

EXHIBIT L

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BRIEFING MEMORANDUM

TO: SPCSA Board
FROM: Patrick Gavin
SUBJECT: Agenda Items 10: Amendment Request from Silver State Charter School
DATE: September 28, 2015

Background:

Silver State Charter School seeks approval to change the school schedule and operating structure of the school mid-year. The school, which is among the lowest performing in the state and has a written charter which is scheduled to expire at the end of the 2015-16 school year, is in receipt of Notices of Breach due to both academic and organizational performance. The school, which has a new leader, is seeking to move from a 4 day school week to a 5-day school week and is seeking to convert the school from an open campus program with a more flexible student schedule to a closed campus program with a more structured approach. There has been some staff and student objection to this mid-year change.

Analysis:

The school's history of poor performance in multiple domains is well documented and it has been evident for some time that the school needed to make dramatic changes to reverse its trajectory. From a general programmatic perspective, the proposed changes seem reasonable and, had they been implemented in prior years, might well have resulted in some improvement in the school's academic performance. It is important to note, however, that there will be little or no opportunity for the school to provide sufficient valid and reliable data on the impact of this change prior to any decision to close the school or to invite the school to submit a renewal application. The Authority must base both its staff recommendations and its Board decisions on clear and unambiguous results, not on last ditch efforts, however sincere and well-thought through. Consequently, it is unlikely that the disruption caused by such midyear changes will be mitigated by any impact the prospect of ongoing operation.

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Conversely, the school's long track record of underperformance raises the specter of several hundred young people being under-served under the current academic model. To the extent that these changes can have some impact on the academic outcomes for the school's remaining student body, there is merit in implementing such changes.

Recommendation:

Based on the potential for some positive academic impact on the students enrolled at the school, however limited, staff recommend that the Board approve this amendment request with the proviso that no last minute initiative, however laudable, will influence the Board's evaluation of the school's performance for the purposes of upholding any Notice of Closure or arriving at a decision to renew or not renew the school.