

# STATE PUBLIC CHARTER SCHOOL AUTHORITY



## **RFA: Reduce in Enrollment in Existing Grade Levels**

The SPCSA considers reductions to an approved enrollment cap to be a material change of the charter contract and require approval by the State Public Charter School Authority Board.

### **Executive Summary**

Provide a brief overview of your school, including:

1. Identification of the school, its location(s), enrollment(s)(most recent ADE quarter), brief history, brief description of its board members and key leadership team members

**Explore Academy Las Vegas** is a charter middle and high school that serves grades 6-12. The school has been open since August of 2020. The school is located at 3551 N. Ferrell Street, North Las Vegas, NM 89032. The approved enrollment for the 2023-2024 school year was 450 students. The current enrollment is 283 and the most recent ADE enrollment (Q2) was 277.4.

The Explore Learning model was created by Justin Baiardo, an experienced educator in New Mexico and the current Executive Director of the Explore Learning Network (CMO). The choice theory model of education, which underlies the philosophy of Explore Academy, is focused on turning each student into an active learner who will increasingly become responsible for his or her own education. By allowing each student to choose and personalize his or her own educational pathway from an exceptionally diverse set of course offerings, students become more active, empowered and successful learners.

The Explore Academy philosophy uses electives to a level previously unseen in public education by incorporating the idea of a differentiated curriculum to provide all students, no matter their background, with a diversity of educational choices from which they can create individualized, custom educational pathways. Students are held to specific requirements which align to state standards; however, rather than learn objectives through longer, semester-based courses, Explore Academy uses month-long seminars to focus on fewer objectives within each learning module. What was previously a semester or year-long class is now broken up into several smaller seminars which collectively cover the same academic standards.

The diversity of the school and its curriculum come in the manner in which these seminars are delivered. Rather than providing a single option (the traditional manner of teaching), Explore Academy teachers create different versions or themes (“flavors”) of each seminar that differentiate the way in which the seminar can be offered to students. It is from this diversity that students can choose the manner in which they are educated.

Specific themes for the seminar flavors, and their prominent strategies, are developed through the creativity of the school's teachers and will be advertised to students so that they may choose the themes through which they receive their education. As students move through their seminar requirements, they come to create an education that is both unique and individualized. When students feel empowered by, engaged in, and excited about their education, the impact is felt throughout their community and the educational landscape begins to shift.

The central component of the Explore Academy model is the freedom for students to choose the manner in which they receive their education, thus shifting the focus from educating a large group in one particular manner to identifying each student as an individual, and thus allowing for a personalization of one's education based on each individual's unique academic strengths, passions, and interests. By utilizing shorter periods of instruction which allow for choice at each monthly or bimonthly junction, and compounded by the Explore Academy course catalog consisting of over seven hundred flavor offerings for grades 6-12, the combination of choices one can make ensures that no two students will ever share the same educational pathway.

The leadership team for Explore Academy Las Vegas includes the school leader, the governing board, and the staff of Explore Learning Network. The school hired a new school leader, Principal Alexandria (Ali) Taylor, who is an experienced charter school administrator. She is extremely competent in organizational, operational and instructional leadership and is passionate and dedicated to serving all students. Justin Baiardo, founder of the Explore Learning model, is the Executive Director of the Explore Learning Network team and provides experience and support across all aspects of school operations including finances, curriculum, educational model, etc. Elisha Baiardo is the Director of Operations of the Explore Learning Network who provides support in areas such as accountability, student data, federal funding applications, and much more. Ashlynn Johnson is an expert in charter school administration and school improvement, including having served as the founding principal for two charter schools. She is now the Director of Administration for Explore Learning Network and supports the school administrator on all aspects of school leadership. Kimberly DiMiceli is a highly experienced educator and teacher leader and is the Director of Secondary Instruction for Explore Learning Network. She works closely with the school's instructional coach to provide all teacher training, professional development, and curricular/instructional support to the school. Felicia Boatman is the Director of Logistics, providing master scheduling support, student data analysis, and teacher training. Karen Woerner brings her wealth of experience in public education and charter school authorizing practices to her position as the Director of Compliance and Board Liaison. In addition, the CMO has experts who provide support to the school leader in the areas of assessments, data management and reporting, ELL, enrollment, facilities, information technology, marketing, purchasing/procurement, special education, and staffing.

The governing board for Explore Academy - Las Vegas has six members who are deeply passionate about education in the Las Vegas area and in providing high quality options to students and families. Rachelle Luna, President, is a government acquisition and contract specialist with in-depth knowledge of legal processes and procurement procedures. Annette Dawson Owens, Board Vice-President, is an educator and education advocate with extensive experience in district and charter schools across Nevada. Ron Coe, Board Secretary, is a TFA alum educator and investor with experience in educational policy. Jennifer Bambao is dedicated to social change and servant leadership with extensive experience in the nonprofit sector and corporate philanthropy. Jose Valenzuela is a personal lawyer in Las Vegas. Devonna Jordan serves as the parent representative to the board.

## 2. Statement and overview of the mission and vision

**MISSION:** Explore Academy will provide each student with a personalized educational experience through the

power of student choice, allowing each student to create a unique educational pathway in preparation for a college future.

**VISION:** Explore Academy is a college preparatory school which will serve grades 6 to 12. Its core academic philosophy and overall vision are based on the idea of a differentiated curriculum in utilizing an expansive set of electives to provide students equal opportunity for choice in their learning, all the while empowering them with the freedom to create unique and individualized educational pathways.

3. A summary explanation of the reasons that the charter school is seeking to make this specific requested change.

The Board of Explore Academy - Las Vegas requests that the SPCSA approve this request to amend its charter school contract with the SPCSA regarding **reducing the enrollment cap to 300 students**.

4. Specifically identify the key reasons associated with this reduction in your enrollment cap.

The charter school is seeking an amendment in order to reduce its enrollment cap and revise the plan for enrollment due to the following factors.

The school has faced numerous challenges since opening day. It was difficult to open during the height of the pandemic and the first year was a remote learning year with only 150 students. Additionally, the delay in securing and preparing the school's permanent facility, also in large part due to the pandemic, impacted enrollment during 2021-2022 when the school was temporarily co-located with another school. The original plan was to relocate to the permanent facility by mid-year (January 2022) however due to ongoing pandemic-related issues with construction and supplies, the school was unable to relocate to its new home until immediately prior to the opening day of the 2022-2023 school year. These issues with the facility impacted students' and families' interest in the school.

Explore Academy - Las Vegas continued to struggle in many aspects during 2022-2023 and the board decided to make a change in school leadership. A new principal was hired and the school has shown significant improvement in school culture, instructional practices, student discipline, and parent/community relationships in the first six (6) months under her leadership. In fact, enrollment has not only recovered from the 40% loss in student retention that occurred at the end of the 2022-2023 school year but has added additional students beyond that. The school's reputation and the interest in continuing to attend the school has improved dramatically.

Though the enrollment has steadily increased each year (with caps of 150, 220, and 275), the school has been unable to meet the original enrollment projection of 450 for 2023-2024. The school expects that both the recruitment and retention issues will be resolved under the new school leadership and the projected enrollments for the remainder of the charter contract, listed in the chart below under Operations and Enrollment question #3, are attainable.

## **Operations and Enrollment**

1. Describe the steps the school is taking to respond to the enrollment challenges. Examples may be increased marketing, hiring of personnel dedicated to outreach, or other measures the school is implementing to address under enrollment.

The hiring of a new school leader has made a marked difference at the school, as observed by SPCSA staff during the site visit conducted on December 5, 2023. In addition to an improved learning environment and

establishment of consistent systems, the principal, Ali Taylor, and school staff have prioritized contacting potential families on a regular basis and work diligently to promote the school in the local community.

Also, the network hired a Director of Outreach and Marketing, Katia Pride, to assist with recruitment efforts. The school has been hosting meet and greet events, in-person at the school and virtually, if needed. The school leader and support staff have been increasing their presence in the community by hosting community wide events and marketing in community centers, such as libraries. The school’s social media postings are also a focus by promoting what is happening within the school. The school is also ensuring a presence at community events such as holiday themed activities, school fairs, and other community sponsored events.

2. If the reduction in enrollment will impact staffing, please complete the staffing chart on the budget workbook. If the reduction in the cap will not impact staffing, please write no impact below.

No impact

3. Please complete the enrollment chart with the proposed enrollment changes for the remainder of the charter term. Please feel free to add rows for grades and change columns to fit the charter term.

Grade Level	Number of Students		
	2023-24	2024-25	2025-26
6	48	95	100
7	55	85	95
8	75	75	80
9	39	65	70
10	39	55	70
11	20	45	55
12	8	30	55
Total	284	450	525

## Financial

1. Please complete the amendment budget workbook and include as part of your amendment application submission or provide an updated budget in a workbook of your choosing.

See Attachment 1- Explore Academy - LVS amendment budget workbook

2. Provide a budget narrative including a detailed description of assumptions and revenue estimates, including but not limited to the basis for revenue projections, staffing levels, and costs. The narrative should specifically address the degree to which the school budget will rely on variable income (e.g., grants, donations, fundraising, etc.). There is no page limit for the budget narrative. Include the following: A detailed discussion of Per-Pupil Revenue: Use the figures provided in developing your budget assumptions.

The school's budget relies almost exclusively on state funding with additional supplemental funding taken into account for Title programs and IDEA-B. No additional grants, donations, or fundraising revenues are included within the budget estimates. The budget takes into account the increase in per-pupil funding for the upcoming 2024-25 school year (with no assumed increases thereafter).

As student enrollment increases, staffing is adjusted accordingly with an increase in three new teachers each year. The average salary assumed for teaching positions is \$60,000 prior to benefits and retirement employer contributions. Additional support staff will also be added each year to mainly include educational assistance which assist with student tutoring, flex period administration, and overall student supervision. Current positions which have been added, including counseling, campus security, registrar, additional special education support staff, and assistant principal will continue to be funded moving forward.

The school anticipates an annual lease rate of approximately \$900,000 for future years as well, again remaining conservative as the school hopes to finance the purchase of its facility in the coming years to better adjust its facility debt service payment to meet its enrollment and staffing demands.

3. Given the current enrollment of your school, discuss in detail the school's plans to address the loss of revenues. Please reference the submitted budget as may be appropriate.

The initial budget, and the significant burden of the school lease payment, required the school to operate with a smaller staff to begin the year. As the school's enrollment numbers became more concrete as the year opened, the school did not elect to add more staff and therefore staffing adjustments are not necessary at this juncture to maintain financial solvency for the remainder of the year.

**In addition to the information above, please submit**

1. The agenda and approved/draft minutes of the meeting in which the governing board of the charter school approved the Request for Amendment.

See Attachment 2 - Explore Academy - LVS Public Notice and Agenda

See Attachment 3 - Explore Academy - LVS Draft Meeting Minutes

2. A board-approved Good Cause Exemption letter, with board chair signature, along with the amendment application.

See Attachment 4- Explore Academy - LVS Good Cause Exemption letter

# NOTICE OF PUBLIC MEETING



## EXPLORE ACADEMY - LAS VEGAS GOVERNING COUNCIL

Explore Academy - Las Vegas will hold a **SPECIAL** public meeting on Tuesday, February 27, 2024 at 7:30 pm at Explore Academy Las Vegas, 3551 N Ferrell Street, North Las Vegas, NV 89032. **This is due to the cancellation of the regularly scheduled meeting on February 21, 2024 due to lack of quorum.**

This meeting will be held in accordance with the Nevada Open Meeting Law, NRS 241.020 and the [Nevada Open Meeting Law Manual](#), and pursuant to COVID-19 directives, board meetings will be held in person and virtually.

Members of the public may view the meeting online via the Zoom link.

This notice has been posted digitally in the following locations on or before 9 am on the third working day before the meeting:

1. The school website ([explore.academy/lvs](http://explore.academy/lvs))
2. The Nevada Public Meeting site ([notice.nv.gov](http://notice.nv.gov))

This notice has been posted physically in the following locations on or before 9 am on the third working day before the meeting:

1. Agendas posted in front window (with all pages facing out) at the school at 3551 N Ferrell Street, North Las Vegas, NV 89032
2. Agendas posted at Alexander Library 1755 W. Alexander Road, North Las Vegas, NV 89032
3. Agendas posted on the home page of the school's website ([www.explore.academy/lvs](http://www.explore.academy/lvs)) under Governance
4. Notices are posted on the Nevada Public Notice website at <https://notice.nv.gov/>
5. A copy of agendas to be provided to anyone who requests it.

If a member of the public would like to view a document referred to in any meeting of the Explore Academy - Las Vegas Governing Council and is not able to easily find or access said document, please email [lvs-board@explore.academy](mailto:lvs-board@explore.academy) and it will be made available within five (5) business days.

Public comment time will be allotted during each board meeting - at the beginning of the meeting regarding items on the agenda before any items are discussed on which action may be taken so comments may be heard by the governing body, and at the end of the meeting prior to adjournment for items not on the agenda. No action may be taken regarding any topic during this public comment section, but rather must wait until the topic at hand is included as an action item on an agenda. A time limit of three (3) minutes will be imposed on public comments to allow all members of the public the opportunity to speak. These comments will not be restricted based on viewpoint.

Public comment can be submitted prior to a meeting to [LVS-board@explore.academy](mailto:LVS-board@explore.academy) to be included in the minutes and provided to the Board.

The Board reserves the right to take agenda items out of order, items may be removed or delayed from the agenda at any time, and two or more items may be combined for consideration.

The Board is happy to make reasonable accommodations for any member of the public who has a disability and wishes to attend the meeting. If special arrangements are necessary, please notify the Board at [LVS-board@explore.academy](mailto:LVS-board@explore.academy).

*Please note that a quorum of the board may attend school or community events and activities. If this occurs, no decisions will be made at these gatherings. All board discussion regarding decisions and voting occur at publicly noticed meetings.*

# AGENDA



## EXPLORE ACADEMY - LAS VEGAS GOVERNING COUNCIL

**Mission** The mission of Explore Academy - Las Vegas is to provide all students, regardless of background, with a personalized, standards-based, educational experience through the power of student choice, allowing each student to create a personalized and engaging educational pathway in preparation for college.

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**Chartering Authority:** State Public Charter Schools Authority (SPCSA)  
**Charter Management Organization (CMO):** Explore Learning Network (ELN)  
**School Finance Management:** Axiom Analytics  
**Department of Education:** Nevada Department of Education (NDE)

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**Meeting Date:** February 27, 2024 **Meeting Time:** 7:30 pm

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**Meeting Location:** In Person: 3551 N Ferrell Street, North Las Vegas, NV 89032  
Virtual:  
<https://us06web.zoom.us/j/87101951367>  
Webinar ID: 871 0195 1367

Or join by phone:  
US: +1 669 444 9171 or +1 669 900 6833 or +1 719 359 4580 or +1 253 215 8782 or +1 346 248 7799 or +1 408 638 0968 or +1 386 347 5053 or +1 564 217 2000 or +1 646 876 9923 or +1 646 931 3860 or +1 301 715 8592 or +1 309 205 3325 or +1 312 626 6799

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- I. Call to Order  
Roll Call and Ascertain Quorum  
Pledge Of Allegiance
- 
- II. Public Comment regarding any item on the agenda For information  
*Members of the public attending this meeting will be invited to address the Board regarding items listed on the agenda at this time. Board members should not respond until the topic is discussed later in the agenda. Comments are limited to three (3) minutes. Commenters should state their name, relationship to the school, and the agenda item to which they are speaking. Comments regarding other topics will be heard at the end of the meeting.*
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- III. Approval of Agenda For action  
*Following a request for any declarations of conflicts of interest, the Chair will request a motion to approve the agenda.*
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- IV. Approval of Minutes from [January 17, 2024](#) For action
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- V. School Finance Report For action  
A. [Bank Reconciliation](#) - January  
B. [Check Register](#) - January  
C. [Financial Presentation - Amended Budget](#)  
D. Audit Report, if available
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- VI. Administration / Management Report For possible action  
A. **Updates from the Administration / ELS**  
may include Staffing/Enrollment/Marketing/Facility/etc
- B. **Training for Governing Board Members**  
1. Questions and answers regarding the training videos provided to the board to learn more about the [Explore Model and Curriculum](#)
2. Training offered by Opportunity 180 - “Charter Board Governance Academy” on April 20,
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2024

Please complete the [Governance Academy Interest Form](#) if you have not already done so

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- VII Governing Board Business For action
- A. Amendment for Reduction in Enrollment Cap**
1. [Amendment Form](#)
  2. [Budget Workbook](#)
  3. [Good Cause Exemption Letter](#)
- B. Lease Approval**  
Final comments were negotiated on Friday, Feb 16, and it has been 100% reviewed by the school's attorney.
1. [Agreement](#)
  2. [Lease](#)
- C. [Submissions to EpiCenter](#) for board reference/review (and approval as required)**
1. Power-based Violence MOU per Assembly Bill 245 (2023)
    - a. [AB 245 one-page handout](#)
    - b. [Signs of Hope MOU](#)
  2. Board Disclosure Forms/Background Checks
- D. CMO Evaluation Tool Task Force Report**  
The first drafts were provided in January 2023 and another proposed version was provided by Justin Baiardo prior to the January board meeting. Review the proposed edits to the [most recent version](#) for discussion and approval.
- 

- VIII. Public Comment regarding any item *not* on the agenda For information  
*Members of the public will be invited to address the Board regarding items not listed on the agenda but within the Board's jurisdiction. Comments are limited to three (3) minutes. Commenters should state their name, their relationship to the school, and the topic of their comment. There shall be no action taken, nor should there be comments on, responses to, or discussion of a topic not on the agenda. The Board members may (1) acknowledge receipt of information/report; (2) refer to staff with no direction as to action or priority; or (3) refer the matter to the next agenda.*
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- IX. Adjournment
- Next regular meeting will be held Wednesday, March 20, 2024 at 5:00 pm. Please note that there may be a special meeting held prior to the next regular meeting if the Audit Report is not available for review and approval at this meeting (in Section V above)
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**No changes** may be made to this agenda after 9:00 am on **THU, Feb 22, 2024** Verified by KW

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### Reference/Reminders:

- Governance Resources (SPCSA)  
[https://charterschools.nv.gov/ForSchools/Governance\\_Standards/](https://charterschools.nv.gov/ForSchools/Governance_Standards/)
- Governance and Operations Resources (SPCSA)  
<https://charterschools.nv.gov/ForSchools/Resources/>
- Accountability (SPCSA)  
<https://charterschools.nv.gov/ForSchools/Accountability/>

# Meeting Minutes

**DRAFT**



## EXPLORE ACADEMY - LAS VEGAS GOVERNING COUNCIL

*prepared by Karen Woerner, Recording Secretary*

**Tuesday, February 27, 2024**

7:30 pm

### I. PROCEDURAL AGENDA

- A. This meeting of the Explore Academy - Las Vegas Governing Council (GC) was called to order at 7:32 pm PST.
- B. A quorum of the GC was present as follows: President Rachelle Luna, Vice President Annette Dawson-Owens, and Jose Valenzuela. Secretary Ron Coe, Jennifer Bambao, and Devonna Jordan were absent.
- C. Staff in attendance: Ali Taylor - School Principal; Karen Woerner - ELN Director of Compliance; and Josh Padilla of Axiom Analytics - School Business Official.
- D. The meeting was held virtually on the Zoom platform with an opportunity for the public to join in-person at the school or online.
- E. The Pledge of Allegiance was recited by the board members.

### II. PUBLIC COMMENT regarding items on the agenda

There were no public comments.

### III. Approval of Agenda

Jose Valenzuela motioned to approve the agenda with no changes; seconded by Annette Dawson-Owens; Unanimously approved (3-0).

### IV. Approval of Minutes from [January 17, 2024](#)

Jose Valenzuela motioned to approve the minutes with no corrections; seconded by Annette Dawson-Owens; Unanimously approved (3-0).

### V. School Finance Report

- A. [Bank Reconciliation](#) - January
- B. [Check Register](#) - January

Following questions and general discussion, Jose Valenzuela motioned to approve the bank reconciliation and check register for January; seconded by Annette Dawson-Owens; Unanimously approved (3-0).

- C. [Financial Presentation - Amended Budget](#)

Following questions and general discussion, Jose Valenzuela motioned to approve the financial amended budget; seconded by Annette Dawson-Owens; Unanimously approved (3-0).

- D. **Annual Audit Report** is not yet available for review and approval.

## VI. Administration / Management Report

### A. Updates from the Administration / ELS

may include Staffing/Enrollment/Marketing/Facility/etc

1. Enrollment is strong at 288 today and the school will continue to enroll through April 12th.
2. 97% of current students are planning to return.
3. Have received 100 applications for 2024-2025
4. Public relations and marketing includes recent visits to community events and campus tours

### B. Training for Governing Board Members

1. Questions and answers regarding the **training videos** provided to the board to learn more about the [Explore Model and Curriculum](#)  
This was postponed from the January meeting. No questions were asked and Chair Luna advised board members to review the videos prepared.
2. Training offered by Opportunity 180 - "**Charter Board Governance Academy**" on Saturday, April 20, 2024. This training is by invitation only; one-day complimentary Charter Board Governance Academy in April 2024 to provide technical assistance to charter boards through our CSP program. It is anticipated that this training will receive SPCSA approval and, if so, participation in this session will fulfill the state-mandated charter school governance training requirement outlined in NRS 388A.224 for schools.

Great Schools Federal Grants Program  
Opportunity 180  
Cell (TEXT PREFERRED): (702) 351-0120  
Email: [greatschoolsncvcs@opportunity180.org](mailto:greatschoolsncvcs@opportunity180.org)  
CSP website: [www.opportunity180.org/great-schools-for-nevada](http://www.opportunity180.org/great-schools-for-nevada)  
Visit our data portal: [www.greatschoolsallkids.org](http://www.greatschoolsallkids.org)

Please complete the [Governance Academy Interest Form](#) if you have not already done so

## VII. Governing Council Business

### A. Amendment for Reduction in Enrollment Cap

1. [Amendment Form](#)
2. [Budget Workbook](#)
3. [Good Cause Exemption Letter](#)

Jose Valenzuela motioned to approve the amendment for reduction in enrollment cap, including items 1-3 above; seconded by Annette Dawson-Owens; Unanimously approved (3-0).

### B. Lease Approval

Final comments were negotiated on Friday, Feb 16, and it has been 100% reviewed by the school's attorney.

1. [Agreement](#)
2. [Lease](#)

Following questions and general discussion, Jose Valenzuela motioned to approve the lease agreement as reviewed and approved by the school attorney; seconded by Annette Dawson-Owens; Unanimously approved (3-0).

C. **Submissions to EpiCenter** for board reference/review (and **approval as required**)

1. **Power-based Violence MOU**  
per Assembly Bill 245 (2023)
  - a) [AB 245 one-page handout](#)
  - b) [Signs of Hope MOU](#)

Following questions and general discussion, Jose Valenzuela motioned to approve the MOU with Signs of Hope; seconded by Annette Dawson-Owens; Unanimously approved (3-0).

2. **Board Disclosure Forms/Background Checks**

Board members were asked to provide disclosure forms which are significantly overdue to Karen Woerner as follows:

- a) Ron Coe: Form needs correction per SPCSA
- b) Jose Valenzuela: Form must be updated with background check per SPCSA.
- c) Jennifer Bambao: Form not received
- d) Devonna Jordan: New member; Form not yet received

D. **CMO Evaluation Tool Task Force Report**

The first drafts were provided in January 2023 and another proposed version was provided by Justin Baiardo prior to the January board meeting. Review the proposed edits to the [most recent version](#) for discussion and approval.

Following questions and general discussion, particularly in regards to metrics for the last three indicators on which were added by the Chair, Annette Dawson Owens motioned to table this discussion until next month; seconded by Jose Valenzuela; Unanimously approved (3-0).

VIII. **PUBLIC COMMENT regarding items not on the agenda**

There were no public comments.

IX. **ADJOURNMENT**

The next regular meeting of the GC is scheduled for Wednesday, March 20, 2024 at 5:00 pm. *Please note that there may also be a special meeting held prior to the next regular meeting if the Audit Report is not available for review and approval at this meeting (in Section V above).* There being no other business for the Governing Council, the board adjourned at 8:39 pm PST.

## Reference/Reminders:

- **Charter Management Organization (CMO):** Explore Learning Network (ELN)  
**School Finance Managers:** Katie Rarick/Josh Padilla of Axiom Analytics
- **Chartering Authority:** State Public Charter Schools Authority (SPCSA)
- **Department of Education:** Nevada Department of Education (NDE)
  
- Please advise Board Liaison of any topics of interest for consideration, discussion, or training at future meetings (regular, special or separate work sessions)
  
- Governance Resources (SPCSA)  
[https://charterschools.nv.gov/ForSchools/Governance\\_Standards/](https://charterschools.nv.gov/ForSchools/Governance_Standards/)
  
- Governance and Operations Resources (SPCSA)  
<https://charterschools.nv.gov/ForSchools/Resources/>
  
- Accountability (SPCSA)  
<https://charterschools.nv.gov/ForSchools/Accountability/>

# EXPLORE ACADEMY - LAS VEGAS

3551 N Ferrell Street (grades 6-11)  
North Las Vegas, NV 89032



February 28, 2024

Dear Members of the Nevada State Public Charter School Authority:

The purpose of this letter is to formally request a Good Cause exemption from the State Public Charter School Authority (SPCSA) for an amendment to the school's existing charter contract. The school is seeking to revise (reduce) its enrollment cap.

As you are aware, the school has faced numerous challenges since its opening day. It was difficult to open during the height of the pandemic and the first year was a remote learning year with only 150 students. Additionally, the delay in securing and preparing the school's permanent facility, also in large part due to the pandemic, impacted enrollment during 2021-2022 when the school was temporarily co-located with another school. Explore Academy - Las Vegas continued to struggle in many aspects during 2022-2023 and the board decided to make a change in school leadership. A new principal was hired and the school has shown significant improvement in school culture, instructional practices, student discipline, and parent/community relationships in the first six (6) months under her leadership. In fact, enrollment has not only recovered from the 40% loss in student retention that occurred at the end of the 2022-2023 school year but has added additional students beyond that. The school's reputation and the interest in continuing to attend the school has improved dramatically.

Though the enrollment has steadily increased each year (with caps of 150, 220, and 275), the school has been unable to meet the original enrollment projection of 450 for 2023-2024. The school expects that both the recruitment and retention issues will be resolved under the new school leadership and the projected enrollments for the remainder of the charter contract are attainable.

The purpose of this letter is to request an amendment to the school's charter contract to align enrollment projections for the length of contract term that are reasonable and attainable, in light of the challenges faced. The board discussed and approved the submission of this amendment request. Board members are both comfortable and confident with the proposed revisions to the enrollment cap. The school's leadership feels a Good Cause exemption to adjust the enrollment projections/cap is merited.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Rachelle Luna'.

Rachelle Luna  
Board Chair