



## NEVADA STATE PUBLIC CHARTER SCHOOL AUTHORITY

May 29, 2020

In compliance with the Governor's Emergency Directives related to COVID-19, the May 29, 2020 Meeting of the State Public Charter School Authority was conducted virtually and livestreamed.

### MINUTES OF THE MEETING

#### **BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT (via video):**

Member Lee Farris  
Member Tamika Shauntee-Rosales  
Member Don Soifer  
Member Holmes-Sutton  
Member Mallory Cyr  
Member Sheila Moulton  
Vice Chair Randy Kirner  
Chair Melissa Mackedon

#### **BOARD MEMBERS ABSENT:**

Member Sami Randolph

#### **AUDIENCE IN ATTENDANCE:**

Gretchen Larsen (via video)  
Jennifer McCloskey (via video)  
Krista Yarberr (via video)  
Karen Vauhn (via phone)  
Jami Curtis (via video)  
Jake Wiskerchen (via video)  
Megan Saulcido (via phone)  
Mike Worm (via phone)  
Jessica LaNeave (via video)  
Ron Coe (via video)  
Biante Gainous (via video)  
Jill Schreidl (via video)  
Carlos Alvarez (via video)  
Jose Herrera (via video)  
Laura Doroteo (via video)  
Dallas Harris (via video)  
JC (via video)  
Amanda Galindo (via video)

#### **AUTHORITY STAFF PRESENT (via video):**

Rebecca Feiden, Executive Director  
Ryan Herrick, General Counsel  
Mark Modrcin, Director of Authorizing  
Michael Dang, Management Analyst IV  
Danny Peltier, Management Analyst I  
Karen Gordon, Education Programs Professional

David Salmon (via video)  
Ryan Reeves (via video)  
Raymond Fraser (via video)  
Ignacio Prado (via video)  
Rob Mallery (via video)  
Kyle McOmber (via phone)  
Justin Brecht (via video)  
Katherine Stork (via phone)  
Joshua Kern (via video)  
Tricia Wilbourne (via video)  
Carrie Buck (via video)

### **Agenda Item 1 – Call to Order, Roll Call, and Pledge of Allegiance [00:00:36]**

Chair Mackedon called the meeting to order at 9:01am, with attendance reflected above.

### **Agenda Item 2 – Public Comment #1 [00:02:18]**

*Public Comment will be taken during this agenda item regarding any item appearing on the agenda. No action may be taken on a matter discussed under this item until the matter is included on an agenda as an item on which action may be taken. See NRS 241.020. A time limit of three (3) minutes, subject to the discretion of the Chair, will be imposed on public comments. The Authority Chair may allow additional public comment at his discretion. Public Comment #2 will provide an opportunity for public comment on any matter not on the agenda.*

*No public comment.*

### **Agenda Item 3 – Approval of the April 24, 2020 and May 5, 2020 State Public Charter School Authority Board Action Minutes [00:02:55]**

***MOTION:** Member Moulton moved to approve the April 24, 2020 State Public Charter School Authority Board Action Minutes. Member Kirner seconded. The motion carried unanimously.*

***MOTION:** Member Kirner abstained from the May 5, 2020 State Public Charter School Authority Board Meeting Minutes, because he was not present at the meeting. Member Shauntee Rosales moved to approve the May 5, 2020 State Public Charter School Authority Board Action Minutes. Member Moulton seconded. The motion carried.*

### **Agenda Item 4 – SPCSA Executive Directors Report [00:05:07]**

Rebecca Feiden, Executive Director, provided updates regarding the following:

#### **a. Update on Staff's efforts aligned to the 2019-2024 Strategic Plan**

- Staff has identified initiatives for implementation for the upcoming fiscal year. See supporting documents for the nine identified agency-wide initiatives.

#### **b. Response to COVID-19 Pandemic [00:13:32]**

- Staff has outlined updates and key areas through their conversations with schools. The pertinent conversation remains around planning for next year and the fiscal impacts. See supporting documents for additional areas discussed.

#### **c. Update regarding state-mandated assessments, and Nevada School Performance and SPCSA Performance Framework ratings for the 2019-2020 school year [00:20:19]**

- There are no state-wide assessments this year, unless in the case of the ACT it was conducted before closure.
- There will be no star ratings.
- School performance information from the 2018-2019 school year will be applied to the 2019-2020 school year.
- SPCSA Staff's current thinking is that they too carry over what is already in place (specifically academic notices).

Mark Modrcin, Director of Authorizing, provided the update regarding the following:

- d. Update regarding new charter school applications, amendment requests, renewal requests, and previously-approved expansion requests [00:25:31]**
  - Update on Summer New Charter Application Cycle
    - 13 letters of intent received
  - Update on Spring Amendment Application Cycle
    - 5 submitted thus far
  - Charter School Renewal Process
    - Schools up for Renewal:
      1. Equipo Academy
      2. Silver Sands Montessori
      3. Elko Institute of Academic Achievement
      4. Alpine Academy

*No action taken on this item.*

**Agenda Item 5 – Updates on Approved New Charter Schools for Fall 2020 [00:28:01]**

- a) **Pinecrest Academy of Northern Nevada**
- b) **Girls Athletic Leadership School**
- c) **Las Vegas Collegiate**
- d) **Explore Academy**

- b) **Girls Athletic Leadership School**

*Combined with*

**Agenda Item 6 – Girls Athletic Leadership School (GALS) Amendment Application.**

Director Modrcin provided an overview of the school’s recent approval and the update on their preopening progress, see supporting materials for the school’s written update. He said Staff feels the school has fulfilled the additional conditions attached when approved in January by the Authority.

Mike Dang, Financial and Organizational Manager, provided the Authority with details regarding the school’s request for a good cause exemption and the request for amendment to add a 7<sup>th</sup> grade level, to their already approved 6<sup>th</sup> grade level for Fall 2020. SPCSA Staff recommends approval subject to the condition that the school provide weekly enrollment updates.

Jennifer McCloskey, Executive Director of GALS, provided an update regarding their enrollment and engagement with families during recent events. Alongside her today is Krista Yarberry, Head of School, and on the phone line, Board Member Karen Vauhn.

Member Soifer asked for the school’s enrollment numbers update and the school responded 27 as of last week.

***MOTION:*** *Member Kirner moved to approve the request of Girls Athletic Leadership School (GALS) for their good cause exemption to submit their request for amendment today and to allow them to add a 7<sup>th</sup> grade to their 6<sup>th</sup> grade beginning this fall with the 2020-2021 school year, subject to the condition that the school submit weekly enrollment updates to Staff showing the number of 6<sup>th</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup> grade students for the 2020 – 2021 school year. Member Moulton seconded. The motion carried unanimously.*

**a) Pinecrest Academy of Northern Nevada [00:48:20]**

Director Modrcin provided an overview of the school's recent approval and the update on their preopening progress. See supporting materials for the four documents referenced: general update, transportation update, document prepared by Staff referencing routine conditions, and lastly the letter in support of the school from the Indian Sparks Indian Colony.

Jami Curtis, Principal, Pinecrest Academy of Northern Nevada, presented on behalf of the school and said she has three board members with her: Jake Wiskerschen, Megan Saulcido and Mike Worm. She provided the update regarding the school's outreach efforts and the challenges they have faced. Their enrollment is at 646 students from 22 zip codes. They still have seats available and continue their outreach. The school is requesting the Board's approval of their transportation plan, which has been approved by the school's board and is under review by the Department of Education and the Department of the Attorney General to approve.

Further discussion ensued regarding the school's enrollment and transportation plan.

***MOTION:** Member Moulton made a motion to approve the transportation plan as it is, with the stipulation that it still needs approval from the State and NDE and if it is not acceptable, they will work under further State transportation regulations. Member Shauntee Rosales seconded. The motion carried unanimously.*

**c) Las Vegas Collegiate [01:13:06]**

Director Modrcin provided an overview of the school's recent approval and said the school will be providing their update.

Biante Gainous, Executive Director, Las Vegas Collegiate, provided an update regarding their enrollment and efforts. The school is asking the Board to approve their request to defer opening one year due to the impacts of global pandemic and the overall uncertainty that they sit in currently.

Chair Mackedon and Executive Director Feiden discussed the logistics of the motion.

***MOTION:** Member Moulton made a motion to defer the opening of Las Vegas Collegiate in the year 2021 – 2022. Member Holmes-Sutton seconded. Motion carried unanimously.*

**d) Explore Academy [01:27:42]**

Director Modrcin provided the school's background and a brief update regarding their preopening progress. Staff is closely monitoring their enrollment which has been impacted by the global pandemic. See supporting documents for the school's written update.

Gretchen Larson, Principal, Explore Academy Las Vegas, provided the school's update and efforts related to preopening. They are sitting at about 100 applications, 15% of those applications are for 8<sup>th</sup> grade, which is a grade they do not offer. It is the school's hope that shifting those unfilled seats to 8<sup>th</sup> grade students would give them enough students and fill a community need.

Ron Coe, Board Chair, Explore Academy, said their board looks forward to continuing the conversations about these internal benchmarks and believes they are attainable despite some early difficulties and that adding 8<sup>th</sup> grade to their charter will help them hit that target.

Director Modrcin clarified the school submitted their amendment request on Tuesday and SPCSA Staff has not yet processed it but intend to bring a recommendation to the June meeting regarding the request the addition of 8<sup>th</sup> grade for the 2020-2021 school year.

*No action taken on this item.*

A 5-minute convenience break was taken before the next item.

**Agenda Item 7 – CIVICA Nevada Career and Collegiate Academy Charter School Application [01:59:49]**

Mark Modrcin, Director of Authorizing, provided the Authority with SPCSA's Staff's recommendation related to the charter school application submitted by CIVICA Nevada Career and Collegiate Academy (CIVICA) in the Winter 2020 Cycle. He noted this was not a unanimous recommendation. See supporting materials for SPCSA Staff's full recommendation.

Carlos Alvarez, Board Member, CIVICA, began by speaking about the conversation around their school's model and purpose. While the school may have the collegiality and community partners with CSN and UNLV to offer collegiate and dual enrollment opportunities, they will also offer career tracks based on needs assessments of the community of potential job openings in the future that would align them once they graduate from high school and position them to take an industry certification and be able to join the work force at an entry level. This career pathway is not an elective, it is a systemic approach to a sequence of courses that are prerequisites for one another, preparing students to sign up for those industry certifications that are aligned to the academies that the school will offer and position them to earn an industry certification upon completion of high school so they can be able to join the work force at an entry level. The career pathways the school has identified are health sciences, the fire program and nursing program. He closes with encouraging the support in CIVICA's application.

Jose Herrera, Proposed Principal, provided some opening remarks. He said he has gained firsthand experience as far as the struggles and obstacles families in this community experience and feels that this school is a community need.

Laura Doroteo, Board Member, provided additional opening remarks. She said CIVICA will benefit her children as well as their community.

Senator Dallas Harris, Nevada Legislature, provided her support for CIVICA and said that her role going forward if the school is approved today is holding the principals feet to the fire in providing the school's vision; which is to deliver to the students.

Further discussion ensued between the Authority and the school regarding the below topics:

- Budget
- Instructional operation of the school
- Compiling data
- Saturday tutoring
- Partnerships
- Timeframe for commitments

- Location
- Community involvement
- Mentorship program
- Consideration of Pre-K
- Staffing

**MOTION:** Member Moulton moved to approve the CIVICA Nevada Career and Collegiate Academy charter school application as submitted during the 2020 winter application cycle with the conditions outlined below, based on a finding that the applicant meets the requirements contained in NRS 388A.249(3).

1. Provide an updated list of proposed partnerships which also includes draft Memorandums of Understanding with each identified partner, and outlines deliverables and responsibilities of each party.
2. Submit a revised SEL and ELL student support plan that reflects an adjusted staffing model to adequately address the projected student population.
3. Submit a draft evaluation tool(s) to be utilized by the Board to annually evaluate both Academica Nevada and the CIVICA Foundation. One or both of these tools should specifically address CTE program coordination.
4. Provide a draft of the CTE scope and sequence (by grade level), name the exact certification exams to be administered and by whom, and include draft MOUs by the local colleges (or at least letters of commitment) for the career exploration pathways.
5. Submit a 12-month, detailed Incubation year plan that includes a professional development plan tailored to the proposed Principal.

Member Shauntee Rosales seconded the motion.

Called the vote via roll call:

Member Farris: Yes.

Member Shauntee Rosales: Yes.

Member Soifer: Yes.

Member Holmes-Sutton: Yes.

Member Cyr: Yes.

Member Moulton: Yes.

Vice Chair Kirner: Yes.

Chair Mackedon: Yes.

The motion carried unanimously.

A 5-minute convenience break was taken before the next item.

## **Agenda Item 8 – Contracts for Former Achievement School District (ASD) Schools [03:47:27]**

Member Cyr recused herself from this item.

Executive Director Feiden provided the Authority with the update regarding the transition of the former ASD schools. SPCSA Staff and the schools are finalizing the final two steps of the transition which are the transition of the schools to the SPCSA as the local education agency (LEA) and the transition of the contracts.

Three of the four schools were able to have the new contracts approved prior to the meeting today, and the last school, Democracy Prep, will be on the Authority's June agenda for approval. Each of the three schools' contracts are for 6-years and can be found in the supporting materials for this meeting.

### **1. Futuro Academy [03:50:52]**

Ignacio Prado, Executive Director, Principal and Founder of Futuro Academy, said he and their board chair, Khanh Anderson, are present on behalf of the school. He turned it over to Ms. Anderson for further remarks.

Khanh Anderson, previously identified, said their board has been very involved with the transition and ensuring the promises they made to the community when initially founded will be brought forth and considered in their contract moving forward with the new authorizer. She said the contract is standard and similar to the one they had engaged in originally with the ASD. She closed with stating their board had no questions or concerns regarding the contract when it was approved.

***MOTION:** Member Moulton moved to approve the contract that has been provided for Futuro Academy. Member Soifer seconded. Motion carried unanimously.*

### **2. Nevada Prep Charter School [03:55:00]**

David Blodgett, School Leader, Nevada Prep Charter School, said there are a couple sections in the contract particularly around facilities and enrollment and that the school anticipates submitting an amendment request before the 2021-2022 school year as their board approved a new location at their board meeting last night, however they did not have enough certainty of this to include in their initial contract.

***MOTION:** Member Kirner moved to approve the contract that has been provided for Nevada Prep Charter School, Member Shauntee-Rosales seconded. Motion carried unanimously.*

### **3. Nevada Rise Academy [03:58:52]**

Justin Brecht, School Leader, Nevada Rise, said he is joined by their treasurer, Katherine Stork on the phone. He continued by saying the transition process went smoothly and they appreciate the work of the team. He turned it over to Katherine Stork.

Katherine Stork, previously identified, said they are excited to continue with their new contract that was unanimously approved at their board meeting with no concerns.

***MOTION:** Member Farris moved to approve the contract that has been provided for Nevada Rise Academy. Member Moulton seconded. Motion carried unanimously.*

### **Agenda Item 9 – Report on Site Evaluations [04:02:45]**

Director Modrcin provided the Authority with the update regarding the draft report on site evaluations which must be submitted to the Legislative Committee on Education no later than June 30, 2020 (Section 8 of AB 462 (2019)). He reported that beginning in January of 2019, the SPCSA initiated the first round of site evaluations and have now completed the site evaluations for all their sponsored schools as of May 8. Due to the global pandemic, the last five evaluations were done virtually. He provided further purpose and background regarding the site evaluations.

Karen Gordon, Education Programs Professional, outlined the information contained in the site evaluations report. She indicated the site evaluations processes and procedures stem from the best practices of charter school authorizers across the country. The site evaluation handbook is available on the SPCSA website for school leaders or anyone curious as to the process. She provided a thorough presentation of the processes and procedures. See supporting materials for the referenced documents.

*No action taken on this item.*

#### **Agenda Item 10 – Schools Under Receivership or Previously Under Receivership [04:22:23]**

##### **a. Quest Academy Update**

Executive Director Feiden provided an overview of the school's update regarding the transitions from receivership to a fully constituted board.

Joshua Kern, Receiver, Quest Academy, provided an update regarding the school and their move forward to a fully constituted board. They have submitted six potential candidates to the SPCSA for consideration. He closed with his appreciation to staff for their support.

##### **b. Discovery Charter School Update [04:27:25]**

Director Modrcin provided an overview of the school's update regarding the transitions from receivership to a fully constituted board.

Tricia Wilbourne, School Leader of Discovery Charter School, said she is joined by their board president Carrie Buck. She shared the update regarding the school's transition. The school exited receivership in July 2019, and at that time their five-member board was reinstated, and an administrative team was formed. The hot topic has been their PERS balance and they received notification of their new balance on May 15. She provided the academic update and said at this point they are not making any big changes to their academic programs.

Dr. Buck, previously identified, provided the update regarding their steps to paying off their debt and moving forward. They are looking forward to starting fresh with no debt.

*No action taken on this item.*

#### **Agenda Item 11 – Long Long-Range Calendar [04:36:23]**

Executive Director Feiden provided the update on the long-range calendar which can be found in the supporting materials.

*No action taken on this item.*

#### **Agenda Item 12 – Public Comment [04:38:25]**

*No public comment.*

#### **Agenda Item 13 – Adjournment [04:38:30]**

The meeting was adjourned at 1:41pm.