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**STATE PUBLIC CHARTER SCHOOL AUTHORITY**

**SUPPORTING DOCUMENT**

**S U B J E C T:** Approval of August 23, 2013

**Meeting Minutes**

<u>  /  /  </u>	Public Workshop
<u>  /  /  </u>	Public Hearing
<u>  /  /  </u>	Consent Agenda
<u>  /  /  </u>	Regulation Adoption
<u>  /  /  </u>	Approval
<u>  /  /  </u>	Appointments
<u>  /  x/  </u>	Information
<u>  /  x /  </u>	Action

MEETING DATE: November 1, 2013

AGENDA ITEM: 2

NUMBER OF ENCLOSURE(S): 1

**PRESENTER(S):** Kathleen Conaboy, Chair, State Public Charter School Authority

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**RECOMMENDATION:**

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**FISCAL IMPACT:**

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**BUDGET ACCOUNT (FOR PRINTING CHARGES ONLY):**

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**LENGTH OF TIME EXPECTED FOR PRESENTATION (IN MINUTES):** 5 mins

**SUBMITTED BY:** \_\_\_\_\_

**NEVADA STATE PUBLIC CHARTER SCHOOL AUTHORITY**

**August 23, 2013**

Nevada Legislature  
401 South Carson Street  
Carson City, Nevada  
Room 2135

And

Grant Sawyer Building  
555 East Washington Ave.  
Las Vegas, Nevada  
Room 4412

**MINUTES OF THE REGULAR MEETING**  
**(Video Conferenced and Teleconferenced)**

**AUTHORITY MEMBERS PRESENT:**

**In Las Vegas:**

**Marc Abelman**  
**Elissa Wahl**

**In Carson City:**

**None**

**Teleconference**

**Kathleen Conaboy**  
**Melissa Mackedon**  
**Michael Van**  
**Robert McCord**  
**Nora Luna**

**AUTHORITY MEMBERS ABSENT:**

**None**

**AUTHORITY STAFF PRESENT:**

**In Las Vegas:**

**Danny Peltier, Administrative Assistant, State Public Charter School Authority**

**In Carson City:**

**Steve Canavero, Director, State Public Charter School Authority**  
**Katherine Rohrer, Education Program Professional, State Public Charter School Authority**  
**Tom McCormack, Education Program Professional, State Public Charter School Authority**  
**Angela Blair, Education Program Professional, State Public Charter School Authority**  
**Allyson Kellogg, Management Analyst, State Public Charter School Authority**  
**Katie Higday, Management Analyst, State Public Charter School Authority**

**LEGAL STAFF PRESENT:****In Las Vegas:**

None

**In Carson City:**

Shane Chesney, Senior Deputy Attorney General

**AUDIENCE IN ATTENDANCE:****In Las Vegas:**

Rich Moreno

Bob Howell

Ryan Reeves

Valerie Blake

Heidi Arbuckle

Joani Williams

**In Carson City:**

Jennifer Dukek

Steve Werlein

Eugene Paslov

Andrew Diss

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

Chair Conaboy called the meeting to order at 9:00a.m. with attendance as reflected above.

**Agenda Item 1 - Public Comment**

None

**Agenda Item 2 – June 21, 2013 SPCSA Board meeting minutes**

There were no comments or corrections regarding the minutes.

**Member Luna moved to approve the June 21, 2013 Meeting Minutes. Member Mackedon seconded. The motion carried unanimously.**

**Agenda Item 3 - Report on the letters of intent received by the Authority as of August 23, 2013 and discussion related to the application review process and timeline**

Director Canavero began the meeting by reporting on the letters of intent the Authority had received in response to the 2013 Call For Quality Charter Schools application process. As of August 23, 2013 the Authority received 9 letters of intent from interested applicants. Director Canavero noted that not all letters of intent were followed up with full applications.

**Agenda Item 4 - Plan and timeline to transition existing Subsection 7 charter schools to a charter contract**

Director Canavero explained the timeline that staff was anticipating converting Subsection 7 charter schools onto the charter contract. He said that staff would begin work over the next two months with the Subsection 7 schools to begin their transition to the charter contract. Staff anticipates bringing those contracts to the Authority Board at the November or January Authority meetings.

**Agenda Item 10 - Discussion and possible action on the adoption of the 2013-2014 Special Education Memorandum of Understanding proposed by the Authority**

Angela Blair, Education Program Professional, gave an overview of the MOU and what it would be mean to both the SPCSA and the charter schools that it sponsors. A copy of her testimony follows:

“Thank you for letting me speak to you today so that I can give you an overview of the Memorandum of Understanding Contract that we would like to have between the SPCSA and our charter schools.

1. The Charter Schools’ Special Education Responsibilities are to continue to adhere to the provisions of the Individual with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) and applicable Nevada Special Education laws and regulations to assure that all students with disabilities are provided a free, appropriate public education (FAPE) including special education and related services.

The Charter Schools will also continue to comply with the applicable requirements of Section 504, the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), and all Office of Civil Rights (OCR) mandates for all students enrolled.

2. The SPCSA is required under state law to function as the Local Educational Agency (LEA) for Special Education Programs for our charter schools. The SPCSA will determine the policies and procedures necessary to ensure that the protections of special education law extend to students in our charter schools through a common Special Education Procedures and Policy Manual.

The SPCSA will provide training to our schools’ staffs to ensure clarity with the Special Education Procedures and Policy Manual; Special Education Federal and State Laws; Federal and State Compliance Indicators; Annual reporting documents; Individual Education Plans (IEP) reviews; and any additional training that our schools may need to be in compliance with Federal and State Laws.

The SPCSA, acting as LEA, will compile all annual reporting documents from our charter schools as District 18 and submit to the Department of Education.

The SPCSA acting as LEA will direct the proportionate share of any money available from Federal and State categorical grant programs to our charter schools. This would include Part B funds, District Improvement Grants (DIGs), and Special Education Discretionary Units. The SPCSA will be responsible for these accounts through the Department of Education’s ePage accountability system which includes submitting a thorough spending plan and narrative, requesting monies for individual schools, and record keeping of receipts and documents for auditing purposes.

In conclusion, while developing this Memorandum of Understanding, we focused on balancing the autonomy of our charter schools with Federal and State accountability regulations; Charter School control over budget; and trying to make us fit into a system that never contemplated our presence.”

Members of the Authority discussed the details of the Memorandum of Understanding and asked for some clarification. Chair Conaboy asked about whose responsibility it was to implement the new MOU. Ms. Blair said that it was the SPCSA’s responsibility to assist in rolling out the MOU; however it was still the responsibility of the school to honor their responsibilities in servicing Special Education pupils. She then explained to the Authority how a student with special needs would be put through the continuum of services and the charter school would be responsible for those accommodations.

The Authority and Director Canavero then discussed reserve funds that are planned to be set aside in the case of a due process complaint being brought against a school.

Director Canavero then explained: Upon a parent's request for assessment, the Charter School will convene a meeting to review and discuss the request in light of student records, acquired data and student performance to agree or deny the request for assessment. If the Charter School determines that assessment for special education eligibility is not warranted, prior written notice must be given to the parent/guardian with a clear rationale for such refusal within 15 days of the request. If the Charter School concludes that there are suspected disabilities, the school must develop an assessment plan, utilizing the Authority's assessment process, for each student with suspected disabilities within the 15 day timeline. The assessment plan will describe the types of assessments that may be used to determine the eligibility of students for special education instruction and services. Assessments will be conducted, within legal timelines, after receiving the parents' written consent.

The Charter School shall conduct an IEP team meeting that includes required team members within mandated timelines for each student assessed to discuss results, determine eligibility, and (if eligible) specify special education instruction and services. Consistent with federal and state special education laws and regulations through the IEP process, the IEP team convened at the Charter School will make decisions regarding eligibility, goals, program (including staffing and methodology), placement at the school, and exit from special education.

Dr. Canavero went on to explain the process in the event of a complaint: The Authority will investigate, cooperate with and respond to all special education complaints the Authority receives pertaining to the Charter School. The Charter School will cooperate with the Authority in any such investigations and provide the Authority with any and all documentation that is required to respond to complaints within the timelines imposed by the investigating agency. The Charter School will be solely responsible for any and all costs resulting from, arising out of, or associated with the investigation and implementation of appropriate remedies.

Chair Conaboy asked if these conditions laid out in the MOU were not followed by the charter school, would that be considered a material breach of the contract between the Authority and the charter school. Director Canavero said, yes, he believed the failure to carry out the conditions in the MOU would be considered a material breach of the contract between the Authority and the charter school.

Member Mackedon expressed concern that smaller charter schools may have trouble paying for the costs of a due process hearing for a larger charter school in the event this were to come up. Director Canavero explained that language in the MOU discusses this concern: In the delivery of special education programming at the Charter School in the manner and to the extent described in the Charter School's Written Charter or Charter Contract, the Charter School shall maintain a special education reserve account as a financial reserve to ensure compliance with the indemnification and financial obligations set forth in this MOU. Such reserve shall not in any way limit the Charter School's obligation to indemnify the Authority pursuant to any provision of this MOU; in the event the special education reserve account is insufficient to fully pay costs incurred in connection with any claim or claims, the Charter School shall remain fully responsible for any and all costs incurred in connection with such claim or claims. The Charter School shall keep the special education reserve separate from and not utilize it to satisfy any other requirements applicable to the Charter School. This special education reserve shall be maintained in a separate bank account.

Member Wahl was not comfortable with the \$25,000 that had been determined to set aside, and therefore was not comfortable taking the vote. Deputy Attorney General Chesney recommended that the Authority vote to approve the MOU as is, and amend later, because it would not be beneficial to delaying the charter schools and the Authority from entering into the agreement.

**Member Wahl motioned to accept the Memorandum of Understanding between the Authority and Charter Schools. Member Van seconded. The vote was unanimous.**

Upon the conclusion of the vote, Chair Conaboy wanted to make sure the minutes reflected that the MOU could be amended based on future meetings between the Authority and other active parties and may be heard again at a future Authority Board meeting.

**Agenda Item 5 - Consideration of the recommendation to approve the charter contract between the State Public Charter School Authority and Doral Academy of Nevada**

Director Canavero gave background on the process that Doral Academy had undertaken in finalizing their contract with the Authority. He gave a history of the legislation that had been voted upon in 2013 that allowed for the charter contract to be executed.

**Member Mackedon motioned to approve the Charter Contract between the Authority and Doral Academy of Nevada. Member Abelman seconded. The vote was unanimous.**

**Agenda Item 6 - Consideration of the recommendation to approve the charter contract between the State Public Charter School Authority and The Learning Bridge**

Director Canavero gave background on the process that Learning Bridge had undertaken in finalizing their contract with the Authority. He noted the contract had similar language in it as Doral Academy's charter contract. Director Canavero noted that The Learning Bridge had not finalized their Certificate of Occupancy and therefore the Pre-Opening requirements were still incomplete. However, after work with SPCSA staff, both parties feel comfortable that the Learning Bridge will be able to complete the Certificate of Occupancy.

Chair Conaboy asked for clarification as to why the language was so dry in the charter contract, and where the charter schools' missions and goals could be found. Director Canavero said the mission and goals, along with the philosophy of the charter school could be found in the charter application and the SPCSA performance framework.

**Member Mackedon motioned to approve the Charter Contract between the Authority and Doral Academy of Nevada. Member Abelman seconded. The vote was unanimous.**

**Agenda Item 7 – Approval of Leadership Academy of Nevada's request to delay commencement of operation for 1 school year (SY2013 – 2014) in order to become operational in SY 2014-2015**

On January 8, 2013, the State Public Charter School Authority approved the proposed charter application for the Leadership Academy of Nevada. Shortly thereafter, a Subsection 7 Charter was issued pursuant to NRS 386.527(7) expiring June 30, 2015.

The 2013 Legislature enacted changes to charter school law to allow the Authority or the governing body of the charter school to request that the sponsor authorize the charter school to delay commencement of operation for 1 school year. On August 8, 2013 the Leadership Academy of Nevada requested that the SPCSA authorize the charter school to delay commencement from the 2013-2014 school year to the 2014-2015 school year.

Staff recommended that the State Public Charter School Authority authorize Leadership Academy of Nevada to delay commencement of operations for one (1) school year (SY2013-2014) in order to commence operation for the 2014-2015 school year.

Members of Leadership Academy of Nevada's Committee to Form spoke to the Authority about some of the challenges they had faced in trying to open for the 2013-2014 school year. They explained that the necessary enrollment for them to be fiscally viable was difficult to obtain, but with the delay in commencement they would have a better opportunity to open and be fiscally sound next year.

**Member Abelman motioned for Approval of Leadership Academy of Nevada's request to delay commencement of operation for 1 school year (SY2013 – 2014) in order to become operational in SY 2014-2015. Member Luna seconded. Member Wahl disclosed that Angie Clevan is a colleague in her business life, but it would not have any bearing on her decision. The vote carried unanimously.**

**Agenda Item 8 – Approval of Nevada Performance Academy's request to delay commencement of operation for 1 school year (SY2013 – 2014) in order to become operational in SY 2014-2015**

As with Leadership Academy, Nevada Performance Academy also asked for a delay in their commencement of operations. On January 8, 2013, the State Public Charter School Authority approved the proposed charter application for the Nevada Performance Academy. Shortly thereafter, a Subsection 7 Charter was issued pursuant to NRS 386.527(7) expiring June 30, 2015.

On August 8, 2013 the Nevada Performance Academy requested that the SPCSA authorize the charter school to delay commencement from the 2013-2014 school year to the 2014-2015 school year.

Staff recommended that the State Public Charter School Authority authorize Nevada Performance Academy to delay commencement of operations for one (1) school year (SY2013-2014) in order to commence operation for the 2014-2015 school year.

Nevada Performance Academy had a difficult time obtaining the necessary enrollment numbers to be fiscally viable. They hoped that the year in delay would allow them to better recruit students and open in a much stronger position in 2014.

**Member Mackedon motioned for Approval of Nevada Performance Academy's request to delay commencement of operation for 1 school year (SY2013 – 2014) in order to become operational in SY 2014-2015. Member Luna seconded. The vote carried unanimously.**

**Agenda Item 9 – Discussion and possible action on NAC revisions proposed by the Authority for consideration by the State Board of Education for adoption**

Chair Conaboy began the discussion by emphasizing that any NAC revisions the Authority plans to take to the State Board of Education should be taken to the charter schools first. Director Canavero then explained the approach that staff had taken in deciding what changes should be made. He said two groups were used, general language clean-up and the more difficult overriding regulation changes. Member McCord was concerned about the striking of the definition of the Educational Management Organization. Director Canavero said he would look into that more as staff worked with various parties. Member McCord wanted to ensure the language was listed somewhere, whether it was NAC or NRS did not make a difference to him, but if he had a choice he would like to have it in statute.

Director Canavero said that staff would also be looking into the language that determines when a charter school could begin enrolling pupils. Member Wahl requested the change and Director Canavero said they would look into the legislative history to understand why the 120day timetable was used. Member Wahl then asked what staff was hoping the timeline for the changes to be made would be. Director Canavero said it would be about 6 months. Member Wahl then asked staff to ensure the Authority would be notified as these NAC revisions are heard by the State Board of Education.

Chair Conaboy asked that all members of the Authority go through the NACs and note any revisions they would like seen. Over the next few months SPCSA staff would take the proposed changes to the schools in order to get their feedback.

**Member McCord motioned that the Authority directs staff to continue their work with charter school board members and other stakeholders and bring their responses to the next Authority meeting. Member Van seconded. The vote was unanimous.**

**Agenda Item 11 – Member Comment**

Member McCord said he likes being face-to-face for future board meetings. Chair Conaboy seconded his observation.

**Agenda Item 12 – Public Comment**

None

**Member McCord motioned for adjournment. Member Van seconded. The motion carried unanimously.**

The meeting adjourned at 11:49 a.m.

**STATE PUBLIC CHARTER SCHOOL AUTHORITY**

**SUPPORTING DOCUMENT**

**S U B J E C T: Authority Update**

<u>  /  /  </u>	Public Workshop
<u>  /  /  </u>	Public Hearing
<u>  /  /  </u>	Consent Agenda
<u>  /  /  </u>	Regulation Adoption
<u>  /  /  </u>	Approval
<u>  /  /  </u>	Appointments
<u>  /  x/  </u>	Information
<u>  /  /  </u>	Action

MEETING DATE: November 1, 2013

AGENDA ITEM: 3

NUMBER OF ENCLOSURE(S): 1

**PRESENTER(S): Kathleen Conaboy, Chair, State Public Charter School Authority**

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**RECOMMENDATION:**

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**FISCAL IMPACT:**

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**BUDGET ACCOUNT (FOR PRINTING CHARGES ONLY):**

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**LENGTH OF TIME EXPECTED FOR PRESENTATION (IN MINUTES): 15 mins**

**SUBMITTED BY:** \_\_\_\_\_

STATE PUBLIC CHARTER SCHOOL AUTHORITY

SUPPORTING DOCUMENT

**S U B J E C T: Director's Report**

<u>  /  /  </u>	Public Workshop
<u>  /  /  </u>	Public Hearing
<u>  /  /  </u>	Consent Agenda
<u>  /  /  </u>	Regulation Adoption
<u>  /  /  </u>	Approval
<u>  /  /  </u>	Appointments
<u>  /  x/  </u>	Information
<u>  /  /  </u>	Action

MEETING DATE: November 1, 2013

AGENDA ITEM: 4

NUMBER OF ENCLOSURE(S): 1

**PRESENTER(S): Dr. Steve Canavero, Director, State Public Charter School Authority**

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**RECOMMENDATION:**

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**FISCAL IMPACT:**

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**BUDGET ACCOUNT (FOR PRINTING CHARGES ONLY):**

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**LENGTH OF TIME EXPECTED FOR PRESENTATION (IN MINUTES): 15 mins**

- **BACKGROUND:** Special Education Memorandum of Understanding
- NAC Revision Timeline
- Strategic Plan: Governance

**SUBMITTED BY:** \_\_\_\_\_



**STATE PUBLIC CHARTER SCHOOL AUTHORITY**

1749 North Stewart Street Suite 40  
Carson City, Nevada 89706-2543  
(775) 687 - 9174 • Fax: (775) 687 - 9113

Date: October 14, 2013

To: Charter School Administrators  
Charter School Sponsors  
Other Charter School Stakeholders

From: Steve Canavero

Subject: Charter School Regulation Revisions

The State Public Charter School Authority (Authority) is spearheading revisions to charter school regulations (NAC, Nevada Administrative Code). The revisions are due to legislative action in the 2013 session, feedback from stakeholders, and to align NAC with model charter school practices. Although the Authority is facilitating this process, revising NAC is a public process of the State Board of Education that includes a public workshop and public hearing. While the Authority will propose NAC revision language to stakeholders and provide opportunities for stakeholder input as described below, the State Board of Education has sole regulation-making authority for charter schools; stakeholders who feel their input is inadequately reflected in the Authority's proposals presented to the State Board of Education are welcome to share their concerns with the State Board during its public meetings.

The following is the schedule of meetings and other opportunities to provide feedback leading up to revision of the regulations:

October 14, 2013: Dissemination to stakeholders of draft proposal for NAC revisions (attached to this memo). Stakeholders are welcomed to provide written feedback to the Authority anytime between now and January 30, 2014.

November 6, 2013, 3:00PM: Telephone conference call to discuss the draft proposal for NAC revisions. Details to follow.

December 4, 2013: Meeting in Las Vegas to discuss the draft proposal for NAC revisions. Details to follow.

December 10, 2013: Meeting in Reno to discuss the draft proposal for NAC revisions. Details to follow.

Late February, 2014: State Board of Education meeting for Workshop for the NAC revisions.

March 1, 2014: Proposed NAC revision language submitted to Legislative Counsel Bureau (LCB) for review and possible revision by LCB.

Late May, 2014: State Board of Education meeting for Public Hearing for the NAC revisions.

Thank you for your attention to this message. The Authority looks forward to your participation in this process. Details regarding the above schedule will be disseminated soon.

# SPCSA Strategic Plan

## Strategic framework

### Vision

A quality public school of choice for every Nevada child.

### Mission

The SPCSA improves and influences public education in Nevada by sponsoring public charter schools that prepare all students for college and career success and by modeling best practices in charter school sponsorship.

### Beliefs

Students first --High expectations -- Excellence--Autonomy/Accountability--Transparency--Leadership

### Goal

### Strategies

### Measures

#### Open and sustain quality new schools

- Define the standard of quality using the performance framework
- Refine the application process to align with new performance framework and contract
- Coordinate and align SPCSA technical assistance with CSAN applicant training
- Collaborate with stakeholders to encourage replication of successful schools
- Provide more intensive oversight and support of schools during the first two years of operation

- % of approved applications
- # of schools meeting quality criteria after 1, 2 & 3 years
- # of replications of quality schools

#### Establish performance-based contracts for all schools

- Advocate for state policy, through statutes and regulations, to facilitate contracts
- Develop contract documents, adoption process and schedule for new and existing schools
- Execute new contracts with the boards of all new and existing schools
- Develop a robust renewal/revocation process consistent with the statute and contract
- Communicate with and provide performance contract technical assistance to boards

- # of schools voluntarily adopting new contracts
- # of school renewals
- # of school closures

#### Support strong school governance

- Define effective school governance
- Develop a board effectiveness rubric
- Assess effectiveness of all boards
- Provide technical assistance to boards
- Report on school performance to all boards

- % of schools with effective boards
- % of boards receiving technical assistance

#### Collaborate to improve the environment for Nevada charter schools

- Develop and advance a charter school policy agenda
- Support NDE in development and oversight of charter school sponsors
- Develop new charter school funding
- Build productive relationships with school districts
- Work with all stakeholders to expand facility options for charter schools
- Collaborate with stakeholder groups to develop a plan to improve the charter school environment

- Alliance rating of NV charter school laws
- # of partners engaged in Charter School Stakeholder group
- New funding sources for charter schools

By 2016, increase the number of SPCSA-sponsored quality charter schools from 4 to 12 based on the Authority's performance framework.

STATE PUBLIC CHARTER SCHOOL AUTHORITY

SUPPORTING DOCUMENT

**S U B J E C T:** Consideration regarding the  
Application Review Team's recommendation of  
Academy of Arts and Sciences charter school  
application

<u>  /  /  </u>	Public Workshop
<u>  /  /  </u>	Public Hearing
<u>  /  /  </u>	Consent Agenda
<u>  /  /  </u>	Regulation Adoption
<u>  /  /  </u>	Approval
<u>  /  /  </u>	Appointments
<u>  /  x/  </u>	Information
<u>  /  x/  </u>	Action

MEETING DATE: November 1, 2013

AGENDA ITEM: 5

NUMBER OF ENCLOSURE(S): 1

**PRESENTER(S):** Dr. Steve Canavero, Director, State Public Charter School Authority

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**RECOMMENDATION:** *Deny: Significant application deficiencies were found which cannot be remedied without major revisions that would significantly alter the nature of the application.*

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**FISCAL IMPACT:**

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**BUDGET ACCOUNT (FOR PRINTING CHARGES ONLY):**

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**LENGTH OF TIME EXPECTED FOR PRESENTATION (IN MINUTES):** 45 mins

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**BACKGROUND:**

**SUBMITTED BY:** \_\_\_\_\_

# *Academy of Arts and Sciences*

## *Charter School Application Recommendation Report*

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# Proposal Overview

## *School Name*

Academy of Arts and Sciences

## *Mission (Application Item A.1.2)*

The mission of Academy of Arts and Sciences is to develop leaders, passionate about making a positive contribution to their local and global communities. We will do this by implementing an academically rigorous, inquiry-based, college preparatory curriculum, cultivating international awareness through the arts, sciences, and the International Baccalaureate program, and by developing meaningful traditions and learning opportunities that reinforce our model of inquiry.

## *Proposed Location (from Charter Application Cover Sheet)*

Clark County

## *Enrollment Projections (from Charter Application Cover Sheet)*

Opening Year	School Type	Opening Grade(s)	Projected Enrollment
Year 1 (2014)	k-12	k-12	650
Year 2 (2015)	k-12	k-12	975
At capacity	k-12	k-12	1000

# Recommendation

## *Overall Recommendation*

***Deny: Significant application deficiencies were found which cannot be remedied without major revisions that would significantly alter the nature of the application.***

## Summary of Section Ratings

*Rating options for each section are Meets the standard; Approaches the standard; Does not meet the standard*

### **Section 1. Education Program Design**

**Does not meet standard**

### **Section 2. Operations Plan**

**Does not meet standard**

### **Section 3. Financial Plan**

**Does not meet standard**

### **Section 4. Performance Record**

**Does not meet standard**

### **Section 5. Evidence of Capacity**

**Does not meet standard**

# Education Program Design

## *Rating*

- ***Does not meet standard***

## *Plan Summary*

The Academy of Arts and Sciences (AAS) proposes to serve students in Kindergarten through 12<sup>th</sup> grade. The philosophy of AAS is that every student deserves to learn, regardless of scheduling and location. The AAS is dedicated to providing families with both a blended online learning environment and a distance education model that can meet an individual student's needs. The applicants propose to utilize Learning Center Hubs to provide a blended learning environment by providing meeting areas for the social and face-to-face component of the proposed program. The proposed school's educational program is based on the instructional needs of the target population, which is not limited to any particular demographic. The AAS proposes to utilize curriculum provided by K12, Inc.

## *Analysis*

The Education Program did not meet criteria for approval due to a number of reasons, the most prominent of which are discussed below.

The review team's overarching concern was that elements of the Education Program lacked detail, coordination, and frequently were not aligned with other aspects of the proposal. The proposed school's name and mission implies that the arts and sciences are critical components to the school's theory of action; however, the applicants did not substantiate this focus throughout the application. During the interview the Committee to Form did provide some examples of how the arts and sciences may be included in the instruction at the proposed school but given the prominence of arts and sciences in the school's name and mission the review team would expect clear focus and integration of the arts and sciences throughout the model proposed in the application. Further, the International Baccalaureate (IB) program is mentioned in the mission and several times throughout the application as a desirable program that will attract students to the school but nowhere in the application or appendices is it explained how the IB Program will be implemented at AAS.

The role of the Learning Center Hub and self-described "blended" program remain unclear. It appears participation in the in-person Learning Center Hub activities will be at the discretion of the student when/if a Learning Hub Center is within geographic proximity. The review team concludes that AAS is a distance education school even though it is referred to as a "blended" school throughout the application.

The plan for professional development lacked sufficient detail to determine whether it is comprehensive and sustainable. In a list of responsibilities of a principal, the only reference to professional development is this short phrase: "Arrange for appropriate professional development."

# Operations Plan

## *Rating*

- ***Does not meet standard***

## *Plan Summary*

The school would engage with the Academy of Arts and Sciences as an EMO, and use distance education. A 25 pupils to 1 teacher ratio would be maintained. Both the CEO and the COO “will be the instructional leader at the school.” The Executive Director of the school would be the Chief Executive Officer of the EMO.

## *Analysis*

The Operations Plan did not meet the criteria for approval because the application failed to provide a coherent plan that appears viable and adequate for the effective implementation of the proposed plan.

The Committee to Form did not include a sound plan and timeline for board recruitment, expansion, orientation of new members and ongoing training. The only training identified for board members would be regarding the Brown Act which appears to be a California specific law governing open meetings. This is a significant omission given the 2013 Call for Quality Charter Schools theme placing an emphasis on effective school governance. Aside from letting community members attend board meetings, there is no effective plan for involving parents, professional educators and the community in the governance of the school.

The Committee to Form did not clearly delineate the roles and responsibilities for administering the school nor include a staffing plan that appears viable and adequate for effective implementation of the proposed program. The review team noted a number of inconsistencies between the plan outlined in this section and the contractual relationship described in the Academy of Arts and Sciences EMO contract. For example, the narrative states: “The Leadership Team will be responsible for creating a staffing plan that will allow for growth as the school grows” though the contract states that all hiring and termination decisions will be conducted by the EMO, Academy of Arts and Sciences.

Other areas of the Operations Plan were unclear or lacked detail to an extent that made it impossible for the review team to conclude that the school could be prepared to open on schedule and successfully serve students. For example, the section describing how teachers will be evaluated states: “The Charter School will abide by the additional evaluation methods that are currently being put in place with the intention of full implementation by 2015.” The Assurances were signed by Julie Troletti who is not a member of the Committee to Form the School. The Teacher Recruitment paragraph is unfinished.

# Financial Plan

## *Rating*

- ***Does Not Meet Standard***

## *Plan Summary*

Budgeted enrollment for FY15 is 175 students and FY16 is 300 students, yielding a positive cash balance of \$78,610 for FY15 and an indeterminate balance for FY16, as revenue and expenditures are entered in two separate columns, one totaling \$628,414 and the other -\$1,669,000.

## *Analysis*

The Financial Plan does not meet criteria for approval because it fails to demonstrate an understanding of basic budgeting concepts and the school's financial management obligations. It does not present a budget that aligns with and supports the academic and operational portions of the school's plan. It presents vague strategies for meeting potential cash flow challenges. It does not demonstrate a commitment to maintaining the financial viability of the school. The number of mistakes in the budgets and cash flow statements undermine the Review Team's confidence in the proposed school.

Financial information that was included with the application received by the deadline was critically incomplete and contained major omissions and errors. The applicant re-submitted financial information after the submission deadline that is still incomplete and full of errors.

Both years are materially misstated because neither includes a beginning cash balance and DSA per pupil amounts for each year are from 3/31/2010.

Cash flow statements include beginning cash balances and expenditures that differ from budgeted amounts, thereby yielding different ending cash balances of \$116,616 for FY15 & \$244,247 for FY16.

The applicant submitted 9 lines of "Budget Narrative" text that does not describe the details of the budget and illustrates a fundamental lack of understanding of Required Element C.1.2. The lack of information renders the budgets unreviewable; impossible to determine if the budget is based on realistic, evidence based revenue and expenditure assumptions.

The review team is unclear why the proposed school submitted a third budget, for the current school year, 2013-14. It includes \$500,000 of direct federal grant money and \$465,000 of undefined expenditures.

The table of contents listed a Pre-opening budget as attachment C.1.5, which was not included. There is no explanation for the stated minimum number of students (75) to make the school financially viable. Also missing is Required Element C.2.8, the break-even cash flow statement.

# Performance Record

## *Rating*

- ***Does not meet standard***

## *Plan Summary*

Academy of Arts and Sciences (AAS) intends to contract with Academy of Arts and Sciences (AAS\_EMO), an Educational Management Organization. According to the contract included in the application, AAS intends to engage AAS\_EMO in a wide array of services including operational, educational, strategic planning, public relations, administrative, and financial. According to the contract included in the application, AAS shall pay or cause to be paid all revenue excluding two percent which is retained by AAS as a board reserve. The proposed contract is for the full term of the initial charter i.e., 6 years, and stipulates the agreement shall continue to remain in effect through renewal.

## *Analysis*

The response to B 3.1 in the 2013 Call for Quality Charter Schools is incomplete and inadequate. The Committee to Form is encouraged to review the evaluation criteria, and the statute and regulation referenced within this section of the Call for Quality Charter Schools as well as the required elements of B 3.1.

All the AAS\_EMO schools opened recently (in 2012 or 2013), thus any track record is necessarily of limited scope. In fact, the applicant reports there are no test scores which AAS\_EMO can report from its previously opened schools.

The application contains no evidence of the financial health of AAS\_EMO as demonstrated through an independent financial audit and its most recent annual report.

The contract provided in the application includes provisions that violate statute (NRS 386.562) and regulation.

# Evidence of Capacity

## *Rating*

- ***Does not meet standard***

## *Plan Summary*

The Committee to Form the School consists of three members. The liaison between the Committee and the proposed sponsor is not a member of the Committee. One of the three Committee members is an employee of the EMO the school would use.

## *Analysis*

The application does not meet Evidence of Capacity criteria for approval because the Committee did not contain the required membership, and because of the number and depth of the inconsistencies within the application and the lack of compelling evidence of success of similar schools.

Although some relationship between and EMO and Committee to Form is understandable, there is a troubling lack of separation between the proposed EMO and the proposed school. The liaison for the Committee to Form, Julie Troletti, does not appear to be a member of the Committee to Form (per Cover Sheet Instructions, the liaison must be a member of the Committee to Form) but according to Wesley's response to the Questionnaire, is the Director of Operations for Academy of Arts and Sciences (the EMO). Nuttall was informed of the opportunity to join the Committee to Form by Sean McManus, currently the California-based CEO of the EMO with which the school would partner.

The lack of separation between the EMO and the Committee to Form is compounded by the lack of clear delineation of roles and responsibilities within the design of the school's operations and the school's proposed contract with the EMO.

The Board Member Agreement signed by Wesley, Nuttall, and Stewart do not take the place of the Nevada charter school board affidavit.

The application does not inspire confidence that the proposed board has the requisite capacity to thoroughly oversee and steward a successful charter school.

STATE PUBLIC CHARTER SCHOOL AUTHORITY

SUPPORTING DOCUMENT

**S U B J E C T:** Consideration regarding the  
Application Review Team's recommendation of  
The Education Academy's charter school  
application

<u>  /  /  </u>	Public Workshop
<u>  /  /  </u>	Public Hearing
<u>  /  /  </u>	Consent Agenda
<u>  /  /  </u>	Regulation Adoption
<u>  /  /  </u>	Approval
<u>  /  /  </u>	Appointments
<u>  /  x/  </u>	Information
<u>  /  x/  </u>	Action

MEETING DATE: November 1, 2013

AGENDA ITEM: 6

NUMBER OF ENCLOSURE(S): 1

**PRESENTER(S):** Dr. Steve Canavero, Director, State Public Charter School Authority

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**RECOMMENDATION:** *Deny: Significant application deficiencies were found which cannot be remedied without major revisions that would significantly alter the nature of the application.*

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**FISCAL IMPACT:**

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**BUDGET ACCOUNT (FOR PRINTING CHARGES ONLY):**

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**LENGTH OF TIME EXPECTED FOR PRESENTATION (IN MINUTES):** 45 mins

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**BACKGROUND:**

**SUBMITTED BY:** \_\_\_\_\_

# *The Education Academy of Nevada*

## *Charter School Application Recommendation Report*

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# Proposal Overview

## *School Name*

Education Academy of Nevada

## *Mission (Application Item A.1.2)*

The mission of The Education Academy of Nevada is empowering students to attain superior achievement in the classroom by integrating innovative teaching methods and technology with familial support.

## *Proposed Location (from Charter Application Cover Sheet)*

Clark County

## *Enrollment Projections (from Charter Application Cover Sheet)*

Opening Year	School Type	Opening Grade(s)	Projected Enrollment
Year 1 (2014)	6-12	6-12	1000
Year 2 (2015)	6-12	6-12	1500
At capacity	k-12	k-12	Unlimited

# Recommendation

## Overall Recommendation

***Deny: Significant application deficiencies were found which cannot be remedied without major revisions that would significantly alter the nature of the application.***

## Summary of Section Ratings

*Rating options for each section are Meets the standard; Approaches the standard; Does not meet the standard*

### Section 1. Education Program Design

- Does not meet standard

### Section 2. Operations Plan

- Does not meet standard

### Section 3. Financial Plan

- Does not meet standard

### Section 4. Performance Record

- Does not meet standard

### Section 5. Evidence of Capacity

- Does not meet standard

# Education Program Design

## **Rating**

- ***Does not meet standard***

## *Plan Summary*

The Education Academy of Nevada proposes to improve education through innovative solutions by incorporating traditional and innovative educational methods within a virtual classroom setting for students in grades K-12. The ultimate goal of The Education Academy is to empower students to attain superior achievement in the classroom utilizing mastery, differentiated instruction, and blended learning instructional strategies. The proposed on-line curricula are CompassLearning Odyssey and Aventa.

## *Analysis*

The Education Program did not meet criteria for approval due to a number of reasons, the most prominent of which are discussed below.

The overall mission, vision, and educational philosophy presented in the application are broad overarching ideas where key terms are not adequately defined making it unclear how the school would “empower students to attain superior achievement in the classroom.” Furthermore, the application fails to provide compelling research-based evidence for selecting the proposed curriculum and instructional strategies that is consistent with the school’s mission and vision. For instance, the application fails to explain why CompassLearning Odyssey was determined to be the best fit for the proposed student population and what criteria were used in making this selection.

Parental involvement is clearly stated in several areas of the application as being core to the school’s mission and vision. However, it is unclear how the family coordinator, parent monthly meetings, and parent volunteerism as discussed in the educational philosophy will come together under the educational program. There are also discrepancies between the distance education application and the charter application concerning parent conferences.

There is no comprehensive sustainable professional development plan in the application. The professional development plan included in the application lacks specifics concerning alignment to the mission, vision, educational philosophy, and educational program. The professional development plan is also silent concerning teacher-parent-community interaction and the importance of professional development centered on successful instructional strategies linked to distance/blending learning programs. Although English Language Learner instructional strategies are mentioned, specifics are not included in either the instructional strategies section or the professional development section.

There are inconsistencies in the application concerning the targeted student population. Although certain areas of the application indicate that the school will target English Language Learners, the application fails to demonstrate alignment between the proposed target population and education plan.

# Operations Plan

## *Rating*

- ***Does not meet standard***

## *Plan Summary*

The school would use distance education. Staff would all be employees of the school's board, not an EMO. Parent and community volunteers would help run the main office. A ratio of 50 pupils to 1 teacher would be maintained.

## *Analysis*

The Operations Plan did not meet criteria for approval due to a number of discrepancies and presentation of information that does not appear complete enough for the review team to have a clear understanding of how the Operations Plan will support a successful school.

The Distance Education Application submitted to the Nevada Department of Education is not fully aligned to the charter school application and a number of discrepancies between the two are evident. The Committee to Form is encouraged to ensure the two documents are in complete alignment and reflective of a single vision for the proposed school.

The staffing model for the school does not appear viable and adequate for the effective implementation of the proposed educational program. The Committee envisions a teacher to student ratio of 1:50; however, the Committee did not ground the 1:50 ratio in any research or evaluation of existing schools successfully using a similar approach. Based on the interview it appeared the Committee's desire is to maintain a student load that affords teachers an opportunity to build personal relationships with students and families – a commendable ideal.

The applicant did not demonstrate a sound understanding of staffing needs. The organizational structure raised more questions than it resolved. For example, the role of department heads in overseeing and supporting teachers and holding a teaching load remains unclear. The role of counselors providing support to students and families requires additional thought - with implications on the desired capacity of the counselors, credentialing requirements, and budget impact.

While some degree of flexibility in how a Committee envisions organizing human capital to support the success of the school is understandable, the discrepancies and incomplete nature of this section (and others) undermine the review team's confidence in this application.

# Financial Plan

## ***Rating***

- ***Does not meet standard***

## ***Plan Summary***

Projected enrollment for FY15 is 1,000 students and FY16 is 1,500 students, yielding positive ending cash balances of \$177,315 and \$234,860.

## ***Analysis***

The Financial Plan does not meet criteria for approval because it displays a significant lack of attention to detail and fails to demonstrate an understanding of basic budgeting concepts or the school's financial management obligations. It does not present a budget that aligns with and supports the academic and operational portions of the school's plan. It presents vague strategies for meeting potential cash flow challenges. It does not demonstrate a commitment to maintaining the financial viability of the school. There is no evidence of a strong financial member of the Committee to Form. The number and depth of mistakes in the budgets and cash flow statements as well as the lack of internal alignment with the proposed education and operations plan severely undermines the review team's confidence in the proposed school.

Cash flow statements contain obvious, uncorrected calculation errors and incorrect column totals.

Budget narratives are virtually nonexistent, making it impossible to determine if the budget is based on realistic, evidence based revenue and expenditure assumptions.

Cash flow statements are not labeled with the proposed school's name, instead leaving the template direction – "Charter School – fill in the name of your school".

FY15 cash flow statement is labeled 2012-2013 once. FY16 cash flow statement is labeled 2012-2013 twice.

Pre-opening expenditures are forecast at \$74,731, of which \$3,000 would be paid by the Committee to Form. The Pre-opening budget infers that the balance would be paid "post charter approval", but it is not included on the FY15 cash flow statement, either as a line item or negative beginning cash balance.

There is no explanation for the stated minimum number of students (300) to make the school financially viable, including the lack of required element C.2.8, which is the break-even cash flow statement.

# Performance Record

## *Rating*

- ***Does not meet standard***

## *Plan Summary*

The Education Academy of Nevada proposes to adapt Learning Compass' Odyssey Curriculum.

## *Analysis*

No research-based evidence of the success of Learning Compass' Odyssey Curriculum was included in the application. This is a significant omission given the 2013 Call for Quality Charter Schools' emphasis on "research-based, rigorous" curriculum.

# Evidence of Capacity

## ***Rating***

- ***Does not meet standard***

## *Plan Summary*

The Committee to Form the School consists of five members. Four members report no prior board experience.

## *Analysis*

The Evidence of Capacity did not meet the criteria for approval. The deficiencies within the application, poorly constructed budget and financial management plan did not demonstrate competency of the Committee to direct the business functions of the school, and the proposed board as a whole lacked a record of success or demonstrated experience relevant to accomplishing the ambitious tasks presented in the application. Deficiencies in all areas of the application suggested that the Committee needs more time to develop its plan and cultivate capacity (in the Committee and proposed board) and partners to bring to life its vision for a successful school.

The Committee is commended for their desire to start a charter school that incorporates and supports families, and abundant enthusiasm. The Committee brings a wealth of experience in professional practice working in Clark County.

STATE PUBLIC CHARTER SCHOOL AUTHORITY

SUPPORTING DOCUMENT

**S U B J E C T:** Consideration regarding the  
Application Review Team's recommendation of  
The Founders Academy's charter school  
application

<u>  /  /  </u>	Public Workshop
<u>  /  /  </u>	Public Hearing
<u>  /  /  </u>	Consent Agenda
<u>  /  /  </u>	Regulation Adoption
<u>  /  /  </u>	Approval
<u>  /  /  </u>	Appointments
<u>  /  x/  </u>	Information
<u>  /  x/  </u>	Action

MEETING DATE: November 1, 2013

AGENDA ITEM: 7

NUMBER OF ENCLOSURE(S): 1

**PRESENTER(S):** Dr. Steve Canavero, Director, State Public Charter School Authority

**RECOMMENDATION:** *Approve K-12 with a contract to serve K-8 in years 1-3 with possible expansion to serve K-12 in years 4 and beyond based on performance of K-8 in first three years.*

**FISCAL IMPACT:**

**BUDGET ACCOUNT (FOR PRINTING CHARGES ONLY):**

**LENGTH OF TIME EXPECTED FOR PRESENTATION (IN MINUTES):** 45 mins

**BACKGROUND:**

**SUBMITTED BY:** \_\_\_\_\_

# *Founders Academy of Las Vegas*

## *Charter School Application Recommendation Report*

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# Proposal Overview

## *School Name*

Founders Academy of Las Vegas

## *Mission (Application Item A.1.2)*

The mission of Founders Academy of Las Vegas is to train the minds and improve the hearts of young people through a rigorous, classical education in the liberal arts and sciences, with instruction in the principles of moral character and civic virtue.

## *Proposed Location (from Charter Application Cover Sheet)*

Clark County

## *Enrollment Projections (from Charter Application Cover Sheet)*

### **1<sup>st</sup> Year**

Kindergarten-2nd is 54 per grade (2 classes per grade); 3rd-6th is 27 per grade; 7th-10th is 20 per grade

### **2<sup>nd</sup> Year**

Kindergarten-6th is 54 per grade (2 classes per grade); 7th is 42 per grade (2 classes); 8th-11th is 20 per grade

Ultimately, the school expects to serve a total of 750 pupils in grades K to 12

# Recommendation

## *Overall Recommendation*

***Approve K-12 with a contract to serve K-8 in years 1-3 with possible expansion to serve K-12 in years 4 and beyond based on performance of K-8 in first three years.***

## Summary of Section Ratings

*Rating options for each section are Meets the standard; Approaches the standard; Does not meet the standard*

### Section 1. Education Program Design

- Approaches the standard

### Section 2. Operations Plan

- Approaches the standard

### Section 3. Financial Plan

- Meets standard

### Section 4. Performance Record

- Meets standard

### Section 5. Evidence of Capacity

- Meets standard

# Education Program Design

## ***Rating***

- ***Approaches the standard***

## *Plan Summary*

The Founders Academy proposes to improve opportunities for student in grades K-12 by providing a rigorous, classical education, with instruction in the principles of moral character and civic virtue. The ultimate goal of Founders Academy is to develop the academic potential and personal character of each student. The educational program is based on the Core Knowledge Sequence and is modeled after Hillsdale College and its network of charter schools.

## *Analysis*

The application approaches rather than meets standards due to several concerns expressed by the review team during the application review process.

Overall, the application presents a compelling mission statement that defines the purpose of the school with research-based evidence for selecting the proposed curriculum and instructional strategies. The application also demonstrates alignment between the chosen curriculum and the mission, vision, and educational philosophy. However, there are some areas of the education plan that need further clarification.

The professional development plan is not as detailed as some of the other sections of the application. The application indicates Barney Charter School Initiative will provide up to eleven days of professional development prior to the first day of school, and although the school calendar indicates that more time has been set aside for professional development, it is unclear exactly how this time will be utilized. The contract with Hillsdale College included with the application does not detail the Hillsdale role in providing professional development.

Rationale behind the selection of grades for the opening first year is troubling. Year one for a school can be instructionally and operationally complicated, and yet the application appears silent on the rationale behind starting with grade levels K-10 and the type of supports that the principal and board will receive in years one and two. Based on the interview it appears the Committee has given deference to Hillsdale's preference of a charter approved to serve all grades, i.e., K-12 and the ability to serve families with multiple students.

Given the demographic make-up of the student population of the schools listed in Attachment A.7.3, the plans to address special need populations appears to lack detail specifically when addressing a support system to ensure that all students attain the goals addressed in A.2. Furthermore, the student recruitment plan fails to address possible strategies to attract diverse student populations into the school.

# Operations Plan

## *Rating*

- *Approaches the standard*

## *Plan Summary*

The school would engage with Rite of Passage (ROP) to provide certain non-educational services. The only person working at the school not employed by the school's board would be the Business Manager who would be employed by Rite of Passage. Among other services provided by ROP is budget preparation; the budget would be approved by the board.

## *Analysis*

The Operations Plan approaches, rather than meets, the standard due to the Committee's desire to open in their first year serving 11 grade levels.

A number of questions raised by the review team were addressed by the Committee during the interview and provide the review team with information to assess the application in light of the review criteria. For example, multiple reviewers questioned the Committee's understanding of credentialing requirements for teachers in charter schools. The Committee was able to clarify their understanding which is in agreement with law and regulation.

The principle concern of the review team with the Operations Plan is the Committee's ability to successfully implement 11 grades in their first year of operation. The Operations Plan did not contain the level of detail and support the review team would expect of a school seeking such an ambitious and complex undertaking in their first year of operation. For example, a Vice Principal is proposed to be hired during the second year of operation or when enrollment exceeds 350 students.

# Financial Plan

## ***Rating***

- ***Meets Standard***

## ***Plan Summary***

Projected enrollment for FY15 is 350 students and FY16 is 500 students, yielding ending cash flow statement cash balances of \$182,501 (FY15) and \$254,454 (FY16).

## ***Analysis***

The Financial Plan meets standard for approval because the plan demonstrates a comprehensive understanding of the school's financial management obligations and presents a budget that aligns with and supports the academic and operational portions of the application. It presents viable strategies for meeting potential cash flow challenges and demonstrates a commitment to maintaining the financial viability of the school.

Budget narratives are comprehensive and descriptive, giving the review team a clear financial understanding of the academic and operational portions of the application.

Cash flow statements contain adequate detail to tie back to the budget and the academic and operational portions of the application.

The review team notes that the financial plan projects \$240,000 in donations; \$80,000 by February, 2014 and \$80,000 during each budgeted year, FY15 and FY16. All three budgets could sustain a lesser amount of donations (as low as \$0), but the pre-opening period prior to 07/01/2014 is also dependent upon a loan from the Account for Charter Schools. This loan is an amount per student, making FY15 enrollment even more critical for this school than a school funding their pre-opening costs some other way.

The applicant states that the minimum number of enrolled students necessary for financial viability of the school is 300, but does not support the number with a break-even cash flow statement, Required Element C.2.8.

# Performance Record

## Rating

- **Meets standard**

### Plan Summary

Founders Academy of Las Vegas proposed to enter into two contracts. One proposed contract is with Rite of Passage (ROP). Rite of Passage will provide services in the areas of Educational Services, Administrative Services, Human Resources, Budgeting and Financial Reporting, Payroll and Reporting, Information Technology Management, and other Value Added. Founders will pay ROP 5% of funds the school receives for the services.

The second proposed contract is with Hillsdale College, the classical education model Founders will replicate. Hillsdale College will assist Founders Academy with the selection of a principal, limited teacher training, and provide a general model for curriculum. The contract contains a number of provisions for Hillsdale College to inspect the school to ensure Founders remains acting in a manner that is consistent with the mission of the Barney Charter School Initiative (related to Hillsdale College). No compensation is provided for in the contract.

### Analysis

It appears there was sufficient due diligence employed in the Founders' Committee to Form selecting Rite of Passage, including receiving proposals from four other service providers. Rite of Passage was selected based on capacity, cost and that it was a Nevada-based corporation. Based on the audited financials provided by ROP, it appears ROP is not only solvent but turning a profit annually. Although ROP does not appear to have experience supporting a charter school with the educational model proposed by Founders, the scope of work is heavily weighted to "back-office" support.

The engagement of Hillsdale College is primarily centered on replicating an existing charter school model. The application includes evidence of performance for only one (Ridgeview Classical Academy) of the charter schools currently related to the Barney Charter School Initiative. Authority due diligence shows that the model has been successfully implemented in two other states; however, the student demographics of the Ridgeview Classical Academy in Colorado and the Founders Classical Academy in Texas are remarkably different from the student demographics of the schools listed on page 108 of the application. The most telling differences are in the student demographics centered-around FRL, ELL, and certain ethnicities.

	FRL	ELL	Black	Hispanic	White
Weighted Average of schools listed on page 108	47.39%	6.0%	18.54%	27.29%	37.34%
Ridgeview as submitted in application	19%	2%	1%	12%	75%
Founders Texas school	18.2%	0%			

The success of Founders Academy resides with the school's governing body and their ability to make the necessary adjustments to the program, as needed, to serve all students within the community. The review team believes the Committee to Form brings the necessary skills to enable such successful implementation of the model.

# Evidence of Capacity

## *Rating*

- *Meets standard*

## *Plan Summary*

The Committee to Form the School consists of nine members, including related parties (a father and daughter). Acknowledging an appearance of impropriety, the application includes a discussion and justification of the membership on the Committee of the related parties.

## *Analysis*

Three of the nine board members are educators (former teacher, retired principal, assistant superintendent). This does not include Councilman Anthony who served as a regent with the Nevada System of Higher Education for 10 years. The proposed board members also have the following areas of expertise: law, real estate, human resources, and accounting. Parents are also represented on the board.

There appears to be a common understanding of the school's mission and vision, all Committee members pointed out the "classical" focus of the education model and at least one educator implemented the "classical" model as a principal (Dr. Geihs).

The review team rating is based on the thoughtful growth plan for the school that includes k-8 in the first three years of operation and, based on performance, expanding the school's grade levels to include high school in subsequent years. The review team has reservations approving the school to serve 11 grade levels in its first year of operation.

The review team is confident that the Committee (and founding board) will successfully implement the program as described in the application and make the necessary adjustments, as needed, to serve all students within their proposed target location.

STATE PUBLIC CHARTER SCHOOL AUTHORITY

SUPPORTING DOCUMENT

**S U B J E C T:** Consideration regarding the  
Application Review Team's recommendation of  
Legacy International's charter school  
application

<u>  /  /  </u>	Public Workshop
<u>  /  /  </u>	Public Hearing
<u>  /  /  </u>	Consent Agenda
<u>  /  /  </u>	Regulation Adoption
<u>  /  /  </u>	Approval
<u>  /  /  </u>	Appointments
<u>  /  x/  </u>	Information
<u>  /  x/  </u>	Action

MEETING DATE: November 1, 2013

AGENDA ITEM: 8

NUMBER OF ENCLOSURE(S): 1

**PRESENTER(S):** Dr. Steve Canavero, Director, State Public Charter School Authority

**RECOMMENDATION:** *Deny: Significant application deficiencies were found which cannot be remedied without major revisions that would significantly alter the nature of the application.*

**FISCAL IMPACT:**

**BUDGET ACCOUNT (FOR PRINTING CHARGES ONLY):**

**LENGTH OF TIME EXPECTED FOR PRESENTATION (IN MINUTES):** 45 mins

**BACKGROUND:**

**SUBMITTED BY:** \_\_\_\_\_

# *Legacy International College Prep Academy*

## *Charter School Application Recommendation Report*

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# Proposal Overview

## *School Name*

Legacy International College Prep Academy

## *Mission (Application Item A.1.2)*

LICPA's mission is to create a school model based on research and data whose graduates are ranked in top 10% in the nation in academics and performance and recognized for their outstanding scholarship, character, leadership and community service.

## *Proposed Location (from Charter Application Cover Sheet)*

Clark County

## *Enrollment Projections (from Charter Application Cover Sheet)*

Opening Year	School Type	Opening Grade(s)	Projected Enrollment
Year 1 (2014)	4-12	4-12	135
Year 2 (2015)	4-12	4-12	270
At capacity	6-12	6-12	3000

# Recommendation

*Overall Recommendation:*

***Deny: Significant application deficiencies were found which cannot be remedied without major revisions that would significantly alter the nature of the application.***

## Summary of Section Ratings

*Rating options for each section are Meets the standard; Approaches the standard; Does not meet the standard*

### Section 1. Education Program Design

- Does not meet standard

### Section 2. Operations Plan

- Does not meet standard

### Section 3. Financial Plan

- Does not meet standard

### Section 4. Performance Record missing

- Approaches the standard

### Section 5. Evidence of Capacity missing

- Does not meet standard

# Education Program Design

## *Rating*

- *Approaches the standard*

## *Plan Summary*

Legacy International College Prep Academy proposes to prepare students in grades 4-12 to become responsible citizens and leaders in national and global arenas. The school proposes to use a blended distance education format and to target student athletes and performers. With a blended model, students would have the opportunity to complete coursework online from a variety of distance education providers such as Connections, Edmentum and Forest Trail, but also have the opportunity to work face-to-face with teachers located at a designated school site.

## *Analysis*

The Education Program did not meet criteria for approval due to a number of reasons, the most prominent of which are discussed below.

Although the application discusses some excellent foundational ideas and proposes to create a program that could potentially fill a need for students in the target area, there are a number of areas within the educational program that appear unfinished or not fully articulated.

The application discusses the vision of both public and private school adopting the model and having the school grow rapidly to 25 states and 3 foreign countries within its first five years of operation. This type of growth pattern is extreme, particularly for an entity that has never tried its model at full-scale. This assertion, combined with the fact that no detailed plan for how this growth would be executed or how the board would determine when the school was ready to replicate, was concerning.

The curriculum model, Flex/Enhanced Online Blended, is not presented with compelling research-based evidence. There is no apparent explanation why this particular model is necessary to producing graduates who are ranked in the top 10% in the nation in academics and performance and recognized for their outstanding scholarship, character, leadership, and community service. It is also not completely clear what the educational model will look like once it is fully implemented especially in light of the federal licensing requirements for secondary core courses. At the interview it was apparent that the Committee has not given full consideration to their staffing plan and how, for example, hiring teachers through Connections Academy impacts their ability to evaluate and shape their instructional staff.

The school model has some preliminary plans addressing how to deal with the potentially frequent absences of student athletes/performers; however, despite the fact that coaches are specifically listed as cooperating with discipline and other plans, it is unclear how the school will formally engage with and gain buy-in from these professionals particularly given the school's plans to recruit from a variety of high-performance programs.

Overall, it is unclear to the reviewers if the Committee to Form the School has a solid understanding of the full implications of taking a partially implemented educational plan design (as defined by the Darling Tennis Club collaborative project) and implementing that design to full scale.

# Operations Plan

## Rating

- ***Does not meet standard***

## Plan Summary

The school would engage with Leap Innovations International as an educational service provider. It would use Connections Academy for provision of distance education curriculum: "The curriculum and most teachers will be online." The Head of School would be an employee of the school's board, not an EMO.

## Analysis

The following statement is of concern, because it indicates a lack of understanding regarding the supremacy of the board over any EMO with which the board may contract: "The School Board will either contract with an EMO, or the board itself establishes policy." An EMO should never be called upon to "establish policy" for a charter school; that's the school's board's job.

The proposed school is presented as a "blended learning" one. The application states "We will not accept...distance education only students into our programs." It's not clear how the school would differentiate between what it considers "distance education only students" and all other types of students. What are the types of students? Has the school confirmed with NDE (distance education staff and/or auditors) its distinction between "distance education only" students and students the school intends to enroll? It's not clear how this distinction complies with the guidance provided by the SPCSA, "Use of Online Curriculum..."

Given the teacher credentialing requirements of NRS 386.590, it's not clear how four teachers could serve pupils in grades 4-12. Consistent with the comment within the Education Program section it was not clear in the application or interview that the Committee has fully explored and subsequently has a plan for hiring and evaluating instructional staff.

The following types of teachers are identified as staffing the school in year one and presumably employed by the school's board rather than by an EMO: "Four face to face classroom teachers [each with fairly highly specialized license endorsements]..." A fifth (despite the claim of "four") would be "certified in math/science," a highly sought-after teacher for whom the school would have stiff competition in hiring. But unless the distance education provider would also provide teachers (which would make the provider an EMO) the school would need to staff grades 4-8 classrooms (that would take at least 5 elementary-credentialed teachers) as well as core subject classrooms at grades 9-12. It is not clear whether the distance education provider will employ and provide to the school any teachers, and if so, which ones. If all teachers would be employed by the school's board, it's difficult to see how 4 (or 5) could meet the requirements of a grades 4-12 school. If the school anticipates no teachers of record to be provided by an EMO, the school will need to employ such teachers (fully credentialed) for all grade levels and core subject areas.

The facility plans raise a number of concerns, particularly related to the fact that the school intends to negotiate free space and has a very broad range of expected enrollment i.e., 30 – 4,000 students). The proposed EMO has been running a pilot program for two years which is currently housed in one of the spaces

mentioned – yet one of the letters of support stated that this facility is already full (presumably making it unfit as a future site). Letters of support from other potential locations made no statements of interest or commitment to the idea of providing free space to the school.

The affidavits submitted are not the Assurances that are required. Provide the signed, notarized Assurances.

The lottery method is not the one provided as a model by the SPCSA. If the school wishes to propose a lottery method other than the one provided as a model, it must explain all deviations from the model language. Note the material provided (p. 161) in the last two paragraphs is unnecessary if the model language is adopted.

# Financial Plan

## Rating

- ***Does not meet standard***

## Plan Summary

Projected enrollment for FY15 is 120 students and FY16 is 240 students, yielding uncertain positive fund balances, depending on whether one reviews budgets or cash flow statements, each of which presents a different, conflicting result.

## Analysis

The Financial Plan does not meet criteria for approval because it fails to demonstrate an understanding of basic budgeting concepts or the school's financial management obligations. It does not present a budget that aligns with and supports the school's plan. The number and depth of mistakes in the budgets and cash flow statements as well as the lack of internal alignment with the proposed education and operations plan severely undermines the review team's confidence in the proposed school.

Prior to opening in fall, 2014, the school claims to have access to three \$50,000 lines of credit (Foundation Funds) from three separate sources. It is difficult to tell if they would be loans or donations or under what terms the funds could be accessed.

The application states that the minimum number of enrolled pupils necessary for financial viability of the school is 30 students. It does not present documentation of any form to support this.

FY15 budgeted revenue (\$874,480) is \$50,000 less than FY15 cash flow statement revenue (\$924,480). The difference appears to be \$100,000 in donated or borrowed funds in the budget versus \$150,000 in donated or borrowed funds on the cash flow statement. It is difficult to tell because the budgeted description is "Miscellaneous - local sources" vs. "Donations" as a description on the cash flow statement.

FY15 Net Change in Cash appears to be off by the same \$50,000 between the budget and the cash flow statement. This is uncertain because the budget presents revenue in a column labeled "Estimated Current Year Ending 6/30/14" and expenditures in a column labeled "Tentative Approved Budget Year Ending 6/30/15", with no netting to produce a change in cash balance. The cash flow statement shows a 6/30/15 positive net change in cash of \$150,000, the exact amount of the foundation funds if they were accessed prior to school opening. In other words, exactly the amount of DSA taken in by the school would be spent in FY15, leaving only the \$150,000 in foundation funds available for FY16.

The FY16 budget does not include any DSA funds as revenue, only the \$150,000 in foundation funds referred to immediately above. It includes \$1,548,960 in expenditures, yielding a negative ending fund balance of \$1,398,960. The FY16 cash flow statement shows revenue and expenditures of exactly \$1,548,000, leaving only the \$150,000 in foundation funds as the ending fund balance for the second straight year.

# Performance Record

## ***Rating***

- ***Approaches the standard***

## *Plan Summary*

Legacy International College Preparatory Academy (Legacy) intends to enter into two contracts with LEAP Innovations International (LII) the proposed school's EMO. The service agreement outlines a number of services LII will provide to Legacy such as overseeing, identification, design and procurement of facilities; staffing recommendations, human resources coordination, regulatory compliance, legal and corporate upkeep, maintenance of the books and records of the school as well as bookkeeping, budgeting, and financial forecasting. Legacy will spend \$300 per student in the first year and \$350 per student in subsequent years. The second contract is a Trademark License and Affiliation Agreement between LII and Legacy. The Committee to Form intends to pay no more than 1% of revenue to LII for use of the Trademark Legacy International College Prep Academy, assistance in accreditation through the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools, and other affiliated services.

## *Analysis*

The justification of performance for the LII (the proposed EMO) is reliant upon the success of a pilot program that has been in operation for three years. According to the interview the pilot project has worked with 18-20 students over the three year pilot. Data were provided in an attempt to extrapolate the performance of the pilot with other schools; however, the size of the pilot program and selective nature of the pilot student sample raise questions among the review team and the school's ability to scale the pilot successfully as a public school.

Given that the role of the EMO, as contemplated in the contracts, includes critical functions related to human capital as well as compliance and finance the questions raised in various sections of this review draw into question the EMO's ability to support Legacy in these important aspects of a school's operation. This concern is compounded by the Committee's rationale to contract with an EMO that is silent on providing services other than providing "...online teachers and an online curriculum in a blended program." It is important to note that the contracts specify a much broader delivery of services that include finance and management.

Additional evidence in the Committee's need to clarify how the two contracts align to efficiently serve the school is found within the scope of work considered under each and the apparent overlap in services. For example, the service agreement with the EMO includes human resource coordination – the EMO will identify and propose for employment qualified principals, teachers, etc... as well as professional development. The second contract, the Trademark License and Affiliation Agreement, includes a scope of work that appears to be included in the service agreement. For example, under the Affiliation Services the EMO will provide "staff selection and training; on site Head of School hiring and training."

The questions surrounding the performance of the existing pilot and lack of clear alignment between the application and various roles of the EMO result in an Approaches Standard rating.

# Evidence of Capacity

## Rating

- ***Does not meet standard***

## Plan Summary

The Committee to Form the School consists of seven members. Dr. David Meckley has extensive experience in education and is a retired UNLV professor. Ms. Mia Banks is the Vice President of Gaming for the Venetian and Palazzo Hotels. Mr. Myles Judd is the Director, STARBASE Nellis, DOD STEM Program. Dr. Porter Troutman is a retired UNLV professor. Mr. Ryan Krametbauer is a practicing Nevada attorney. Mr. Nicholas Oyola works at the Venetian and Palazzo Hotels. Colonel Charles Edwards is a retired member of the USAF.

## Analysis

The Committee to Form submitted an application to the Authority for consideration during the 2012 application cycle that was denied. As a result of the review process the Committee received a significant amount of feedback on the application submitted in 2012 – essentially providing a road map to improve the presentation of the Committee’s vision for the school. It is apparent to the review team that last year’s feedback resulted in some changes to and improvement in the application; however, critical concerns exist year over year. One significant area is the composition of the Committee to Form. The recommendation from 2012 included the following comment under Evidence of Capacity:

While members of the Committee have strong professional experience and training, the insular nature of the Committee, which appears to primarily be a group of the founders’ (and EMO principals’) friends and colleagues, calls into question the ability of the future board to fulfill its obligations, most notably, holding LII accountable.

The Committee did not fundamentally redesign itself to address the concern noted last year. The addition of two new members – Mr. Judd and Mr. Oyola – does not resolve the insular nature of the Committee. According to Mr. Judd’s response to the questionnaire he was informed of the opportunity to serve on the Committee by Dr. Levitt, a principal of the EMO. Mr. Oyola was made aware of the opportunity to serve on the Committee through Ms. Banks, who is also on the Committee. It is unclear whether Ms. Banks has any supervisory responsibility over Mr. Oyola at the Venetian Resort where both work in gaming.

The review team considers the members of the Committee to be highly capable and knowledgeable professionals that may well serve as a school’s governing body. However, there appears to be a fundamental and important disconnect between the Committees’ capacity and the application submitted for consideration.

STATE PUBLIC CHARTER SCHOOL AUTHORITY

SUPPORTING DOCUMENT

**S U B J E C T:** Consideration regarding the  
Application Review Team's recommendation of  
Mater Academy charter school application

<u>  /  /  </u>	Public Workshop
<u>  /  /  </u>	Public Hearing
<u>  /  /  </u>	Consent Agenda
<u>  /  /  </u>	Regulation Adoption
<u>  /  /  </u>	Approval
<u>  /  /  </u>	Appointments
<u>  /  x/  </u>	Information
<u>  /  x/  </u>	Action

MEETING DATE: November 1, 2013

AGENDA ITEM: 9

NUMBER OF ENCLOSURE(S): 1

**PRESENTER(S):** Dr. Steve Canavero, Director, State Public Charter School Authority

- 
- **RECOMMENDATION:** *Deny: The Committee is encouraged to revise and resubmit the application within the 30-day NRS 386.525 resubmission window. The deficiencies in the application preclude entering into a charter contract at this time, but could be corrected in a manner that does not fundamentally alter the school's proposed program. If corrected to the satisfaction of SPCSA staff and resubmitted pursuant to NRS 386.525, staff would recommend entering into a charter contract.*

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**FISCAL IMPACT:**

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**BUDGET ACCOUNT (FOR PRINTING CHARGES ONLY):**

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**LENGTH OF TIME EXPECTED FOR PRESENTATION (IN MINUTES):** 45 mins

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**BACKGROUND:**

**SUBMITTED BY:** \_\_\_\_\_

# *Mater Academy*

## *Charter School Application Recommendation Report*

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# Proposal Overview

*School Name*

Mater Academy

*Mission (Application Item A.1.2)*

The mission of Mater Academy of Nevada is to provide an innovative, challenging, multi-cultural curriculum, preparing students to be global citizens and have a competitive edge in the 21st century workforce. Mater Academy of Nevada aspires to have students to obtain a thirst for knowledge and a belief in the students' self-efficacy. We strive to have the Mater Academy of Nevada community to be actively involved in the learning of its students.

*Proposed Location (from Charter Application Cover Sheet)*

Clark County

*Enrollment Projections (from Charter Application Cover Sheet)*

Opening Year	School Type	Opening Grade(s)	Projected Enrollment
Year 1 (2014)	k-5	k-5	300
Year 2 (2015)	k-7	k-7	400
At capacity	k-8	k-8	1000

# Recommendation

## Overall Recommendation

- ***Deny: The Committee is encouraged to revise and resubmit the application within the 30-day NRS 386.525 resubmission window. The deficiencies in the application preclude entering into a charter contract at this time, but could be corrected in a manner that does not fundamentally alter the school's proposed program. If corrected to the satisfaction of SPCSA staff and resubmitted pursuant to NRS 386.525, staff would recommend entering into a charter contract.***

## Summary of Section Ratings

*Rating options for each section are Meets the standard; Approaches the standard; Does not meet the standard*

### Section 1. Education Program Design

- Approaches the standard

### Section 2. Operations Plan

- Does not meet standard

### Section 3. Financial Plan

- Does not meet standard

### Section 4. Performance Record

- Approaches the standard

### Section 5. Evidence of Capacity

- Approaches the standard

# Education Program Design

## **Rating**

- ***Approaches the standard***

### *Plan Summary*

The Mater Academy proposes to improve the academic achievement of at-risk pupils in grades K-8 by providing an innovative, challenging, multi-cultural curriculum. The ultimate goal of Mater Academy is to prepare students to be global citizens who have a competitive edge in the 21<sup>st</sup> century workforce. Instructional strategies include the use of teacher modeling, scaffolding, group practice, peer teaching, integration, and practice and review. The educational program of this school is modeled after Mater Academies located in Florida.

### *Analysis*

The application only partially meets standard. Although the application presents a compelling research-based mission, vision, and educational philosophy, the application does not clearly demonstrate alignment between the mission, vision, and educational philosophy with the school's curriculum, pedagogy, professional development plan, and targeted at-risk population.

The mission, vision, and educational philosophy detailed in the application are aligned and embedded in research around Partnership for 21<sup>st</sup> century skills and Ted Sizer's Coalition of Essential Schools Common Principles. However, the mission statement mentions global citizens and a multi-cultural curriculum, but the vision and educational philosophy fail to explicitly call these out and explain how the school will obtain this part of the mission. Furthermore, the curriculum model, instructional strategies, and professional development plan fail to align with the mission, vision, and educational philosophy. The overview of the curriculum is comparatively silent on the uniqueness of the at-risk population being targeted nor does it speak to multi-culturalism, self-efficacy, cross-cultural competence, college and career readiness, or the 21<sup>st</sup> century key skills outlined and defended in A.1 of the application.

The application indicates that Mater Academy of Nevada is replicating the Florida Mater Academy charter school network which is a "National Demonstration School for the College Board's Springboard curriculum which promotes critical thinking and segues into AP coursework." However, the application fails to sufficiently describe the curriculum being replicated in order to produce the results outlined in section A.2.4. Nor does the application provide sufficient detail to determine faithfulness to the Mater school model in Florida.

Only one educational goal written in A.2 is connected to the at-risk population being targeted. But specifics on how the desired outcomes would be obtained were not discussed in the curriculum, instructional strategies, and professional development plan. The application indicated that Mater Academy would provide onsite professional development. It also indicated that on-site coaching in instructional strategies for students of poverty, at-risk and ELL would be provided. However, the

apparent connection between the instructional strategies in A.3.12 and professional development in A.3.13 is missing.

Overall, the application fails to create a clear picture of how the mission, vision, and educational philosophy so clearly defined in the beginning of the application can be obtained using the current education plan outlined in the rest of section A. It is also not clear how the curriculum, instructional strategies, and professional development plan will meet the specific needs of the at-risk student population being targeted.

# Operations Plan

## *Rating*

- ***Does not meet standard***

## *Plan Summary*

The school would engage with Academica Nevada to provide certain non-educational services to the school, and with Mater Academy, Inc., to provide certain educational services. The school's principal would be an employee of the school's board, not of an EMO. The principal would be the person to draw orders for payment of the school's money.

## *Analysis*

The application did not present a staffing plan that appears viable and adequate for effective implementation of the proposed Educational Program. The review team's primary concern is the lack of alignment between the school's mission, vision and target population and the qualifications or skills needed to teach at Mater Academy of Nevada. The staffing plan read as if it could be applied to any school with no unique qualifications or skills identified for the instructional leader and teachers that directly ties to the Education Program, no mention of ESL or bilingual certification, and no mention of experience or knowledge of working with students living in poverty. Further, Attachment 3.2 states that students may be provided instruction in Spanish – the school will need bilingual teachers in order to meet this need but there is no mention in the Operations Plan of how the school plans to overcome this challenging staffing requirement. Based on the Operations Plan, it does not appear to the review team that the Committee is well versed in the abundant literature on the topic of attracting and retaining effective teachers in high need schools.

The organizational chart was rather unclear, listing both Academica and the board as overseeing the principal. Teacher aids do not appear to have any direct connection to the principal implying that they are to be supervised and evaluated by teaching staff. The budget section of the application also indicates there will be only three of these staff members.

No plan for the evaluation of the school leader was apparent.

The Committee's decision to affiliate with Mater Academy, Inc. is worthy of discussion. According to the application and the interview it appears the Mater Academy, Inc. affiliation was introduced to the Committee by representatives from Academica, and it was Academica that recommended a partnership with Mater Academy, Inc. Whether the Committee independently researched other "designs" or models is not expressly stated within the application. It is entirely unclear what the Committee gains from such an affiliation given the present expertise represented on the Committee.

The application did not contain a clear plan or timeline for hiring the school leader, nor did the Committee articulate who would be responsible for which day-to-day activities of the school beyond the fact that Academica will take care of most business functions.

Responses to several questionnaire items are missing from all members of the Committee – responses to questions 11 – 18 are missing; these are questions regarding conflict of interest disclosure.

# Financial Plan

## *Rating*

- ***Does not meet standard***

## *Plan Summary*

Projected enrollment for FY15 is 300 students and FY16 is 400 students. Recognizing that the proposed school budgeted with per pupil funding rates that are 3 ½ years old (3/31/2010), their cash flow statements yield ending cash balances of \$55,240 (FY15) and uncertain (FY16), as two different numbers are presented on the FY16 cash flow statement. Either of these ending FY16 balances appears to be misstated, as the beginning FY16 balance is different than the ending FY15 cash balance.

## *Analysis*

The Financial Plan does not meet criteria for approval because it fails to demonstrate an understanding of the school's financial management obligations. It does not present a budget that aligns with and supports the school's plan. The number of mistakes in the budgets and cash flow statements undermines the review team's confidence in the proposed school.

The proposed school's strategy for meeting potential cash flow challenges is entirely dependent upon per student enrollment fee reductions from its EMO and forgiveness of a loan by the EMO if the proposed school is not granted a charter. Such cost reduction measures are dependent upon an unrelated entity and present the appearance of a relationship that is not "arm's-length" in nature.

Budget narratives do not always support the numbers included in the budget nor are they always the same numbers included in the cash flow statement. Such inconsistency leaves the review team uncertain, when there is a difference, which numbers and narratives upon which to rely, making it impossible to determine if the budget is based on realistic, evidence based revenue and expenditure assumptions.

What appears to be a pre-opening budget (not labeled) relies wholly on a line item described as donations, yet the budget narrative describes the revenue as a loan from the EMO. Further complicating this understanding, no loan repayment is included in the cash flow statements.

There is no explanation for the stated minimum number of students (125) to make the school financially viable, including no break-even cash flow statement, Required Element C.2.8.

The printed cash flow statements delivered to the Authority were truncated such that there were no revenue or expense titles or total columns, rendering them unreviewable. Fortunately, the review team was able to reprint the documents from the electronic application. Nevertheless, this combined with math errors and inaccurate budget narratives further undermines the review team's confidence in the proposed school's Financial Plan.

# Performance Record

## ***Rating***

- ***Approaches the standard***

## *Plan Summary*

The Committee to Form Mater Academy of Nevada proposes to enter into two contracts: Academica Nevada, LLC and Mater Academy, Inc. Mater Academy of Nevada proposes to engage Academica Nevada to provide administrative services and support to the school for an initial term of six years. Mater Academy of Nevada will pay Academica Nevada \$450 per FTE student. Mater Academy of Nevada proposes to enter into a trademark license and affiliation agreement with Mater Academy, Inc. for a fee of 1% of the per pupil funding that the school receives. In addition to the use of the trademark, Mater Academy of Nevada is entitled to receive affiliation services such as training and materials for use.

## *Analysis*

The proposed contract between Academica Nevada, Inc. and Mater Academy of Nevada submitted with the application contained a prohibited provisions specified by NRS 386.562 (i.e., an initial term of 6 years).

Academica Nevada, LLC currently has active contracts with three existing Nevada charter schools: Pinecrest Academy, Somerset Academy and Doral Academy. Somerset Academy became operational in fall 2011 and Pinecrest in fall 2012 and Doral in fall of 2013. In terms of operational performance the Authority's experience with the schools has been positive. In terms of financial performance for Pinecrest and Somerset, the Authority profile indicators are strong, both in the near term and from a sustainability perspective. There are no data for Doral as it became operational this year.

Thus far, all Committees that elected to contract with Academica Nevada, Inc. have also elected to "replicate" a charter school and therefore engage in an affiliation agreement with the charter school located in Florida. With respect to the "replication" and affiliation agreement, in terms of academic performance, Pinecrest received "Approaches" on the Authority framework and 3 Stars (k-6 and 7-8) from the state, Somerset Academy received "Adequate" on the Authority framework and 4 Stars (k-6 and 7-8) from the state. Again, no data exists for Doral as it is in the first year of operation.

Although performance of the Mater Academy, Inc. family of schools initially looked relatively strong (8/23 receive an A from Florida, 2/23 receive a B from Florida), out of 23 total schools open in Florida, 2/23 received a C, 1/23 receive a D, 5/23 were too small to report, 1/23 received an I, and the remainder, 4/23 are too new to receive a letter grade. Over 1/3 of the portfolio appears to be three or less years old.

The Trademark License and Affiliation Agreement between Mater Academy, Inc. and Mater Academy of Nevada allow the school to use the Mater Academy name in the development of the school and to promote the fact that the school will affiliate with Mater Academy and replicate its successful

educational best practices and methods. Additionally, the agreement provides for Mater Academy, Inc to monitor the conduct and performance of the school and provide on-site training, assistance with attainment of accreditation and other areas identified by Mater Academy of Nevada. Given the narrative of the application did not address the desire for this partnership in-depth, it is critical to determine the extent to which Mater Academy, Inc. leadership team (and which members) are prepared to devote themselves to actively assisting in the implementation of their program on the other side of the country.

# Evidence of Capacity

## *Rating*

- *Approaches the standard*

## *Plan Summary*

The Mater Academy of Nevada Committee to Form is comprised of six members. Robert Anderson is the Chief Financial Officer for Land Baron Investments – Las Vegas. Renee Fairless is the Assistant Principal at Basic High School in Henderson. Ricardo Jasso is a commercial agent with REMAX Benchmark Commercial Properties. Sheila Moulton is an Area Coordinator for Brigham Young University – Idaho and Board Member for the Las Vegas Clark County Library District as well as former CCSD Trustee (1999 – 2010). Adalberto Ronquillo is a Focus Coordinator at Sunrise Mountain High School. Maricela Solis is presently self-employed through My Housekeeping Services.

## *Analysis*

The Committee to Form brings a wide array of experience and expertise to found and sustain a quality school. The Evidence of Capacity only partially met criteria for approval due to concerns noted in the recommendation report. The review team observes a fundamental disconnect between the Committee’s wealth of experience and knowledge and the sections of the application that convey a rather generic approach. The interview made clear that members of the Committee have the expertise to provide the detail within the application to align all sections to their compelling mission to serve this at-risk population.

Given the knowledge and experience of the Committee and the application the review team questions the “value add” of the affiliation with Mater Academy, Inc. Based on the interview and academic results it was not evident that the Mater Academy, Inc. model is well defined or that they have “cracked the code” resulting in significant academic gains across the network of schools. Alternatively, the Committee was well versed in strategies and tools needed to be successful in working with their proposed at-risk target population.

The review team has confidence that the proposed governing body has the capacity to remedy the identified deficiencies within this report and resubmit the application within the 30-day resubmission window.

STATE PUBLIC CHARTER SCHOOL AUTHORITY

SUPPORTING DOCUMENT

**S U B J E C T:** Consideration regarding the  
Application Review Team's recommendation of  
Nevada State High School's II charter school  
application

<u>  /  /  </u>	Public Workshop
<u>  /  /  </u>	Public Hearing
<u>  /  /  </u>	Consent Agenda
<u>  /  /  </u>	Regulation Adoption
<u>  /  /  </u>	Approval
<u>  /  /  </u>	Appointments
<u>  /  x/  </u>	Information
<u>  /  x/  </u>	Action

MEETING DATE: November 1, 2013

AGENDA ITEM: 10

NUMBER OF ENCLOSURE(S): 1

**PRESENTER(S):** Dr. Steve Canavero, Director, State Public Charter School Authority

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- **RECOMMENDATION:** *Deny: The Committee is encouraged to revise and resubmit the application within the 30-day NRS 386.525 resubmission window. The deficiencies in the application preclude entering into a charter contract at this time, but could be corrected in a manner that does not fundamentally alter the school's proposed program. If corrected to the satisfaction of SPCSA staff and resubmitted pursuant to NRS 386.525, staff would recommend entering into a charter contract.*

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**FISCAL IMPACT:**

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**BUDGET ACCOUNT (FOR PRINTING CHARGES ONLY):**

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**LENGTH OF TIME EXPECTED FOR PRESENTATION (IN MINUTES):** 45 mins

**BACKGROUND:**

**SUBMITTED BY:** \_\_\_\_\_

# *Nevada State High School II*

## *Charter School Application Recommendation Report*

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# Proposal Overview

*School Name*

Nevada State High School II

*Mission (Application Item A.1.2)*

To support our students in a college environment with personal, academic, and social skills.

*Proposed Location (from Charter Application Cover Sheet)*

Clark County

*Enrollment Projections (from Charter Application Cover Sheet)*

Opening Year	School Type	Opening Grade(s)	Projected Enrollment
Year 1 (2014)	11-12	11-12	125
Year 2 (2015)	11-12	11-12	200
At capacity	11-12	11-12	300

# Recommendation

## Overall Recommendation

- ***Deny: The Committee is encouraged to revise and resubmit the application within the 30-day NRS 386.525 resubmission window. The deficiencies in the application preclude entering into a charter contract at this time, but could be corrected in a manner that does not fundamentally alter the school's proposed program. If corrected to the satisfaction of SPCSA staff and resubmitted pursuant to NRS 386.525, staff would recommend entering into a charter contract.***

## Summary of Section Ratings

*Rating options for each section are Meets the standard; Approaches the standard; Does not meet the standard*

### Section 1. Education Program Design

- Approaches the standard

### Section 2. Operations Plan

- Approaches the standard

### Section 3. Financial Plan

- Meets standard

### Section 4. Performance Record

- Meets standard

### Section 5. Evidence of Capacity

- Approaches the standard

# Education Program Design

## ***Rating***

- ***Approaches the standard***

## *Plan Summary*

NV State High School II proposes to create a dual credit high school where students in grades 11-12 can complete their high school graduation requirements while enrolled in college courses. The purpose of the school is to develop future professionals with the habits for college success. The proposed instructional delivery is a supported dual-enrollment model following a college school calendar year supported by three high school elective courses designed to provide students with the necessary skills for college success.

## *Analysis*

The application only approaches standards due to a few concerns articulated by the reviewers.

Overall, the application is cohesive and describes a promising model that is already working in a current charter school. The application provides justification for the decision to use a college-like environment where students are able to take actual college courses during grades 11 and 12 rather than providing a more typical college-prep course sequence in a high school setting.

Some of the concerns expressed by the reviewers included the lack of detail concerning an in-depth discussion regarding need for the school with members of the new community where the school will be located, the school's discipline plan which appears to be designed to remove students who do not already fit the college bound mold, and the fact that the calendar is not approved by the Authority, rather approval/denial remains within the jurisdiction of the Nevada Department of Education.

Collectively these concerns lead the reviewers to question whether the school will be increasing the percentage of students who graduate and attend college or merely will be facilitating the inevitable success of some of the targeted area's most well-positioned students.

# Operations Plan

## *Rating*

- *Approaches the standard*

## *Plan Summary*

The school would be a replication of Nevada State High School, a dual credit, secondary/postsecondary charter school sponsored by the SPCSA. The two current administrators of the “flagship” school would administer the replication school in two .25 FTE positions in the first year of operation, and in two .5 FTE positions in the second year. The Committee to Form is composed of three “categories” of members with each category impacting how the Committee will transition to a full board: Designing Members will serve on the Committee but not seek to serve on the school’s board; Founding Members will serve both on the Committee and the school’s board; and Lead Agent and Liaison serving on the Committee to form but will transition to become employees of the school’s board.

## *Analysis*

The application positions the founding board appropriately in relation to the concept of governance versus management. The board has identified the need to appropriately orient new members and to provide ongoing training to those serving on the board. The application provides a detailed accounting of how the board intends to seek highly qualified new members. The school’s statement on page 35 alluding to the fact that there will be times when outside assistance is needed to determine the correct course of action, and the board will not hesitate to seek such assistance, appears proper and a positive indicator.

Although not in the application the interview did address a review team concern regarding an organizational structure that includes part-time administration at the NSHS II that will result in a part-time administration at NSHS. The Committee’s rationale for part-time administration centered on budgetary concerns with the goal of transitioning both Hawks to full-time at NSHS II and hiring a new administration for NSHS. The Committee referred to this strategy as a “bread crumb approach”.

It’s not clear why two different enrollment window dates are provided (April 15, 2014, and May 1-15). The lottery description in the application does not completely match that offered as guidance by the proposed sponsor (see the SPCSA website; see “Resources for Schools”). The applicant needs to either explain variations from the guidance provided by the proposed sponsor or use the language suggested by the proposed sponsor.

# Financial Plan

## ***Rating***

- ***Meets Standard***

## ***Plan Summary***

Projected enrollment for FY15 is 125 students and FY16 is 200 students, yielding ending cash flow statement cash balances of \$50,075 (FY15) and \$114,075 (FY16).

## ***Analysis***

The Financial Plan meets standard for approval because the plan demonstrates an understanding of the school's financial management obligations and presents a budget that aligns with and supports the academic and operational portions of the application. It presents viable strategies for meeting potential cash flow challenges and demonstrates a commitment to maintaining the financial viability of the school.

Budget narratives are comprehensive and descriptive, giving the review team a clear financial understanding of the academic and operational portions of the application.

Cash flow statements contain adequate detail to tie back to the budget and the academic and operational portions of the application.

The application is based on per pupil funding from 4/25/2012, overstating revenue by less than 1% each year.

FY15 & FY16 budget for receipt of \$10,000 of federal E-Rate telecom/internet funding. Receipt of these funds is uncertain, but not critical to the sustainability of the budget.

The pre-opening budget submitted in response to Required Element C.1.5 comprehensively documents projected expenditures of \$100,000, but does not indicate a source of revenue to pay for them. The review team's concern is minimized by the inclusion in both the budget and the cash flow statements of repayment of a \$100,000 loan.

The applicant states that the minimum number of enrolled students necessary for financial viability of the school is 65, but does not support the number with a break-even cash flow statement, Required Element C.2.8.

# Performance Record

## *Rating*

- *Meets standard*

## *Plan Summary*

Nevada State High School II proposed to replicate the Nevada State High School model currently operating in Clark County.

## *Analysis*

A cornerstone of the Authority's strategic plan's theory of action is the replication of successful schools. Existing models seeking to replicate within Nevada provide the Authority with a performance basis to assess the future performance of a replicated school.

Nevada State High School II would replicate the model used by Nevada State High School in Clark County. Nevada State High School opened in 2004 under the NV State Board of Education and is currently a SPCSA sponsored charter school. Nevada State High School started with an enrollment of 40 students and has built that enrollment up to 245 students in the last nine years. The school has consistently made AYP and has consistently, since 2005, been designated as either high achieving status or exemplary. Nevada State High School was designated as a "Quality" charter school according to the Authority's performance framework. Graduation rates for Nevada State High School have also been consistently high, being reported at 100% for most years.

NSHS's June 30, 2013 Financial Performance Framework profile indicators are strong, both in the near term and from a sustainability perspective.

NSHS's independent audit report annually shows that their financial statements present fairly, in all material respects, the respective financial position of the governmental activities, the aggregate remaining fund information, and the respective changes in financial position in conformity with accounting principles generally accepted in the United States of America. The auditor's consideration of internal control over financial reporting did not identify any deficiencies in internal control considered to be material weaknesses.

Nevada State High School's outcomes are compelling and provide evidence of an effective program for Clark County.

# Evidence of Capacity

## **Rating**

- ***Approaches the standard***

## *Plan Summary*

The Committee to Form the School consists of 9 members. Two of the nine are the two administrators (married to each other) of the “flagship” school, and two other members are employees of these two administrators. Another Committee member is a contractor of the flagship school. Five of the nine members report no prior board experience.

## *Analysis*

The review team understands the construction of the Committee to Form includes three different “roles” that differentiate a member that serves the Committee to develop and submit the application versus those members of the Committee that apparently will serve on the school’s first governing body. The primary concern of the review team is the insular nature of the Committee and lack of prior board experience of its members.

The Committee to Form includes five of the nine members that are either currently employed by NSHS or plan to be employed by NSHS II. It was unclear to the review team the benefit of composing the Committee in this manner given the obvious questions raised by having a supervisor/employee serve on the same Committee. Only one, Ms. Holdaway, member of the Committee to Form has prior experience serving on the PTA at Bonner Elementary School.

The role of the Hawks in scaling NSHS to two campuses is critically important and considered an asset to this proposal; however, equally important will be the role of strong governance to ensure the continued success of NSHS and the successful implementation of the independent NSHS II. The insular quality of the CTF manifests itself in, among other things, an apparent over-dependence on the administrators John and Wendi Hawk. Those acquainted with the “flagship school” and this application for replication of the flagship school may find it difficult to picture the continuation of either school should the Hawks for any reason leave employment at the school. Application reviewers are aware of no administrative succession plan for either the flagship or proposed schools.

Expanding the Committee to Form to include members with board experience who are neither employees, contractors nor relatives would improve the application. Developing a succession plan is necessary to ensure the continued performance of NSHS and the successful start-up and ongoing operations of NSHS II.

STATE PUBLIC CHARTER SCHOOL AUTHORITY

SUPPORTING DOCUMENT

**S U B J E C T:** Consideration regarding the  
Application Review Team's recommendation of  
Telesis Academy's charter school application

<u>  /  /  </u>	Public Workshop
<u>  /  /  </u>	Public Hearing
<u>  /  /  </u>	Consent Agenda
<u>  /  /  </u>	Regulation Adoption
<u>  /  /  </u>	Approval
<u>  /  /  </u>	Appointments
<u>  /  x/  </u>	Information
<u>  /  x/  </u>	Action

MEETING DATE: November 1, 2013

AGENDA ITEM: 11

NUMBER OF ENCLOSURE(S): 1

**PRESENTER(S):** Dr. Steve Canavero, Director, State Public Charter School Authority

**RECOMMENDATION:** *Deny: Significant application deficiencies were found which cannot be remedied without major revisions that would significantly alter the nature of the application.*

**FISCAL IMPACT:**

**BUDGET ACCOUNT (FOR PRINTING CHARGES ONLY):**

**LENGTH OF TIME EXPECTED FOR PRESENTATION (IN MINUTES):** 45 mins

**BACKGROUND:**

**SUBMITTED BY:** \_\_\_\_\_

# *Telesis Academy*

## *Charter School Application Recommendation Report*

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# Proposal Overview

*School Name*

Telesis Academy

*Mission (Application Item A.1.2)*

Telesis Preparatory Academy is committed to offering curriculum individually designed and delivered to meet the needs of each student in real preparation for lifelong learning.

*Proposed Location (from Charter Application Cover Sheet)*

Washoe County

*Enrollment Projections (from Charter Application Cover Sheet)*

Opening Year	School Type	Opening Grade(s)	Projected Enrollment
Year 1 (2014)	6-9	6-9	400
Year 2 (2015)	5-10	5-10	498
At capacity	k-12	k-12	1000

# Recommendation

## *Overall Recommendation*

***Deny: Significant application deficiencies were found which cannot be remedied without major revisions that would significantly alter the nature of the application.***

## Summary of Section Ratings

*Rating options for each section are Meets the standard; Approaches the standard; Does not meet the standard*

### Section 1. Education Program Design

- Approaches the standard

### Section 2. Operations Plan

- Does not meet the standard

### Section 3. Financial Plan

- Does not meet the standard

### Section 4. Performance Record

- Approaches the standard

### Section 5. Evidence of Capacity

- Does not meet the standard

# Education Program Design

## *Rating*

- *Approaches the standard*

## *Plan Summary*

Telesis proposes to improve academic achievement for students in grades K-12 with a multi-age curriculum model. The ultimate goal of Telesis is to foster a learning environment that challenges students without frustration. Some of the proposed instructional strategies include differentiated instruction and mastery learning. The proposed school would be modeled after the Telesis Preparatory Academy in Arizona.

## *Analysis*

The application only partially meets standard due to a number of unmet evaluation criteria.

The Committee to Form does not present research-based evidence for selecting the proposed curriculum and instructional strategies. Within the application there is a lot of discussion of the structure of classrooms but the curriculum narrative is one paragraph that states the curriculum will be based on Common Core and Nevada standards. Given the Authority's expectation that schools will offer a research-based, rigorous curriculum, this is a significant omission. During the interview the Committee to Form commented that they want to use the curriculum already in use in Arizona, but that they don't want to assume what works in Arizona will work in Nevada and intend to remain flexible. While it is understandable to desire some level of flexibility, the review team didn't see within the application clear criteria to drive this key decision. It is noted that during the Interview the Committee to Form mentioned the establishment of a Curriculum Committee – the review team did not find such a committee included in the application's description of the proposed structure of the school.

The application identifies no fewer than 15 instructional strategies and best practices to be incorporated at Telesis Preparatory Academy – Effective Elements of Instruction, T4S, 8 Standards of Mathematical Practice, Portfolio Assessment, Project-Based Learning, Service Learning, etc... While not mutually exclusive, the number and significance of the strategies included render meaningful implementation with a high degree of fidelity practically impossible. Without a clear understanding of how and why certain strategies are employed within the structure of the school the review team is left with the impression that the applicant included most of the instructional strategies currently in mode without giving complete thought to the plan and implementation of all strategies.

In consideration of the academic performance of the Telesis Preparatory Academy in Arizona (the model school to be replicated in Washoe County) the review team noted the absence of "lessons learned" in how the model has been modified in AZ to better serve enrolled students and how those lessons would translate into the context of Washoe County. It is not clear to the review team that the present Committee to Form (the Nevada-based members) conducted a thorough analysis of the model's performance in Arizona.

# Operations Plan

## **Rating**

- ***Does not meet the standard***

## *Plan Summary*

A "Superintendent" would be the CEO of the "organization," and would "support the Administrative positions." The Superintendent would not be on site at the school every day. A Principal would supervise day to day operations. The school would replicate the Telesis Center for Learning, Inc., DBA Telesis Preparatory Academy; it would use neither an EMO nor distance education.

## *Analysis*

Based on the application and the interview the review team's concern that the Committee to Form appreciates the staffing needs for the successful implementation of the proposed program remains unresolved.

The relationship between Telesis Preparatory Academy, AZ (Telesis AZ) and Telesis Preparatory Academy, NV (Telesis NV) appears to be loosely defined and based on mutual trust. The Committee to Form is correct in assuming some relationship is necessary; however, the lack of a contract or other written agreement that explicitly defines services to be provided by Telesis AZ to Telesis NV is troublesome. Given the Committee's reliance upon Telesis AZ (e.g., "job share business staff", part-time share of the CEO Sandra Breece, business office duties, curriculum development, carrying out the philosophy of the school in the correct manner) the review team would expect a contractual agreement between the entities that not only protects Telesis NV and the enrolled students but also provides a clear outline of the organizational systems needed and to be developed for purposes of accurate budgeting. The Committee is encouraged to research other replication charter schools and the strategies used to ensure that both the model and replication school are well positioned to scale-up successfully.

Further complicating the relationship between the two entities is the conflicting language in the application and the responses in the interview regarding how long the relationship between the two entities will exist and whether or not the relationship will include compensation. The staffing plan suggests that Sandra Breece (the "Superintendent") would, in the beginning, work for free, but later would be "hired" by the board. The response in the interview suggested that Telesis AZ expected Telesis NV to "be on their own two feet" in 5 years. No plan to transition Telesis NV away from Telesis AZ was found within the application nor was any discussion of the critical human capital necessary to replace the support from Telesis AZ.

# Financial Plan

## Rating

- ***Does not meet the standard***

## Plan Summary

Projected enrollment for FY15 is 400 students and FY16 is 500 students, yielding ending cash flow statement cash balances of \$145,346 (FY15) and \$220,293 (FY16). These balances conflict with ending budget balances of \$45,346 (FY15) & \$74,947 (FY16).

## Analysis

The Financial Plan does not meet criteria for approval because it fails to demonstrate an understanding of basic budgeting concepts or the school's financial management obligations. It does not present a budget that aligns with and supports the school's plan. The number and depth of mistakes in the budgets and cash flow statements as well as the lack of internal alignment with the proposed education and operations plan severely undermines the review team's confidence in the proposed school.

The budget, as explained by the narrative, neglects to include employee retirement (PERS). Inclusion of this expenditure would reduce ending cash balances by \$140,000 in FY15 & \$177,000 in FY16.

The Nevada Superintendent (Arizona Head of School) is described in the budget as a zero cost consultant; however \$40,000 is budgeted in both years for travel from AZ to NV and/or an apartment in NV. It is uncertain whether this would continue as a zero cost service. Year two budgets the Superintendent for .25 FTE X \$25,000, incorrectly equal to zero dollars. Then, the budget narrative curiously states "5% raise assumed in Year 2."

Budget Form 7 – "Indebtedness", was not completed for FY15 to account for the \$100,000 loan from the Arizona charter school. The loan was also not budgeted as a revenue source, putting it in conflict with the FY15 cash flow statement, which includes it as a beginning balance. The pre-opening budget states that "The loan will be payable at the end of FY16." In apparent conflict, it goes on to say "the school has included the expenses it needs to complete the loan payments in budget year one." The budget for FY15 includes no such repayment under "Debt Service" in either the detailed budget or the narrative. FY16 includes only \$25,000 in the detail, but zero in the narrative. It is also omitted from the cash flow statements as a separately identifiable line item.

When descriptions are comparable, budgeted amounts do not always match the same description on the cash flow statement, giving rise to the question of which is accurate; impossible to determine if the budget is based on realistic, evidence based revenue and expenditure assumptions. For instance, FY15 "Supplies", per the budget are \$309,800. The same description on the CFS is \$259,800.

The application says "Telesis Preparatory Academy in Reno, Nevada will utilize the business office at the Telesis Preparatory Academy in Lake Havasu, Arizona, a non-profit charter school, to help them get started while building their school and enrollment. A small fee to offset the AZ charter school costs of time will be charged to the school..." The amount of this fee is uncertain, as it is buried in a \$75,000 "Accounting and Auditing Services" budget line item. It is also impossible to determine if this fee is included in the cash flow statements, as it is not identified separately.

# Performance Record

## *Rating*

- ***Approaches the standard***

## *Plan Summary*

Telesis Preparatory Academy of Nevada proposes to replicate the Telesis Preparatory Academy in Arizona.

## *Analysis*

Telesis Preparatory Academy, AZ appears to be financially sound based on the audited FY12 report and a conversation with the school's sponsor in Arizona. The FY12 audit did not identify any deficiencies in internal controls over financial reporting.

A cornerstone of the Authority's strategic plan's theory of action is the replication of successful schools. Existing models seeking to replicate in Nevada provide the Authority with a window into their academic performance in other environments with which the Authority may infer the model's performance in Nevada. Extrapolating the academic performance from Telesis Preparatory Academy, AZ to the proposed location in Washoe County is based on the academic framework used in Arizona which is similar to the Authority's.

The review team evaluated Telesis Preparatory Academy, AZ student achievement using the information provided within the application and due diligence by Authority staff. Due diligence included review of the Arizona State Board for Charter Schools academic performance results for 2012 and 2013. Telesis Preparatory Academy, AZ (k-8) received an overall "Does not meet standard" in both years and a letter grade of "C" based on Arizona's state accountability rating. Telesis Preparatory Academy, AZ (9-12) received an overall rating of "Does not meet standard" in 2012 and "Meets standard" in 2013 with a letter grade of "C" in both years based on Arizona's state accountability rating. According to the sponsor Telesis Preparatory Academy, AZ is not eligible for expansion within Arizona due to their academic performance not meeting the thresholds established in policy.

Additional student achievement data were included by The Center for Student Achievement (a third party associated with the Arizona Charter School Association). The Center for Student Achievement gave Telesis Preparatory Academy, AZ a grade of "C" in 2012 and 2013 based on its test performance. One recommendation of the third party report is the need to further differentiate student learning – this is a concern because a hallmark of the Telesis "model" is differentiated learning.

# Evidence of Capacity

## *Rating*

- ***Does not meet the standard***

## *Plan Summary*

The Committee to Form the School consists of eight members, two of whom are related. Three of the members of the Committee live in Arizona. Two of the members are employees of a third member, the "Superintendent" of the school to be replicated.

## *Analysis*

The Committee to Form the school are professionals with a clear interest and desire in charter schools and evident enthusiasm to provide a quality choice for Nevada families. The Committee is commended for bringing forth the idea of Telesis NV; however, questions and concerns exist regarding the composition of the Committee (and future board) that largely stem from the lack of clarity found within the application and interview.

Three members of the Committee to Form reside in Arizona; two are related: Sandra Breece (CTF Liaison) and Ryan Breece. Two of the members, Mario Biasiucci and R. Breece, appear to be employees of S. Breece. Two of the members of the Committee to Form that reside in Nevada are related: P. Butters and A. Juve. No strong rationale exists to justify why relatives serve on the Committee to Form; why three of the 8 members of the Committee (including the Liaison) reside outside of Nevada; and why two employees of the Liaison serve on the Committee.

If the "Telesis Center for Learning, Inc. DBA Telesis Preparatory Academy," referred to in the application not as an EMO but as the school model to be replicated, would indeed receive any money from the school, the membership of the Breeses and M. Biasiucci violates regulation. All three are employees of Telesis Preparatory Academy.

S. Breece intends to serve on the school's board, but is identified in the Organizational Chart as the "Superintendent" reporting to the school's board; school employees may not serve on the school's board.

It is not clear which members of the Committee to Form meet the statutory membership requirements. Two members of the Committee to Form have prior board experience: S. Breece has board experience and Saunders has experience serving on a Home Owners' Association.