

NEVADA STATE PUBLIC CHARTER SCHOOL AUTHORITY

January 8, 2013

Department of Education
700 East Fifth Street
Board Conference Room
Carson City, Nevada

And

Department of Education
9890 South Maryland Pkwy
Second Floor Conference Room
Las Vegas, Nevada

MINUTES OF THE REGULAR MEETING
(Video Conferenced)

AUTHORITY MEMBERS PRESENT:

In Las Vegas:

Kathleen Conaboy
Elissa Wahl
Marc Abelman
Nora Luna
Melissa Mackedon
Michael Van
Robert McCord

In Carson City:

None

AUTHORITY MEMBERS ABSENT:

None

AUTHORITY STAFF PRESENT:

In Las Vegas:

Steve Canavero, Director, State Public Charter School Authority
Tom McCormack, Education Program Professional, State Public Charter School Authority

In Carson City:

Angela Blair, Education Program Professional, State Public Charter School Authority
Katherine Rohrer, Education Program Professional, State Public Charter School Authority
Allyson Kellogg, Management Analyst, State Public Charter School Authority

LEGAL STAFF PRESENT:

In Las Vegas:

Shane Chesney, Senior Deputy Attorney General

In Carson City:

None

AUDIENCE IN ATTENDANCE:

In Las Vegas:

Tiffani Curtis
Peggy Selma
Sylvia Allen
Jasmine Roman
Christine Kleisner
Melissa Hester
Tiffany Ferguson
Shawna Rice
Tracy Jones
Marivelle Nunez
Lauren Drachen
Evani Thomas
Cedric Ferguson Jr.
Charmaine Paliotta
Cedric Ferguson Sr.
Shari Grennan
Darren Johnson
Adrione Ashley
Nalani Paliotta
Jezaoin Garcia
Delevear Mack
Kimberly Miernik
David Brown
Michael Foster
LeAnn Lomax
Annette Green
Demeasa Heard
Jacqueline Hamilton
Stehani Loper
Kelly Miller
Nancy Hall
Linda Kiefner
Heidi Arbuckle
Robin Vitello
Ruth Parker
David Calvo
Terry Warren
Trista Pfeifer
Kathy Yates
Michelle Raney
Tracy Jones
Victoria Carreon
Angela Landers

Greg Lockeridge
Ryan Reeves
Jennifer DiMarzio
Mike Kazek
Vernon Law
Berta Norwood
Curt Carlson
Rachelle Hulet
Angie Kleven
Jon Gardner
Hadassa Lefkowitz
Connie Jordan

In Carson City:

Donna Wix
Eugene Paslov
John Eppolito
Jennifer Dukek

CALL TO ORDER; ROLL CALL; PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE; APPROVAL OF AGENDA

President Conaboy called the meeting to order at 9:01a.m. with attendance as reflected above.

Agenda Item 1 - Public Comment

The following public speakers testified: Tiffani Curtis, Peggy Selma, Sylvia Allen, Jasmine Roman, Christine Kleisner, Melissa Hester, Tiffany Ferguson, Shawna Rice, Tracy Jones, Marivelle Nunez, Lauren Drachen, Evani Thomas, John Eppolito, Cedric Ferguson Jr., Charmaine Paliotta, Cedric Ferguson Sr., Shari Grennan, Darren Johnson, Adrione Ashley, Nalani Paliotta, Jezaoin Garcia, Delewear Mack, Kimberly Miernik, David Brown, Michael Foster, LeAnn Lomax, Annette Green, Demeasa Heard, Jacqueline Hamilton, Stehani Loper, Kelly Miller

Agenda Item 2 – Approval of August 24, 2012 and October 18-19, 2012 Meeting Minutes

Chair Conaboy took separate motions to approve the minutes.

Member McCord moved to approve the August 24, 2012 minutes. Member Abelman seconded. The motion carried unanimously.

Member McCord moved to approve the October 18-19, 2012 minutes. Member Van seconded. The motion carried unanimously.

Agenda Item 3 – Authority Update

Chair Conaboy gave a brief account of her, Member McCord, and Director Canavero’s trip to Memphis for the National Association of Charter School Authorizer’s national charter school conference.

Agenda Item 4 – Director’s Report

Due to time constraints Director Canavero did not give an update.

Agenda Item 5 - Approval of SPCSA Title I Parental Involvement Policy as required by section 1118 of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA)

Angela Blair gave a brief description to the Authority regarding the Approval of the Title I Parental Involvement Policy and there were no questions from the Authority.

Member Mackedon moved to approve the SPCSA Title I Parental Involvement Policy as required by section 1118 of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA). Member Wahl seconded. The motion carried unanimously.

Agenda Item 9 – Update on progress by Quest Academy’s governing body in addressing questions raised by Quest governing board members, parents, auditors, Quest staff, and Authority staff.

Chair Conaboy called the members of Quest Academy’s governing body to address questions raised by the Authority board, parent’s, auditors, Quest staff and Authority staff. The information item was requested by Christina Fuentes, Quest Academy’s former board president. Vernon Law, Berta Norwood, Kelli Miller, Spencer Gunnerson, and legal counsel Kimberly Rushton presented on behalf of Quest Academy. Mr. Law explained what Quest had done in recent months to address the allegations that had been made about the school’s administrator, Connie Jordan, and other allegations related to testing and finances. Mr. Law detailed the contracts that had been executed to independently investigate Quest Academy’s finances and work environment. He also addressed the action plan that had been sent to the Authority for their review. The Authority asked for clarification of some of the events and dates that Mr. Law had explained. Then Mr. Law went over the various actions the Quest governing board had taken with regard to letters sent to them by the SPCSA. He said they had added new board members, and conducted an independent audit of the school’s finances. Ms. Rushton detailed the timeline of the independent audit to the Authority. Director Canavero then gave background regarding the SPCSA’s role in the aforementioned independent audits and the letters the SPCSA had sent to Quest Academy requesting action. The Authority continued their discussion with Quest Academy.

Director Canavero then addressed the comments from Mr. Law. He requested that the Authority ask him for clarifications instead of going over each point made by Mr. Law due to time constraint. Director Canavero also noted that the future of Quest Academy was in the hands of its board and there was not much more that could be done by the SPCSA at this point.

Agenda Item 10 – Direction to Authority staff to make a recommendation to the Authority board about next steps and deadlines by which further progress must be made by the Quest Academy board. This item shall include a discussion of possible consequences for failure to make and document progress.

After a continuation of the discussion between the Authority, Director Canavero and the Quest Academy Board the Authority directed SPCSA staff to work closely with the Quest Academy board to come up with a corrective action plan that would have well-defined deliverables and a well-defined timeline.

Member Luna moved for the identification of Quest Academy’s remaining issues, development of an action plan with a timeline and description of the evidence to resolve these issues. Member Wahl seconded. The motion carried unanimously with an abstention by Member Abelman.

Agenda Item 11 – Consideration regarding the Application Review Team’s recommendation of Leadership Academy of Nevada’s charter school application.

The Authority heard the resubmission of Leadership Academy of Nevada’s (LAN) charter application. Director Canavero explained the resubmission of LAN’s application and recommended approval of the resubmission to the Authority.

The Authority had questions regarding the performance record of Williamsburg Learning and recommended the applicant be very transparent with the reports focusing on Williamsburg if they were to be approved. LAN's committee to form then came to testify before the Authority.

Before the motion was made Member Wahl disclosed that she knew members of LAN's committee to form but it did not have any bearing on her vote.

Member Mackedon moved for the approval of Leadership Academy of Nevada's Subsection 7 charter. Member McCord seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

Agenda Item 12 – Consideration regarding the Application Review Team's recommendation of American Preparatory Academy's charter school application

The Authority heard the resubmission of American Preparatory Academy's (APA) charter application. Director Canavero explained the resubmission of APA's application and recommended approval of the resubmission to the Authority.

The Authority then asked that the members of APA's committee to form come before them for questions. The Authority asked for clarification of the relationship between the proposed school and the EMO. Jon Gardner, committee to form liaison, detailed the relationship and explained that APA had changed the committee to form's liaison to him instead of Rachelle Hulet to end any conflicts of interest.

Member Mackedon moved for the approval of American Preparatory Academy's Subsection 7 charter. Member Abelman seconded the motion. Chair Conaboy voted no. The motion passed 6 to 1

Agenda Item 13 – Consideration regarding the Application Review Team's recommendation of Imagine Centennial's charter school application

Member Abelman recused himself from any discussion or vote due to a past relationship with Imagine Schools.

Director Canavero then detailed Imagine Centennial's resubmitted application and outlined the concerns SPCSA staff had with the resubmitted application. After he completed his review he recommended denial Imagine Centennial's resubmitted application.

The Authority then asked the committee to form Imagine Centennial to address the SPCSA staff findings. The Authority expressed concern over the amount and nature of due diligence conducted by Imagine Centennial's committee to form prior to choosing Imagine as their EMO. The Authority was concerned with the large amount of data and reports that were available from many states that listed Imagine as a problematic EMO with underperforming schools and a lack of results. Imagine Centennial's committee to form felt they had conducted the required due diligence and felt that Imagine was a fine EMO. Imagine Centennial's committee to form also disagreed with SPCSA staff that because schools in other states were performing poorly they would too. They wanted to Authority to view them as a single committee and not part of a larger Imagine group that had problems in other states. The Authority appreciated this request but felt that it was too difficult to ignore the performance records, lease contracts, and other information from various states because Imagine Inc. would be the operating EMO at Imagine Centennial.

Member McCord moved for denial of Imagine Centennial's Subsection 7 charter. Member Mackedon seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously with Member Abelman recusing.

Agenda Item 14 – Consideration regarding the Application Review Team's recommendation of Legacy International College Prep Academy's charter school application

The Authority heard the resubmission of Legacy International College Prep Academy's charter application. Director Canavero explained the resubmission of Legacy's application and recommended denial of the resubmission to the Authority.

The Authority had questions regarding why the committee to form had been absent throughout the charter application process. It concerned the Authority that only members of the EMO were present at many of the meetings that SPCSA staff conducted throughout the process. When the Authority asked for members of the committee to form to present Legacy's resubmission no members were present.

Member Mackedon moved for denial of Legacy International College Prep Academy's 7 charter. Member Van seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

Agenda Item 15 – Consideration of the Application Review Team's recommendation of Sterling Charter High School North's charter school application

The Authority heard the resubmission of Sterling Charter High School North's charter application. Director Canavero explained the resubmission of Sterling North's application and recommended denial of the resubmission to the Authority.

No members of the committee to form represented Sterling Charter High School North at the hearing.

Member Van moved for denial of Sterling Charter High School North's Subsection 7 charter. Member McCord seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

Agenda Item 16 – Approval of New America School's request for an extension of Subsection 7 per NAC 386.240(1)

Tom McCormack detailed a request by New America Charter School to have their Subsection 7 agreement extended due to a lack of facility and not meeting their fundraising goals for opening the school.

Member McCord disclosed that Larry Mason was the president of the Clark County School board when he was employed there, but it did not have any bearing on his vote.

Member Mackedon moved for approval of New America School's request for an extension of Subsection 7 per NAC 386.240(1). Member McCord seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

Agenda Item 17 – Discussion and possible action identifying future agenda items

Member McCord asked that Director Canavero address agenda item 6, 7 and 8. Director Canavero pointed to the charts in the support document for further clarification and then he detailed the three schools currently coming up for their charter renewals.

Agenda Item 18 – Member Comment

Member McCord recognized the Quest Academy students who had come to the meeting to support their school.

Agenda Item 19 – Public Comment

Connie Jordan commented to the board regarding the allegations that had come up against Quest Academy. She defended herself and the school from the allegations that had been made.

Agenda Item 18 – Next Meeting Date

The next Authority meeting will be scheduled for March 22, 2013.

Agenda Item 21 – Adjournment

Member Van moved for adjournment. Member Mackedon seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

The meeting was adjourned at 5:16 p.m.