

**NEVADA STATE PUBLIC CHARTER SCHOOL AUTHORITY**

**February 15, 2019**

Nevada Department of Education  
700 East 5<sup>th</sup> Street  
Board Room  
Carson City, Nevada

Nevada Department of Education  
9890 South Maryland Parkway  
2<sup>nd</sup> Floor Board Room  
Las Vegas, Nevada

**MINUTES OF THE MEETING**

**BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT:**

**In Las Vegas:**

Sheila Moulton  
Nora Luna  
Stavan Corbett

**In Carson City:**

Melissa Mackedon (virtually)  
Jason Guinasso

**BOARD MEMBERS ABSENT:**

Jeff Hinton  
Randy Kirner

**AUTHORITY STAFF PRESENT:**

**In Las Vegas:**

Mark Modrcin, Director of Authorizing  
Brian Scroggins, Deputy Director  
Michael Dang, Management Analyst IV  
Sandra Kinne, Education Programs Professional  
Lisa Dzierbicki, Education Programs Professional

**In Carson City:**

Danny Peltier, Management Analyst I  
Selcuk Ozdemir, Education Programs Supervisor  
Ryan Herrick, General Counsel  
Aisheh Quiroz, Legal Assistant

**AUDIENCE IN ATTENDANCE:**

**In Las Vegas:**

(See attached Sign-in Sheet)

**In Carson City:**

Pat Hickey

**CALL TO ORDER; ROLL CALL; PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE; APPROVAL OF AGENDA**

**Agenda Item 1 – Call to Order, Roll Call, and Pledge of Allegiance**

Chairman Guinasso called the meeting to order at 9:13am with attendance as reflected above.

**Agenda Item 2 – Public Comment**

Renee Fairless, lead principal for Mater Academy in Las Vegas. She wanted to share her experience with the Board regarding the Site Evaluation that was conducted at their campus earlier this month. She applauded staff for their transparency and for making the site evaluation as organized as possible and was not disruptive to the school day.

**Agenda Item 3 – Approval of the January 18, 2018 Action Minutes.**

Member Moulton moved to approve the minutes of the January 18, 2018 Authority Board meeting. Member Luna seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

**Agenda Item 4 – SPCSA Staff Reports**

**1. Authorizing Team**

- a. Sandra Kinne updated the board on staff's progress on Site Evaluations. Staff has undergone training and started the evaluations. They are going well so far, and staff looks forward to updating the board more thoroughly as they progress through the portfolio.
- b. Director Modrcin explained that staff is seeking feedback from applicants who submitted a notice of intent but did not complete the application in order to learn how to improve the process for future applicants. They have found that it would be helpful for the applicants to have some internal deadlines or benchmarks in their own processes.
- c. Doctor Ozdemir and Mike Dang updated the board regarding the listening sessions staff has held to elicit feedback from stakeholders about the Academic and Organizational Performance Frameworks. Dr. Ozdemir and Mr. Dang are now starting to have workgroups to continue their development of these frameworks.
- d. Mr. Dang updated the board on the Financial Performance Framework and the audits that have been conducted on our schools. According to feedback from the

auditors, the financial reports better indicate the financial health and viability of the schools.

- e. Member Moulton and Director Modrcin have discussed changing the format of Focus on Schools. We would like to have schools that are not SPCSA-sponsored schools present during this segment as well in order to explore Best Practices outside of our portfolio. We would also like to showcase schools that have made significant improvements – not only the schools that are high-performing.

Member Moulton explained that the language we use (PUBLIC Charter Schools) is important as well as collaboration with our partners in education. Additionally, the SPCSA should better utilize the press.

## **2. School Support Team**

- a. Lisa Dzierbicki gave a short report of what the School Support has been working on over the past month. They have visited schools, attended various conferences and trainings, and provided ongoing comprehensive technical support to sponsored schools.
- b. Mr. Scroggins also visited some schools as well as attending the Nevada Emergency Preparedness Summit in Reno along with several representatives from our sponsored schools.

## **3. Finance and Operations Team**

- a. Upcoming Budget Hearing – February 22, 2019

## **4. Legal**

- a. Due Process Complaints – staff is continuing to monitor the status of these complaints.
- b. Executive Director Recruitment – board will conduct interviews on March 8, 2019. Currently, HR is reaching out to complete the applicants' reference checks.

## **Agenda Item 5 – 2019 Legislative Update**

Ryan Herrick, legal counsel for the SPCSA, briefly went over several bills that may affect charter schools or education in general. He also discussed AB 78, which is the SPCSA's bill. Staff has been watching pending bills related to charter schools and/or the education code. There are six charter-specific bills that have not been filed, so there is no language for them yet. As they are introduced, we will be able to provide more information. There are a number of education bills that affect both charter schools and traditional schools, but we will update the board as the session continues.

AB78, the bill as originally submitted was significant. As we get closer to the session, staff looked at the bill and worked closely with NDE to determine our priorities for this session. We have revised that bill and it currently consists of five priorities:

The first priority revises 388A.453 to make clear that our schools are required to provide special education services and also incorporate McKinney-Vento students – essentially our admission and enrollment statute. Federal law mandates that we serve these students, so we are amending our statute to reflect that.

Second, there have been calls for greater charter school sponsor accountability. What we have done is take the existing regulations and codified them into statute. Additionally, we are proposing to add two new board members to be appointed by NDE

Third, regulatory authority. We have limited ability to adopt our own regulations and we are clarifying that we have the ability to adopt regulations related to our charter schools and the department retains plenary authority over our schools as well as other schools.

We are clarifying in NRS that we are the LEA for our schools. We are revising the existing provision that allows schools to become their own LEA to make it clearer.

Rebecca Feiden, Acting Executive Director of the Achievement School District, gave a brief history of the Achievement School District. She explained that the ASD serves a primarily underserved and underrepresented population. She stated that there has been discussion for some time regarding folding the Achievement School District into the SPCSA so that there is one statewide sponsor. The proposed AB78 would transfer the existing ASD schools to the SPCSA's sponsorship.

Acting ED Scroggins stated that staff has met with some legislators and briefed them on AB78. He also explained that he, Director Modrcin, and Mr. Herrick have met with the governor's office.

Member Luna stated that she supports the ASD becoming part of the SPCSA but asked what the budget implications are and if they have been addressed.

Chair Guinasso answered that we will have an opportunity to address the budget implications later in the session if AB78 is approved.

Member Moulton and Member Corbett asked to be kept apprised of the progress of AB78 and other bills through the session. Mr. Scroggins said he would keep them informed.

Chair Guinasso explained that he and Vice Chair Mackedon have been collaborating with staff from the SPCSA as well as NDE regarding AB78 and he is happy with the work and the priorities they have identified. He also noted that he is particularly excited about the prospect of the ASD coming under the SPCSA because it would help make some headway toward the Authority's goal of providing equitable access to charter education.

### **Agenda Item 6 – Beacon Academy of Nevada**

Director Modrcin gave a short introduction to the representatives from Beacon Academy. Beacon is the only school in the SPCSA portfolio to operate under the Alternative Performance Framework. They will be presenting their 2017-2018 results.

Tambre Tondryk, Executive Director of Operations, introduced herself as well as Andrea Damore, Executive Director of Academics, Sue Rodriguez, Board Secretary, and Sarah Sherman, Board Treasurer.

Ms. Sherman explained that she has been with Beacon for the past five years. As an educator, parent, and board member, she has a unique perspective on the school. She is happy to be a part

of the school under both performance frameworks and she applauds the school for their efforts in helping kids who would otherwise not be able to graduate.

Ms. Rodriguez also expressed her support for Beacon Academy and shared her enthusiasm for the school and her joy for the work they are doing to serve this special population of students.

Ms. Tondryk gave an introduction that explained a little about the school's history and the progress they have made to-date. In September of 2016, Beacon was issued a Notice of Concern due to its falling graduation rate. The school made several changes in the hopes of improving their graduation rate, but these attempts had little success in raising it. Finally, they made the unanimous decision to amend their charter to serve only a special population of students. Every student at Beacon has either been suspended or expelled, adjudicated, has an IEP, or is credit-deficient. As a result of serving this population exclusively, Beacon Academy is held accountable under the NSPF, NDE's Alternative Performance Framework, and the SPCSA's Alternative Performance Framework. The data contained in this presentation, has been independently validated and is from the 2017-2018 school year.

Ms. Damore gave a comprehensive overview of Beacon's academic performance over the 17-18 school year. Her presentation can be found with the supporting materials for this agenda item.

Chair Guinasso asked how the school has gotten families to complete the FRL paperwork. Ms. Tondryk answered that when students enroll, the application is a part of the enrollment process and they have incentivized it so that students who qualify for FRL and submit the appropriate paperwork are given Chromebooks without having to put down a monetary deposit. Students who do not qualify for FRL have to put down a \$100 deposit for the use of the Chromebooks.

Chair Guinasso asked Ms. Damore to further explain what "Adjudicated" and "Habitual Discipline" mean in the context of subpopulations served by Beacon. Ms. Damore explained that an adjudicated student is under court supervision, and students who have a habitual discipline problem have been expelled or suspended from other schools.

Member Moulton asked if there are other programs available for students who are not on track for graduation. Ms. Tondryk answered that the students have the option of remaining in their traditional school or going to an online school, but these both often present significant challenges for the students – particularly the McKinney-Vento students and Pregnant or Parenting students.

Member Moulton asked if Beacon receives the same funding as other schools. Ms. Tondryk explained that they do, but that a lot of their funding comes from entitlement programs and grants for which the population they serve qualifies.

Chair Guinasso asked about potential replication and renewal for Beacon. Director Modrcin explained that this fall the school will be up for renewal. He is optimistic about the quality and quantity of data we have to make a robust recommendation when the time comes to discuss an expansion amendment.

### **Agenda Item 7 – Nevada Virtual Academy**

Director Modrcin gave a brief introduction regarding the history of NVA’s elementary school – most notably its persistent underperformance and the fact that as a result of this underperformance, the school will be closing its elementary school at the conclusion of this school year.

Dr. Yolanda Hamilton gave a short presentation regarding the progress of the closure of NVA’s elementary school and their Quarter Two Metrics. She expressed her gratitude for Director Modrcin’s help and willingness to work with the school during this process.

Dr. Hamilton explained that the school has held two informational meetings for elementary families during which they discussed the timeline, enrollment options, etc. However, attendance at these meetings has been low.

Dr. Denson went over the MAP Growth Data for the elementary school. Chair Guinasso commended the school for their improvement and thanked them for their presentation.

### **Agenda Item 8 – Discovery Charter School**

Receiver John Haynal provided an update regarding Discovery’s receivership. Mr. Haynal explained Discovery is working to serve more FRL students, IEP students, ELL students, etc. to be more representative of the population where the school is located. To that end, the school is now bussing students between the campuses.

Dr. Nohara gave an overview of the school’s performance as well as their enrollment. They have over five hundred interested students in both campuses. Their performance on their diagnostic testing has improved.

Mr. Haynal noted that they are trying to build a stronger sense of community by holding town hall meetings. He also expressed that he is working on a plan and timeline to meet goals that align with the receivership exit strategy. Mr. Haynal explained that if the following goals are met, there is potential for the receivership to end earlier than anticipated:

1. Have a model of magnet or STEM with implementation underway
2. Enrollment at 400 students
3. Creating different governance models and identify potential board members
4. Maintain success
5. Work on budget

(Member Luna left at 11:27 am)

### **Agenda Item 9 – Legislative Letter of Intent**

Director Scroggins presented the board with the responses to the questions asked by the Interim Finance Committee. The response is included as part of the supporting materials with this agenda item.

Director Modrcin stated that in the future, for the responses due in August, Staff will gather feedback prior to the responses being sent out,

**Agenda Item 10 – Open Meeting Law Training**

(Tabled for a later meeting due to time constraint)

**Agenda Item 11 – Long-Range Calendar**

(Tabled for a later meeting due to time constraint)

**Agenda Item 12 – Public Comment #2**

Pat Hickey, Executive Director of CSAN – commended staff on their collaborative work with stakeholders on developing the frameworks. He also extended the invitation to CSAN’s Legislative Days at the end of February. Several board members, parents, school leaders, and students will be attending the events.

**Agenda Item 15 – Adjournment**

The meeting was adjourned at 12:15 pm.