

Joe Lombardo
Governor

STATE OF NEVADA

Rebecca Feiden
Executive Director



STATE PUBLIC CHARTER SCHOOL AUTHORITY

1749 North Stewart Street Suite 40
Carson City, Nevada 89706-2543
(775) 687-9174 · Fax (775) 687-9113

2080 East Flamingo Road Suite 230
Las Vegas, Nevada 89119-5164
(702) 486-8895 · Fax (702) 486-5543

ACTION MEMORANDUM

TO: SPCSA Authority Board
FROM: Mark Modrcin, Director of Authorizing, SPCSA
Danny Peltier, Management Analyst III, SPCSA
SUBJECT: **Discovery Charter School – Charter Amendment Request to Reduce the Sandhill campus 2022-23 Enrollment Cap**
DATE: March 3, 2023

Summary of Request and Recommendation

Discovery Charter School (Discovery) has submitted an amendment application requesting that the State Public Charter School Authority (SPCSA) grant a Good Cause Exemption and approve the school to reduce its enrollment cap at the Sandhill campus for 2022-2023 school year.

SPCSA staff has reviewed the application and recommends that the Authority grant the Good Cause Exemption and approve the amendment request. A proposed motion can be found on page of 3 this memo.

Background and Overview of the Amendment

Discovery currently operates two campuses in Clark County: the Hillpointe campus, which is located at 8941 Hillpointe Rd, Las Vegas, NV 89134, and the Sandhill campus, which is currently located at 3975 S Sandhill Rd, Las Vegas, NV 89121. As of the 2022 Validation day, the Sandhill campus had 89 students enrolled. Discovery was renewed by the Authority at the December 16, 2022, board meeting for a four-year charter term beginning July 1, 2023. The leadership team consists of Principal Tricia Wilbourne and Assistant Principal Denise Koch. The mission of Discovery is, “To promote a safe, nurturing environment which fosters student success through community involvement, progressive educational practices, and innovative use of technology.” Along with being approved for renewal at the December 16, 2022 meeting,

Discovery also submitted a request to amend its charter, and was approved to relocate the Sandhill campus to 4801 South Sandhill Road, Las Vegas, NV 89121 beginning in the 2023-24 school year.

Discovery is requesting an amendment to approve an enrollment reduction at the Sandhill campus for the 2022-23 school year only. If approved, the Sandhill campus enrollment cap for the remainder of the charter term would be:

School Year	2022-23	2023-24	2024-25	2025-26	2026-27
Grade Levels	K-5	K-5	K-5	K-5	K-5
Total Enrollment	100	120	120	120	120

According to the amendment application, Discovery is seeking this amendment to comply with its current charter enrollment cap of 120. Discovery stated that its enrollment as of February 14, 2023, was 101 students and is 7 students below the 10% threshold of the 210 cap. According to the amendment application Discovery seeks to decrease its enrollment cap to 100 for the remainder of SY 2022-2023 and will keep the cap set at 120 students starting in 2023-24.

As previously mentioned, Discovery was approved to relocate the Sandhill campus at the start of the 2023-24 school year and expects this relocation to assist in increasing enrollment beginning next school year. In addition to the relocation, Discovery noted they are canvassing the surrounding Sandhill neighborhoods with marketing information and engaging in outreach to nearby preschools as well.

Finally, according to the amendment application, Discovery does not anticipate staffing or budgetary impacts as a result of the proposed reduction in enrollment.

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. When determining whether to approve an amendment request, the sponsor considers the charter school’s compliance with applicable local, state and federal laws and regulations and evidence relating to the academics, finance and organization of the charter school. (See NAC 388A.400(8) and NRS 388A.276).

Analysis and Staff Recommendation

When reviewing an amendment application, SPCSA staff reviews the academic, financial and organizational performance of the applicant charter school. Since the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic, SPCSA staff has waived the requirement that schools maintain enrollment levels at or above 90% of their contractual cap due to the many extenuating circumstances impacting students and families. Staff believes schools are now better positioned to adhere to this requirement for the 2022 – 23 school year, necessitating this amendment. Discovery Sandhill is currently rated as a 2-star elementary school program and the Hillpointe elementary and middle school campuses are rated as 4-stars according to the 2018 – 19 NSPF ratings. The Hillpointe

elementary and middle school received 69.9 points and 75.2 points respectively on the points 2021-2022 SPCSA Academic Performance Framework. The Sandhill elementary campus did not meet standard on the 2021-2022 SPCSA Academic Performance Framework and received 33.2 points.

Additionally, the school earned 95 points (out of 100) under the SPCSA Organizational Performance Framework for the 2021 – 22 school year as approved by the Authority on December 16, 2022. As such, SPCSA staff finds the school to be ‘Meeting Standards.’ Discovery has also been found to ‘Meet the Standards’ on the most recent 2021 SPCSA Financial Performance Framework.

SPCSA staff is supportive of the request by Discovery. As previously stated in this memo, Discovery was approved to relocate the Sandhill campus and staff along with Discovery is hopeful this new location will allow the Sandhill campus to meet enrollment targets beginning in the 2023-24 school year. Discovery explained they are canvassing neighborhoods and preschools in the nearby community and had already shown an enrollment increase as of the January 2023 SPCSA monthly enrollment check. As such, SPCSA staff recommends the Authority approve Discovery’s request to reduce its enrollment cap for the 2022-23 school year.

Proposed Motion: Grant the Good Cause Exemption request and approve the Discovery Charter School’s request to reduce the Sandhill campus’s 2022-2023 approved enrollment cap from 120 students to 100 students.

If approved, the enrollment cap for Discovery’s campuses will be as follows for the remainder of the charter term:

School Year	2022-23	2023-24	2024-25	2025-26	2026-27
Hillpointe					
Grade Levels	K-8	K-8	K-8	K-8	K-8
Enrollment	380	380	380	380	380
Sandill					
Grade Levels	K-5	K-5	K-5	K-5	K-5
Enrollment	100	120	120	120	120
Total Enrollment	480	500	500	500	500

The current, approved, enrollment caps for the Discovery campuses are as follows:

School Year	2022-23	2023-24	2024-25	2025-26	2026-27
Hillpointe					
Grade Levels	K-8	K-8	K-8	K-8	K-8
Enrollment	380	380	380	380	380
Sandhill					
Grade Levels	K-5	K-5	K-5	K-5	K-5
Enrollment	120	120	120	120	120
Total Enrollment	500	500	500	500	500

School Demographic Change since 2017 – Discovery Charter School

Hillpointe

Year	Enrollment	A	B	C	H	I	M	P	IEP	ELL	FRL
17-18	234	2.1%	6.8%	59.8%	23.9%	1.2%	5.9%	0.0%	8.1%	*	17.9%
18-19	253	1.9%	9.8%	54.1%	24.1%	1.1%	8.6%	0.0%	6.7%	*	26.4%
19-20	267	1.1%	8.9%	50.1%	28.8%	1.4%	8.9%	0.3%	7.1%	*	0.0%
20-21	339	2.9%	7.0%	42.4%	33.9%	1.1%	11.5%	0.8%	7.3%	*	0.0%
21-22	359	2.5%	6.6%	40.3%	36.2%	0.8%	12.2%	1.1%	8.9%	<5.0%	16.9%
22-23	404	3.2%	7.6%	39.1%	37.6%	0.7%	10.1%	1.4%	13.1%	<5.0%	19.8%

Sandhill

Year	Enrollment	A	B	C	H	I	M	P	IEP	ELL	FRL
17-18	154	3.2%	7.7%	50.6%	22.7%	0.6%	8.4%	6.4%	*	*	21.4%
18-19	119	0.8%	19.3%	34.4%	22.6%	0.0%	13.4%	9.2%	*	*	42.8%
19-20	106	1.8%	18.8%	19.8%	43.3%	0.0%	12.2%	3.7%	*	*	0.0%
20-21	111	2.7%	18.9%	21.6%	50.4%	0.0%	5.4%	0.9%	*	*	0.0%
21-22	101	1.9%	14.8%	20.7%	54.4%	0.0%	5.9%	1.9%	*	10.8%	31.6%
22-23	89	2.2%	17.9%	21.3%	48.3%	0.0%	8.9%	1.1%	*	*	48.3%

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

Discovery Charter School Financial Performance

Year	Rating
2019 – 2020	Notice of Concern
2020 – 2021	Meets the Standard

Discovery Charter School Organizational Performance

Year	Rating
2019 – 2020	Meets the Standard
2020 – 2021	Meets the Standard
2021 – 2022	Meets the Standard

Discovery Charter School Academic Performance

Year	NSPF Rating – Hillpointe	NSPF Rating—Sandhill
2018	Elementary: 4 Star Middle School: 5 Star	Elementary: 3 Star Middle School: 4 Star (formally Mesa Vista)
2019	Elementary: 4 Star Middle School: 4 Star	Elementary: 2 Star Middle School: 2 Star (formally Mesa Vista)
2020 ¹	Elementary: 4 Star Middle School: 4 Star	Elementary: 2 Star Middle School: 2 Star

¹ 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

2021 ²	Elementary: 4 Star Middle School: 4 Star	Elementary: 2 Star
2022 Index Score	Elementary: 76.6 Middle School: 73.8	Elementary: 37.0

Discovery 2021-22 SPCSA Academic Performance Framework Results³

Campus	2021-22 SPCSA Academic Framework Score	2021-22 SPCSA Academic Framework Rating
Discovery Hillpointe ES	69.9	MEETS STANDARD
Discovery Hillpointe MS	75.2	MEETS STANDARD
Discovery Sandhill ES	33.2	DOES NOT MEET STANDARD

² Due to COVID-19, the Nevada Department of Education (NDE) applied for and was granted a 2020-21 school year waiver from the U.S. 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 new Nevada School Performance Framework (NSPF) school ratings for the 2020-21 school year.

³ The Nevada Department of Education (NDE) calculated NSPF index scores for the 2021-22 school year but did not calculate corresponding star ratings (shown as N/A). 2021-22 NSPF details and rules can be found at: <http://nevadareportcard.nv.gov/DI/MoreDownload?filename=Nevada%20School%20Performance%20Framework%20Manual%202021-22%20School%20Year.pdf>