

# 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

Strong Start Academy is located at the Tony Hsieh Education Center at 310 S. 9th Street in downtown Las Vegas. The City of Las Vegas has leased the building to Strong Start Academy and has committed to providing maintenance, security, and improvements to the building as needed. SSAES opened in August 2022 with three classes of students in kindergarten and two classes in 1st and 2nd grades. During the last quarter of the 2022-2023 school year, the ADE for the 4th quarter was 79.1. Currently, SSAES has an enrollment of 145 students with ADE for the second quarter at 143.1. Class sizes are capped at 20 students per class and all students are engaged in a dual language educational model. The school leadership team is committed to hiring bilingual, TESL/bilingual endorsed teachers. The Board is comprised of a highly qualified set of individuals including experienced, bilingual educators, college professors, human resources experts, and a parent. The Leadership Team includes a highly qualified and experienced Executive Director, several highly experienced educational consultants, and a team of teacher leaders.

2. Statement and overview of the mission and vision

**Vision:** Strong Start Academy Elementary School is a culturally diverse learning community that prepares children to excel academically in two languages and have a positive impact on an increasingly evolving and global society.

**Mission:** The mission of Strong Start Academy Elementary School is to provide equitable, high- quality academics as we prepare our bilingual, civic-minded thinkers to maximize their potential in their community and the world.

Students deserve equal access to opportunity and high-quality education, regardless of the zip code in which they live, the color of their skin, their gender, the language they speak, or their country of origin. Strong Start Academy Elementary School (SSAES) believes that every child has the ability to excel given the right supports, and that all students have talents that can grow through formal learning. SSAES will equip students with the knowledge, skills, and mindsets they need to put their learning to use as active citizens. SSAES want students to love coming to school each day because they feel valued, safe, supported, and respected by peers and faculty.

The goal of SSAES is to holistically cultivate the academic ground for these students with a rigorous and innovative academic experience. SSAES will promote student achievement in a safe and enriching learning environment where students will develop a sense of purpose and become responsible, independent life-long learners.

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

SSAES is seeking this change based on current enrollment data. SSAES has an enrollment of 145 students with ADE for the second quarter at 143.1. While the school was able to increase enrollment by 45%, it did not meet the projected enrollment cap of 180 for the 2023-2024 school year. Therefore, the school is seeking a contract amendment to adjust maximum enrollment for the 2023-2024 school year of 143 students.

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

Currently, SSAES only serves students in kindergarten through 3rd grade. This does create an enrollment challenge for our families that have multiple children in grades kindergarten through 5th. As we expand the grades we serve, this will become less of an issue.

### **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.

To address our enrollment challenges, we have increased our marketing budget with Graphicka to boost our marketing campaign. We have started to work with Latino Outreach to assist with recruiting and canvassing our surrounding community. The Executive Director will also attend tabling events throughout the community to make the information about the school more accessible to the neighboring communities. The Executive Director will also present at Strong Start Academy Pre-Schools to strengthen the transition from preschool to kindergarten. With these measures in place, we believe we will be able to maintain the 143 student enrollment cap for the remainder of the current school year and meet the projected student enrollment of 206 students for the 2024-2025 school year.

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 charter 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	2026-27	2027-28
K	51	60	60	60	60
1	48	55	60	60	60
2	21	50	55	60	60
3	25	21	50	55	60
4	0	20	21	50	55
5	0	0	20	21	50
Total	145	206	266	306	345

**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.
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.
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.

**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.
2. A board approved and board chair signed Good Cause Exemption letter along with the amendment application.



January 19, 2024

State Charter Governing Board  
State Public Charter School Authority  
2080 E. Flamingo, Suite 230  
Las Vegas, NV 89119

To: State Public Charter School Authority,

RE: Request for Amendment to Charter Application

Strong Start Academy requests an exemption from the current amendment schedule to amend their charter contract with the SPCSA in order to:

1. Change the enrollment cap of the school

The Strong Start Academy Governing Board has voted on the proposed amendment prior to submission. The change will allow for Strong Start Academy to be in compliance with the enrollment floor and cap for the 2023-2024 school year.

We appreciate the support of the SPCSA staff regarding the required amendment and are asking that good faith exemption be granted and that the request for amendment be approved.

Sincerely,

Lorna James-Cervantes,  
Board President, Strong Start Academy  
[ljamescervantes@clvstrongstartes.org](mailto:ljamescervantes@clvstrongstartes.org)

**Budget Narrative – Enrollment Amendment**  
**January 2024**  
**CLV Strong Start Academy ES**

The attached budget and cash flow projection are based on conservative estimates of actual costs to operate CLV Strong Start Academy ES (SSAES). Assumptions used to create the budget model are based on rates provided by the State of Nevada and actual historical rates for this school.

**REVENUES**

- **Pupil-Centered Funding Plan (PCFP), formerly Distributive School Account:** The largest source of revenue is the Pupil-Centered Funding Plan based on average daily enrollment, with weighted adjustments for special populations. The budget reflects a model assuming an enrollment of 143 students in FY23-24 and growing per the table below. PCFP rates are per the State PCFP workbook and align with actual rate of \$8,966 in FY23-24 and \$9,414 in FY24-25, with rates increasing by 3% beginning in FY26-27.

	Year 1 2023-24	Year 2 2024-25	Year 3 2025-26	Year 4 2026-27	Year 5 2027-28
<b>Enrollment Breakdown</b>					
K	51	60	60	60	60
1	48	55	60	60	60
2	21	50	55	60	60
3	23	21	50	55	60
4	-	20	21	50	55
5	-	-	20	21	50
<b>Total ADE</b>	<b>143</b>	<b>206</b>	<b>266</b>	<b>306</b>	<b>345</b>

- **Federal and State Revenue:** Federal and state revenue assumptions are based on rates provided by the State of Nevada and SPCSA for this school. Rates in future years are estimated based on rate per eligible student as distributed in FY23-24. Sources of Federal revenue include eligible Title funding, special education funding, and the National School Lunch Program. Percentages of students identified as eligible for free and reduced lunch, English Language Learners, and Special Education are based on historical average demographics. The budget model reflects that the school is receiving State Special Education funds now that they are in Year 2 of operations.
- **Other Grants and Start-Up Funding:** SSAES received a Federal CSP grant totaling \$750,000 for certain eligible start-up expenses. The School has until the end of FY23-24 to spend these funds and has included relevant revenue and expenses in the FY23-24 Budget that are one-time in nature. In addition, SSAES receives support from the City of Las Vegas in varying amounts which has been committed for the next 4 years. SSAES also received ARP ESSER, AB495 and CLV ARPA funds that are one-time in nature and included in the FY23-24 Budget along with offsetting expenses.

## EXPENSES

### *Salaries/Personnel*

The head counts included in the budget are below.

POSITION	2023-24	2024-25	2025-26	2026-27	2027-28
CAFETERIA WORKER	1	1	1	1	1
CUSTODIAN	1	2	2	2	2
ELL TEACHER	2	2	2	2	2
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR/PRINCIPAL	1	1	1	1	1
FIRST AID/SAFETY ASSISTANT (FASA)	1	1	1	1	1
INSTRUCTIONAL AIDE	2	2	2	2	2
SAFE SCHOOL PROFESSIONAL	1	1	1	1	1
SPED TEACHER	1	2	2	2	2
TEACHER	12	14	17	19	22
<b>Total Staff</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>26</b>	<b>29</b>	<b>31</b>	<b>34</b>

- Expenses for benefits and payroll taxes are based upon federal/state requirements and current Clark County School District rates. The average annual cost for medical benefits is \$9,000 per staff member. SSAES also offers retirement benefits through NV PERS with average employer cost included at 33.5% of salaries. Other benefit related costs include Medicare tax of 1.45%, and unemployment insurance at 3% of eligible costs up to the annual salary cap in the State of Nevada. Workers' compensation is included at estimated rate of \$360 per employee.
- The budget also includes professional development costs which are largely covered by Federal grants.

### *Instruction Related Expenses*

- Curriculum costs: The budget includes costs for textbooks averaging \$777 per ADE in FY23-24, with some costs covered by start-up grants. Other budgeted costs include general supplies at \$996/ADE.
- For recruiting and marketing, SSAES budgeted \$99,255 in FY23-24 with use of CSP funds and expects to reduce these expenses substantially in later years as the school becomes known in the community.
- To ensure that SSAES can service its special education population, in addition to the salaried special education personnel, the budget also includes \$54,000 in special education contractor costs and nurse services in FY23-24 with similar costs per student in each year.

- Also included in this budget is \$1,000 per FTE in contracted substitute costs to cover staff absences and ensure continuity of educational services for students.

#### *Operation Related Expenses*

- Operational contracted expenses for SSAES include fees for an annual audit (\$20,000), legal fees (\$10,000), and HR/Board On Track fees (\$26,495) in FY23-24 with amounts growing by 3% in future years.
- Back-office support services (Financial Services) are based on contract with the School's current service provider. Services include fiscal training of staff and board, accounts payable, payroll, budgeting, accounting, financial reporting, compliance reporting, and strategic planning. Back-office support services are budgeted at \$65,000 in FY23-24 with nominal growth thereafter.
- Nutrition: The revenue of this program is expected to cover the costs of providing meals to students. Daily breakfast and lunch/snack revenue rates are estimated at \$850 per student per year based on historical costs and participation rates, with similar amounts included for cost of meals.
- Other operating expenses include bank fees at \$245/year, payroll fees at \$125 per FTE, Postage at \$25/student, dues and memberships of \$75/FTE, background checks of \$75 per new FTE, and parent/staff meetings at \$8,000 per year.

#### *Facilities*

- The School leases a facility from the City of Las Vegas under an operating agreement that calls for lease payments of \$12 per year.
- Utilities are paid directly by the School and are estimated at \$6,000 per month based on historical averages. Water/sewer services are included at \$7,000 per year, with estimated 3% increase per year.
- Custodial costs and facility upkeep are estimated at \$1,000 per month, and the School has custodial staff to support with maintaining the facility. Custodial supplies are budgeted at \$15,000 per year.
- Other facility maintenance costs include pest control at \$1,300 per year, alarm monitoring at \$130 per month, and building repairs at \$5,000 per year.

#### *Technology and Equipment*

- Classroom Technology:
  - Devices: Each teacher will be provided a laptop computer for lesson preparation and all other professional expectations, equipped with full Microsoft Office. For students, the

school has purchased sufficient laptops and laptop carts to serve the needs of current students and upcoming student growth in the coming year with use of CSP grant funds. SSAES utilized CSP and other grant funds to purchase smart boards, iPads and doc cameras totaling approximately \$100,000.

- Other Technology:
  - Student Information Systems (SIS) costs are based on actual vendor invoices. Infinite Campus cost is included at \$50 per student.
  - Copier Lease rates and usage fees are budgeted at \$1,125/mo based on actual contracts in place
  - Internet and phone expenses are estimated at \$650/month based on actual expenses
  - Other technology costs include Imagine Language & Literacy and Raz-Plus totaling \$44,000.
  
- Furniture:
  - The School purchased most of the student and staff furniture with use of start-up grant funds. Total budgeted in FY23-24 was \$74,386, and estimated costs in future years are included at \$500 per new student.
  
- Transportation
  - This budget includes costs for transportation during the summer program as included in the AB495 grant. At this time, there are no grant funds or expenses included in this Budget for ongoing student transportation.
  
- Reserves:
  - There is no separate expense line item included in this budget for reserves. However, the net income reflected in the Summary tab shows very strong carryover reserves in each year, with cumulative reserves of at least 20% ongoing.



## Nevada Department of Education

### Accountability Assessment Calendar for the 2023-2024 School Year

Student Assessments – All Students	Grades	Testing Windows
<b>Smarter Balanced Summative Assessment</b> English Language Arts and Mathematics	3 – 8	March 4 – May 7
<b>Science Assessments</b>	5, 8, and high school	March 4 – May 7
<b>ACT</b> College & Career Readiness Assessment English Language Arts and Mathematics	11	<i>Paper/Pencil: February 27, 2024</i> w/Accommodations: February 27-29, March 1 & March 4-8 Online: February 27-29, March 1 & March 4-8 <i>Make-up 1: April 9</i> w/Accommodations: April 9-12 & April 15-19 Online: April 9-12 & April 15-19 <i>Make-up 2: April 23</i> w/Accommodations: April 23-26 & April 29-30, May 1-3 Online: April 23-26 & April 29-30, May 1-3
<b>Kindergarten Entry Assessment (KEA)</b>	K	<i>Intake assessment:</i> No earlier than 15 calendar days prior to the start of school or within 45 instructional days of the start of the school year.
<b>NWEA Measures of Academic Progress (MAP) Growth Reading</b> MAP Growth Reading K-2  MAP Growth Reading K-2  MAP Growth Reading 2-5	K  1  2 – 3	<i>2 Testing Seasons: Winter &amp; Spring:</i> Nov. 13 – Feb. 16; March 11 – May 31 <i>3 Testing Seasons: Fall, Winter, &amp; Spring:</i> Aug. 7 – Oct. 26; Nov. 13 – Feb. 16; March 11 – May 31 <i>3 Testing Seasons: Fall, Winter, &amp; Spring:</i> Aug. 7 – Oct. 26; Nov. 13 – Feb. 16; March 11 – May 31



**Nevada Department of Education**  
**Accountability Assessment Calendar for the 2023-2024 School Year**

<b>Student Assessments – Select Populations</b>	<b>Grades</b>	<b>Testing Windows</b>
<b>NAA</b> – Nevada Alternate Assessment English Language Arts & Mathematics Alternate Assessments  Science Alternate Assessment	3 – 8, 11  5, 8, 11	March 4 – May 17  March 4 – May 17
<b>WIDA</b> – Students Identified as English Learners English Language Proficiency Assessment in Speaking, Listening, Reading, and Writing	K  1 – 12	January 3 – March 1  January 16 – March 1
<b>CTE</b> – Career & Technical Education Workplace Readiness Skills & End-of-Program Technical Skills  Workplace Readiness Retest & End-of-Program Technical Retest	CTE Program Completers  CTE Program Completers	February 12 – March 22  April 15 – April 26