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ACTION MEMORANDUM

TO: SPCSA Board
FROM: Mike Dang, Manager of Organizational and Financial Performance
Rebecca Feiden, Executive Director
SUBJECT: Transportation Plan: Beacon Academy of Nevada
DATE: August 25, 2023

Background

[Assembly Bill 400 \(2023 Session of the Nevada Legislature\)](#) appropriated \$7 million to the State Public Charter School Authority (SPCSA) for each year of the upcoming biennium (the 2023-24 fiscal year and the 2024-25 fiscal year) to award to charter schools, including SPCSA-sponsored and district-sponsored charter schools, to fund student transportation. To receive funding, a charter school must submit a Transportation Plan to the SPCSA and the SPCSA may approve the Transportation Plan and award funding to the charter school if the plan meets the following criteria:

1. “The transportation plan is comprehensive and likely to be successfully implemented;
2. The transportation plan will materially improve access to education in the region served by the transportation plan;
3. The transportation plan demonstrates that the charter school will be able to comply with statutory and regulatory transportation requirements, including, without limitation, the certification of bus drivers and vehicle safety;
4. The transportation plan is financially viable;
5. The transportation plan would not cost more, on a per pupil basis, than the average cost for transportation for other public schools operating in the school district in which the charter school is located; and

6. The academic, financial and organizational performance of the charter school indicate that the transportation plan is in the interest of pupils who will be served by the transportation plan.”¹

It is important to note that pursuant to NAC 388A.330(4), a charter school is only permitted to provide transportation to pupils if the school has approval to do so from its sponsor. Therefore, charter schools that are not already approved to provide student transportation will be required to submit to their sponsor a contract amendment request in order to implement the Transportation Plan. For those schools sponsored by the SPCSA, the amendment request to provide student transportation was incorporated into the application process, and the SPCSA Board will consider approval of the amendment request in conjunction with the Transportation Plan.

Applications for the 2023-24 school year will be accepted and reviewed on a rolling basis from July 7, 2023 and through September 30, 2023². While the SPCSA hopes to fund all applicants that submit a compliant transportation plan, because there is only \$7 million available in each school year, the SPCSA may prioritize funding Title I charter schools.

Additional details and form associated with the Transportation Plan and Funding Application can be found on the [SPCSA's website](#).

Transportation Plan Overview

Beacon Academy of Nevada is requesting \$149,516 to implement the school's Transportation Plan. Below is an overview of the proposed Transportation Plan for Beacon Academy of Nevada as provided in the application.

“Beacon Academy of Nevada (BANV) is seeking funding to provide RTC Bus Passes for all students who reside more than two miles from the East or West Campus and who request transportation assistance.

Returning students may request an RTC bus pass at any time during the school year, registration, or at the time of enrollment. A staff member verifies the student's eligibility based on their residency and if qualified, the student will receive a bus pass immediately. The students' information is then added to a Smartsheet which lists all eligible BANV students. During the student's last period each day, the teacher distributes bus passes to all eligible students, as needed. Students are reminded that the bus pass is to be used to travel to and from school the next time they are scheduled to be on campus.

30-Day Bus Passes are provided to students who qualify under SB 147 (Foster Care, McKinney-Vento, etc.). The school social workers identify students for 30-Day Bus Passes based on student/family needs and distribute them directly to the students on their caseload.

¹ Section 28.5 of Assembly Bill 400 (2023 Session of the Nevada Legislature)

² After September 30, 2023, the SPCSA will determine if there are remaining funds that have not yet been awarded. If funds remain, the SPCSA will re-open the transportation application.

This information is also noted on a tracker, so that no student receives more than one type of bus pass.”

Analysis and Recommendation

Beacon Academy of Nevada is a Title I School and is requesting approval of its Transportation Plan and funding to implement the Transportation Plan.

SPCSA staff has reviewed the Transportation Plan and find that the Plan meets the requirements set forth in Assembly Bill 400.

1. The Transportation Plan is comprehensive and likely to be successfully implemented.
2. The narrative provided by the school explains that “The proposed Transportation Plan will increase access to qualifying alternative education students by eliminating or reducing transportation expenses for attending school.” This demonstrates that the Transportation Plan will materially improve access to education in the region.
3. The Transportation Plan includes details regarding how the charter school will ensure compliance with statutory and regulatory transportation requirements.
4. The budget provided within the Transportation Plan demonstrates that the Transportation Plan is financially viable.
5. The average daily enrollment for Beacon Academy of Nevada during the fourth quarter of the 2022-23 school year was 648.83. Beacon Academy of Nevada is located within Clark County where the four-year average (per pupil) in transportation funding for the 2023-24 school year is \$481. The total funding request for Beacon Academy of Nevada was \$149,516 which is less than or equal to the average cost, per pupil, for transportation within Clark County School District.
6. The academic, financial, and organizational performance of the charter school indicates that the transportation plan is in the interest of pupils who will be served by the transportation plan. Specifically, the Transportation Plan indicates that transportation will increase access to qualifying alternative education students by eliminating or reducing transportation expenses for attending school. Beacon Academy also notes that the school is financially viable and is in compliance with organizational and academic performance expectations.

Therefore, SPCSA staff recommend approval of the Beacon Academy of Nevada Transportation Plan, along with funding to implement the plan.

Proposed Motion:

1. Approve the Beacon Academy of Nevada Transportation Plan, along with funding to implement the Plan and allow SPCSA staff to work with the school to make budget revisions as long as the total funding does not exceed the average per pupil cost in the local school district.

2. Require the school to provide SPCSA staff with documentation to demonstrate that the school is in compliance with applicable laws and regulations prior to beginning to transport students.