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**ACTION MEMORANDUM**

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**TO:** SPCSA Board  
**FROM:** Mike Dang, Manager of Organizational and Financial Performance  
Jennifer Bauer, Interim Executive Director  
**SUBJECT:** Transportation Plan: Founders Classical Academy of Las Vegas  
**DATE:** October 13, 2023

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**Background**

[Assembly Bill 400 \(2023 Session of the Nevada Legislature\)](#) appropriated \$7 million to the State Public Charter School Authority (SPCSA) for each year of the upcoming biennium (the 2023-24 fiscal year and the 2024-25 fiscal year) to award to charter schools, including SPCSA-sponsored and district-sponsored charter schools, to fund student transportation. To receive funding, a charter school must submit a Transportation Plan to the SPCSA and the SPCSA may approve the Transportation Plan and award funding to the charter school if the plan meets the following criteria:

1. “The transportation plan is comprehensive and likely to be successfully implemented;
2. The transportation plan will materially improve access to education in the region served by the transportation plan;
3. The transportation plan demonstrates that the charter school will be able to comply with statutory and regulatory transportation requirements, including, without limitation, the certification of bus drivers and vehicle safety;
4. The transportation plan is financially viable;
5. The transportation plan would not cost more, on a per pupil basis, than the average cost for transportation for other public schools operating in the school district in which the charter school is located; and

6. The academic, financial and organizational performance of the charter school indicate that the transportation plan is in the interest of pupils who will be served by the transportation plan.”<sup>1</sup>

It is important to note that pursuant to NAC 388A.330(4), a charter school is only permitted to provide transportation to pupils if the school has approval to do so from its sponsor. Therefore, charter schools that are not already approved to provide student transportation will be required to submit to their sponsor a contract amendment request in order to implement the Transportation Plan. For those schools sponsored by the SPCSA, the amendment request to provide student transportation was incorporated into the application process, and the SPCSA Board will consider approval of the amendment request in conjunction with the Transportation Plan.

Applications for the 2023-24 school year will be accepted and reviewed on a rolling basis from July 7, 2023, and through September 30, 2023<sup>2</sup>. While the SPCSA hopes to fund all applicants that submit a compliant transportation plan, because there is only \$7 million available in each school year, the SPCSA may prioritize funding Title I charter schools.

Additional details and form associated with the Transportation Plan and Funding Application can be found on the [SPCSA’s website](#).

## **Transportation Plan Overview**

Founders Classical Academy of Las Vegas (Founders) is requesting a total of \$244,050 to implement the school’s Transportation Plan. Below is an overview of the proposed Transportation Plan for Founders, as provided in the application.

“Founders Classical Academy of Las Vegas qualifies to apply for \$449,735 according to our Quarter 4 Average Daily Enrollment (ADE) Report from 2022-23. We are applying for \$244,050 with the following goals in mind: safety, efficiency, and support to families. Our families are dedicated to Founders, and we want to show them the appreciation they deserve by making transportation more accessible.

Our arrival and dismissal process at Founders Classical Academy is a growth point for us coming into the 2023-24 school year. Currently, arrival and dismissal involve long lines, traffic build up, and various start times for students. To solve this issue, we are proposing a four route bus system that will allow us to move most of the families elsewhere in closer to home bus stops. Each bus will pick up a full load of students from our 4 most concentrated geographic areas. This will allow us to cut down the arrival and dismissal traffic tremendously. In addition to these stops we are also increasing access to RTC for families by purchasing RTC passes.

Since each school bus stop will be accommodating a full bus load of scholars, we are proposing that each bus has a Safety Coordinator aboard. These Safety Coordinators will

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<sup>1</sup> Section 28.5 of Assembly Bill 400 (2023 Session of the Nevada Legislature)

<sup>2</sup> After September 30, 2023, the SPCSA will determine if there are remaining funds that have not yet been awarded. If funds remain, the SPCSA will re-open the transportation application.

ensure safety at the bus stops and on the bus ride. We will also employ one full time employee to oversee daily bus operations from campus.”

### **Analysis and Recommendation**

Founders is a Title I School and is requesting approval of its Transportation Plan and funding to implement the Transportation Plan. In addition, because Founders is not currently approved to provide transportation, the school is also requesting to amend its charter contract to provide transportation, and has submitted a good cause exemption request to have this amendment considered outside of the established amendment windows.

SPCSA staff has reviewed the Transportation Plan and find that the Plan meets the requirements set forth in Assembly Bill 400.

1. The Transportation Plan is comprehensive and likely to be successfully implemented.
2. The narrative provided by the school explains that “If the transportation plan is approved and funded, Founders Classical Academy of Las Vegas will be able to serve families with greater safety and efficiency. The proposed plan would also expand our equitable recruitment footprint to include more of the Las Vegas area.”. This demonstrates that the Transportation Plan will materially improve access to education in the region.
3. The Transportation Plan includes details regarding how the charter school will ensure compliance with statutory and regulatory transportation requirements.
4. The budget provided within the Transportation Plan demonstrates that the Transportation Plan is financially viable.
5. The average daily enrollment for Founders during the fourth quarter of the 2022-23 school year was 935. Founders is located in Clark County where the four-year average (per pupil) in transportation funding for the 2023-24 school year is \$481 per pupil. The total funding request for Founders was \$244,050, which is less than or equal to the average cost, per pupil, for transportation within the Clark County School District.
6. The academic, financial and organizational performance of the charter school indicate that the transportation plan is in the interest of pupils who will be served by the transportation plan. Specifically, the Transportation Plan indicates that transportation will greatly reduce tardiness and add efficiency to arrival and dismissal leaving more time for academics and family.

Therefore, SPCSA staff recommend approval of the Founders Classical Academy of Las Vegas Transportation Plan, along with funding to implement the plan. Furthermore, SPCSA staff recommend approval of the good cause exemption and amendment request to enable the school to provide transportation to students.

### **Proposed Motion:**

1. Approve the Founders Classical Academy of Las Vegas Transportation Plan, along with funding to implement the Plan and allow SPCSA staff to work with the school to make

budget revisions as long as the total funding does not exceed the average per pupil cost in the local school district.

2. Approve the charter contract amendment request for Founders Classical Academy of Las Vegas to allow the school to provide student transportation.
3. Require the school to provide SPCSA staff with documentation to demonstrate that the school is in compliance with applicable laws and regulations prior to beginning to transport students.

*If approved, the enrollment for the remainder of the contract term will remain unchanged:*

<b>School Year</b>	<b>2023-24</b>	<b>2024-25</b>
Grade Levels	K-12	K-12
Total Enrollment	1082	1166