerset Academy and Change the Network’s Lottery Preferences**
DATE: November 18, 2022

Summary of Request and Recommendation

Pinecrest Academy of Nevada (PAN) has submitted an amendment application requesting that the State Public Charter School Authority (SPCSA) grant a Good Cause Exemption, approval of an articulation agreement with Somerset Academy of Las Vegas (Somerset) as permissible under NRS 388A.456, and approval of a modified lottery policy creating enrollment preferences for 8th grade students enrolled at the Somerset Stephanie middle school campus to continue their studies at Pinecrest’s Cadence high school campus.

SPCSA staff has reviewed the application and recommends that the Authority grant the Good Cause Exemption and approve the amendment request for PAN to enter into an articulation agreement with Somerset prior to the upcoming application window and enrollment for the 2023 – 24 school year. A proposed motion can be found on page 3 of this memo.

Background and Overview of the Amendment

Pinecrest Academy of Nevada (PAN) opened its first campus in 2012 serving students in grades K-7. Today, the PAN network has grown to six campuses serving approximately 7,000 students in Grades K-12 across the Las Vegas Valley according to available data. The school is currently operating under a renewed charter contract that was entered into in 2018 and will expire in 2024.

Nevada Revised Statute 388A.456(1)(d) provides that, before a charter school enrolls pupils who are eligible for enrollment pursuant to NRS 388A.453, a charter school may enroll a child who is “enrolled at a charter school with which the charter school has an articulation agreement, approved by the sponsor, providing for priority enrollment.”

According to the application, PAN requests to amend its existing charter contract with the SPCSA in order to adopt an updated enrollment lottery policy which affords priority in accordance with an articulation agreement with Somerset. Also, according to the application, the schools’ executed articulation agreement will provide eighth grade students from Somerset’s Stephanie campus with an enrollment priority to attend high school at PAN’s Cadence campus. The application states that the purpose of the articulation agreement and this amendment is to facilitate a high-quality charter high school pathway for eighth grade students currently attending Somerset’s Stephanie campus.

PAN’s requested lottery change included in the “Proposed Enrollment and Lottery FAQ” of the amendment seeks to create a the newly proposed sixth priority in addition to previously approved priorities. This proposed sixth priority would be given to 8th grade students matriculating from Somerset Academy’s Stephanie campus in accordance with the schools’ operative Articulation Agreement.

According to the amendment application, the potential change will be tentatively communicated with Pinecrest families upon final approval by the SPCSA. Although the schools seek the SPCSA’s approval to enter into this articulation agreement, there are no planned changes to governance, management, or fiscal structures currently in place for either PAN or Somerset.

Legal Authority and Requirements Related to Amendment Requests

Existing charter schools that are sponsored by the SPCSA may submit a charter school contract amendment application to the SPCSA – which is reviewed by SPCSA staff and presented for SPCSA Board action – in order to, among other things, increase enrollment, add grade levels above and beyond what the charter school is approved to serve, or add a new campus. Only those existing charter schools that are meeting expectations in regard to academics (under both the Department of Education’s Nevada School Performance Framework -- the “Star Ratings” -- and the SPCSA’s Academic Performance Framework), are compliant in regard to the SPCSA’s Organizational Framework, and are fiscally sound may be approved for expansion. Furthermore, the academic, organizational, and financial performance of other charter schools that contract with the same Charter Management Organization or Educational Management Organization is taken into account when reviewing an expansion application¹.

Applicant Eligibility

For this specific type of Amendment request, the sponsor of the charter school shall review the written request to determine if the written request: (a) Complies with NRS 388A.010 to

¹ There are limited exceptions to these eligibility requirements for those charter schools that have been approved by the State Board of Education and the SPCSA Board to be rated under Nevada’s Alternative Performance Framework.

388A.640, inclusive, and the regulations applicable to charter schools; and (b) Is complete in accordance with regulations of the Department. This review also includes an assessment of the charter school’s compliance with regards to such applicable law, regulations and SPCSA requirements including those described in the Academic Performance Framework, Organizational Performance Framework, and the Financial Performance Framework.

When reviewing an amendment application, SPCSA staff reviews the academic, financial and organizational performance of the applicant charter school. In the case of PAN, SPCSA staff finds the school to be meeting academic, financial and organizational performance expectations. As previously mentioned, the elementary, middle school, and high school programs across the PAN network are operating at 4 and 5-star levels under the NSPF ratings for the 2018-19 school year. Specific campus academic ratings are included on page 5 and 6 of this memo.

Additionally, the school earned 96 points (out of 100) points under the SPCSA Organizational Performance Framework for the 2020 – 21 school year as approved by the Authority on January 28, 2022. As such, SPCSA staff finds the school to be ‘Meeting Standards.’ PAN has also been found to ‘Meeting Standards’ on the most recent 2021 SPCSA Financial Performance Framework.

Given the historic academic, organizational, and financial performance under SPCSA Performance Frameworks, SPCSA staff finds Pinecrest Academy of Nevada to be eligible for this amendment request.

Analysis and Staff Recommendation

SPCSA staff finds this articulation agreement to be mutually beneficial to the relationship between PAN and Somerset. Due to the location of the Somerset Stephanie Campus, in relation to other campuses in the Somerset network, having an agreement between the Stephanie Campus and the PAN Cadence Campus will allow families an option for a preferred seat in a sister system that is closer to the originating campus.

SPCSA staff has reviewed the final, signed, articulation agreement approved by both PAN and Somerset and finds it to be compliant with provisions of NRS 388A.456(1)(d). As such, SPCSA staff recommends the SPCSA board approve the request of Pinecrest Academy of Nevada to enter into an articulation agreement with the Somerset Academy of Las Vegas, and adopt the school’s modified lottery policy which affords 8th grade students enrolled at the Somerset Stephanie Campus priority enrollment at the PAN Cadence campus prior to the upcoming application window and enrollment for the 2023 – 2024 school year.

Proposed Motion: Grant the Good Cause Exemption request and approve Pinecrest Academy of Nevada to adopt modified enrollment preferences and to enter into an articulation agreement with the Somerset Academy of Las Vegas permitted under NRS 388A.456(1)(d).

The current, approved, enrollment caps for each Pinecrest campus are as follows:

School Year	2022-23	2023-24
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Cadence		
Grade Levels	K-12	K-12
Enrollment	2,040	2,040
Horizon		
Grade Levels	K-5	K-5
Enrollment	910	910
Inspirada		
Grade Levels	K-8	K-8
Enrollment	1,090	1,090
Sloan Canyon		
Grade Levels	K-12	K-12
Enrollment	1,900	2,025
St. Rose		
Grade Levels	K-8	K-8
Enrollment	1,010	1,010
Virtual Academy		
Grade Levels	6-10	6-11
Enrollment	80	170
Springs		
Grade Levels	N/A	K-6
Enrollment	N/A	645
Total	7,030	7,890
Enrollment		

School Demographic Change since 2017 – Pinecrest Academy

Pinecrest Cadence

Year	Enrollment	A	B	C	H	I	M	P	IEP	ELL	FRL
17-18	1261	5.2%	6.5%	53.0%	25.3%	0.2%	8.5%	0.9%	11.4%	*	18.0%
18-19	1628	5.8%	7.2%	49.2%	26.9%	0.3%	8.7%	1.5%	11.6%	*	30.8%
19-20	1814	5.4%	7.2%	48.3%	27.9%	0.4%	8.9%	1.5%	12.5%	*	30.8%
20-21	1941	5.4%	7.7%	45.7%	28.9%	0.5%	9.5%	2.0%	12.1%	*	28.8%
21-22	2078	5.5%	6.0%	44.5%	30.6%	0.4%	10.6%	2.1%	13.7%	*	32.3%

Pinecrest Horizon

Year	Enrollment	A	B	C	H	I	M	P	IEP	ELL	FRL
17-18	866	3.8%	8.1%	55.1%	25.2%	0.3%	6.0%	1.1%	11.2%	*	17.6%
18-19	703	4.5%	5.1%	51.6%	29.8%	0.2%	7.8%	0.7%	10.2%	*	27.7%
19-20	771	3.6%	7.2%	47.4%	31.6%	0.3%	8.6%	0.9%	12.0%	*	31.1%
20-21	816	3.9%	7.1%	45.7%	33.3%	0.3%	8.7%	0.8%	9.9%	*	32.3%
21-22	871	3.5%	6.7%	45.5%	33.2%	0.2%	9.4%	1.1%	11.1%	*	32.3%

Pinecrest Inspirada

Year	Enrollment	A	B	C	H	I	M	P	IEP	ELL	FRL
17-18	1017	10.4%	3.9%	52.0%	18.5%	0.6%	12.8%	1.4%	9.6%	*	*
18-19	1099	10.6%	4.5%	50.3%	19.1%	0.3%	13.2%	1.6%	8.4%	*	11.0%
19-20	1193	12.0%	4.5%	49.8%	18.4%	0.4%	12.9%	1.7%	9.0%	*	9.8%
20-21	1224	12.7%	4.2%	47.7%	19.9%	0.3%	13.2%	1.7%	8.3%	*	12.5%
21-22	1186	13.4%	3.7%	45.9%	21.0%	0.3%	13.3%	2.0%	9.1%	*	13.3%

Pinecrest St. Rose

Year	Enrollment	A	B	C	H	I	M	P	IEP	ELL	FRL
17-18	982	12.0%	5.2%	44.7%	23.0%	0.4%	10.4%	4.0%	7.3%	*	8.2%

18-19	992	13.2%	5.0%	42.1%	23.8%	0.2%	11.6%	3.8%	8.5%	*	19.5%
19-20	980	15.8%	6.6%	34.1%	27.5%	0.2%	12.6%	2.9%	8.5%	*	26.0%
20-21	1007	15.0%	7.7%	33.5%	28.0%	0.1%	11.8%	3.5%	8.1%	*	26.0%
21-22	1008	13.9%	8.1%	34.8%	27.1%	0.1%	12.7%	2.8%	7.3%	*	28.0%

Pinecrest Sloan Canyon

Year	Enrollment	A	B	C	H	I	M	P	IEP	ELL	FRL
17-18	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
18-19	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
19-20	1236	14.0%	4.9%	38.4%	25.8%	0.1%	14.4%	2.1%	8.8%	*	17.0%
20-21	1473	15.1%	4.4%	37.2%	25.9%	0.3%	14.7%	2.1%	9.0%	*	17.5%
21-22	1706	15.8%	5.0%	36.2%	25.3%	0.2%	14.8%	2.2%	10.0%	*	17.3%

Pinecrest Virtual – Data Not Available as it opened for the 2022-2023 School Year

A - Asian

B - Black

C - Caucasian

H - Hispanic

I - American Indian/Alaskan Native

M - Two or more races

P - Pacific Islander

IEP - Individualized Education Plan -A student with a disability/special education student

ELL - English Language Learner

FRL - A student who qualifies for Free or Reduced-Price Lunch

* - Suppressed data due to n-count

Pinecrest Academy Charter School Financial Performance

Year	Rating
2019 – 2020	Meets the Standard
2020 – 2021	Meets the Standard

Pinecrest Academy Charter School Organizational Performance

Year	Rating
2019 – 2020	Meets the Standard
2020 – 2021	Meets the Standard

Pinecrest Academy Academic Performance

Year	Rating		
2021 ²	Cadence – ES: 4-star Horizon – ES: 4-star Inspirada – ES: 5-star St. Rose – ES: 4-star Sloan Canyon – ES: Not Rated	Cadence – MS: 5-star Inspirada – MS: 5-star St. Rose – MS: 5-star Sloan Canyon – MS: Not Rated	Cadence – HS: Not Rated
2020 ³	Cadence – ES: 4-star Horizon – ES: 4-star Inspirada – ES: 5-star St. Rose – ES: 4-star Sloan Canyon – ES: Not Rated	Cadence – MS: 5-star Inspirada – MS: 5-star St. Rose – MS: 5-star Sloan Canyon – MS: Not Rated	Cadence – HS: Not Rated
2019	Cadence – ES: 4-star Horizon – ES: 4-star Inspirada – ES: 5-star St. Rose – ES: 4-star Sloan Canyon – ES: Not Rated	Cadence – MS: 5-star Inspirada – MS: 5-star St. Rose – MS: 5-star Sloan Canyon – MS: Not Rated	Cadence – HS: Not Rated
2018	Cadence – ES: 5-star Horizon – ES: 5-star Inspirada – ES: 5-star St. Rose – ES: 5-star Sloan Canyon – ES: Not Rated	Cadence – MS: 5-star Inspirada – MS: 5-star St. Rose – MS: 5-star Sloan Canyon – MS: Not Rated	Cadence – HS: Not Rated

² Due to COVID-19, the Nevada Department of Education (NDE) applied for and was granted a 2020 – 21 school year waiver from the US Department of Education for certain requirements established by the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA). Nevada statewide assessments were administered in the 2020 – 21 school year, but the NDE did not calculate Nevada School Performance Framework (NSPF) school ratings for the 2020 – 21 school year.

³ Due to COVID-19, the Nevada Department of Education (NDE) applied for and was granted a 2019 – 20 school year waiver from the US Department of Education for certain assessment, accountability, school identification, and reporting requirements established by the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA). Accordingly, for the 2019 – 20 school year, Nevada statewide assessments were not administered and the NDE did not calculate Nevada School Performance Framework (NSPF) school ratings.