



STATE PUBLIC CHARTER SCHOOL AUTHORITY

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BRIEFING MEMORANDUM

TO: SPCSA Board
FROM: Patrick Gavin, Executive Director
Mark Modrcin, Director of Authorizing
SUBJECT: Learning Bridge amendment request pursuant to NAC 386.3265
DATE: January 26, 2017

Learning Bridge Charter School (LBCS), operating under a charter contract entered into in 2013, is located in Ely, Nevada, and is currently ranked as a 3-star school serving 179 students in Kindergarten through 8th grade. LBCS is requesting an amendment to its charter contract to allow it to relocate to a new facility for the 2020 – 2021 school year, with no increase in grade levels or enrollment. As discussed below, staff recommends approval of the amendment request, with conditions.

Summary of Request:

LBCS focuses on preparing students to enter life in the twenty-first century with skills necessary for success in an ever-changing world. The mission of LBCS is to ensure that students receive the best education possible and obtain the necessary skills, knowledge and confidence to succeed in their future. LBCS currently serves 179 (as of Validation Day - October 2nd) students, with approximately 74 students on the waitlist.

This school is currently located in a 12,000 square foot building that was constructed approximately 50 years ago. In 2013, LBCS entered into a seven year lease with the Shoshone Sovereign Nation Tribe. Since that time, LBCS has added two modular buildings so as to accommodate the full growth plan of the school, Kindergarten through 8th grade. Furthermore, a new truck stop and casino were recently constructed which have created safety questions and concerns among parents and constituents.

LBCS is requesting an amendment to their current charter so as to allow the school to build a new campus, ultimately relocating classes to that new facility beginning in the 2020 – 2021 school year. The new facility will provide more useable room that will accommodate changes in the physical education program. Additionally, the proposed campus will be in a comfortable, traditional

residential setting. That, coupled with the size of the site, will result in more adequate parking, greater landscape and outdoor improvements and safer loading and unloading of children.

It should be noted that LBCS is not requesting to expand to additional grades, campuses, or to enroll additional students in pre-approved grades. Rather, this request is solely to relocate to a new campus for the 2020 – 2021 school year.

Legal Authority and Requirements Related to Amendment Requests:

Pursuant to NRS 388A.276 and NRS 388A.279, the Authority may, at a duly noticed public meeting, approve, approve with conditions, or deny a request to amend a charter contract. Specifically, a charter school may apply to amend its charter contract to add additional grade levels, increase or decrease enrollment, acquiring additional facilities (including relocation), or consolidating existing facilities. Section 7(2)(f) of R089-16A (effective December 21, 2016) provides that an amendment requesting permission to relocation to a new facility which will not have the effect of increasing enrollment must be approved by the Authority. This approval cannot be delegated to Authority staff.

The Authority must deny any such amendment request if the charter school is not meeting the requirements established in the performance framework incorporated into each charter contract, or if the charter school does not have a comprehensive and feasible plan related to the proposed amendment. Furthermore, Nevada’s regulations related to charter schools allows the Authority to deny a request to amend its charter contract to occupy a new or additional facility if the charter school is not ranked in the first, second, or third tier of Nevada’s statewide system for accountability for public schools. See NAC 386.3265 and NAC 386.3266. Finally, when considering a request to amend a charter contract, the Authority may consider the charter school’s compliance with local, state, and federal laws and regulations related to the charter school’s academic, financial and organizational framework and performance. See Section 7 of R089-16A. Additionally, Section 9 of R089-16A provides that the Authority may impose conditions on the approval of a charter contract or a charter contract amendment.

Recommendation: Approve with Conditions

LBCS has been classified as at least a 3-star school since the inception of the Star rating system, and exhibits both a healthy enrollment and waitlist. Furthermore, the current facility LBCS occupies is less than ideal for a number of reasons, most notably student safety.

The school is targeting the 2020 – 2021 school year to open the new campus, affording over two years for the school to approve work permits, survey and rescore the property, hold community meetings, design and construct the facility, and pass final inspections for occupancy. Additionally, the school is financially viable, and is able to take on additional debt and costs to complete this project without jeopardizing the school.

SPCSA recommends approval, but with conditions that ensure the school remains financially stable and construction remains on schedule ([Attachment 8A](#)), allowing for students to begin class for the 2020 – 2021 school year on time. The following should be submitted by the school to SPCSA:

- Quarterly financial reports, beginning for Quarter 1 of 2018
- Proof of purchase for the property

- Building inspector report
- Final Inspection of the new facility
- All other materials required by state and federal law and regulation

It should be noted that the charter for LBCS expires on June 30, 2019. This conditional approval does not supersede that obligation, nor does it imply that the school will be renewed. A renewal decision will be made separately at a public meeting through a vote of the SPCSA Board. However, if the school were currently up for renewal, staff would have a positive recommendation given available data and historical performance. At the time of renewal in the 2018-19 school year, the staff recommendation will rely upon the academic, financial and organizational performance of the school during the entire charter term along with any renewal request.

Enrollment – Current and Projected:

Grade Level	Total Enrollment All Existing Campuses – Current and Projected					
	2017-18	2018-19	2019-20	2020-21*	2021-22	2022-23
Pre-K	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
K	21	20	20	20	20	20
1	20	20	20	20	20	20
2	21	20	20	20	20	20
3	20	20	20	20	20	20
4	20	20	20	20	20	20
5	21	20	20	20	20	20
6	20	20	20	20	20	20
7	19	20	20	20	20	20
8	17	20	20	20	20	20
9	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
10	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
11	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
12	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Total	179	180	180	180	180	180

* LCBS proposes to relocate to the new facility during the 2020 – 2021 school year.

Background:

Learning Bridge Charter School Academic Performance

School Year	Performance
2012-2013	Not Rated
2013-2014	3 Star (Elementary)
2014-2015	3 Star (Elementary)
2015-2016	N/A
2016-2017	3 Star (Elementary) and 5 star (Middle)

School Demographics since 2013

Year	Enrollment	AI/AN	A	H	B	W	PI	2/MR	IEP	ELL	FRL
2013-2014	118	7.3%	0.9%	25.7%	-	63.3%	1.8%%	0.9%	0.0%	2.8%	35.8%
2014-2015	151	8.6%	-	21.9%	-	66.2%	1.3%	2.0%	11.3%	2.0%	33.8%
2015-2016	174	4.6%	-	24.7%	-	67.2%	1.1%	2.3%	8.6%	4.0%	25.9%
2016-2017	181	3.9%	-	18.2%	-	74.0%	1.1%	2.8%	13.2%	4.0%	10.0%
2017-2018	179	3.4%	0.6%	20.1%	-	72.1%	1.1%	2.8%	13.4%	3.9%	

AI/AN – American Indian/Alaskan Native

A – Asian

H – Hispanic

B – Black

W - White

PI – Pacific Islander

2/MR – Two or more races

IEP – Individualized Education Plan –A student with a disability/special education student

ELL – English Language Learner

FRL – A student who qualifies for Free or Reduced-Price Lunch

LCBS was approved by the State Public Charter School Authority in _____, and currently operates under a charter contract. The school has not received any notices of concern or breach related to its academic, financial, or organizational performance. The elementary school is currently rated as a 3 star program, while the middle schools is rated as a 5 star program.