



STATE PUBLIC CHARTER SCHOOL AUTHORITY

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RECOMMENDATION MEMORANDUM

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**TO:** SPCSA Board  
**FROM:** Mike Dang, Manager, Financial and Organizational Performance  
Mark Modrcin, Director of Authorizing  
**SUBJECT:** Pinecrest Academy of Northern Nevada - Contract Amendment Request: Addition  
of Distance Education Program  
**DATE:** December 4, 2020

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**Summary of Request:**

Pinecrest Academy of Northern Nevada (PANN) is a recently approved K-8 charter school that began operation in the 2020-2021 school year and is currently serving approximately 700 students in grades K-7. The school is a replication of the Pinecrest Academy of Nevada school model that currently has five campuses in Las Vegas. PANN is operated in Washoe County and is located in the Spanish Springs area.

PANN is requesting approval to add supplemental distance education options for students for credit retrieval and advancement of coursework not currently offered in the school.

**Background:**

PANN's mission is to unite the community to prepare students for college and career. PANN's vision is to have Scholars perform at the highest level on all academic measures. PANN stated purpose is to provide a safe and nurturing educational environment that maximizes student achievement and fosters respect for all.

As stated above, PANN is requesting to add Distance Education options for students enrolled at the school. PANN's proposed target population is children who are already enrolled in grades 6-7, (and eventually 8th Grade) who are in need of credit recovery or remediation, academic challenge such as Advanced Placement, or wish to take an elective course that they may not otherwise have the opportunity to attend without the proposed new Distance Education program. Stated another way, the proposed addition of distance education courses will not replace the current delivery of instruction in a brick-and-mortar atmosphere; PANN will offer distance education as a supplement for students with specific needs.

PANN currently operates one campus in the Spanish Springs neighborhood. PANN would like to create a new program of Distance Education for its currently enrolled middle school grade students to better serve each student's unique educational needs.

Additionally, PANN has established the following goals for the proposed Distance Education program:

1. Expand student learning opportunities and enhance success for middle school students currently enrolled in PANN;

2. Create and strengthen community and educational partnerships;
3. Create a culture of innovation and collaboration that empowers teachers and students to achieve their goals to their maximum potential; and
4. Ninety percent (90%) of middle school students enrolled in blended Distance Education classes will successfully pass the course.

As stated in the application PANN's proposed Distance Education program will include the following best practices: (1) two-way academic communication such as email, internet, chat, and videoconferencing; (2) opportunities for synchronous (real-time) communication and discussions such as voice over internet protocol (VOIP); (3) multi-faceted social networking platforms that include community engagement; (4) access to internal and external technology support and consulting to teachers and students; (5) creative, flexible, and innovative teachers equipped to meet the unique needs of the distance learner; and (6) highly visible and accessible student support that meet or exceeds the level of support offered in PANN's traditional classrooms to PANN's diverse student population and unique needs.

Additionally, PANN students who elect to participate in Distance Education courses will receive instruction from their virtual teacher in addition to having access to a digital learning lab or classroom with support from their face-to-face teacher. In this way PANN's students will engage in Distance Education coursework in a hybrid model where students have multiple pathways to success.

PANN's will be using state-approved distance education providers: Accelerate Education, BYU, Edgenuity, and Fuel Education/K12; along with support of Virtual Education that has been established by affiliate Pinecrest schools in Las Vegas and Florida.

PANN's proposed Distance Education program will not replace any existing curriculum or educational programs, but rather serve to complement and improve traditional delivery methods already in place providing students with the following additional educational options: credit recovery, academic challenge, and/or academic enrichment.

As stated in the application, PANN's request does not affect its current Academic, Operational, or Financial plan.

### **Eligibility Requirements:**

To be eligible for consideration of approval of a contract amendment a school must timely submit a complete and accurate RFA, in accordance with the requirements and directions stated in the RFA application.

The RFA application includes Eligibility Requirements that a charter school must be "meeting the requirements of the performance framework concerning academics, finances or organization", in good standing in all three domains of the Authority's academic, financial and organizational performance frameworks and it must not be considered a low-performing school or otherwise ineligible. This includes those schools rated at the approaches standards, unsatisfactory, or critical level on the authority performance framework either in aggregate or at the elementary, middle, or high school level.

**Because Pinecrest Academy of Northern Nevada began operations in the 2020 – 21 school year, the school has yet to be rated under any of the SPCSA frameworks or the Nevada School Performance Framework (NSPF).**

Staff have reviewed the application in light of relevant NRS law and NAC regulations mentioned above, the RFA template with its Eligibility Requirements, and prior and current best practices. Staff finds PANN in good standing with regards to the performance framework and also with regards to the statutory, regulatory and SPCSA requirements mentioned above.

Additionally, SPCSA staff has been notified that the school has already obtained all necessary approvals to implement supplemental distance education from the Nevada Department of Education. This documentation was provided to the SPCSA on November 2, 2020.

**Recommendation: Approve with conditions**

Authority staff recommends approval, but with conditions, to ensure that the first year of implementation runs smoothly, and the school is working to ensure that it maintains strong oversight of these programmatic additions. The school should submit the following to Authority staff:

- A year-end report of the student performance against the performance expectation outlined both in the memo and on page two of this memo, or that 90% of middle school students enrolled in blended Distance Education classes will successfully pass their courses; and
- A student enrollment summary or course log that notes the number of students enrolling in supplemental distance education courses during the 2020-2021 school year.

**Proposed Motion:**

**Approve, Pinecrest Academy of Northern Nevada's request to implement a distance education program for all eligible middle school students enrolled at the PANN Academy charter school with the conditions listed by SPCSA staff**

**Background:**

**Academic Performance of PANN**

**\*\*\* Because PANN is in its first year of operation, the school has yet to be rated under any of the SPCSA frameworks or the Nevada School Performance Framework (NSPF).**

**School Total Enrollment and Demographics**

**\*\*\*2020-2021 Validation day data has not been made available**