



## NEVADA STATE PUBLIC CHARTER SCHOOL AUTHORITY

**December 3, 2021**

The State Public Charter School Authority Board Meeting was conducted virtually and at the following physical location:

Nevada Department of Education  
2080 East Flamingo Road  
Board Room  
Las Vegas, Nevada

### **MINUTES OF THE MEETING**

#### **BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT IN-PERSON:**

Member Erica Mosca  
Member Tamika Shauntee Rosales  
Member Mallory Cyr  
Vice Chair Sheila Moulton  
Chair Melissa Mackedon

#### **BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT VIRTUALLY:**

Member Tonia Holmes-Sutton  
Member Lee Farris

#### **BOARD MEMBERS ABESENT**

Member Javier Trujillo

#### **AUDIENCE IN ATTENDANCE IN-PERSON:**

John Hawk  
Jesse Welsh  
Dan Triana  
Jill Cribari

#### **AUTHORITY STAFF IN-PERSON:**

Rebecca Feiden, Executive Director  
Mark Modrcin, Director of Authorizing  
Ryan Herrick, General Counsel  
Brian Scroggins, Deputy Director  
Jennifer King, Administrative Assistant IV

#### **AUTHORITY STAFF PRESENT VIRTUALLY:**

Selcuk Ozdemir, Education Programs Supervisor  
Michael Dang, Management Analyst IV  
Brandon Gayton, Education Programs Professional  
Michael Gawthrop-Hutchins, Management Analyst III  
Jennifer Bauer, Administrative Services Officer

#### **AUDIENCE IN ATTENDANCE VIRTUALLY:**

Rodney Saunders  
Tiffany Bailey  
Jennifer Emling  
Ronald Fick  
Nathalie Burgess  
Ercan  
Lee Esplin  
Ralph Hartman  
Michael Pelham  
Matt Durham  
David Fossett  
Shannon Manning  
Jessica Scobell  
Lisa Satory  
Ben Salkowe  
Christina Threeton  
Rebecca Gonzalez  
Rami Hernandez  
Katie Krackhardt  
Kathy Rudd  
Cesar Tiu  
Ignacio Prado  
Travis Keys

**Agenda Item 1 – Call to Order and Roll Call, and Pledge of Allegiance [00:00:36]**

Melissa Mackedon, State Public Charter School Authority (SPCSA), Board Chair, called the meeting to order at 9:00am and facilitated the pledge of allegiance.

**Agenda Item 2 – Public Comment #1 [00:01:51]**

There was no public comment in the board room or online.

**Agenda Item 3 – Consent Agenda [00:02:08]**

- a. **Approval of November 5, 2021 Board Meeting Action Minutes. The Authority will review and possibly approve the board meeting action minutes from the November 5, 2021 Authority Board meeting.**
- b. **Doral Academy of Nevada – changes to mission and vision statements**
- c. **Coral Academy of Science Las Vegas – addition of dual credit**

*MOTION: Vice Chair Moulton made a motion to approve the consent agenda. Member Shauntee Rosales seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.*

**Agenda Item 4 – Executive Director’s Report [00:04:43]**

- b. **Overview of Organizational and Financial Performance Frameworks**

Member Mosca and Member Farris arrived at the meeting.

Mike Dang, Management Analyst IV, provided the overview of the SPCSA’s financial and organizational performance frameworks. He talked about what is expected of the charter schools in exchange for essentially the grants and other resources provided. These are set forth in the charter school agreement. One of the key principals in them is that they try to balance accountability and autonomy.

There are three core performance frameworks that the SPCSA uses: academic, financial, and organizational. The two they are focusing on today are the financial and organizational. For the financial, they are essentially asking whether the school is financially viable. For the organizational, they are looking at how well run and effective the organization is, and this includes making sure they are in compliance with laws and regulations and authority policy.

He spoke to the objectives and principles of the SPCSA financial framework. The framework looks at two categories with eight indicators on the school’s financial health and liability. When they review the school on the indicators, they come to one of the three outcomes: Meets Standard Rating, Does Not Meet Standard, Falls Far Below Standard.

Poor financial performance measures ratings may trigger a Notice of Concern or Notice of Breach. Continued or significant evidence of materially weak financial performance observed through ongoing/oversight, and/or failure to make substantial progress towards remedying previously-identified concerns may result in escalated intervention.

Lastly, regarding the financial framework, are the key milestones. Audits must be submitted to individual charter boards by November 1<sup>st</sup> and to the SPCSA, LCB, and NDE by December 1<sup>st</sup>. Preliminary ratings results are provided to schools on approximately December 17<sup>th</sup> and the final data and recommendations will be presented at the January 28<sup>th</sup> board meeting.

Mr. Dang moved to the organizational framework, which includes operations and compliance. He spoke to the objectives and principles of the SPCSA organizational framework. There are five areas of focus the SPCSA looks at and a number of measures within these and assign up to 20 points per category. For each of the five areas, they provide a rating of Meets Standards or Does Not Meet Standards.

He talked through the key milestones. Preliminary reports are provided to school leaders and board chairs on approximately December 17<sup>th</sup> and the final data will be presented to the Authority at the January 28<sup>th</sup> board meeting.

Occasionally, the routine performance framework process will result in adverse findings. Charter schools may fall out of compliance on important legal or contractual requirements. Academic standards may not be met. Financial sustainability may become an issue. When these situations occur, the Authority may respond with a Notice of Concern, Notice of Breach, or Notice of Intent to Revoke.

Vice Chair Moulton asked about the audits and if the charter schools conduct their own. Mr. Dang replied that they are performed pursuant to the audit guide provided and approved by the state and audit committee, with a list of approved auditors. This information is also on the SPCSA website. If a new auditing firm wants to perform the audit, they must submit and be approved by the audit committee.

**a. Initiatives Related to Serving All Students Equitably [00:19:56]**

Executive Director Feiden started with reiterating that they aim to bring their focus on schools item back in front of the board and are looking forward to hopefully early 2022 to have the opportunity to bring a school in front of the board to share some of their work on equity at the school level.

With regard to efforts this month, she highlighted a couple opportunities today where their focus on equity will be seen within the board meeting. First, they are talking about student graduation rates as well as student demographics and this first and foremost is an opportunity for them to understand their progress as they seek to realize their vision of equitable access. Additionally, there are several items on the agenda today related to lottery and enrollment, including two schools requesting to add weighted lotteries in an effort to be more representative of their communities. Keep in mind that that these two requests are in addition to the weighted lottery that the Coral Academy of Science Las Vegas network will be implementing for next year which was a condition of their expansion approved earlier this year. They've continued to make progress serving more representative student population and expect the implementation of these weighted lotteries will continue to contribute to that progress.

**Agenda Item 5 – SPCSA Charter School Governing Body Governance Standards [00:22:32]**

Chair Mackedon said this is a standing item they plan to have, and Vice Chair Moulton is going to highlight one of the SPCSA Charter School Governing Body Governance Standards today and next meeting will be Member Cyr.

Vice Chair Moulton said she took one of the bullet points from number 5: Proactively plan for the development of future leaders and for succession. She said a succession is important so you can be ready when things are changing. The second is how you do it. You put it into policy and review that policy. That goes for the administration of their schools but also their boards. Sometimes it is difficult to get board members and the best way to do this is to go into your networking circles, to know people and to expect people to help others that come along that chain of command. She reminded everyone that under number 5 to ensure strong leadership and effective partnerships that there should be a plan for succession. As far as their board, just keep in mind that they should always be looking with the end in mind and the end in mind is students.

**Agenda Item 6 – Information related to validated demographic enrollment data for SPCSA-sponsored charter schools for the 2021-2022 school year, including enrollment and student demographics. [00:25:12]**

Selcuk Ozdemir, Education Programs Supervisor, said today he and his colleague Brandon Gayton will be presenting the 2021 SPCSA enrollment data. He gave the outline of today's presentation before giving an overview of Annual Nevada Enrollment Data (Validation Day) collected by the Nevada Department of Education (NDE). Annually on October 1<sup>st</sup>, the NDE takes a snapshot of student enrollment across the state. These student-level enrollment data contain demographic information, including but not limited to race/ethnicity, free or reduced-price lunch (FRL) eligibility, whether the student has an individual education program (IEP), and English

Language Learner (ELL) status. Data are carefully validated by LEAs and charter schools. These enrollment data are used by the NDE, SPCSA, LEAs, charter schools, and other stakeholders for official federal and state reporting and funding.

Next, Dr. Ozdemir talked about the SPCSA enrollment highlights. First, the official SPCSA enrollment for the 2021-22 is 55,415 students and remains the third largest Local Education Agency (LEA) in Nevada. Close to 30% of SPCSA students are enrolled at Title I schools.

Year over year, the SPCSA enrollment rates increased for students identifying as Asian, Black/African American, Two or More Races, or Hispanic/Latino, increased for economically disadvantaged students (FRL), students with disabilities (IEP), and English Language Learners (ELLs) and decreased for students identifying as White. As the Authority knows, the SPCSA strives to serve a population representative of the state and the districts our schools serve.

The next slide displays the SPCSA's total enrollment count for the past 5 years. As previously mentioned, the SPCSA's total enrollment for the 2021-22 school year was 55,415 students. This is about a 4.1 percent increase from the previous year count which was 53,223. He talked the percentage changes from other years.

Moving to the 2021 SPCSA enrollment within the state. Being the third largest LEA, the SPCSA serves 11.2% of students across Nevada. It is behind Washoe County School District (13.5%) and Clark County School District (65%). The rest are represented as Other LEAs (10.1%). Dr. Ozdemir turned it over to Dr. Gayton to continue on the next slide.

Dr. Gayton said now that have discussed total enrollment for the SPCSA and how that fits into enrollment across Nevada, they will examine specific SPCSA student populations. The chart in the presentation displays a three-year trend from 2019-2021 for each of the 10 standard student groups including the 7 race/ethnicity categories, economically disadvantaged students or FRL eligible, students with disabilities, and English language learners. These are the 10 student groups typically reported in federal and state reporting. Under race/ethnicity, Asian, Black/African American and Hispanic/Latino enrollment rates have increased each of the last two years. The White enrollment rate has decreased under the last two years and other populations under race and ethnicity have remained relatively steady. Looking back even further, which they were unable to show due to lack of space, the Hispanic/Latino enrollment rate has increased each year since at least 2014, while the White rate has decreased. The FRL, IEP, and ELL populations have also increased each of the last two years and looking back even further the FRL rate has steadily increased from about 20% in 2015 to the current rate of 43.4%.

Following their look at SPCSA student groups, the next slide displayed a comparison for this year 2021 student group enrollment rates at the SPCSA versus the state. Compared to the state, the SPCSA enrolls proportionately more students identifying as Asian, White, Two or More Races, or Pacific Islander. In contrast, the SPCSA enrolls proportionately fewer Hispanic/Latino with the rate being over 8 points lower and American Indian/Alaskan Native students than the state. Black/African populations are about the same. The SPCSA enrolls proportionately fewer economically disadvantaged students or FRL, students with disabilities and English language learners than the state. Compared to last year, the gap between SPCSA and state FRL rates has increased, meaning the state FRL increased more than the SPCSA. For IEP and ELL, the gap between the SPCSA and the state has closed by about half a percentage point each. The SPCSA is making progress towards serving a population representative of the state due to recent initiatives and state legislation, student group enrollment rates at new SPCSA schools are more representative of the state, but the SPCSA does have a lot of work remaining.

The next slide is specifically focusing on additional student groups. The SPCSA enrolls proportionately fewer students that are in foster care or homeless than the state but enrolls proportionately more students that are military connected.

The next two slides compare SPCSA student group enrollment rates at SPCSA schools located in Clark County and Washoe County versus those local districts themselves. They show these comparisons because by NDE school code just over 90% of their schools are located in and serve students residing in Clark County and Washoe County school districts. The trends are similar to those when comparing the SPCSA to the state. The SPCSA schools located in Clark County serve proportionately more White students, and proportionately less Hispanic/Latino, FRL, IEP, and ELL students than the Clark County School District. The data is similar for Washoe County as well. SPCSA schools located in Washoe County enroll proportionately more White students and proportionately less Hispanic/Latino, FRL, IEP, and ELL students than the Washoe County School District.

The next slide shows the student group enrollment at their new schools that opened for the 2021-22 school year. These schools include CIVICA and TEACH Las Vegas. Owing to recent initiatives and state legislation that have resulted in more strategic authorizing, such as the incorporation of an Academic and Demographic Needs Assessment into authorizing decisions, there are some positive trends towards the SPCSA serving a population more representative of the state. For example, the Hispanic/Latino enrollment rate for the SPCSA as a whole, is almost 7 points below the state but the new SPCSA schools are serving proportionately more Hispanic/Latino students than the state. These schools also serve a larger population of Black/African American students than both the SPCSA and the state. When it comes to FRL, IEP, and ELL, for FRL CIVICA is at 71% and TEACH at almost 94%. CIVICA is a few points under the state but TEACH Las Vegas is above by 16 points. For English learners, the enrollment rates at new schools are 4 times the SPCSA EL enrollment rate and more than twice the state rate.

Finally, they highlighted their schools with large increases on their FRL, IEP, and ELL populations.

First, they discussed schools with FRL enrollment changes that are greater than or equal to 25%. Credit goes to the Coral Academy of Science Las Vegas (CASLV) network, 5 out of 6 of their schools had a 25% or greater FRL percent change. Other schools with significant gains included Signature Prep, the two Amplus campuses, the Elko Institute of Academic Achievement, and Imagine at Mountain View. Moving to schools with greater than or equal to 25% percent change in their students with disabilities enrollment rate, these include Leadership Academy, GALS, Equipo Academy and CASLV Windmill. Finally, schools with greater than or equal to 25% change in their ELL population include both Amplus campuses, Nevada Virtual Academy, multiple Doral campuses and multiple Somerset campuses and Pinecrest Horizon.

Of note, their annual SPCSA Academic Performance framework incentivizes enrollment of these populations by awarding bonus points to schools that have significant increases in these populations year over year.

There was conversation between the Authority and SPCSA staff regarding the FRL increases at schools and what factors attributed to this.

Member Cyr asked staff to look into how many students in the state are at Title I schools. She also asked if they could look at enrollment demographics for the Washoe County schools from 2019-21 and see how they adjusted.

**Agenda Item 7 – Information related to graduation rate for SPCSA-sponsored charter schools for the class of 2021, including data disaggregated by student group. [01:08:30]**

Dr. Ozdemir said he and his colleague Brandon Gayton will present the class of 2020-21 4-year graduation rate data. He noted that this data is for students that graduated in May or June of 2021. First, Dr. Ozdemir began by discussing the overview of the adjust cohort graduation rates (ACGR). For the class of 2020-21, the cohort entered 9<sup>th</sup> grade in the 2017-18 school year. He provided more details about the ACGRs they will be discussing today.

Moving to the next slide, Dr. Ozdemir spoke to the SPCSA 4-year graduation rate highlights. The 4-year graduation rate for the SPCSA class of 2020-21 was 86.8% – the second consecutive year the SPCSA has outperformed the state. The SPCSA graduation rate improved by 2.6 percentage points over last year, an increase

larger than all but four Nevada districts. When it comes to our schools, all schools except one outperform the state rate and 16 schools outperformed the state rate, with sixteen above 95%. Year over year, graduation rates increased for nine SPCSA student groups and twelve SPCSA student groups outperformed their state groups. Almost half of SPCSA graduates were awarded a more rigorous Advanced or College and Career Ready (CCR) diploma.

The next slides show the 4-year graduation rate trend for the SPCSA versus the state and then SPCSA versus school districts across Nevada. Aside from outperforming the state, the SPCSA also outperformed 10 Nevada districts including Clark, Washoe and Carson school districts but remains behind 7 other small districts. SPCSA is the largest district with the highest graduation rate.

Moving to SPCSA school performance, the next slide shows the class of 2020-21 4-year graduation rate for 24 SPCSA high schools. All of the schools outperform the state except for Beacon Academy which serves a unique population of unique students and 6 schools has 100% graduation rates.

The next slide displays year over year percentage points changes in graduation rates by SPCSA schools. 9 SPCSA schools were at or above the graduation rate from last year and the top 3 increases include Nevada Connections Academy, Nevada State High School – Downtown and SLAM. Though a number of schools declined, most changes were not drastic. Dr. Ozdemir turned it over to Dr. Gayton to talk about 4-year graduation rate trends.

Dr. Gayton began discussing the SPCSA graduation rates over the last 4 years by population. All student populations reflected on the slide improved over the last year except for students that identify as Two or More Races and Pacific Islander as well as students that are ELL. A few highlights here include students identifying as Hispanic/Latino improved by 3.7 points. American Indian/Alaskan Native improved by almost 25 points, economically disadvantaged or FRL improved by almost 4 points and Students with Disabilities or IEP improved by 6 points. Of note, the FRL population has increased by 13.4 points over the past two years. However, various populations still lag the overall SPCSA rate. Opportunities remain to improve outcomes for all students. They looked at SPCSA graduation rates for additional populations that the NDE collects.

The next slide looks at SPCSA student group graduation rates versus the state. All 10 standard federally reported student groups outperform the corresponding state group. They looked at SPCSA graduation rates versus the state for those additional populations that the NDE collects.

Vice Chair Moulton asked if the NDE looks at success of graduates as they move on to higher education. Dr. Gayton said they would need to investigate further.

Vice Chair Moulton asked about Equipo Academy and looking at their change in graduation rate and how it went down significantly and yet they have the highest rate of advanced or CCR diplomas. Executive Director Feiden noted that charter schools can require additional graduation rates beyond the state and some of their schools require above and beyond. As for the decline in graduation rate, there may have been some impacts statewide that the pandemic has had on students.

Member Holmes-Sutton asked about graduation goals they may have set previously and are meeting them. Executive Director said at the January meeting they will have the state of the SPCSA where they will look at all of these in the context of the strategic plan and goals they have set and can certainly do a comparison.

A 5-minute convenience break was taken.

#### **Agenda Item 8 – Charter School Contract Renewal Applications [01:48:56]**

Director Modrcin said this item consists of 5 renewal recommendations. He recapped the overview of the renewal process before moving to the first school.

**a. Nevada State High School – Flagship**

Director Modrcin said Nevada State High School Flagship (NSHS Flagship) has a contract that expires on June 30, 2022 and provided some highlights. Over the course of the current term, these campuses have been rated under the NSPF at the 5-star level. There are a number of campuses that have not been rated but those that have been, have been consistently at the 5-star level. Graduation rates have also been very high as heard today and is truly commendable.

Regarding organizational performance, staff has found the school to be consistently compliant. With regards to the financial performance, staff finds the school has history of clean audit findings and is in good standing at this time. Staff has conducted multiple site evaluations at the NSHS school campuses and overall the evaluations have reaffirmed high performance.

With that said, staff is confident with the recommendation to renew and believes the school will maintain strong performance including when the new campus (which would be the 8<sup>th</sup> campus for this contract) opens for the 2022-23 school year. They believe a 7-year term is warranted given the high performance.

NSHS school representative Dr. John Hawk said he is joined by NSHS Vice Chair Michael Pelham and introduced Jesse Welsh, their new Executive Officer. Mr. Welsh provided remarks.

There was further conversation between the Authority and the school regarding the school's recruitment efforts, staff diversity and persistence numbers.

***MOTION:** Vice Chair Moulton made the motion to Approve the NSHS – Flagship Renewal Application with a seven-year term beginning July 1, 2022 and the enrollment caps as outlined in the recommendation memo. Member Shantee Rosales seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.*

**b. Nevada State High School – Meadowwood [02:08:33]**

Director Modrcin provided the overview of the recommendation for the renewal of NSHS Meadowwood which is located in Reno. The current contract expires on June 30, 2022.

A couple of highlights regarding this campus, first, since it has opened it has not been rated under the NSPF but staff has conducted multiple site evaluations and feels confident that the network is performing at a high level. They see this reaffirmed best in the graduation data seen previously which are 100% for the past two years which is commendable.

Regarding the organizational performance, staff has found the school to be consistently compliant. With regard to financial performance, staff finds that the school has a history of clean audit findings and the school is meeting the standards at this time. Overall, staff is confident with the recommendation to renew and believes the school will maintain strong performance over the course of the new term and they believe a 7-year term is warranted given the high performance.

Chair Mackedon asked how the school has been affected since the state made it mandatory that all schools provide dual enrollment. Dr. Hawk replied that their school is different and how it's different is through a proven process, they give a real college experience. They are not just sending kids to college classes being taught by high school teachers, but it has opened up discussion for them in a good way.

***MOTION:** Member Shauntee Rosales made the motion to Approve the NSHS – Meadowwood Renewal Application with a seven-year term beginning July 1, 2022 and the enrollment caps as outlined above in the recommendation memo. Vice Chair Moulton seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.*

**c. Sports Leadership and Management Academy (SLAM) [02:13:27]**

Director Modrcin provided the recommendation overview for the renewal of SLAM. The school has a contract that expires on June 30, 2022 and operates out of one campus.

A couple of highlights, the school has consistently shown adequate performance according to the NSPF. The school has maintained a high graduation rate over the last two years as seen earlier today. The high school has not been formally rated but staff believes the graduation rate is an indicator of high performance.

Regarding organizational performance, staff has found the school to be consistently compliant. With regard to the financial performance, staff finds the school to have a history of clean audit findings and is meeting standards based upon available information. Staff have conducted multiple site evaluations at SLAM over the years and those have reaffirmed the strong performance. Overall, staff is confident with the recommendation to renew and believes the school will maintain strong performance over the course of the new term and staff is recommending a 6-year term as described in the memo.

SLAM school representative, Dan Triana, Principal, said he is joined by Jill Cribari, Elementary Principal, Matt Durnham, SLAM Board Chair, and Phil Bateman, Board Member. Mr. Triana provided remarks and there was brief discussion with the Authority regarding the school.

**MOTION:** *Vice Chair Moulton made the motion to Approve the SLAM Renewal Application with a six-year term beginning July 1, 2022 and the enrollment caps as outlined in the recommendation memo. Member Shauntee Rosales seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.*

**d. Legacy Traditional Schools [02:23:07]**

Director Modrcin provided the recommendation overview for the renewal of Legacy Traditional Schools. The school has a contract that expires on June 30, 2022 and operates out of three campuses in Las Vegas.

A couple of highlights, the school has exhibited mixed performance results according to the NSPF. The middle school ratings have generally been higher than the elementary school ratings across the network. Currently the North Valley and Cadence elementary campuses are operating under notices. Staff has conducted heightened oversight of these campuses in a number of ways to monitor the performance.

Regarding organizational performance, staff finds that the school is currently meeting the standards. With regard to financial performance, Legacy Traditional Schools earned a Meets the Standard rating under 6 indicators and 1 falls far below standards in the debt to asset ratio under the FY20 financial framework. The school was directed to develop a targeted remediation plan to address that performance under the indicator.

To summarize, staff grappled with this recommendation given the performance results spoken about, the network has exhibited the ability to meet state academic standards at the middle school level but is below performance standards at the elementary level. They also have 1 campus that has been open for 3 years and has yet to be rated under the NSPF. Given the mixed performance, staff feel a 4-year renewal term is appropriate.

Ralph Hartman, Board Member of Legacy Traditional Schools, said he is joined by Jennifer Emling and Nathalie Burgess. He turned it over to them to provide the academic update during the current charter and their vision for their next 4 years.

There was further discussion regarding the school's staff diversity and where students go for high school.

**MOTION:** *Vice Chair Moulton made the motion to Approve the Legacy Traditional Schools – Nevada Renewal Application with a four-year term beginning July 1, 2022 and the enrollment caps as outlined in the recommendation memo. Additionally, direct SPCSA staff to continue heightened oversight, such as those activities*



*referenced within this memo, over the network, specifically those campuses with active notices. Finally, in the event of continued academic underperformance the Authority may impose additional oversight. Member Shauntee Rosales seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.*

**e. Somerset Academy of Las Vegas [02:36:45]**

Director Modrcin provided the recommendation overview for the renewal of Somerset Academy of Las Vegas. The school has a contract that expires on June 30, 2022 and operates out of seven campuses in Las Vegas.

Somerset Academy of Las Vegas has exhibited mixed performance results according to the NSPF. The school has performance levels that vary across the 7 campuses. The middle school performance levels have generally been higher than elementary across the network. Currently there are multiple active notices within the Somerset network, these include Notices of Concern at the Aliante elementary school, the Losee elementary and Losee middle school, and the North Las Vegas school is currently operating under a Notice of Breach. The performance is concerning to staff particularly at the elementary level and staff has conducted heightened oversight at these campuses.

Regarding the organization performance, staff finds that the school is consistently compliant. With regard to financial performance, they earned a Meets the Standard rating and has a history of clean audit findings. To summarize, staff has engaged in multiple conversations internally regarding this recommendation, the network has exhibited the ability to meet and exceed state academic performance standards at a number of campuses and exhibits strong organizational and financial performance but is below performance standards at a couple of campuses and does have active Notices. Staff believes renewal is warranted but only for a 4-year term.

John Bentham, Board Chair for Somerset Academy of Las Vegas, provided brief remarks. The school is celebrating their 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary this year. Their educational committee has been working extremely hard to address all concerns and deficiencies. Lee Esplin, Principal, Somerset Academy of Las Vegas, provided brief remarks.

There was further discussion regarding the school's plans on how to increase the FRL number across campuses.

**MOTION:** *Vice Chair Moulton made the motion to Approve the Somerset Academy of Las Vegas Renewal Application with a four-year term beginning July 1, 2022 and the enrollment caps as outlined in the recommendation memo. Additionally, direct SPCSA staff to continue heightened oversight, such as those activities referenced within this memo, over the network, specifically those campuses with active notices. Finally, in the event of continued academic underperformance the Authority may impose additional oversight. Member Shauntee Rosales seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.*

**Agenda Item 9 – Charter School Contract Amendment Applications. [02:49:26]**

Chair Mackedon said items 9a and 9b will be combined but the motion will remain separate.

*Member Mosca recused herself from the agenda items.*

- a. Equipo Academy** – change in lottery preferences and consideration of articulation agreement with Futuro Academy
- b. Futuro Academy** – change in lottery preferences and consideration of articulation agreement with Equipo Academy [00:00:00]

Director Modrcin said these are recommendations regarding amendment submissions from Equipo Academy and Futuro Academy. Equipo Academy currently operates one 6-12 campus in East Las Vegas and Futuro Academy also currently operates one K-5 campus in East Las Vegas.

The schools have submitted good cause exemptions to consider their proposals to adopt lottery policies that create enrollment preferences for students that are enrolled at the other school with which they have proposed to enter into an articulation agreement pursuant to NRS 388.456(1)(d). The schools are seeking approval of those

preferences in the articulation agreement prior to their upcoming application and enrollment period so that it can be in effect by the 2022-23 school year. After thorough review, staff is recommending the Authority grant the good cause exemption requests and approve the request for the schools to enter into an articulation agreement with one another. The schools are seeking this change to essentially create priority enrollment for students seeking to matriculate from 5<sup>th</sup> grade at Futuro Academy into 6<sup>th</sup> grade at Equipo Academy and to establish reciprocal priority enrollment for siblings enrolled at either campus and children of staff or board members at either campus. Overall, staff finds the proposed agreement mutually beneficial to the schools. The schools are one mile apart, so this can offer enrollment preferences to families to help ensure that those students have access to high quality schools of choice that share various similarities including a college preparatory environment. As such, staff recommends approval of these requests.

Ignacio Prado, Executive Director, Futuro Academy, provided brief remarks regarding the amendment request.

Equipo Academy Motion:

**MOTION:** *Vice Chair Moulton made the motion to Grant the Good Cause Exemption request and approve Equipo Academy to adopt modified enrollment preferences and to enter into an articulation agreement with Futuro Academy as permitted under NRS 388A.456(1)(d) on the condition that the school provides the SPCSA with a fully-executed copy of the articulation agreement with Futuro Academy. Member Shauntee Rosales seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.*

Futuro Academy Motion:

**MOTION:** *Vice Chair Moulton made the motion to Grant the Good Cause Exemption request and approve Futuro Academy to adopt modified enrollment preferences and to enter into an articulation agreement with Equipo Academy as permitted under NRS 388A.456(1)(d) on the condition that the school provides the SPCSA with a fully-executed copy of the articulation agreement with Equipo Academy. Member Shauntee Rosales seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.*

**c. Pinecrest Academy of Nevada** – change in lottery procedures including addition of weighted lottery  
[03:00:12]

Director Modrcin said this is a recommendation regarding a portion of the amendment submission from Pinecrest Academy of Nevada. The network operates 5 campuses in the Las Vegas Metropolitan area and is proposing to implement a weighted lottery across the network's campuses in preparation for the 2022-23 school year. The submitted policy was approved by the Pinecrest board in July in an effort to ensure the student population of the network would more closely resemble the community where the schools are located. The proposed policy will provide a weighted preference of 5 in its enrollment lotteries to students who qualify for free and reduced price lunch services and will take place only if it is determined that the percentage of students at the Pinecrest campus who qualify for free and reduced price lunch is less than 90% of the percentage of students eligible for free and reduced price lunch services in the Clark County School District.

Overall, staff finds this portion of the amendment application to be in alignment with the spirit of the Academic and Demographic Needs Assessment as well as the SPCSA's Strategic Plan. As such, staff is recommending approval of this request.

One last note in the executive summary in the amendment submission, the school submitted a request to expand enrollment in existing grades and facilities as well as implement a blended learning program. Staff is continuing to review those requests and they plan to bring forth recommendations at the January 28<sup>th</sup> meeting and staff may request additional information from the network in the interim.

**MOTION:** *Vice Chair Moulton made the motion to Approve the portion of the Pinecrest Amendment request to adopt a weighted lottery policy for the upcoming student application and enrollment period for the 2022 – 23 school year. Member Mosca seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.*

**d. Founders Classical Academy – change in lottery procedures including addition of weighted lottery**  
[03:04:50]

Director Modrcin said Founder’s Classical Academy currently operates one campus in the Las Vegas area. The school has submitted an amendment application to implement a weighted lottery for student applications for the 2022-23 school year. The submitted policy was approved by the Founders Classical board on November 24, 2021. The application outline that the school seeks this approval to implement the weighted lottery to address enrollment diversity and equity in important demographic subgroups, students with disabilities and students qualifying for free and reduced priced lunch. The school’s weighted lottery policy will provide a preference of 3 for students qualifying for free or reduced priced lunch and a weight of 4 for students with disabilities and will take place only if it is determined that the percentage of students who qualify for free and reduced-price lunch or students with disabilities is less than 90% of the percentage of students eligible for free and reduced-price lunch services in the SPCSA. Students qualifying in both categories would not have a combined weight they would choose one or the other.

Overall, staff finds this portion of the amendment application to be in alignment with the spirit of the Academic and Demographic Needs Assessment as well as the SPCSA’s Strategic Plan. As such, staff is recommending approval of this request.

Member Moulton asked about the school’s current demographics and what they will do to promote the lottery.

Member Cyr asked, with regard to thinking about how the school will recruit for their lottery, how are they also promoting and understanding to those that are looking to apply to what that commitment is and what sets the school apart. On the school’s website it shares about the requirements of the educators being a bit different than traditional schools, having training in the disciplines and not just the education, are they able to meet the requirement that they are setting forth as far as what they want in a classical educator with their recruitment or staffing policies or are they seeing a desire of educators to come to your school specifically because it is a classical school?

Rami Hernandez, Founders Classical Academy Board Chair, shared some remarks. Jeremy Christensen, Executive Director of Founders Classical Academy, was having technical issues and therefore was not able to provide a response.

**MOTION:** *Vice Chair Moulton made the motion to Grant FCALV a Good Cause Exemption Request and approve the amendment request to adopt a weighted lottery policy for the upcoming student application and enrollment period for the 2022 – 23 school year. Member Shauntee Rosales seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.*

**Agenda Item 10 – SPCSA Revolving Loan Application submitted by Battle Born Academy** [03:19:06]

Michael Gawthrop-Hutchins, Management Analyst III, provided the overview of the SPCSA revolving loan application submitted by Battle Born Academy. Staff reviewed the application to ensure alignment with at least one of the statutory purposes and that there was a strong plan in place for management and repayment of funds should the loan be awarded.

the loan be awarded. Overall, SPCSA staff finds the Battle Born Academy’s Revolving Loan application to be complete. The school has a strong plan for repayment of the loan and presents a need for additional start-up cash.

For these reasons, SPCSA staff recommends approval of the Battle Born Academy Revolving Loan application for \$124,000. SPCSA staff note that no funds will be released until after SPCSA conducts an enrollment audit and verifies the enrollment supports the requested loan amount. SPCSA staff will work with the school to schedule an enrollment audit at an appropriate time.

Director Modrcin added that this is now a two step approval process so if this is approved here today it will be put on a future IFC agenda, they anticipate February or March. One approved they will work with the school to schedule the audit.

**MOTION:** *Member Mosca made the motion to Approve the Revolving Loan Fund Application for \$124,000 for the Battle Born Academy according to the repayment terms described in this memo. Vice Chair Moulton seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.*

**Agenda Item 11 – COVID-19 Update and Plan for the Safe Return to In-Person Instruction [03:26:03]**

Executive Director Feiden said as a reminder, the American Rescue Plan Act of 2021 (ARP) was signed into law on March 11, 2021 and includes numerous provisions aimed at responding to the COVID-19 pandemic and providing relief to address its impacts. Among these provisions is the allocation of \$122 billion to the ARP Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief (ARP ESSER) Fund to be used to “help safely reopen and sustain the safe operation of schools and address the impact of the coronavirus pandemic on the Nation’s students.” As a condition of receiving funding, each Local Education Agency (LEA) must, within 30 days of receiving the ARP ESSER allocation, develop and post a plan for the “safe return of in-person instruction and continuity of services.” The LEA is also required to seek public comment on the plan and take any comments into account in the development of the plan.

This document, along with the individual charter school re-opening plans which are included in the Appendix A, can be found on the State Public Charter School Authority website, meet the requirements for the Plan for the Safe Return to In-Person Instruction under Section 2001(i) of the American Rescue Plan.

Pursuant to federal and state guidance, the State Public Charter School Authority reviews and updates this plan, with input and feedback from the public, at least every six months. Today an updated version of the plan has been provided with highlighted changes. She summarized the changes, which primarily serve to bring this plan up to date with current directives and also responds to the feedback provided from the Nevada Department of Education in their review of our initial plan.

Vice Chair asked about who pays for the testing. Executive Director Feiden said they have been working with DHHS to have them actually make the purchases on our behalf. They also have a testing option that she believes is paid for by the federal government.

There was further discussion regarding the COVID-19 update and Plan for the Safe Return to In-Person Instruction.

**MOTION:** *Vice Chair Moulton moved to approve the updated Plan for the Safe Return to In-Person Instruction. Member Shauntee Rosales seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.*

**Agenda Item 13 – 2022 Academic and Demographic Needs Assessment [03:35:15]**

Executive Director Feiden began with some background and context. Statute requires that updates be made before January 31 of each year, and so staff is preparing for their annual review and the Authority will consider this at their January meeting. She talked about the current needs assessment and the current needs outlined therein. Staff continues to gather input from their community working group and other school districts and NDE.

Member Cyr said some things have come to mind in the review of past applicants, one came to mind was the idea of zip codes that do not have an existing school of choice. The next was transportation and how it is another way to impact the demographics of their schools and meeting the needs, she doesn’t know if it’s a matter of saying providing a transportation plan could assist or add a point in the evaluation, something along the lines of promoting that. The third one is if there was a tie potentially to a direct employer or partnership, in thinking of

how their schools need to move the needle for the state and bringing economic diversity. There was further discussion between the Authority regarding Member Cyr's comments.

Member Farris said nothing in their needs assessment contemplates about overcrowding of schools and if they can incorporate some level of overcrowding that might be an indicator or future problems. There was further conversation between the Authority and staff regarding overcrowding.

**Agenda Item 12 – Granting Monitoring [00:00:00]**

Executive Director Feiden said the next presentation will provide an overview of the SPCSA's grant monitoring approach and Jennifer Bauer their Finance and Operations Director will be co-presenting.

While the Charter Authority has been conducting grant monitoring since they've existed, over the last two years they've really worked to make their grant monitoring more intentional and cohesive and more importantly that they meet every one of the federal requirements and there are no holes when they get audited as part of the state's audit. She provided some further context.

Ms. Bauer briefly provided the overview. The SPCSA, as the LEA agency and pass-through entity for their charter schools. The list grants administered by the SPCSA can be found in the supporting materials. The responsibilities included ensuring grant subawards are clear identified, evaluating the risk of noncompliance, monitoring of their schools, ensuring schools are audited, and taking enforcement action when necessary. She then gave an overview of the next slide which shows the annual grant cycle.

Executive Director Feiden dove into the specifics of monitoring. The SPCSA conducts risk-based monitoring, this type of monitoring is required by federal laws. She talked about why the SPCSA monitors their schools and there are really three reasons. The first is for student services and wellbeing. Second, for sound financial stewardship, and third, for legal compliance.

Ms. Bauer said they have really started focusing on enhancing their risk-based monitoring protocols. When staff does risk based monitoring they are required to conduct monitoring off of the risk that they assess each of their subrecipient charter schools. The risk assessment determines the likelihood of noncompliance with grant requirements and they've performed that risk assessment per year and their goal is to do that between August and September and by the end of September or beginning of October have the letter to the school at the school level to inform of what the monitoring will look like based off the risk assessment (low, moderate, high). Based on the risk level, there is ongoing monitoring in the form of desktop monitoring. Moderate and high-risk schools will receive additional monitoring and high risk receive onsite monitoring. Onsite visits will be required at least once every three years for low and moderate risk schools which is done by a random selection. The reports are completed after the visit and to wrap up the year of monitoring (usually in May or June), staff will look at the results of monitoring and visits and evaluate and submit the reports to the school and decipher which are necessary for corrective action and we work with the school through a notice all the way through resolution.

Ms. Bauer dove into the risk assessment indicators and monitoring activities. Executive Director Feiden wrapped up with talking through the monitoring outcomes and the relationship to the organizational performance.

**Agenda Item 14 – Long-Range Calendar. [04:55:35]**

Executive Director Feiden said January is shaping up to be a lengthy meeting. They will be looking at financial and organizational framework ratings as well as the charter resubmissions, contract amendments relating to expansion, the updated Needs Assessment reference today and the Annual Report to NDE. They will also have some informational items such as updates from new schools. She noted their regulations are set to be heard by the legislative commission on the December 21<sup>st</sup> and they expect to share an update on that and the interim legislative session.

**Agenda Item 15 – Public Comment #2 [04:58:07]**  
There was no public comment.

**Agenda Item 16 – Adjournment [04:58:30]**  
The meeting was adjourned at 1:58pm.

# State Public Charter School Authority

## December 3, 2021 Board Meeting

### Las Vegas

Name	Representing	Agenda Item #
John Hawk	Nevada State HS	#8
Jesse Welsh	NSHS	#8
Jill Cribari	SLAM	8
Dan Francis	SLAM OK	#8