

NEVADA STATE PUBLIC CHARTER SCHOOL AUTHORITY

September 5, 2014

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

And

Legislative Building
401 South Carson Street
Room 2135
Carson City, Nevada

MINUTES OF THE MEETING

BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT:

In Las Vegas:

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

In Carson City:

None

BOARD MEMBERS ABSENT

Nora Luna

AUTHORITY STAFF PRESENT:

In Las Vegas:

Traci House, Business Process Analyst, State Public Charter School Authority
Patrick Gavin, Director, State Public Charter School Authority

In Carson City:

Angela Blair, Education Program Professional, State Public Charter School Authority
Kathy Robson, Education Program Professional, State Public Charter School Authority
Katie Higday, Management Analyst, State Public Charter School Authority
Adrienne Lawrence, Administrative Services Officer, State Public Charter School Authority
Allyson Kellogg, Management Analyst, State Public Charter School Authority

Danny Peltier, Administrative Assistant, State Public Charter School Authority

LEGAL STAFF PRESENT:

In Carson City:

Shane Chesney, Senior Deputy Attorney General

AUDIENCE IN ATTENDANCE:

In Las Vegas:

Steve Werlein

Seth Rau

Dan Tafoya

Laruen Tevis

Caroline McIntosh

Ercan Aydogdu

Deb Roberson

Erin Cranor

In Carson City:

Donna Wix

Judy Osgood

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

President Conaboy called the meeting to order at 9:05am with attendance as reflected above.

Chair Conaboy called for a flexible agenda.

Member McCord moved for a flexible agenda. Member Abelman seconded. The decision was unanimous.

Agenda Item 1 - Public Comment

Member McCord remembered former State Superintendent Eugene Paslov, who passed away a few months earlier. He was commended for his hard work through many years on behalf of all children in Nevada.

Agenda Item 2 - Approval of July 18, 2014 SPCSA Meeting Minutes

Chair Conaboy said there were some edits that needed to be made. No members had any additional edits.

Member Mackedon moved for approval of the July 18, 2014. Member McCord seconded. The motion was unanimous.

Agenda Item 3 - Authority Update

Chair Conaboy said that legislative bill tracking had already begun and she would be working with staff to monitor bills that would have effect on charter schools during the 2015 Legislative session. She said there were BDRs related to facility funding, enrollment, teacher licensure, special education and public boards.

Agenda Item 4 – Director’s Report

Director Gavin thanked Chair Conaboy for her assistance in getting him familiarized with Nevada and the SPCSA. He said he had found there is a critical need to develop talent that already exists in the state and that it would be incumbent on the agency and the board to set a high bar in order to achieve the best results for students in Nevada. He said human capital is a constraint in this goal and it would be wise to advocate to key policy makers that this need be addressed in the legislative session.

He said the SPCSA opened three new schools for the 2014-2015 school year. He said three other schools’ charters had expired and they would have to resubmit an application in order to receive a new application. He said the SPCSA-sponsored school’s enrollment now totals close to 20,000 pupils.

He said one critical point he wanted to make was the SPCSA would not continue growth for the sake of growth. He would like to see quality schools thrive while possibly closing charter schools that are not meeting academic expectations. He wants to emphasize to external operators that Nevada takes academic accountability very seriously and would not tolerate schools that did not meet this challenge.

Agenda Item 5 – Report on Preliminary Academic Performance Data

Joan Jurgensen, Education Program Professional, presented the preliminary academic data that was being released by the Nevada Department of Education. She said that the data was currently embargoed and wouldn’t be released until the 12th. She said that the SPCSA has one 1-star school, seven 2-star schools, and several 4 and 5-star schools. The exact rating and which school achieved the rating would be available once the data was not embargoed. Chair Conaboy asked if Ms. Jurgensen was able to see any trends in the data up to this point. Ms. Jurgensen said that currently it was difficult to see trends with the embargoed data.

Director Gavin said that staff would be putting together a “Quality Seats” metric which would be made available after the data was open to the public. Member McCord was impressed with the number of charter schools that had shown improvement from the previous year. He said those schools should be equally acknowledged for the hard work they had done.

Agenda Item 8 – SPCSA Budget Status

Director Gavin began by explaining the budgeting process for a state agency. He then spoke about the items the SPCSA would be including in its budget. He said the SPCSA would be looking to add 3 new positions over the next two years in order to help with increased work load as the SPCSA's charter portfolio grows.

He said money would be budgeted for incentive programs for developing and attracting high quality schools and operators to Nevada. He said he was setting money aside to create an SPCSA Publication that would be sent out to the schools and the public, which would provide information about charter schools in Nevada.

He said staff would be exploring training seminars for charter school leadership including Governing Board and Administrator classes. Also included in the budget were the day-to-day operating costs, travel expense, board expenses, and federal programs.

Chair Conaboy said she hoped that staff would reach out to the schools in order to see what needs they would like met. She said this should be a give and take relationship and that schools have to be involved with how the SPCSA would spend their fee money.

Chair Conaboy and Member Mackedon also spoke about the need to ensure the communities with the most acute educational needs have access to high quality schools. They had visited a group in Las Vegas a year ago and the group had mapped out some of the areas in Las Vegas that were underserved educationally. She said she would like to see funds go towards meeting needs in these locales with future charter school approvals.

Chair Conaboy asked if staff was planning on asking for an increase to the charter school loan account. Director Gavin said it was his intent to ask for an increase to the account in the upcoming legislative session and during the budgeting process.

Agenda Item – 9 Charter School Association of Nevada Report

Laruen Tevis, CSAN Executive Director, said CSAN was having their annual conference in the coming weeks and members of both the SPCSA Board and staff were all invited. She said some of the SPCSA-sponsored schools would be assisting in some of the breakout sessions at the conference. Ms. Tevis also said she would be more involved in the 2015 Legislative session. She said she would like to have more charter school voices heard during the session.

Agenda Item 10 – Report on Letters of Intent and Applications received

Director Gavin said the SPCSA had received 11 Letters of Intent and 8 full applications were received. The 8 charter applications received were: Equipo Academy, Y.E.S. Academy of Performing and Fine Arts, Sterling Charter School, NE PLUS ULTRA, Athlos, Sports Leadership and Management Academy, Acadia Prep and River Mountain Charter School. Staff and technical consultants will review the applications over the course of 60 days and the first hearing will take place on October 27, 2014 in front of the SPCSA board.

Agenda Item 4 continued – Update Regarding the Transition to Infinite Campus

Traci House, Business Process Analyst, said the transition was coming along well. She said there had been some bugs and glitches, but overall the schools were becoming much more comfortable with the system. She said that as schools work within Infinite Campus more, the system will become second nature to the users. Chair Conaboy asked if the schools would be ready for count day. Ms. House said she is very confident that the schools would be prepared for count day. Member Mackedon said that while the process has been trying at times, overall she thinks the process has gone about as smoothly as possible.

Agenda Item 7 – Presentation and Discussion with Nevada Interscholastic Activities Association regarding Charter membership

Erin Cranor, Chair of the CCSD board and member of the NIAA board, spoke to the Authority regarding a possible charter schools liaison with the NIAA. She said that the NIAA questions how to deal with charter schools only offering certain sports and student eligibility at their zoned school if the charter school did not offer the sport desired. She said all of the ideas currently are just ideas and no policies have been voted on yet.

Member Mackedon said that the rural districts have been having issues between charter schools and district schools with regard to participation in sports. She said a survey that was sent to charter schools around the state showed that Clark County and Washoe County schools haven't had nearly the problems that rural districts have had.

Trustee Cranor said the concept of a charter schools liaison will be placed on an NIAA agenda. She thinks that having a charter schools liaison on the NIAA board would allow the concerns to be expressed and then addressed by the NIAA board. Member Van said he hoped the charter schools would eventually have a voting member on the board. Trustee Cranor said she would take some of the ideas talked about with the Authority back to the NIAA for further discussion.

Agenda Item 11 – Member Comment

Member Wahl welcomed Patrick Gavin to the SPCSA and said she was excited to work with him moving forward.

Agenda Item 6 – Nevada Department of Education Academic Standards Report

Judy Osgood, Public Information Officer for the Nevada Department of Education explained Nevada Ready! She said that Nevada Ready! is a statewide initiative led by the Nevada Department of Education and the Nevada Board of Education, and is financially supported by the Nevada Public Education Foundation. The Department is partnering with the Nevada System of Higher Education, local school districts, and public and private organizations and agencies to raise awareness of the state's public school standards, which define what students are expected to learn and be able to do as they move from grade to grade.

Although standards are not new to education in Nevada, today's students are being taught under more challenging standards to prepare them for college and the modern workplace and to place Nevada's education system on par with every other state. Virtually all our state's education initiatives are built upon these standards -- with the goal of increasing expectations of what our students will know and master to be college and career ready, and equipped to compete globally.

Through a comprehensive communications initiative, Nevada Ready! will provide information to help educators, students, parents, community leaders and others understand the standards of education adopted by the Department and Board, the tests that will be given to assess student and teacher performance and ways to use those results to help students, educators, schools and school districts reach these new, rigorous standards.

The Nevada Ready! initiative started with a focus on implementation of new standards for English language arts and mathematics (commonly referred to as the Common Core State Standards), but also addresses new science standards adopted by the State Board of Education in February 2014 and standards in many other subject areas including social studies, the arts, pre-K/early learning, and career and technical education.

With more rigorous standards for learning come enhanced assessments. Because the new tests are based on higher expectations, new assessment data may show that fewer students score at a proficient level. Modernizing our expectations and updating our approach to education will not be an overnight project, but preparing our children for global competition is a shared responsibility for the entire state to embrace.

Agenda Item 12 – Public Comment

Lauren Tevis, Executive Director of CSAN, spoke about the NIAA. She said that CSAN has also spoken about having a representative on the NIAA board. She said she would like to see CSAN and the SPCSA work together to ensure all charter schools -- both district and SPCSA-sponsored -- are represented on NIAA.

Chair Conaboy called for a motion for adjournment. Member McCord motioned for adjournment. Member Van seconded. The decision was unanimous.

The meeting was adjourned at 12:17 pm