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BRIEFING MEMORANDUM

TO: SPCSA Board
FROM: Mark Modrcin, Director of Authorizing
SUBJECT: Agenda Item No. 5: Quarterly Reports – Nevada Connections Academy
DATE: November 2, 2018

Nevada Connections Academy's elementary, middle, and high school all received one-star ratings under the Nevada School Performance Framework for the 2017-2018 school year. Additionally, NCA's elementary, middle, and high schools are all on a downward trajectory in regard to their NSPF ratings. Finally, NCA's charter school contract will expire at the end of the 2019-2020 school year, and NCA's charter school contract will be up for renewal during the fall of 2019.

As a result, in addition to the required quarterly reporting that NCA is required to provide the Authority Board in regard to its high school under the previously-agreed to agreement related to NCA's high school, SPCSA staff has asked Dr. Chris McBride, superintendent of NCA, to report on the academic performance of NCA's elementary and middle school at the Authority Board's November 2, 2018 Board meeting. Dr. McBride has agreed to provide this reporting.

This memorandum is meant to provide the Authority Board with background related to NCA's elementary, middle, and high school as a supplement to Dr. McBride's report. Attached to this memorandum is a chart showing the historical academic performance of NCA's elementary, middle, and high school under the NSPF, as well as NCA's historic high school graduation rates. Note that NCA's graduation rate for the 2017-2018 school year will be released in December of 2018.

Elementary School:

NCA's elementary school was rated as a one-star school under the NSPF for the 2017-2018 school year, earning an index score of 18.89. Not only did NCA miss the target (29.32) NCA set for itself in its Elementary School Improvement Plan submitted to the SPCSA on May 4, 2018, a third year of a one-star rating for the 2018-2019 school year will mean that NCA's elementary school is subject to mandatory closure under NRS 388A.300(1) (requiring the SPCSA to terminate the charter school contract of any SPCSA-sponsored public charter school that earns a one-star rating for three years out of any five consecutive school years).

For reference, NCA's elementary school was rated as a two-star school for the 2013-2014 and 2014-2015 school year (with an index score of 48), a one-star school for the 2016-2017 school year (an index score of 21.11) and, as mentioned above, as a one-star school for the 2017-2018 school year (an index score of 18.89).

Middle School:

NCA's middle school was likewise rated as a one-star school for the 2017-2018 school year (an index score of 25).

While NCA's middle school's academic performance has been marginally better than its elementary school, NCA's middle school has likewise declined in the NSPF ratings over the last three ratings. Specifically, NCA's middle school earned a three-star rating for the 2013-2014 and 2014-2015 school year (an index score of 68), declined to a two-star rating for the 2016-2017 school year (an index score of 51.67), and, again, received a one-star rating for the 2017-2018 school year (an index score of 25).

High School:

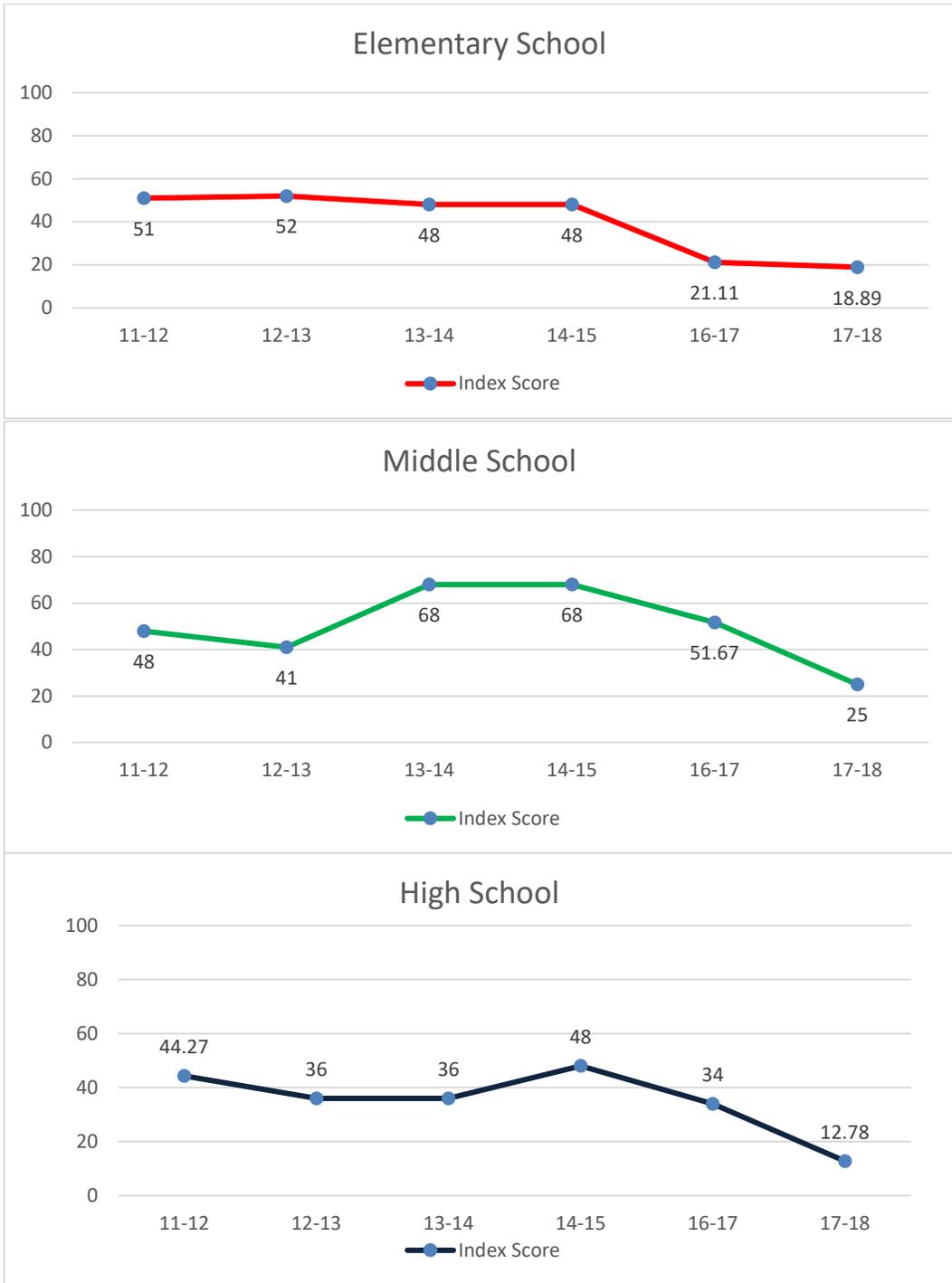
Finally, NCA's high school also received a one-star rating for the 2017-2018 school year – in fact, the lowest index score of any elementary, middle or high school of any SPCSA-sponsored public charter school, save for Argent Preparatory Academy, which closed at the end of the 2017-2018 school year.

And just as with NCA's elementary and middle school, NCA's high school has declined in the NSPF ratings, earning a two-star rating for the 2013-2014 and 2014-2015 school year (an index score of 48), a two-star rating for the 2016-2017 school year (an index score of 34), and a one-star rating for the 2017-2018 school year (again, an index score that is a SPCSA portfolio-low of 12.78).

NCA's high school's graduation rate, while improving, remains well-below standard. As the attached chart shows, NCA's graduation rate has increased from a low of 33.91% for the 2011-2012 school year, to a high of 45% for the 2016-2017 school year. Please note that this means in practical terms that since 2011 less than half of the 1,500-plus students attending NCA's high school earn a high school diploma, well below the statewide average for all public schools of 80.85% graduation rate.

In this regard, the agreement reached between NCA and the SPCSA in the fall of 2017 requires NCA to obtain a graduation rate of 49%. The agreement between NCA and the SPCSA instituted enrollment caps for the high school of 1,500 students, and "froze" enrollment in the 11th and 12th grade. In the event that NCA does not obtain a graduation rate of 49%, the enrollment cap will be reduced to 1,200 students for the high school (no currently-enrolled students will be unenrolled).

The graduation rates for the 2017-2018 school year will be released by Nevada's Department of Education in December of 2018, and SPCSA expects to report back to the Authority Board on this issue in early 2019.



**The ratings for SY14-15 were frozen from SY13-14. No ratings were issued for SY15-16.*

