

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

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ACTION MEMORANDUM

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**TO:** SPCSA Board  
**FROM:** Mike Dang, Manager of Organizational and Financial Performance  
Rebecca Feiden, Executive Director  
**SUBJECT:** Transportation Plan: Nevada Prep Charter School (NV Prep)  
**DATE:** August 25, 2023

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**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.”<sup>1</sup>

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 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, 2023<sup>2</sup>. 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**

Nevada Prep Charter School (NV Prep) is requesting a total of \$127,807 to implement the school’s expanded Transportation Plan. Below is an overview of the proposed Transportation Plan for NV Prep, as provided in the application.

“Since 2018, NV Prep has been the only charter school in Nevada to offer a transportation program comparable to what district schools offer. The school has done this with \$0 of public transportation funding. NV Prep wants to expand its transportation to continue to provide bus access to more than 50% of its students – a goal that NV Prep has met every month since October 2018. However, without funding to support four school buses, NV Prep will not be able to grow its program, and we will fail to meet this goal for the first time. NV Prep requests transportation funding contingent upon the number of students who actually attend school in 2023-2024 because the school was not able to volunteer for an EEGA audit for the year. If NV Prep is funded at its Q4 enrollment level from 2022-2023, rather than anticipated enrollment for 2023-2024, the school will not be able to expand bus access to meet needs based on new enrollment.

With a per-route budget of \$66,000 (\$264,000 total) for the 2023-2024 school year, NV Prep can provide transportation access to between 240-300 scholars each day. The total number of riders depends on the breakdown of elementary vs. middle school students who sign up to ride each bus.

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<sup>1</sup> Section 28.5 of Assembly Bill 400 (2023 Session of the Nevada Legislature)

<sup>2</sup> 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.

With the aforementioned SPCSA transportation funding, NV Prep can enhance its transportation services in the following ways:

1. Increase scale by 100%, growing from two routes serving 150 scholars to four routes serving up to 300 scholars.
2. Outsource transportation operations to an external transportation provider, reducing operational burdens on the school, and allowing the school's new leadership team to focus on teaching, learning, and culture.
3. Shorten bus routes to reduce the amount of time scholars spend on the bus and increase the time they can spend at home sleeping.
4. Improve the rider experience and program reliability by using school buses are replaced [sic] with a more modern, dependable fleet.

NV Prep is thrilled that public funding for transportation is finally available. Our team, including students and families, have advocated for transportation funding since 2018, and we hope to remain a leader in charter school transportation.”

### **Analysis and Recommendation**

NV Prep 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. The Transportation Plan is comprehensive and likely to be successfully implemented.

1. The narrative provided by the school explains that “If the transportation plan is approved and funded, NV Prep will be able to serve up to 150 additional students with transportation services. The proposed plan would expand our transportation-free accessibility footprint to about 40 square miles.” This demonstrates that the Transportation Plan will materially improve access to education in the region.
2. The Transportation Plan includes details regarding how the charter school will ensure compliance with statutory and regulatory transportation requirements.
3. The budget provided within the Transportation Plan demonstrates that the Transportation Plan is financially viable.
4. The average daily enrollment for NV Prep during the fourth quarter of the 2022-23 school year was 265.71. NV Prep is located within Clark County where the four-year average (per pupil) in transportation funding for the 2023-24 school year is \$481.00. for NV Prep was \$ 127,807 which is less than or equal to the average cost, per pupil, for transportation within Clark County School District.
5. 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. Specifically, the Transportation Plan indicates that “transportation’s greatest impact will be reducing absenteeism and tardiness”. NV Prep’s internal data indicates that on average, their students who ride the bus or walk to school have a higher

attendance rate than students who are driven to school. The school also firmly believes that a transportation system will increase enrollment and allow the school's arrival and dismissal processes to run more smoothly.

Therefore, SPCSA staff recommend approval of the NV Prep Transportation Plan, along with funding to implement the plan.

**Proposed Motion:**

1. Approve the NV Prep 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.