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ACTION MEMORANDUM

TO: SPCSA Board
FROM: Mike Dang, Manager of Organizational and Financial Performance
Rebecca Feiden, Executive Director
SUBJECT: Transportation Plan: Southern Nevada Trades High School
DATE: July 28, 2023

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.”¹

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, 2023². 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

Southern Nevada Trades High School (SNTHS) is expected to be a Title I school and is requesting a total of \$25,012 to implement the school’s Transportation Plan. Below is an overview of the proposed Transportation Plan for SNTHS, as provided in the application.

“Southern Nevada Trades High School serves a niche population of high schoolers who are interested in careers and higher education in the construction industry. Therefore, student transportation is especially important at SNTHS because the school needs to cast the widest net possible to reach enough students interested in its unique mission.

To realize our school’s full potential, we need to secure strong Year 1 enrollment, and we believe providing transportation will be a critical step toward boosting our current enrollment numbers. In our community outreach, we regularly speak with families who would enroll at SNTHS but don’t have access to reliable transportation.

SNTHS intends to contract with a student transportation provider for one strategically designed bus route to reach up to 60 bus riders per day. The total cost of this service is \$66,000, but our 2023 EEGA audit only qualifies us for \$25,012 of transportation funding. Realizing the gap between the cost of transportation and the funding available, SNTHS intends to secure additional funds by requesting an amendment with the SPCSA after we can document higher enrollment resulting from bus services and ongoing community engagement. We also intend to work with our transportation provider and local nonprofit

¹ Section 28.5 of Assembly Bill 400 (2023 Session of the Nevada Legislature)

² 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.

partners to secure additional funding to help us close the gap between SPCSA grant funding and the cost of providing transportation, if necessary. We also have CSP funding that we could re-allocate if necessary.

Our proposed transportation route is based on the areas of highest concentration for initial applications to join our founding class, but we will work with our transportation provider to revise the bus route as we gather more information from our ongoing needs assessment.

Based on budget limitations, this transportation plan does not include other forms of pupil transportation, but we are open to adding new services in the future as our enrollment and budget allow.”

Analysis and Recommendation

SNTHS is requesting approval of its Transportation Plan and funding to implement the Transportation Plan. In addition, because SNTHS 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 “the proposed school bus stops are designed to extend access in the most efficient way possible to a geographic area that will allow us to reach as many families as possible within a reasonably timed (<50 minutes) bus route. Once the bus is running, there will be roughly 8 square miles more where students without access to a car can walk to campus or a bus stop.” 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. As a new school, SNTHS received an enrollment audit during June of 2023 to establish the student count for the purpose of funding through the Pupil Centered Funding Plan. As of the enrollment audit, the student count was 52. SNTHS is located in Clark County where the four-year average (per pupil) in transportation funding for the 2023-24 school year is \$481. The total funding request for SNTHS was \$25,012, 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 indicates 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

support the school in reducing chronic absenteeism, ensuring full enrollment, and enabling smooth and safe arrival and dismissal procedures.

Therefore, SPCSA staff recommend approval of the SNTHS 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 SNTHS 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 SNTHS 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:

| School Year | 2023-24 | 2024-25 | 2025-26 | 2026-27 | 2027-28 | 2028-29 |
|------------------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|
| Grade Levels | 9-10 | 9-11 | 9-12 | 9-12 | 9-12 | 9-12 |
| Total Enrollment | 200 | 300 | 400 | 450 | 500 | 550 |