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**STATE OF NEVADA**

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**STATE PUBLIC CHARTER SCHOOL AUTHORITY**

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**ACTION MEMORANDUM**

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**TO:** SPCSA Board  
**FROM:** Jennifer Bauer, Director of Finance and Operations  
Melissa Mackedon, Executive Director  
**SUBJECT:** Transportation Plan: Amplus Academy  
**DATE:** January 26, 2024

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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 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 until all funds are expended<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**

Amplus Academy is requesting a total of \$1,114,477.00 to implement the school’s Transportation Plan. Below is an overview of the proposed Transportation Plan for Amplus Academy, as provided in the application.

“Since launching, Amplus Academy has continued to grow, and the need for safe and equitable transportation has grown too. The goal of this transportation plan is to expand our enrollment footprint to include more families in the Las Vega Valley, to improve customer service to our existing families, to improve safety and efficiency in our arrival and dismissal processes, and to expand access to extracurricular experiences for all our students. Amplus’s chronic absenteeism rates are lower than state and charter school averages, but we strive for even better attendance, so we will leverage transportation funds to improve student attendance rates as well.

IN 2024 Amplus Academy will provide transportation access to up to 850 scholars each day on six buses, each running two routes per day. Amplus also plans to acquire up to three smaller vehicles to support this transportation plan. This transportation plan includes strategically coordinated efforts across campuses, but the budgets included herein represent Amplus’s best attempt to allocate expenses to the campus that will receive primary benefit from each line item.

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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.

The majority of this annual transportation budget will support the purchase of vehicles that will serve Amplus students for years to come, but the budget also includes a service agreement for an outside firm to operate Amplus’s bus services. The budget also includes a new transportation coordinator position that will ensure coordination across campuses, strong family communication, and exemplary rollout of the transportation plan.

Amplus has already begun working with a transportation partner to gather interest about bus stop locations, so that specific bus routes and schedules provided to families will reflect ongoing needs assessment from surveys and family meetings that will continue throughout January 2024.

Based on the Q2 FY24 Q2 ADE Report, Amplus is eligible to apply for \$1,114,529.91 in transportation funding through AB 400.”

### **Analysis and Recommendation**

Amplus Academy, Rainbow Campus is a Title I School, Amplus Academy Durango Campus is not a Title I school. Combined Amplus is requesting approval of its Transportation Plan and funding to implement the Transportation Plan. In addition, because Amplus is not currently approved to provide transportation, the school is requesting by this document also to amend its charter contract to provide transportation and has submitted a good cause exemption request to have this amendment considered outside of the established amendment windows.

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 “if the transportation plan is approved and funded, Amplus Academy will be able to serve a more significant geographical area. The proposed plan would expand our equitable recruitment footprint to include more of the Las Vegas area.” 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 Amplus during the second quarter of the 2023-24 school year was 2317. Amplus is located in Clark County where the four-year average (per pupil) in transportation funding for the **2023-24** school year is \$481.00. The total funding request for Amplus Academy is \$1,114,477, which is less than or equal to the average cost, per pupil, for transportation within the Clark County School District. Note that this amount differs from the school’s original request because staff worked with the school to correctly calculate the amount for which the school is eligible to receive.
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. Specifically, the Transportation Plan indicates that transportation will expand access, improve chronic absenteeism, and improve the current drop off and pick procedures at the school.

Therefore, SPCSA staff recommend approval of the Amplus Academy’s Transportation Plan, along with eligible funding to implement the plan. Furthermore, SPCSA staff recommend approval of the good cause exemption and amendment request to enable the school to provide transportation to students.

**Proposed Motion:**

1. Approve the Amplus Academy Transportation Plan, along with eligible 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. Approve the charter contract amendment request for Amplus Academy to allow the school to provide student transportation.
3. 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.

*If approved, the enrollment for the remainder of the contract term will remain unchanged:*

School Year	2023-24	2024-25	2025-26	2026-27	2027-28	2028-29
Grade Levels	K-12	K-12	K-12	K-12	K-12	K-12
Total Enrollment	2256	2256	2256	2256	2256	2256