

STATE PUBLIC CHARTER SCHOOL AUTHORITY



2019 CALL FOR QUALITY CHARTER SCHOOLS SUMMER CYCLE REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS

Schools Opening Fall 2020 and Beyond

MS Word Application Template

Application Track B:

**Start-Up Applicant (Committee to Form) Seeking to Operate With a Management Agreement
With a Non-Profit or For-Profit Educational Management Organization**

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1. SPCSA Charter Proposal Cover Sheet

Identify the **primary point of contact** for your team. Barring a change in the makeup of the founding group, this will likely be the liaison identified in the Notice of Intent. This individual will serve as the contact for all communications, scheduling, and notices regarding your application. The Primary Contact is expected to ensure that your team receives all general communications promptly. Please note that, as with all aspects of your application, names and contact information of the Primary Contact will become public information. Please note that neither the Primary Contact nor any other member of the Committee to Form may be an employee of a proposed vendor, including an educational management organization.

Primary contact person: Annette Dawson Owens

Mailing address:

Street/PO Box: 2632 Sunday Grace Drive

City: Henderson State NV Zip 89052

Phone Number: day 702-336-5149 evening 702-336-5149

Fax Number: _____ Email: annette@nevadastrongacademy.org

Name of team or entity applying: Nevada Strong Academy Charter School

- ☐ Track A
- ☒ Track B
- ☐ Track C
- ☐ Track D

Provide a brief description of your school that includes the name, the mission, grades served and other information you would like to include in a brief communication of this type. Your description will be used by the sponsor to provide information to the public about applicants and, for approved schools, new charter schools.

The mission of Nevada Strong Academy is to prepare every student to be college and career ready to lead in their community and world by sparking curiosity and providing students with an exceptional, well-rounded education through high-quality instruction, rigorous curriculum, and character development.

Our school will serve students in kindergarten through twelfth grade and our mission informs our daily activities and students' classroom experiences. We provide a joyful, safe, caring and collaborative atmosphere. Our curriculum features a quality student centered program with an emphasis on STREAMS-Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics, as well as reading, art and social-emotional learning (SEL). Our mission guides us in targeted, intentional and purposeful design and decisions that impact every element of our school.

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Names, roles, and current employment of all persons on applicant team (add lines as needed):

Full Name	Current Job Title and Employer	Position with Proposed School
Soner Tarim	Co-Founder of Nevada Strong	Founder
Annette Dawson Owens	Co-Founder of Nevada Strong	Founder
Carrie Buck	Fundraising/Pinecrest Foundation	Board Member
Sam Castor	Legal Counsel/Switch	Board Member
Monty Coon	Director/Artificial Intelligence	Board Member
Lindsey Dalley	Dentist/Dalley Dental	Board Member
Andy Hafen	Retired Mayor	Board Chair
Kurt Harris	Attorney/Harris Law Firm	Board Member
David Jones	Manager/Northern Trust	Board Treasurer
Bea Soares	Business advisor/SCORE	Board Vice Chair
Amy Trombetti	Director/SPEDCO	Board Member

Does this applicant team, charter management organization, or education management organization have charter school applications under consideration by any other authorizer(s) in the United States? ☐ Yes ☒ No

If yes, complete the table below, adding lines as needed.

State	Authorizer	Proposed School Name	Application Due Date	Decision Date

Does this applicant team, charter management organization, or education management organization have new schools scheduled to open elsewhere in the United States in the 2018-19 or 2019-20 school years? ☐ Yes ☒ No

If yes, complete the table below, adding lines as needed.

Proposed School Name	City	State	Opening Date

School Name (add lines as needed):

Proposed School Name(s)*	Opening Year	Grades served Year 1	Grades served at capacity

(a) Planned Enrollment (Must Correspond to Budget Worksheet Assumptions)

	2020-21	2021-22	2022-23	2023-24	2024-25	2025-26
K	112	112	112	112	112	112
1	84	112	112	112	112	112
2	56	84	112	112	112	112
3	56	56	84	112	112	112
4	56	56	56	84	112	112
5	50	56	56	56	84	112
6		39	112	112	112	112
7			30	67	112	112
8					52	112
9						4
10						
11						
12						
Total	414	515	674	767	920	1012

Nevada law currently permits an operator to contract with for-profit and non-profit education management organizations and education service providers.

Does the proposed school intend to contract or partner with an education management organization (EMO) or education service provider (ESP) or other organization to provide school management services? <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	
If yes, identify the EMO/ESP:	Royal School

Effective January 1, 2016, Nevada law permits authorizers to enter into charter contracts to nonprofit charter management organizations which directly hold a charter in another state as well as to Nevada non-profit corporations formed for the purpose of applying for a charter in conjunction with such a CMO.

Is the applicant for the proposed school a charter management organization (CMO) or a Nevada non-profit corporation formed for the purpose of applying for a charter in conjunction with a CMO? <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No	
If yes, identify the CMO and any affiliated NV non-profit:	

Applicant Certification:

Annette Dawson Owens

July 15, 2019

Signature

Date

Annette Dawson Owens
Printed Name:

2. Executive Summary

4 Page Limit

Provide a brief overview of your proposed school, including:

- (a) An overview of the mission and vision for the school
- (b) Proposed model and target community
- (c) The outcomes you expect to achieve
- (d) The key components of your educational model
- (e) The values, approach, and leadership accomplishments of your school leader or leadership team
- (f) Key supporters, partners, or resources that will contribute to your school's success

(a) Provide a brief overview of the mission and vision for the school

The mission of Nevada Strong Academy is to prepare every student to be college and career ready to lead in their community and world by sparking curiosity and providing students with an exceptional, well-rounded education through high-quality instruction, rigorous curriculum, and character development.

In Las Vegas, there are disparities in academic attainment between minority students and their Caucasian peers and between students from low-income families and their more affluent peers. Nevada Strong Charter School exists to both extinguish the Achievement Gap and raise the collective level of performance for all students by providing educational excellence to students and families in Las Vegas. We believe that providing students and families access to a rigorous, college-preparatory academic program in a structured environment of high expectations will break the cycle of underperformance and change the life trajectories of the students we serve.

Our vision for Nevada Strong is to deliver learning experiences that equip students with the knowledge and social-emotional skills necessary for them to be curious, knowledgeable, responsible, and well-rounded future leaders.

We envision equity and excellence for all. Starting in kindergarten and continuing into high school, we prepare students for a rigorous college preparatory study and pursuit of their lives goals and dreams. Students who graduate from our school will have a clear picture of what college looks like, will be able to understand what is required for entrance, and they will have the knowledge, skills, and test scores to position them to open college and career doors.

(b) Proposed model and target community

The importance of education in today's global economy cannot be overstated. Yet, by any objective measure, educators are failing to prepare the vast majority of our students. At Nevada Strong, we will focus our collective efforts to overcoming this trend and setting our students on the path to success in high school, college, and beyond. Nevada Strong's model rests on three major pillars that lead to success: high-quality instruction, rigorous academics, culture, and values that connect students with the community. The value of these seemingly simple pillars is not in their identification but in the implementation of our model.

Our first pillar of success, high-quality instruction, will be realized by supporting great teachers within a school that is modeled around using academic data to inform the instruction students receive constantly. Collecting data in real time allows intervention/extension activities to be

provided quickly – often the same day. Data will inform lesson plans and instructional strategies as it will be a common theme throughout our professional development and processes of continuous improvement.

Rigorous academics, our second pillar, begins with a foundation of proven curriculums that have been successful in student populations that mirror our own. Starting with curriculum and assessments that are already aligned to state standards allows teachers to spend time analyzing data and responding to student needs.

Our third pillar speaks to the Core Values at Nevada Strong. Excellent academics are the primary focus of a school, but developing culture and character should not be sacrificed in the quest for higher test scores. We know that incorporating our S.T.R.O.N.G. values, Scholar, Team, Resilience, Optimism, Noble, Gracious into our daily routines and discussions will ultimately build a community of confidence, support, and even greater success.

Target Community:

In order to provide an excellent K-12 education option to families and students who do not currently have access to one in the heart of our city, we will strategically locate near disadvantaged students who do not have access to a high-quality school. Students who are experiencing high poverty, who are at risk of dropping out or failing in school, students who are disengaged because they do not have access to a high-quality educational outcome, those whose needs are not being met, whether they be English language learners, special education students or students dealing with trauma, all are a target and focus of Nevada Strong Academy.

(c) The outcomes you expect to achieve

By starting in kindergarten, ensuring our entire program is aligned to rigorous high school standards, and by using quantitative student performance to drive instruction, Nevada Strong will create a dynamic, responsive, and supportive environment that is centered on realizing the full potential of all students.

We expect students, upon graduation, be college and career ready performing at or above grade level in all subjects, with every option and avenue open to them for post-secondary experiences. We expect them to be confident, capable connected individuals due to the high quality, caring, and personalized education they receive at Nevada Strong Academy.

(d) The key components of your educational model

At the center of our educational model and instructional program are nine core components: 1) Rigorous curriculum and instruction; 2) Assessment and academic progress monitoring; 3) Addressing the needs of special populations; 4) Highly effective teacher development; 5) Social and emotional learning; 6) College, career and military readiness; 7) Extracurricular activities and enrichment; 8) Parent engagement, and 9) Classroom management through clear protocols and procedures.

These nine core elements are our non-negotiables and equip all students, including students with disabilities and English language learners to learn and achieve as we understand their individual needs and work to meet them.

In addition, we focus on the fundamental five, which are strategies every teacher uses to improve educational outcomes for students. We utilize double blocks of instruction in reading and math as well as daily fluency practice in both subjects. We personalize learning through the project and place-based learning and serve the whole child through STREAMS360, which, besides a strong STEM focus, attends to reading, arts, and social-emotional learning for students.

(e) The values, approach, and leadership accomplishments of your school leader or leadership team

Nevada Strong believes in creating a culture of care and respect for all staff, students, and teachers. Our approach is targeted, intentional, and purposeful in all that we do throughout the school. Our team is determined, enthusiastic, well versed, and equipped to address all students' educational and emotional needs, including students with disabilities and English language learners. We believe every student can learn and achieve when their individual needs are understood and met.

The vast experience of our Founding Team positions Nevada Strong as uniquely capable of success. Soner Tarim's track record of excellence is often the standard to which other schools are held. He has already proven that he will be successful in founding schools under ideal and difficult conditions. He brings with him a career of best practices; lessons learned, tips, tricks, and experiences in serving our students, families, teachers, and community.

Annette Dawson Owens, our school co-founder, is in the midst of an incredible journey preparing to open a school. Capitalizing on her years of experience and community connections, including school relationships across the country, she has learned from dozens of high-performing schools. By combining this knowledge with her decades of experience in the classroom and assembling a governing board with specialized skills and deep community interests, Dawson Owens is equipped to create a school that changes the lives of each and every student. That is Nevada Strong.

(f) Key supporters, partners, or resources that will contribute to your school's success

Key supporters and partners, as well as resources that will contribute to our schools success, are Project Lead the Way, Uncommon Training, The Public Education Foundation, Project and Place-Based Learning Organizations, The Boy Scouts of America, Shaan Patel's Prep Expert/Shark Tank, partnerships with local colleges and universities, Teach For America, and countless non-profits throughout the community.

3. Meeting the Need

TARGETED PLAN

- (1) Identify the community you wish to serve and describe your interest in serving this specific community.

In Clark County alone, there are over 360,000 specific reasons we want to start a school. Each of these students are part of our future; every student has a story to tell, and most of our young scholars are underserved. Nevada Strong is designed around the central mission of serving students in underserved areas and providing choice in their education and control over their future.

While Nevada's recent results have improved slightly, it is still consistently at or near the bottom in ACT scores nationally¹. With a composite score of 17.5, only 11 percent of the state's high school juniors are college and career ready. Data from the Department of Education's website shows the results of the 2017 NAEP. By 8th grade, only 27% of students were proficient in math, and 28% were proficient in reading. This knowledge gap starts even earlier than in middle school. By 4th grade, only 31% of students were proficient in both math and reading. In a sea of discouraging data, results for African American and Latino students were even worse. Black and Hispanic students' results on the NAEP are roughly 20 percent lower in all four categories.

Our students, after attending thirteen years of school, should not need remedial courses before starting on their college and career paths. If this is the case, the system has failed and has not been designed in targeted, intentional, and purposeful ways as it should and could be. Nevada Strong is interested in serving the community to make a difference in college and career readiness.

Given the clear need for high-quality seats across the state, Nevada Strong has chosen two specific areas of focus:

1. zip code 89119 (including 89169)
2. zip code 89106 (including 89107, 89108)

The 89106 Zip Code is home to two 1-star elementary schools, five 2-star elementary schools, one 1-star middle school, and one 2-star middle school.

Within a four-mile radius of zip code 89106, there are twenty elementary schools serving 12,486 elementary students who are currently attending one and two-star performing schools. Eighteen of the twenty schools have student populations that are 100% free and reduced lunch. Half of these students have 40% or more ELL students.

The 89119 Zip Code is home to two 2-star elementary schools, and the only middle school is one star.

Within a four-mile radius of zip code 89119, there are six elementary schools serving 4378 elementary students who are currently attending one and two-star performing schools. 2 All schools are 100% free and reduced lunch. Four out of the six one and two-star schools have 40% or more ELL students. Nevada Strong is committed to serving our most underserved students;

¹ http://www.doe.nv.gov/News__Media/Press_Releases/2018/Nevada_ACT_Scores_Improve/

² <https://opportunity180.org>

specifically, students who qualify for free/reduced lunch and students who are learning English as their second language.

As seen across Clark County (and across the country) the trend is for large numbers of students in urban areas to attend the lowest performing schools. Research confirms both the collective underperformance of our students and specific achievement gaps that African American and Latino students must overcome.

We wish to serve students in an area of need and have identified facilities in the above two locations as we considered possible areas to serve and partnerships. Public charter schools can play a key role in working alongside the local school district to help solve the education equity problem in Clark County.

- (2) Explain how your model, and the commitment Explain how your model, and the commitment to serve this population, including the grade levels you have chosen, would meet the district and community needs and align with the mission of the SPCSA.

Our model has nine distinct pillars, including high-quality instruction, rigorous curriculum, and character development which, together, will provide an excellent and equitable education for all. Our proposed STREAMS-360 Project Based Learning model will fortify the foundational skills of students and prepare them to face academic challenges at the high school and college levels. Practical application of knowledge will be encouraged so that students can broaden their horizons and preview what their professional lives are going to be like. Our innovative approach will be targeted, intentional, and purposeful. Through our project based and blended learning components of our educational plan, we'll create personalized learning paths for all students in grades K-12 in order to meet the needs of each student. This, in concert with a strong program to support students socially and emotionally, will prepare our students to be college and career ready.

Our model aligns with the SPCSA's mission of increasing student achievement while being innovative in our design and personalized approach to serve students. Students currently have limited access to a high-quality school, and Nevada Strong would provide an option in excellence and equity for all.

PARENT AND COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT

- (1) Describe the role to date of any parents, neighborhood, and/or community members involved in the development of the proposed school.

In addition to providing updated information via our school website and interacting on social media, we have also focused on cultivating interactive opportunities for students, parents, and families to ask questions and provide feedback. We have hosted community information sessions and tabling events. We have attended monthly community events to speak with parents about our school, offer families the opportunity to provide input, and distribute 'intent to enroll' forms. These surveys and direct conversations have given parents an intentional opportunity to express their desires and priorities for their child's education.

The Nevada Strong board has met extensively with key community members including our mayors, the speaker of the assembly, and the governor. Our board members have met with members of the education committee, commissioners, assemblymen, and senators. We have reached out to local politicians, city and business leaders, traditional district education leaders, national charter network leaders, and major colleges and universities both locally and nationally.

Our co-founder has a rich history of being active in education locally. She's involved in Community Education Advisory Boards, various educational committees (including Title One), School Organizational Teams and has actively engaged with local universities. She's continuously seeking opportunities for continued professional development and remains active in the community through My Brother's Keeper. She was selected for the Public Education Executive Leadership cohort and trained monthly by local and national educational experts that helped inform the design of Nevada Strong.

Parents have influenced the design of our school by encouraging us to focus on student engagement and personalized learning pathways that meet the needs of each individual student. A culture of care, as well as a safe learning environment, are desires expressed by parents as well as students. Nevada Strong has developed targeted, intentional, and purposeful practices that will be implemented in the school, such as daily affirmations for both teachers and students, as well as professional development before school begins. Teachers will practice and be ready on day one, before students ever enter the building, with routines and procedures that maximize outcomes for students.

- (2) Describe how you will engage parents, neighborhood, and community members from the time that the application is approved through the opening of the school. What specific strategies will be implemented to establish buy-in and to learn parent priorities and concerns during the transition process and post opening?

Post-authorization, Nevada Strong will engage parents, neighborhood and community members by continuing our purposeful outreach efforts already underway. We'll leverage our relationships with community organizations, local businesses, early childhood facilities, and churches to help us inform parents and families about the opportunity for their child(ren). Our board will continue to build on the business and community relationships we have already established to engage more families in our target community.

Several members of our Founding Board have extensive experience in start-up charter schools and marketing. Specific strategies to establish buy-in and continue to discuss parents' priorities and concerns during the transition process and post opening include: door-to-door canvassing, boots-on-the-ground events to pass out flyers, interactive social media outreach, information sessions and town hall meetings, radio interviews, and a commitment that our outreach efforts (fliers, postcards, enrollment forms, information sheets) will be available in English and Spanish. As a Founding Team, we fully understand that enrollment will rely on energetic mobilization of the relationships and connections within our community. Parent engagement is a two-way street, and ample opportunities will be given for parents to provide feedback through surveys, through question and answer periods, through open communication and listening tours.

- (3) Describe your plan for engaging parents/families in the life of the school, in addition to any proposed governance roles related to students' parents/guardians. Explain the plan for building family-school partnerships that strengthen student support and academic outcomes and how the school will encourage parental involvement. Describe any expectations for parent volunteering.

Nevada Strong's plan for engaging parents/families in the life of the school starts with every child receiving a home visit. We will create a Family Advisory Council/School Organizational Team/PTO that meets monthly and consists of parents and staff members.

We will elect a parent to serve as a member of the Nevada Strong Academy Board. We will leverage the board and school leaders' personal connections within the community to bring in resources that would be most helpful to our families.

Nevada Strong will have an open door policy and believes every parent is an asset and strengthens our school culture. We will have a family questionnaire to capture our parents' skill sets and their desires to be involved in the school. We will have regular surveys, weekly check-ins with parents regarding their student, monthly family night events, which depending on the expressed desires of our parents could include guest speakers, resume writing workshops, job fairs, etc. Our parents will be invited to regular college visits, and student-led parent teacher conferences at our school.

- (4) Discuss the community resources that will be available to students and parents. Describe any strategic partnerships the school will have with community organizations, businesses, or other educational institutions that are part of the school's core mission, vision, and program other than the EMO identified in the application or dual-credit partners discussed in subsequent sections. Specify the nature, purposes, terms, and scope of services of any such partnerships, including any fee-based or in-kind commitments from community organizations or individuals that will enrich student-learning opportunities. Include, as Attachment 1, existing evidence of support from community partners such as letters of intent/commitment, memoranda of understanding, and/or contracts.

Nevada Strong's founder has deep roots working within the community and established relationships. The school will continue to formalize countless additional relationships with preschool partners such as Accelero and Strong Start, with community centers such as the Boys and Girls Clubs, the Cambridge Community Center, Dolittle Community Center, with countless mentoring organizations such as Tulip, Big Brothers Big Sisters, JAG-Jobs for America's Graduates, 100 Black Men of NV, with community libraries such as the Clark County Library and Clark County West Las Vegas Library.

Nevada Strong has discussed our school and made contact with local sports leaders such as the Raiders, the Lights, the Aces, the 51s, the Aviators. We continue to build awareness with non-profits and organizations that serve at-risk youth such as Shade Tree, St. Jude's, Veteran's Village, the Harbor, Casa Luz, Three Square, and the Police Department. We will continue to build relationships with local places of worship embedded in the community such as Victory Baptist Church, Casa Luz, New Jerusalem Worship Center, etc. In addition, Nevada Strong has built relationships within the Latin Chamber, the Urban Chamber, the Henderson Chamber of Commerce the Clark County Black Caucus chair, and attended numerous gatherings, meet and greet events.

In addition, a number of community partners are available and eager to partner with Nevada Strong when services are desired by parents or staff that will enrich students' lives in aftercare programs or at times within the school day. Community resources that will be available to students and parents include college and university partnerships, as well as after-school activities made possible by organizations such as the Boy and Girl Scouts of America, Coding, Think Law, and Music, Leadership Training, etc.

- (5) Describe the group's ties to and/or knowledge of the target community. What initiatives and/or strategies will you implement to learn from and engage the neighborhood, community, and broader city?

Nevada Strong has ties to and knowledge of our target community through direct involvement with My Brother's Keeper, long term relationships with the local universities, and by sitting on a variety of Boards and Committees including: the Community Education Advisory Board, Title 1 Committee, School Reorganization efforts, school organization teams, the Public Education Foundation's Executive Leadership Academy, and School Leader's Council.

We will leverage our community partners to provide our students opportunities through speaking engagements, project-based learning, field trips, and other interactive experiences. In keeping with our commitment to literacy, these community-based experiences will be woven into a language arts lesson unit or project as appropriate. Starting in kindergarten, Nevada Strong students will have opportunities to participate in and be exposed to experiences that provide them enhanced academic and personal development as well as service opportunities in the community. Our students will have annual opportunities to broaden their horizons and serve the community. As students get older, naturally, the level of the project will advance. By graduation, students will complete a "Capstone" level project. We will provide the necessary supports and scaffolding for students, but we will use this opportunity to develop their skills and confidence and connect to the community as we prepare them for success in college and careers.

To continue to learn from the community and engage the neighborhood, upon authorization, we will provide STREAM360 activities for the target community. This will allow us to highlight our STEM focus combined with literacy to get parents and students excited about learning and attending Nevada Strong. Our school leaders have training and connections to Project Lead the Way, and we will highlight and connect college and career paths as an integral part of our mission.

Nevada Strong is also committed to recruiting mentors and has connected with mentor groups who want to be involved in schools and make a difference in the lives of our students. In addition, our co-founder has made connections with our homeless and foster advocates in the community and will continue to see that our most underserved have the opportunity to access Nevada Strong Academy.

- (6) Identify any organizations, agencies, or consultants that are partners in planning and establishing the school, along with a brief description of their current and planned role and any resources they have contributed or plan to contribute to the school's development. If much of the founding group and/or the EMO contractor is new to Nevada, describe how your previous work has prepared you to establish relationships and supports in this new community.

Amy Trombetti of Spedco-Special Education Consulting Services (SPEDCO) provides schools with exceptional services and coaching regarding support, professional development, and federal law compliance. This allows special education teachers/directors the ability to focus on their student's educational needs. She was a school administrator with Utah Charter Schools and spent 10 years as a Special Education Teacher and Facilitator with Clark County School District. She has a B.S. in Education/Special Education from UNLV, Administrations and Supervision from the University of Phoenix and is Mediation/Conflict Resolution certified from the University of Utah.

In addition, Soner Tarim founder of Harmony Schools, successfully serving urban students in Texas and whose bio is attached is providing any and all necessary support to the successful launch of Nevada Strong.