



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: American Preparatory Academy Charter Contract Amendment Request: Expansion Pursuant to NAC 386.3265 (additional campus and increase in enrollment)

DATE: June 28, 2018

American Preparatory Academy, operating under a charter contract entered into in 2014, is located in Las Vegas, Nevada, and is currently rated as a 4-star elementary school and 5-star middle school serving 1,554 students in Kindergarten through 11th grade. In the 2020-2021 school year, American Preparatory Academy seeks to open a second campus with grades Kindergarten – 6th grade campus in Clark County. As discussed below, Staff recommends approval of the amendment request, with conditions

Summary of Request:

American Preparatory Academy's mission is to provide an orderly, safe and nurturing learning environment wherein content-rich, efficient curriculum and research-based instructional methodologies are utilized to ensure that every student achieves academic success. American Preparatory Academy served 1,554 students (as of Validation Day - October 2nd) in the Las Vegas metropolitan area during the 2017 – 2018 school year, with another 2,679 students on their waitlist as of the time of their amendment submission in April.

In the 2020-2021 school year, American Preparatory Academy seeks to open a second campus with grades Kindergarten – 6th grade campus in Clark County. The proposal states that, if approved, the second Las Vegas campus would create many additional elementary school seats, which matches the demand from students and the community. Furthermore, a second campus will provide the space needed to enroll students from the waiting list while also helping American Preparatory Academy configure a more sustainable model in Nevada. The local governing Board will determine the final location of the second campus, if approved, in coordination with American Preparatory Academy's current EMO, American Preparatory Schools, Inc. To minimize the chances that this new school would not be financially viable in the short-term, it is important to note

that only 25% of the current waitlist would need to enroll to completely fill the proposed second Las Vegas campus.

The proposed school will help American Preparatory Academy create a more viable network in Nevada. In Utah, the model of having two, Kindergarten – 6th grade elementary schools which feed into one 7th – 12th grade secondary school has proven very effective. Replicating this strategy will provide the ideal numbers of students to feed into the secondary school, and permit the school to expand course offerings. As noted above, the school has a large wait list and this expansion will allow more families the opportunity to educate their students in this high-quality program. The submitted plan also details various steps the school is taking to mitigate any risks that could derail a successful opening of this campus. First, the submitted plan notes that while securing a facility and reasonable financing is often an obstacle for new schools, their EMO has successfully sought and opened property for eight other campuses across two states. American Preparatory Academy also notes that strong school expansion proposals require robust talent pipelines to ensure a new school is staffed with high-quality instructional leaders. The school notes that recruiting for elementary positions tends to be a bit easier than secondary, but that they will be able to rely on their EMO for recruiting teachers both in and outside of Nevada. The proposal also details that the school plans to fill many of the new leadership positions at the second school internally with individuals that are currently performing at a very high level.

It is noteworthy that American Preparatory Academy makes a strong commitment in their amendment application to expand the opportunity for all students to attend their programs, including a pledge to implement a weighted lottery. The school also plans to continue to recruit prospective students through door-to-door campaigns, billboards and flyers, especially within 2-miles of the final school location.

Legal Authority and Requirements Related to Amendment Requests:

[NRS 388A.279](#) provides that the Authority may hold a public hearing concerning any request from a charter to amend a charter contract, including:

- Increasing the total enrollment of a charter school or the enrollment of pupils in a particular grade level in the charter school for a school year to more than 120 percent of the enrollment prescribed in the written charter or charter contract for that school year.
- Seeking to acquire an additional facility in any county of this State to expand the enrollment of the charter school.

The specific requirements for amending a charter contract to acquire and occupy a new or additional facility can be found in [NAC 386.3265](#) et seq. and Section 7 of R089-16A.

Recommendation:

American Preparatory Academy is classified as a 4-star elementary school and a 5-star middle school according to the 2016-17 Star rating system, and exhibits both a healthy enrollment and waitlist.

The school is targeting the 2020 – 2021 school year to open the new campus, affording over twenty-four months for the school to find a final location, approve work permits, survey and rescore the property, hold community meetings, design and construct the facility, and pass final inspections for occupancy. This will parallel similar processes that the organization, particularly the EMO,

underwent when opening its previous eight campuses across both Nevada and Utah. Additionally, the school is financially viable, and has not been issued a notice for problematic financial performance. Authority staff trusts that the school is able to take on additional debt and costs to complete this project without jeopardizing the current campus.

SPCSA recommends approval, but with conditions that ensure the school remains financially stable and construction remains on schedule, 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 2019
- Proof of purchase, facility or rental agreement
- Building inspector report (if purchased)
- Final Inspection of the new facility
- All other materials required by state and federal law and regulation

It should be noted that the current charter for American Preparatory Academy expires on June 30, 2020. This conditional approval does not supersede that obligation, and the renewal of the American Preparatory charter will be considered by the Board at a later date.

Total Current Enrollment Across All Campuses:

Grade Level	Total Amount Across All Existing Campuses - Number of Students			
	2014-15	2015-16	2016-17	2017-18
Pre-K	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
K	73	168	99	100
1	64	171	164	99
2	60	160	165	165
3	59	161	165	165
4	34	213	132	161
5	31	162	197	132
6	28	124	162	196
7	20	94	118	183
8	23	65	90	136
9	18	77	58	81
10	N/A	29	55	60
11	N/A	N/A	28	47
12	N/A	N/A	N/A	29
Total	410	1424	1434	1554

Proposed Expanded Enrollment for the Additional Campus:

Grade Level	Total Amount Across All Existing Campuses - Number of Students					
	2018-19	2019-20	2020-21	2021-22	2022-23	2023-24
Pre-K	0	0	0	0	0	0
K	0	0	100	100	100	100
1	0	0	90	90	90	90
2	0	0	90	90	90	90
3	0	0	90	90	90	90
4	0	0	90	90	90	90
5	0	0	90	90	90	90
6	0	0	90	90	90	90
7	0	0	0	0	0	0
8	0	0	0	0	0	0
9	0	0	0	0	0	0
10	0	0	0	0	0	0
11	0	0	0	0	0	0
12	0	0	0	0	0	0
Total	0	0	640	640	640	640

Full Enrollment if Approved:

If the SPCSA approves this amendment request, American Preparatory Academy will expand from one to two campuses and will grow from an enrollment of approximately 1,554 students in 2017-2018 to approximately 2,240 students in the 2020-2021 school year.

Background:

American Preparatory Academy Academic Performance

Year	NSPF Rating
2014	Elementary: N/A-New School Middle School: N/A-New School High School: N/A-New School
2015	Elementary: N/A (frozen from 2014) Middle School: N/A (frozen from 2014) High School: N/A (frozen from 2014)
2016	No star rating published by State
2017	Elementary: 4 Star Middle School: 5 Star High School: N/A

School Demographic Change since 2015

American Prep	TOTAL ENROLLED	A	B	C	H	I	M	P	IEP	ELL	FRL
15-16	1424	14.3%	12.6%	42.6%	19.4%	0.3%	8.0%	1.8%	4.2%	6.6%	9.2%
American Prep	TOTAL ENROLLED	A	B	C	H	I	M	P	IEP	ELL	FRL
16-17	1434	16.1%	12.9%	43.4%	18.5%	0.4%	6.6%	1.8%	5.3%	3.1%	2.7%
American Prep	TOTAL ENROLLED	A	B	C	H	I	M	P	IEP	ELL	FRL
17-18	1554	16.9%	14.6%	41.3%	18.3%	0.2%	5.7%	2.6%	5.2%	3.1%	0.0%

A – Asian

B – Black

C - White

H – Hispanic

I – American Indian/Alaskan Native

M – Two or more races

P – Pacific Islander

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