



NEVADA STATE PUBLIC CHARTER SCHOOL AUTHORITY

Friday, May 19, 2023
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:

Member Kurt Thigpen
Member Jackson Olsen
Member Tamika Shauntee Rosales
Member Lee Farris
Vice Chair Sheila Moulton
Chair Melissa Mackedon

BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT VIRTUALLY:

Member Cindi Rivera
Member Tonia Holmes-Sutton

BOARD MEMBERS ABSENT:

Member Maureen Schafer

AUTHORITY STAFF PRESENT IN-PERSON:

Rebecca Feiden, Executive Director
Ryan Herrick, General Counsel
Marinna Cutler, Director of School Support
Michael Dang, Management Analyst IV
Jennifer King, Administrative Assistant IV

AUTHORITY STAFF PRESENT VIRTUALLY:

Mark Modrcin, Director of Authorizing
Danny Peltier, Management Analyst III
Michael Gawthrop-Hutchins, Management Analyst III

AUDIENCE IN ATTENDANCE IN-PERSON:

Brett Willis
Kayla Davis
Allison Fowler
Jose Silva
Candi Wadsworth
Michael O'Dowd
Mia Nelson
Jennifer Cosby
Tom Nichols
Jose Herrera
Julie Carver
Tambre Tondryk
John Etzell
Jonathan Johnson

AUDIENCE IN ATTENDANCE VIRTUALLY:

Ashley Perkins
Mike Taack
Shannon Manning
J Mallory
Cindi McLeod
Lori Lynch
Serdar Y.
Dr. Chauncey Nash
Andrea Damore
David Blodgett
Nate Mildren
Sherlene Simpson
Tyrone Henderson
Katie Krackthardt
Kathy Rudd
Kristin Dietz
Jennifer Cosby
Ms. Brean

Agenda Item 1 – Call to Order and Roll Call, and Pledge of Allegiance [00:00:46]

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

Agenda Item 2 – Public Comment #1 [00:01:58]

There was no public comment.

Agenda Item 3 – Approval of April 14, 2023 SPCSA Board Meeting Action Minutes. The Authority will review and possibly approve the action minutes from the April 14, 2023 Authority Board meeting. [00:02:28]

Motion: Vice Chair Moulton made the motion to approve the April 14, 2023 SPCSA Board Meeting Action Minutes. Member Thigpen seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

Agenda Item 4 – SPCSA Charter School Governing Body Governance Standards [00:05:43]

The board did not hear this item today.

Agenda Item 5 – SPCSA Executive Director’s Report. [00:07:05]

b. New Charter School Applications {00:03:13}

Rebecca Feiden, Executive Director, reported that the SPCSA has received 14 letters of intent this application cycle and 8 applications for new charter schools to open in the 2024 – 25 school year. Of the 8 applications, 6 of them intends to locate in Clark County, 1 in intends to locate in Elko County and 1 intends to locate in Nye County. They have assigned review teams and will be conducting capacity interviews in July. Following the interviews, review teams will make a recommendation to her, and she will finalize recommendations and bring them to the Authority at the August meeting.

c. Federal Grants Administered by the SPCSA [00:04:25]

Executive Director Feiden provided the updates related to the status of the emergency grant funding in response to COVID-19 and the status of annual federal grants managed by the SPCSA.

a. Legislative Update [00:11:58]

Mr. Herrick provided the legislative update. He referred to the memo within the supporting materials which includes the bills they are tracking. They plan to provide a bill summary of legislation which will be more detailed.

d. Purple Star Schools: Legacy Traditional School’s Cadence Campus, Somerset Academy’s Aliante Campus, and Coral Academy of Science Las Vegas Nellis and Centennial Hill Campuses [00:20:17]

Mr. Herrick provide the context around the Purple Star Schools. Annually, the Nevada Department of Education designates district schools and charter schools are purple star schools and these are schools that show a commitment to military students and families. Recently, the following schools were nominated and are here today: Legacy Traditional School’s Cadence Campus, Somerset Academy’s Aliante Campus, and Coral Academy of Science Las Vegas Nellis and Centennial Hill Campuses. Cindi McLeod, Principal, and Ms. Brean, Assistant Principal, Legacy Traditional Schools – Cadence; Shannon Manning, Principal, and Jaelyn Johnson, Assistant Principal, Somerset Academy – Aliante; Mia Nelson, Principal, and Jennifer Cosby, Assistant Principal, Coral Academy of Science Las Vegas – Nellis; Kayla Davis, Assistant Principal, and Allison Fowler, Literacy Specialist, and Principal Serdar, Coral Academy of Science Las Vegas – Centennial Hills, were present and provided comment around their recent nominations.

Agenda Item 6 – Girls Empowerment Middle Schools. [00:50:33]

- a. School representatives will provide the Authority with an update and information regarding any recent actions by the GEMS governing body and the potential closure of GEMS charter school at the end of the 2022-2023 school year, and SPCSA staff will provide the Authority with SPCSA’s staff’s recommendation

related to the possible acceptance of the surrender of the GEMS Charter School Contract and the potential closure of the charter school at the end of the 2022-2023 school year.

- b. School representatives will provide the Authority with information and SPCSA staff will provide the Authority with its recommendation related to the potential appointment and approval of an administrator of the charter school to act as a trustee during the process of the closure of the charter school pursuant to NRS 388A.306(1)(b).
- c. School representatives will provide the Authority with information and SPCSA staff will provide the Authority with its recommendation related to the school's proposed closure plan pursuant to NRS 388A.306(1)(c).

Director Modrcin provided the context around GEMS. As part of the Notice of Breach issued at the April 14 meeting, the Authority directed the school to submit a Viability Plan to show that it could remain in operations through the 2023 – 24 school year through increased evidence of enrollment and/or evidence of philanthropic support to offset those shortfalls. Since that time, the GEMS board voted to close the school at the end of the 2022 – 23 school year at its meeting on April 24, 2023. As a result, SPCSA staff recommends to the Authority that 3 actions be taken. First that the Authority accept the vote of the GEMS board to close the school at the end of the 2022 – 2023 school year; second, approved the appointment of Mike Taack to be the trustee throughout the closure process; and third, to approve the school's closure plan as submitted and to direct SPCSA staff to work with Mr. Taack to ensure all closure requirements are met. He briefly restated the key reasons why they are making today's recommendation. Mike Taack, School Leader at GEMS, provided remarks. There was brief conversation between Mr. Taack and the Authority.

Motion: Member Shauntee Rosales moved to accept the recent action by the GEMS board to close the school, approve the appointment of Mr. Mike Taack to be the administrator overseeing the GEMS closure process, approve the school's closure plan as submitted, and direct SPCSA staff to work with Mr. Taack to ensure all closure requirements are met. Member Holmes-Sutton seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

Agenda Item 7 – New Schools Updates. [01:02:18]

Mark Modrcin, Director of Authorizing, noted for this agenda item that SPCSA staff has prepared a summary of each of the schools' progress against the standard pre-opening items, as well as summarized their current enrollment progress, and their progress towards any unique conditions attached with their approval or new campus. The summaries can be found in the supporting materials.

b. Pincrest Academy – Springs Campus [01:03:07]

Director Modrcin provided the brief update regarding Pincrest Academy – Springs Campus before turning it over to the school for their updates. Michael O'Dowd, Principal, Pincrest Academy, provided the update on behalf of the school. There was further discussion between Mr. O'Dowd and the Authority.

c. Rooted School – Clark County [01:05:05]

Director Modrcin provided the brief update regarding Rooted School – Clark County before turning it over to the school for their updates. Jose Silva, Executive Director, Rooted Schools, provided the update on behalf of the school, alongside Jonathan Johnson and John Etzell, Board Chair, Rooted Schools. There was brief discussion between Mr. Silva and the Authority.

d. Southern Nevada Trades High School [01:19:25]

Director Modrcin provided the brief update regarding Southern Nevada Trades High School before turning it over to the school for their updates. Brett Willis, Chair, Southern Nevada Trades High School, provided the update on behalf of the school as it relates to the facilities. Candi Wadsworth, Principal, at Southern Nevada Trades High School provided the updates as it relates to the staffing and Julie Carver, Executive Director, provided the updates as it relates to the enrollment and financials. There was brief discussion between school representatives and the Authority.

a. Eagle Charter Schools of Nevada [01:37:09]

Director Modrcin provided the brief update regarding Eagle Charter Schools of Nevada before turning it over to the school for their updates. Jose Herrera, Principal, Eagle Charter Schools of Nevada, provided the update on behalf of the school. There was further discussion between school representatives and the Authority.

A 10-minute convenience break was taken.

Agenda Item 8 – Charter School Contract Amendment Applications [02:13:08]

a. Elko Institute for Academic Achievement: approval of permanent facility

Danny Peltier, Management Analyst IV, said Elko Institute for Academic Achievement has submitted an amendment application requesting that the State Public Charter School Authority (SPCSA) approve to relocate to a new, permanent facility, beginning in early 2024. SPCSA staff has reviewed the application and recommends that the Authority grant the good cause exemption and conditionally approve the amendment request. Ashley Perkins, Executive Director, Elko Institute for Academic Achievement, was present on behalf of the school and provided comment.

Motion: Member Thigpen made the motion to grant the Good Cause Exemption request and approve Elko Institute for Academic Achievement’s request to relocate to the proposed permanent facility located at 905 West Main Street, Elko, NV 89801 when construction at the facility has been completed with the following conditions:

- That by August 1, 2023 EIAA provides SPCSA staff with a final copy of construction/renovation schedule demonstrating that school will have a TCO or COO in place 30 days before the first day of school.
- That EIAA provides SPCSA staff with Certificate of Occupancy or Temporary Certificate of Occupancy demonstrating compliance with NRS 388A.360, which requires a school facility to be inspected at least 30 days prior to occupancy; and
- That the school complete the SPCSA pre-opening process for new schools and campuses for occupation of the facility located at 905 West Main Street, Elko, NV 89801.

Member Shauntee Rosales seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

b. Beacon Academy of Nevada: enrollment expansion within approve grade levels [02:22:08]

Danny Peltier, Management Analyst IV, said Beacon Academy of Nevada has submitted an amendment application requesting that the Authority approve a request to expand enrollment in existing grade levels and facilities beginning in the 2023-24 school year. SPCSA staff has reviewed the application and recommends that the Authority approve the request. Tambre Tondryk, Executive Director, and Andrea Damore, Beacon Academy of Nevada, were present and provided comment. There was brief conversation between the Authority and school representatives.

Motion: Vice Chair Moulton made the motion to approve Beacon Academy of Nevada’s request to increase enrollment at both the East and West Campus as detailed in the recommendation memo.

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

Agenda Item 9 – Financial Performance Review and Recommendations for the 2021-22 School Year. [02:25:51]

a. 2021-22 SPCSA Financial Performance Framework Ratings

- i. Nevada Prep
- ii. Democracy Prep

b. Issue Notices of Concern

- i. Democracy Prep
- ii. Nevada Prep

Mike Dang, Manager of Organizational and Financial Performance, reported on the overview of the Financial Performance Ratings. At the Authority's March 3, 2023, Board Meeting, SPCSA staff presented analysis and recommendations for 29 schools regarding their Fiscal Year Ending June 30, 2022 (FY 22) independent financial audits. This recommendation pertains to two (2) schools, Democracy Prep at the Agassi Campus (Democracy Prep) and Nevada Preparatory Charter School (Nevada Prep). At this time, the SPCSA has not received final audits for the following seven schools: CIVICA Career & Collegiate Academy of Nevada, Doral Academy, Doral Academy of Northern Nevada, Explore Academy, Mater Academy of Northern Nevada, Pinecrest Academy of Nevada, and Pinecrest Academy of Northern Nevada. Results and recommendations regarding these outstanding audits will be presented at a future meeting. Further analysis regarding SPCSA staff's initial review and analysis of the Fiscal Year Ending June 30, 2022 independent financial audits for Democracy Prep and Nevada Prep can be found in staff's recommendation memo within the supporting materials. Chauncey Nash, Executive Director at Democracy Prep, was present and provided comment. David Blodgett, Executive Director at Nevada Prep, was present and provided comment. There was further discussion between the school leaders, the Authority, and SPCSA staff.

Motion: Vice Chair made the motion to (1) Adopt the Financial Performance Framework results presented for the schools listed in Appendix A, Democracy Prep and Nevada Prep, for fiscal year 2022 for all indicators except the Enrollment Variance measure, which was not rated; and (2) Issue a Notice of Concern under the Financial Performance Framework to both Democracy Prep and Nevada Prep and require each to develop and submit a financial improvement plan, and require each to provide quarterly updates regarding the implementation of the improvement plan. Member Farris seconded the motion.

Member Rivera: No

Member Thigpen: No

Member Olsen: Yes

Member Farris: Yes

Member Shauntee Rosales: Yes

Member Holmes-Sutton: Yes

Vice Chair Moulton: Yes

Chair Mackedon: Yes

The motion carried 6-2.

Agenda Item 10 – SPCSA Revolving Loan Applications. [03:18:12]

a. Battle Born Academy

Authority staff received a Revolving Loan Fund Application for the Battle Born Academy (BBA) after the March 15 submission deadline, with a request for good cause exemption. According to the submitted application, the school is seeking the loan to assist with improvements to their facilities and growth during their second year of operation. Upon receipt, staff reviewed the application and recommends that the Authority grant the requested Good Cause Exemption and approve this loan application.

Motion: Member Farris made the motion to grant the requested Good Cause Exemption and approve the Revolving Loan Fund Application for \$109,500 for the BBA to the repayment terms described in staff's recommendation memo. Member Olsen seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

b. Southern Nevada Trades High School [03:24:47]

Michael Gawthrop-Hutchins, Management Analyst III, reported that Authority staff received a Revolving Loan Fund Application for the Southern Nevada Trades High School (SNTHS) by the March 15 submission deadline. According to the submitted application, the school is seeking the loan to assist with initial cash flow entering the first year of operation in 2023-24. SNTHS intends to utilize the first year of operations to establish a solid financial

position and build a healthy cash reserve for operational purposes. Upon receipt, staff reviewed the application and recommends approval of this loan application.

Member Thigpen made the motion to approve the Revolving Loan Fund Application for \$100,000 for the SNTHS Public Charter School according to the repayment terms described in staff's recommendation memo. Member Olsen seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

Agenda Item 11 – Long-Range Calendar. [03:28:05]

Executive Director Feiden said on the agenda for June they may be bringing potential updates to the organizational and financial performance framework. The Plan for Safe Return to In-Person Learning is also on the agenda for next month. Finally, she noted that statute does require that the Authority elect a chair and vice chair, and they will vote on that at the June meeting. Member Olsen asked about getting a calendar regarding school events to share with the board.

Agenda Item 12 – Public Comment #2. [03:32:55]

There was no public comment.

Agenda Item 13 – Adjournment [03:33:07]

The meeting was adjourned at 12:32PM.