

Charter School Request for Amendment to Charter Contract Application

For: Nevada Rise Academy

Date Submitted: March 14, 2023

Current Charter Contract Start Date: July 1, 2020

Charter Contract Expiration Date: June 30, 2026

Key Contact: Justin Brecht

Key Contact Title: Founder & Executive Director

Key Contact email and phone: jbrecht@nevadarise.org, 702.486.4889

Date of School Board Approval of this application: March 14, 2023

This Request for Amendment (RFA) is submitted to request a contract amendment regarding the following:

- Enrollment: Reduce Enrollment in Existing Grade Levels and Facilities.

Section I, A: Executive Summary (Questions 1-4)

1. Identification of the school, its location(s), enrollment(s)(most recent ADE quarter), brief history, brief description of its board members and key leadership team members

Nevada Rise Academy, located at 2525 Emerson Avenue, Las Vegas, Nevada 89121 is a public charter school serving, as of the 2nd quarter for the 2022-2023 school, 456 kindergarten through 5th grade students.

Nevada Rise Academy opened in 2018 with kindergarten and 1st grade under a slow-growth model. Each school year, one grade level has been added; one grade level as a new cohort of kindergarten students enter each year. This current school year (2022-2023) is the first year having the full kindergarten through 5th grade spectrum.

The history of Nevada Rise Academy has been tumultuous. In just our second year of operation, we abruptly transitioned to a distance learning program in compliance with state-mandated COVID-19 protocols. This happened just as the vision of Nevada Rise was coming to fruition for the first time after navigating the struggles of start-up. Distance education, in varying and constantly adapting formats, continued through the spring of 2020. Year three launched under a full distance education format until March of 2021, at which point a hybrid model of instruction was introduced to complete the school year. For the 2021-2022 school year, all students returned to in-person instruction. This proved difficult as the natural progression of the slow-growth model was interrupted through the pandemic. Academic and operations have been reinvented each year due to facility challenges, pandemic protocols, and growth.

As the school community perseveres through the current year, there is a recognition and reflection of the successes in our history. There is evidence of academic achievement, despite the challenges. Nevada Rise is the first Nevada school to join the Diverse Charter School Coalition and have a dedicated radio station. The school successfully transitioned to a four-day school week, leveraging the 5th day to conduct meaningful professional development and restorative preparation and collaboration staff time while incorporating enriching student clubs aimed at social and emotional learning. Powerful community partnerships have been made and celebrated during quarterly events that celebrate diversity.

Nevada Rise is lead by a dedicated board of directors, composed of the following:

Name	Position on Board	Relevant Experience
Daniel Bernbach	Chair	Business: Executive Vice President, MGM Education: Licensed (former) Teacher
Steven Washington	Vice Chair	Law: Attorney at Holland Hart
Nicole Calix Coy	Secretary	Human Resources and Diversity: GeoTab Law: Juris Doctorate Degree
Catherine Sourk	Treasurer	Finance: CPA Nonprofit Board Management: YMCA, ALS
Jean Carlo Rosero	Director	Higher Education/Tech: Professional, UNLV
Andrea Lombardo	Director	Human Resources: Director of HR ARCXIS
Melissa Cardenas	Director	Business: Owner, Tacos Tijuana Parent of two current students Education: Currently studying
Maliq Kendricks	Director	Law: Attorney at Brownstein Education: Licensed (former) teacher

The current school leadership team includes Founder and Executive Director Justin Brecht, Principal Cesserly Rice, Instructional Coach Melissa Ramirez (also a founding teacher), Director of Operations Anisa Payne, and Director of Exceptional Education Ashley Kelly.

2. Statement and overview of mission and vision

Through rigorous academics, high-quality instruction, and intentional character development, Nevada Rise Academy Charter School places every kindergarten through 5th grade student on a path to college, and ensures each student has access to life's fullest opportunities.

The academic achievement gap has persisted in our country, in Nevada, and in Clark County for far too long, especially in the urban sector and school serving low income communities. The ramifications of this gap limit not only academic success, but the opportunities for life success for thousands of our students.

Schools across the country are proving that it is possible to close the gap and change the trajectory for long-term success and achievement regardless of zip code or other demographic determinants.

Nevada Rise intends to be such a school and envisions all students achieving at high levels, matriculating into high-achieving middle and high schools, graduating college, and proving what is possible for **ALL** students in Las Vegas.

At Nevada Rise Academy, we believe that every child, regardless of demographics or socioeconomic status, should have the opportunity to choose college and should have access to the foundation that will make that choice possible. We begin building that foundation on the first minute of the first day of kindergarten.

Through the successful implementation of our academic program, our vision is that we develop learners who embody our student success profile, outlined below:

Students RISE to success by demonstrating:

R Relentless learning
Students push forward no matter the challenge in and out of the classroom in order to develop academic skills, knowledge, and understanding.

I Independent hearts & minds
Students know and appreciate who they are and what they believe.

S Socially conscious collaboration
Students understand social and cultural dynamics of their school and broader community, enabling effective collaboration in diverse groups.

E Enduring personal growth
Students are growth oriented – they regularly set goals and seek the opportunities and relationships they need to thrive.

We employ the following components to unlock the potential that enables all students to RISE!

- Culture of achievement enables students to learn in a structured environment.
 - Classrooms named after colleges aligned with high expectations.
- Excellent teachers deliver rigorous curriculum through great instruction.
 - Revamped screening process to ensure top quality and mindsets and continued instructional coaching
- Literacy is crucial to success in all other academic subjects.
 - Dedicated intervention, reading, foundational skills, and writing blocks
- Character development unlocks the full potential of every student.
 - Arts and Crew time facilitate character development.
- Professional development and collaborative community leads to meaningful education.

- Unique 4-day school week with powerful 5th day program
- Community support matters.
 - Parents and partners play an active role in our school and programs.

3. Specific statement of the request

The Board of Nevada Rise Academy, operating under a current contract with a start date of July 1, 2020 and a six-year expiration date of June 30, 2026 requests that the SPCSA approve this request to amend its charter school contract with the SPCSA regarding enrollment: **Reduce** enrollment in existing grades and facilities. Please see attached document with meeting minutes confirming board approval of the Request for Amendment.

4. A summary explanation of the reasons that the charter school is seeking to make this specific requested change.

As briefly described above in the history of the organization, Nevada Rise Academy has experienced a tumultuous 5 years of operation, and the request for a reduction in enrollment is driven by the following factors.

First, Nevada Rise strives to be a model of academic excellence in the urban sector. As the 2021-2022 was the first year Nevada Rise was eligible for a star rating, there were high hopes for the data to reflect the hard work of our school community. However as two of our first four years included distance education and adding grade levels each year, the data was insufficient to demonstrate the desired outcomes, reflecting a score equivalent to a 1-star rating. In order for Nevada Rise to address both improved academic outcomes and learning loss resulting from the pandemic, it is in the best interest of the school community to reduce from three classrooms per grade level to two classrooms per grade level, allowing for more intentional, focused intervention and acceleration.

Another reason Nevada Rise seeks to reduce enrollment is current limitation within the facility. Part of our model is staffing each grade level teacher with an associate teacher to provide targeted, small group intervention. Given the small classroom sizes, small groups are best done in other areas of the building, which currently do not exist, leaving small group instruction in hallways, subject to passing period noise, unsuitable seating arrangements, and, ultimately, ineffective instruction. There are also currently five classrooms that are pushing boundaries of capacity guidelines. Reducing enrollment would open up these small classrooms to facilitate more powerful intervention instruction, enrichment opportunities, and comfort for staff and students. Reducing will allow a more natural slow growth with the mindset of facility permanence and plan accordingly.

Further, school culture and operations have been disrupted in our tumultuous history. Each year has been it's own "Year One," as the school community navigated the pandemic, expansion to a new grade level each year, sharing a space with another school/church, and onboarding multiple new staff.

Finally, the organizational strategy for Nevada Rise has been dictated by many factors, including facility, growth through enrollment plans created before opening or acquiring a facility, and pandemic-related issues. Nevada Rise intends to have its strategy dictate steps moving forward.

After the initial reduction, and successful implementation of our academic model, our strategy will be to expand seats to the community. What is to be determined is if future expansion is for more elementary seats or offer the opportunity to continue education at Nevada Rise through middle school. To make the informed decision on what is best for our school community, a reduction in our current model is necessary.

Section 1, B: Meeting the Need (Growth Rate and Rationale)

The risks associated with this reduction plan are considerations of our current enrollment and calibrating finances.

Current (as of 3/6/23) enrollment for Nevada Rise is 434 total students consisting of the following (excluding 5th grade as they will leave Nevada Rise at the conclusion of the school year).

Grade (Current)	FY23 Budgeted	Current	Target FY24	Difference
Kindergarten	84	74	--	+18
1 st Grade	84	77	56	+19
2 nd Grade	84	80	56	+24
3 rd Grade	84	74	56	+18
4 th Grade	84	83	56	+27
5 th Grade	--	--	56	--
Totals	420	389	280	106

Our reduction targets a total enrollment of 364 students. As a public charter school, Nevada Rise is fully aware of choice regulations and will not unenroll students without proper procedure or cause and will not seek to force students and families out of our community. To mitigate this risk, Nevada Rise will rely on historical trends of transiency and attrition. As families make decisions to unenroll students for various reasons, primarily relocation, Nevada Rise has ceased making any efforts to fill the vacated seat in anticipation of an approved amendment. Additionally, analyzing chronic absenteeism rates, Nevada Rise has engaged in critical conversation with families to find solutions. Among these solutions is addressing location of students with high absenteeism rates. Transportation continues to be a barrier for many of our families, and working with them to find other options for the success of their child’s education has been a staple of these conversations. Nevada Rise is also graduating its first class of 5th graders, resulting in anticipated movement of some siblings of those scholars.

Ultimately, if more students than expected are enrolled at the beginning of the 2023-2024 school year, we will have the staff, space, and programmatic capacity to accommodate all students, and will continue to the practice of not filling any vacated seats.

Section 1, B: Meeting the Need (Parent and Community Involvement)

Parents play a vital role in the Nevada Rise school community. It is a pride point for Nevada Rise that the school has a familial culture, and that culture includes parents. We have worked to create great relationships with a families and welcome all elements of participation. The power of relationships are evidenced through our community events that consistently draw upwards of 90% of our parents.

Through conversations with individual parents and groups of parents, both informally and informally, the idea of reduced enrollment has been welcomed. With the disrupted natural growth plan resulting from the pandemic, man parents have expressed the following ideas, compared to that of earlier years:

- Slightly less personal relationships with staff and administration
- Family-style culture that attracted them to campus has diminished
- Child feels uncomfortable, physically, in small classrooms
- Attention to individuality and personal learning has lessened

A reduced enrollment will answer these concerns while allowing the opportunity to build a stronger parent advocacy group with a stronger foundation and be more prepared to grow as the school grows. If amendment is approved, we will also ensure all families that they have a space and be welcomed here for as long as they choose.

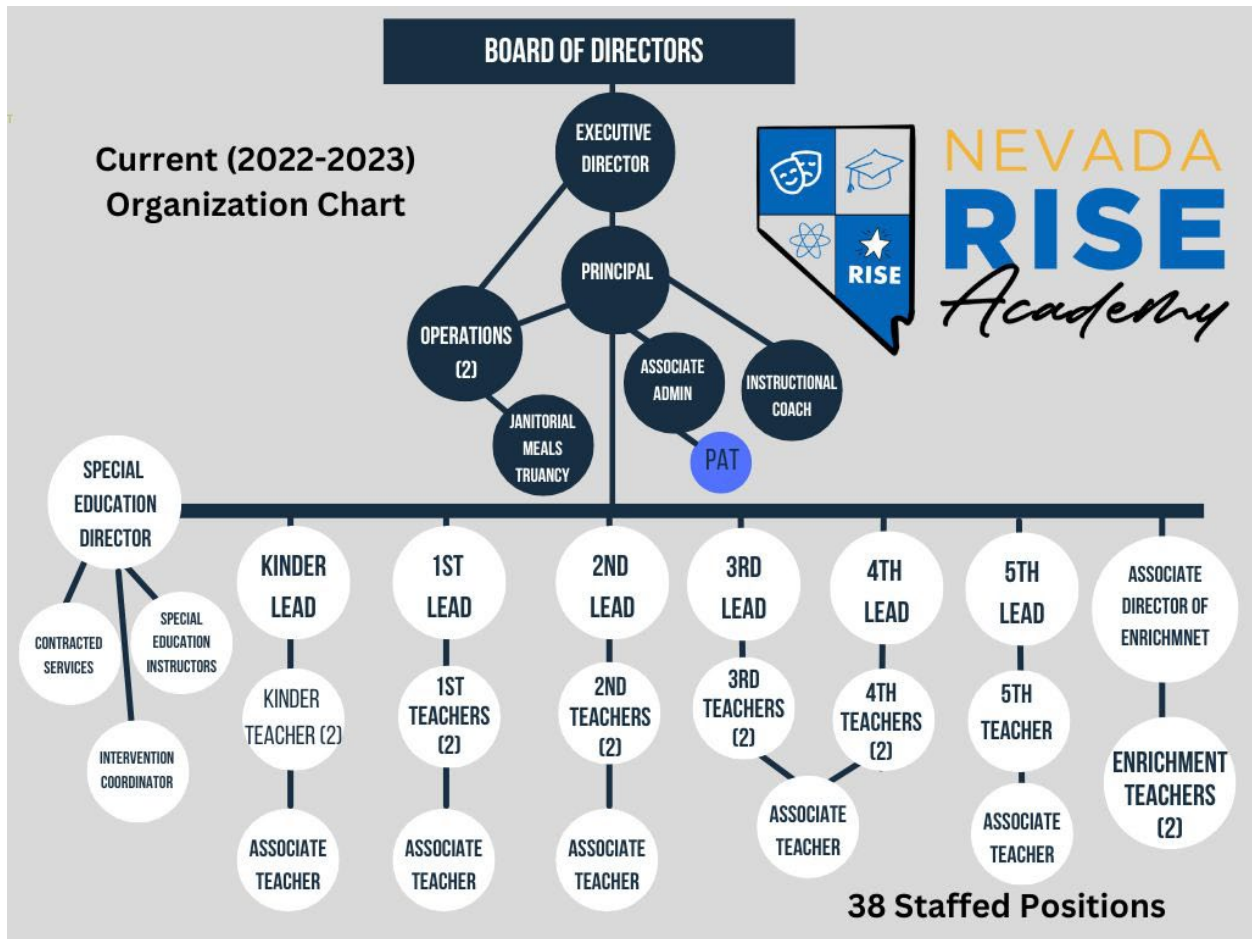
To further invest parents in this process, Nevada Rise will share with all community stakeholders the benefits of the reduction plan, while inviting all stakeholders to discuss future growth plans. One of the reasons outlined for the requested amendment is to determine appropriate growth strategies afterwards. Parents will play a powerful role in the discussion and decision process for any growth after the successful reduction.

Section 1, D: Financial Plan (Question 3 & 4)

Attached Separately

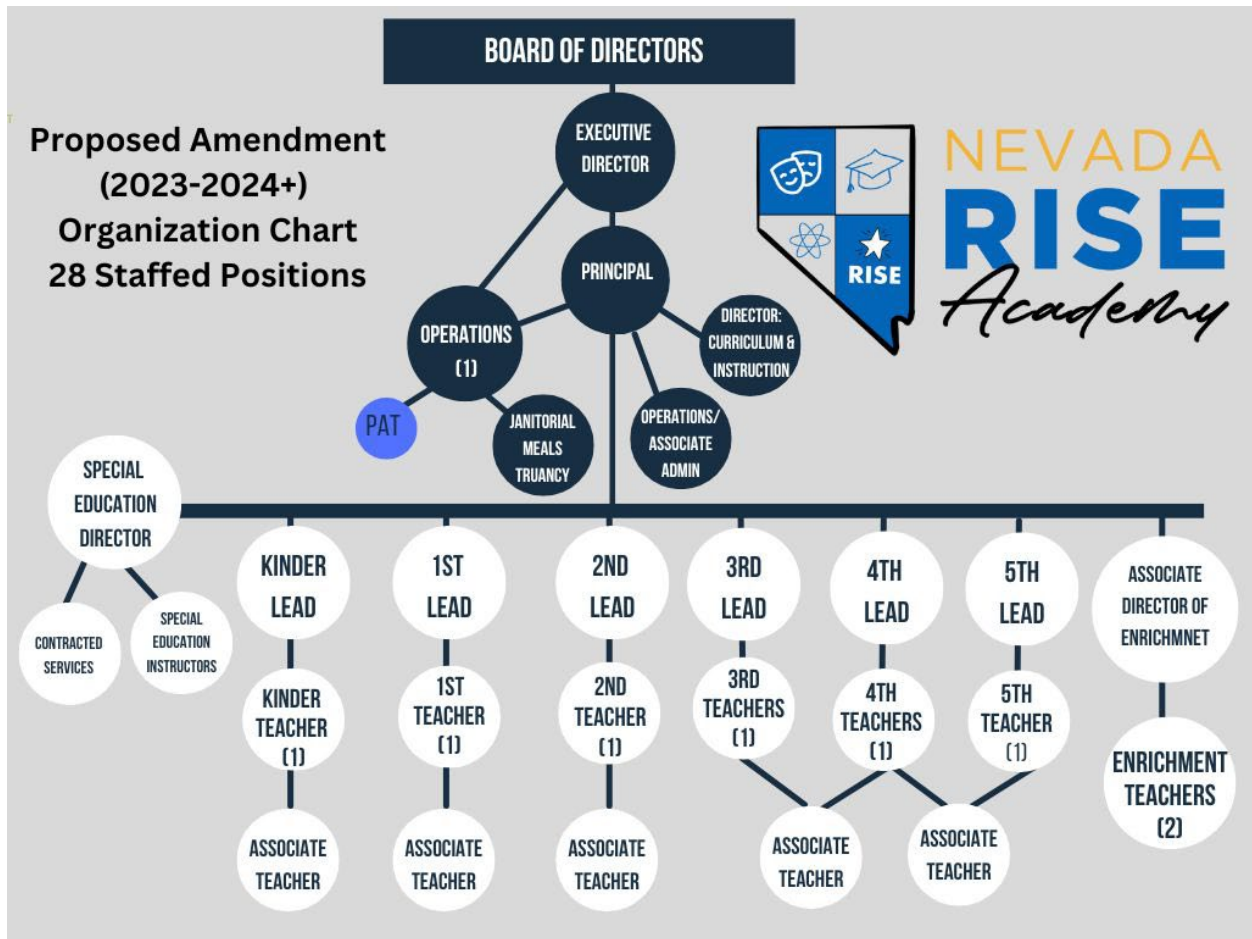
Section 1, E: Operations Plan (Question 3)

Organizational Charts:



Current Enrollment

	2018-2019	2019-2020	2020-2021	2021-2022	2022-2023	2023-2024
Grade K	84	84	84	84	84	84
Grade 1	56	84	84	84	84	84
Grade 2		56	84	84	84	84
Grade 3			56	84	84	84
Grade 4				56	84	84
Grade 5					56	84
Total	140	224	308	392	476	504



Proposed Staffing Plan (If elementary growth is determined)

	2022-2023	2023-2024	2024-2025	2025-2026	2026-2027	2027-2028
Admin	4	3	4	4	4	4
Operations	4	2	3	4	4	4
Enrichment	3	3	3	3	3	3
SPED	4	2	3	3	4	4
Grade K	4	4	4	4	4	4
Grade 1	4	3	3	4	4	4
Grade 2	4	3	3	3	4	4
Grade 3	4	3	3	3	3	4
Grade 4	3	2	2	2	2	2
Grade 5	3	3	3	3	3	3
Total	37	28	30	33	35	36

Proposed Enrollment Chart (if elementary growth is determined)

	2022-2023	2023-2024	2024-2025	2025-2026	2026-2027	2027-2028
Grade K	84	84	84	84	84	84
Grade 1	84	56	56	84	84	84
Grade 2	84	56	56	56	84	84
Grade 3	84	56	56	56	56	84
Grade 4	84	56	56	56	56	56
Grade 5	56	56	56	56	56	56
Total	476	364	364	392	420	448



TO: State Public Charter School Authority Governing Board

FROM: Nevada Rise Academy Board of Directors

RE: Good Cause Exemption Request to Amend Charter Application

Nevada Rise Academy respectfully requests a good cause exemption from the current amendment schedule to amend its charter contract with the State Public Charter School Authority (SPCSA).

The purpose of this out-of-cycle amendment is to seek the Authority's approval to reduce the enrollment cap of students.

The Nevada Rise Academy Governing Board has approved the following:

- The filing of the proposed amendment application;
- The request to seek a good cause exemption, and;
- The amendment application itself (see Attachment 1).

We sincerely appreciate the support of the SPCSA staff as Nevada Rise Academy seeks the approval of this good cause exemption as well as the granting of its underlying application to amend the charter to move our scholars forward.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Daniel Bernbach", is written over the typed name.

Daniel Bernbach

Board Chair, Nevada Rise Academy

Nevada Rise SPECIAL Board Meeting Minutes

Date: March 13, 2023

Time: 6:15pm

Location:

2525 Emerson Ave.

Las Vegas, NV. 89121

Nevada Rise Academy Mission Statement: Through rigorous curriculum, high quality instruction, and intentional character development, Nevada Rise Academy Charter School places every kindergarten through fifth grade student on a path to college, and ensures that all students have access to life's fullest opportunities.

A. OPENING ITEMS

1. Welcome/Call to Order: Bernbach called the meeting to order at 6:16pm. Attendance followed.

Present: 6:16pm

Justin Brecht- Executive Director

Daniel Bernbach- Chair

Steven Washington (JT)- Vice Chair

Catherine Sourk- Treasurer

Nicole Calix Coy- Secretary

Melissa Cardenas – Director

Andrea Lombardo – Director

Maliq Kendricks - Director

Absent:

Jean-Carlo Rosero (JC) - Director

Visitors:

Mike - EdTec

Mark Czerniak

2. Approval of Agenda: Agenda has been posted in compliance as required by the Nevada Open Meeting laws at the following locations: Nevada Rise Academy, East Las Vegas Community Center, Parkdale Community Center, and Winchester Community Center. Notice of this meeting was also posted on the internet through Nevada Rise Academy's website as well as notice.nv.gov. **Sourk presented a motion to approve the agenda for the March 13, 2023 meeting. Motion was second by Calix Coy. Vote followed, all were in favor, motion passed.**

3. Public Comment: There were none.

B. BOARD ITEMS

1. **Charter School Contract Amendment:** Brecht presented the Request for Amendment (RFA) regarding reduction of enrollment in existing grade levels and facilities Bernbach mentioned the docs are in order and obviously y NV Rise grew during the pandemic. Bernbach cautioned that Section 1B reads as if there is a need of parent, community and staff involvement, however the connection. Bernbach wanted to ensure it is noted that there is a great relationship between the community, parents, and NV Rise Staff. It makes since to reduce size temporality and grow from there. Enrollment for the 2023-2024 school year (for possible action)

Brecht explained the next steps will involve approval through the charter and request to have this approved in April 2023. **Sourk presented a motion to approve the Charter School Request for Amendment to the Charter School Agreement for 2023/2034 school year. Motion was second by Lombardo. All were in favor. Motion passed.**

2. **Facility Updates: Playground build (for possible action)** Brecht asked for permission of the board to approve funding to improve the playground, of up to \$100,000. Terms and more details will be presented for the April board meeting for approvals. Discussion continued regarding risk and liability of playground equipment outside of school open hours. Maintenance, finance costs, contact liability insurance, ensure lease is current.

3.

C. PUBLIC COMMENT: There were none.

Public Comment Period

The public is hereby noticed that the Nevada Rise Board of Directors reserves the right to take agenda items out of posted order, with the exception of public hearings, and items may be pulled or removed from the agenda at any time or combined for consideration. A time for public comment is provided at the beginning and at the conclusion of the meeting. The Board of Directors Chair reserves the right to call on individuals from the audience or to allow for public comment at any time. Individuals providing testimony should fill out a Visitor Card which will be numbered in order received by the Board of Directors Secretary. A time limit (three minutes) will be imposed by the Board of Directors Chair on public testimony in order to afford all members of the public who wish to comment an opportunity to do so within the timeframe available to the Board of Directors. No Board of Directors action may be taken on items raised in public comment unless those items are already on the posted agenda.

D. ADJOURNMENT:

Sourk presented a motion to adjourn. Motion was second by Calix Coy. All were in favor. Motion passed. Meeting adjourned at 6:45pm.

Nevada Rise Academy

FY24 Draft Budget Review

MIKE POCRNICH

MARCH 13TH, 2023



- 1. Currently forecasting two scenarios:**
 - A. 0% PCFP increase from FY24-FY28
 - B. 10% PCFP increase in FY24 and 2% thereafter
- 2. SPCSA requires a sustainable forecast with no funding increases to approve the enrollment reconfiguration**
- 3. The following slides will discuss major assumptions for each forecast**

0% PCFP Forecast

edtec 



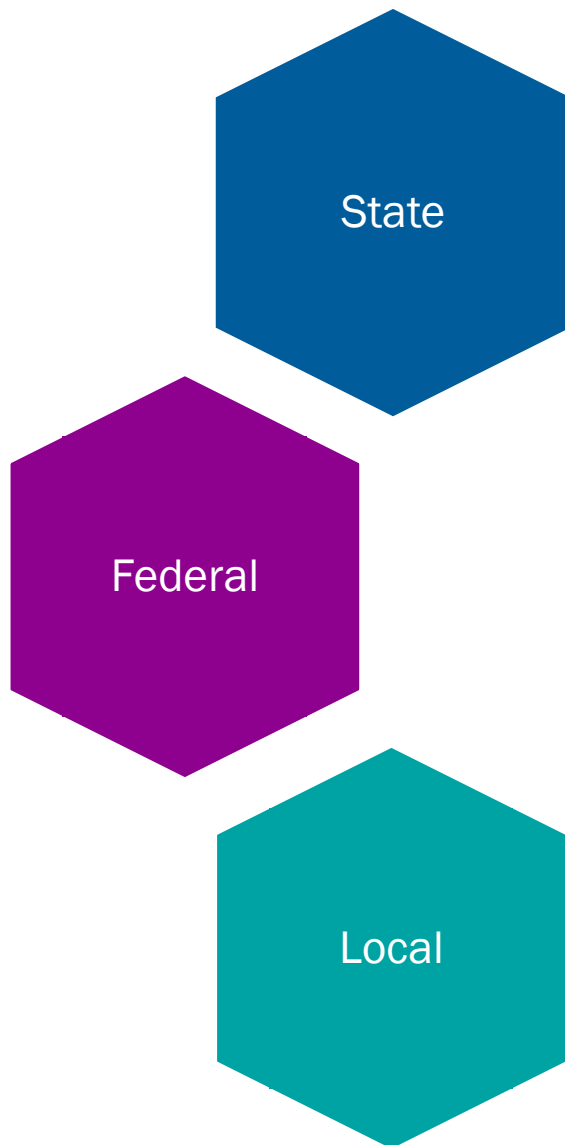
0% PCFP Budget Assumptions



No PCFP increases for FY24 – FY28 per requirement from SPCSA

	2023-24	2024-25	2025-26	2026-27	2027-28
Enrollment	364	392	420	448	476
FRL	257	277	297	317	337
ELL	46	50	54	58	62
SPED	22	24	26	28	30

0% PCFP Forecast: Other Revenue Assumptions



- SPED rate unchanged
- ELL rate unchanged
- FRL rate unchanged
- Total amounts reduced based on enrollment
- One-time funds exhausted by FY23
- Title funds based on historical amounts
- No anticipated funding carryover to FY24
- Potential AB495 grant excluded (\$358K)
- Based on historical levels
- Total amount reduced based on enrollment

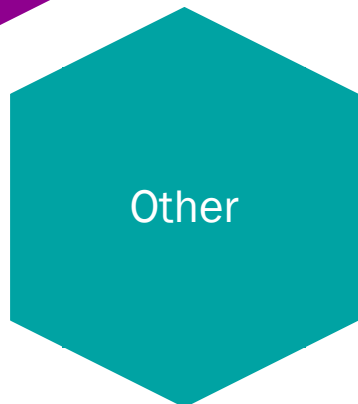
0% PCFP Forecast: Major Expenditure Assumptions



- 0% increase for FY24 – 2.5% thereafter
- Reduction of total FTE to align with lower enrollment
- FY24 Teacher FTE: 21 FTE
- FY24 Admin FTE: 2 FTE
- FY24 Other FTE: 4 FTE



- 5% increase for health insurance costs
- Updated PERS rates (17.5%/33.5%)



- 3% inflation rate for other expenses
- Student driven expenditures adjusted for lower enrollment

0% PCFP MYP Forecast



		2023-24	2024-25	2025-26	2026-27	2027-28
		Projected Budget	Projected Budget	Projected Budget	Projected Budget	Projected Budget
Revenue	Revenue from Local Sources	16,800	16,960	17,123	17,290	17,459
	State Revenue	2,811,846	3,029,383	3,246,919	3,464,456	3,681,992
	Federal Revenue	443,816	477,956	512,096	546,235	580,375
	Total Revenue	3,272,462	3,524,298	3,776,138	4,027,981	4,279,827
Expenses	Personnel Services-Salaries	1,464,548	1,551,161	1,779,940	1,919,439	2,012,425
	Personnel Services-Employee Benefits	549,615	586,184	669,244	728,914	772,191
	Professional and Tech Services	269,828	285,315	301,518	318,469	336,200
	Property Services	544,040	558,662	573,742	589,298	605,347
	Other Services	103,542	108,938	114,441	120,056	125,785
	Supplies	248,559	269,338	291,141	314,009	337,987
	Depreciation Expense	1,259	1,259	1,154	-	-
	Debt Service and Miscellaneous	1,437	1,480	1,525	1,570	1,617
	Total Expenses	3,182,828	3,362,337	3,732,705	3,991,755	4,191,553
Operating Income	89,634	161,961	43,433	36,226	88,274	
	Beginning Balance (Audited)	1,533,538	1,623,171	1,785,133	1,828,565	1,864,791
	Operating Income	89,634	161,961	43,433	36,226	88,274
Ending Fund Balance (incl. Depreciation)		1,623,171	1,785,133	1,828,565	1,864,791	1,953,065
Ending Fund Balance as % of Expenses		51.0%	53.1%	49.0%	46.7%	46.6%

10% PCFP Forecast

edtec 



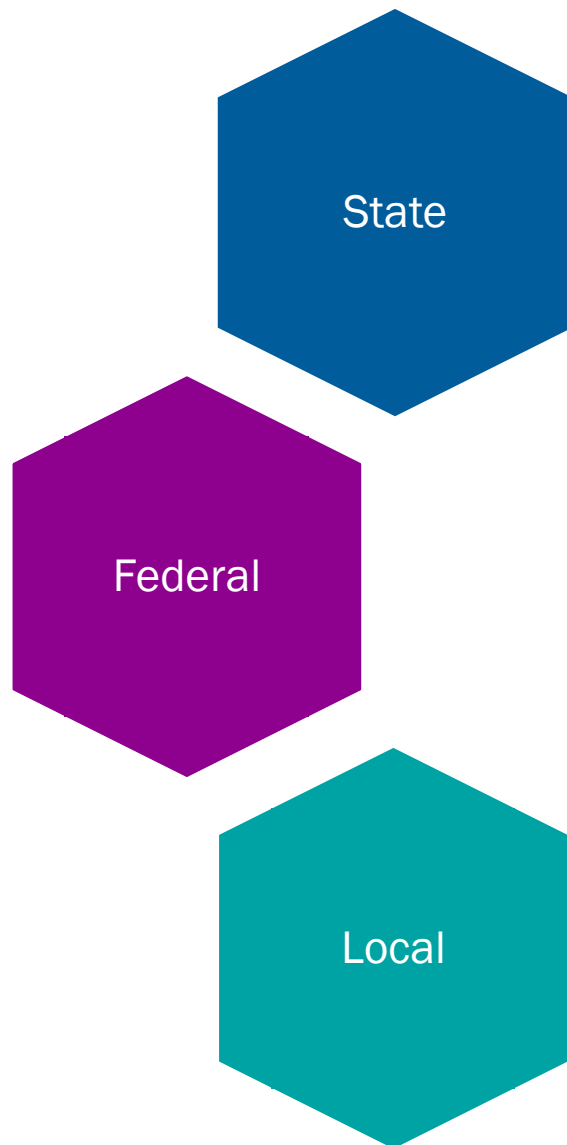
10% PCFP Budget Assumptions



10% increase for FY24 PCFP – 2% thereafter

	2023-24	2024-25	2025-26	2026-27	2027-28
Enrollment	364	364	392	420	448
FRL	257	257	277	297	317
ELL	46	46	50	54	58
SPED	22	22	24	26	28

10% PCFP Forecast: Other Revenue Assumptions



- SPED rate unchanged
- ELL rate unchanged
- FRL rate unchanged
- Total amounts reduced based on enrollment
- One-time funds exhausted by FY23
- Title funds based on historical amounts
- No anticipated funding carryover to FY24
- Potential AB495 grant excluded (\$358K)
- Based on historical levels
- Total amount reduced based on enrollment

10% PCFP Forecast: Major Expenditure Assumptions



Salary

- 7.5% increase for FY24 – 2.5% thereafter
- Reduction of total FTE to align with lower enrollment
- FY24 Teacher FTE: 21 FTE
- FY24 Admin FTE: 2 FTE
- FY24 Other FTE: 5 FTE



Benefits

- 5% increase for health insurance costs
- Updated PERS rates (17.5%/33.5%)



Other

- 3% inflation rate for other expenses
- Student driven expenditures adjusted for lower enrollment

10% PCFP MYP Forecast

		2023-24	2024-25	2025-26	2026-27	2027-28
		Projected Budget	Projected Budget	Projected Budget	Projected Budget	Projected Budget
Revenue	Revenue from Local Sources	16,800	16,960	17,123	17,290	17,459
	State Revenue	3,077,310	3,135,713	3,442,315	3,759,456	4,087,441
	Federal Revenue	443,816	443,816	477,956	512,096	546,235
	Total Revenue	3,537,927	3,596,489	3,937,394	4,288,841	4,651,135
Expenses	Personnel Services-Salaries	1,637,657	1,678,598	1,910,563	2,098,327	2,200,786
	Personnel Services-Employee Benefits	600,860	620,680	704,594	783,210	829,000
	Professional and Tech Services	269,828	279,458	295,486	312,256	329,800
	Property Services	544,040	558,662	573,742	589,298	605,347
	Other Services	106,860	109,701	116,296	123,133	130,220
	Supplies	248,559	256,016	277,418	299,875	323,429
	Depreciation Expense	1,259	1,259	1,154	-	-
	Debt Service and Miscellaneous	1,437	1,480	1,525	1,570	1,617
	Total Expenses	3,410,500	3,505,854	3,880,778	4,207,669	4,420,200
	Operating Income	127,426	90,635	56,615	81,172	230,936
	Beginning Balance (Audited)	1,533,538	1,660,964	1,751,598	1,808,214	1,889,385
	Operating Income	127,426	90,635	56,615	81,172	230,936
	Ending Fund Balance (incl. Depreciation)	1,660,964	1,751,598	1,808,214	1,889,385	2,120,321
	Ending Fund Balance as % of Expenses	48.7%	50.0%	46.6%	44.9%	48.0%