



Solicitation of Input – 2023 New Charter Application Submission

County: Elko
Proposal: Nevada Classical Academy
Proposed Location: 1031 Railroad Street Elko, NV 89801
Proposed Zip Codes to be served: 89801, 89815, 89822, 89835

School District Input:

Please provide any data as to overcrowding in the zip code where the school is proposing to locate.

While we have some schools that are at or near their projected capacity, the majority of the schools are not in that scenario. Near future plans include a realignment of school boundary zones in order to even those enrollment numbers out. Demographic studies, which were part of our most recent comprehensive facilities assessment, do not project much growth at all in Elko as it pertains to school enrollment projections. Our schools in Elko/Spring Creek are also going to experience a decrease in enrollment starting this year as well due to the doubling in size of the already existing State Sponsored Charter School, the Elko Institute for Academic Achievement.

The zip codes mentioned above also require some context. This proposed school would be built in Elko (89801) and would primarily draw student enrollment applications from this zip code. Spring Creek (89815) is the neighboring city which is about a 15–25-minute drive from the proposed site, would likely be the next biggest draw for student enrollment. The other two zip codes are for Carlin (89822) and Wells (89835) which are about a 20- and 45-minute drive (respectively) down I-80. The likelihood of relevant and sustained enrollment and service to those zip codes would be minimal. Furthermore, the schools in those zip codes have no overcrowding concerns due to the small size of those communities.

Does the School District’s Capital Improvement Plan include any plans to add new schools or add additional capacity to existing schools within the community in which the applicant proposes to locate?

Yes. Our current 5-year CIP includes a concept for a project that would either build a new elementary school in Elko or an addition to our current Intermediate School. Either of these options would also mean a redistribution of grade levels across campuses, re-drawing of school boundaries, etc. Additionally, the CIP has immediate plans for the construction of an addition of 6 classrooms to another of our larger schools.

As you know, the SPCSA approved the Academic and Demographic Needs Assessment on July 26, 2019 and approved an updated version on January 22, 2021, January 28, 2022, and subsequently November 18, 2022. A copy of the current version can be found [here](#). Our staff and board will be evaluating the degree to which the applicant aligns with the identified needs. Please provide any input as to how this applicant does or does not meet identified needs in the community.

I would encourage you to consider only the cities of Elko and Spring Creek as the locations where students will primarily be enrolling from. The other two zip codes, if any, will likely be so minimal it would be disingenuous to consider the data from them. According to the criteria from this report, and only considering the schools in the two relevant zip codes, there were three schools from those two communities that came in at 1- or 2-star ratings. Since then, despite going through the pandemic and the well-documented challenges from that, one of those increased from a 2- to 3-star rating while the other two stayed at their previous rating. Those two schools that stayed below represent a little over 1,000 students.

If district staff or Board of Trustees has had prior communications with this applicant, please provide any relevant information or details from that communication that might be useful to the SPCSA in making an informed decision regarding the application.

In my conversations with the applicant, as well as looking into the particular model they are proposing, I don't see how this will fit/meet the needs of the students of the community. My grasp of this model is that it very much appeals to a certain demographic of the community and is much more suited for a private school model. In the Needs Assessment document referenced above, it details the need to target specific historically underserved/underrepresented student populations. I don't believe there are plans for providing transportation for students, nor targeted efforts to ensure the inclusion of minority populations and students who have historically struggled in school. I believe this has a high likelihood to result in people who have access to personal transportation and other means being those who will most benefit from what this school has to offer. This only serves to create/perpetuate achievement gaps between those who "have" and those who do not.

Are there currently any schools providing a similar educational model in the community in which the applicant proposes to locate? If yes, please provide any relevant information on the current school(s) with similar educational models that are available to students in the community.

To my knowledge there is not another school providing a similar educational model. They are modeling their school after, and seeking association with, a larger national organization.

Is there any other additional information you wish to provide?

While I am not against school choice, I sincerely believe that this model will not equitably serve the students of this community. I think that it will cater to a specific demographic and largely be rather homogenous in race, religious inclination, as well as political leanings. A huge part of what kids benefit from at school, outside of academic achievement, is the opportunity to regularly associate with peers of vastly different beliefs, backgrounds, learning styles, etc. Everything I've learned about this school feels much more like a private school to me. I recognize that a private school is both expensive for those who attend, as well as those who will organize and operate it, but that's the nature of a school who is more targeted in their audience. I don't think it's correct for taxpayers to fund a school that will not be equitably accessible, in all meanings of access, to much of the population of the students of Elko County.