



February 22, 2013

Dr. Steve Canavero
Director, State Public Charter School Authority
1749 North Stewart Street Suite 40
Carson City, Nevada 89706-9113

Dear Dr. Canavero,

Thank you for meeting with Sarah Ault and I on 2/14/2013 to review and discuss questions related to our recent application to renew the Nevada Connections Academy's charter. Below is the list of questions in bold with the school's response in italics, along with an attachment to address question #5.

Please don't hesitate to contact me if you have further questions or concerns.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Jennifer Dukek".

Jennifer Dukek, M.Ed.
Principal, Nevada Connections Academy

1) Does NCA still wish to amend its charter to reflect new goals (Section 5.7 and 5.7(a))?

Yes, between now and June 30th, 2014, the school staff and governing board would like to work collaboratively with the SPCSA to incorporate elements of the new SPCSA performance framework into our charter goals, as we understand that the SPCSA performance framework will be used to measure the effectiveness of all charter schools authorized by the SPCSA. We would also like to retain the flexibility to include school specific goals that support our school mission and vision.

2) Certain language appearing in the application is in need of clarification or additional documentation.

As we discussed in the meeting on 2/14/2013, we would like to strike the statements below (a., b., and c.) from our original application. Although the statements are generalizations, clarification is provided under each question.

a. Page 3 "A particular weakness of almost all incoming students concerns their mastery of math..."

i. Please clarify how and by what measure NCA uses to substantiate this observation.

Student academic performance in mathematics was below state and district percentages in most years and at most grade levels, with the exception of 2007-2008 and high school performance in 2012, therefore we are particularly concerned about student performance in mathematics.

b. Page 3 "NCA is impacted even more than many schools since its growth results in many more students who are new to the school but still counted in NCA's evaluated population, even though most of their schooling was in another environment."

i. Please clarify this statement.

We believe that because NCA is a 'school of choice,' students in our school tend to have higher mobility than traditional schools. We understand that students who enroll after student count day in the fall are not included in academic performance results for the school.

c. Page 4 "NCA is fully committed to high academic performance, not only versus other virtual schools, but as compared to traditional schools serving comparably challenged populations."

i. Please clarify what is meant by *challenged populations*.

The reference to "challenged populations" is intended to represent the academically diverse (IEP, FRL, ELL, etc.) student population.

3) Please submit a copy of the NCA Governing Body self-evaluation instrument and results from SY2011-2012.(Reference to the instrument appears on page 8)

A copy of the 2011-2012 NCA Governing Board self-evaluation instrument titled: "ncaBdEvalresults2012oct27.pdf" (Nevada Connections Academy, 2012-2013, and EMO Evaluation) was successfully submitted to AOIS for determination on acceptance. Date and Time Received is Wednesday, October 31, 2012 at 8:43:51 AM.

4) Response to Question #5, Page 8: Please provide NCA graduation rates for all applicable years. Please include the 4-year adjusted cohort graduation rate for the most recent years.

Cohort Year	Graduates	Non Graduates	Transferred Out	Total Graduates + Non Graduates	Graduation Rate
2009	10	30	9	40	25.0%
2010	26	88	27	114	22.8%
2011	53	147	124	200	26.5%
2012	57	101	225	158	36.1%

5) Attachment E, Pages 3-4 Progress on Mission and Goals: Student Academic Goal 2 – Yearly Growth. NCA defined “satisfactory academic growth” as attainment of 75% and/or an increase in a score from the pretest to posttest of 10 percent (or 10 percentage points) as measured by the LEAP assessment. Please provide evidence to demonstrate that NCA’s definition of “satisfactory academic growth” results in student attainment of standards and proficiency as measured by the state assessments.

Please see the attached description of how LEAP is used as a diagnostic tool to analyze academic growth for Nevada Connections Academy students.

6) Attachment E, Pages 4-7 Progress on Mission and Goals: Student Academic Goal 3 – Achievement Scores.

a. Please provide the evidence and analysis to satisfy the following statement in Goal 3: “Nevada Connections Academy students will perform equal to or better than comparable Nevada public school on the Nevada Proficiency Examination Program.” Staff reviewing the renewal application were not able to find an analysis of comparable schools.

Data used to compare Nevada Connections Academy’s academic performance to comparable Nevada public schools was taken from multiple sources, dependent upon which report provided the relevant data. The primary source was the School Accountability Summary Report. For Nevada Connections Academy’s first year (2007-2008), the School Summary Report Achievement Distribution and the Achievement Level Distribution Summary School Report was used. The State Accountability Summary Report was used to provide district and state performance data for comparison, when it was not provided on the School Accountability Report.

~~**b. Please clarify the tables appearing on pages 5 and 6. It is unclear what NCA means in the header. Please clarify what constitutes the District and State. Additionally, please clarify whether the numbers appearing in the table are percents or student counts or other.**~~

7) Other considerations at time of renewal.

a. As of 2/4/13, no resumes or affidavits for any board members are found in AOIS’ Permanent Files.

Resumes and affidavits for all board members were uploaded in AOIS on 2/22/2013.

b. As of 2/4/13, the information provided in the "Board Roster 9/19/12" is not the information requested by the Authority:

Rather than "Term start date," "Month and year began serving on the board" is requested by the Authority.

i. The school responded with dates, not number of terms, to the question "How many terms served on the board, including current term?"

The board roster was corrected to indicate "Month and year began serving on the board." The corrected roster was updated in AOIS on 2/22/2013.

Prior to the SPCSA Board meeting scheduled on March 22, 2013, Nevada Connections Academy will submit a request to amend the Governing Board By-Laws to clarify all questions below related to board member terms, classes, and board member composition.

ii. It's not clear who on the board is in which of the three "classes" identified in bylaws article 3, section 4(b):

1. It appears that three of the seven members have been serving since April 2007, and a fourth member has been serving since June, 2008.

2. Jamie Castle appears to have been board president since the school's inception.

iii. Information provided under the heading "NRS 386.549 membership category..." needs clarification: The membership categories are educator (2 required positions), parent, person with knowledge and experience in accounting, financial services, law, or human resources (2 required positions).

iv. The bylaws (art. 3, sec. 3(b)) need updating to reflect the current membership requirements of NRS 386.549