

## Girls Athletic Leadership School Las Vegas



### Addendum to Charter Application, prepared August 7th, 2019

(3) The SPCSA has defined demographic and academic needs as follows:

**Demographics:** Applicants meeting this need will propose a school model that includes demonstrated capacity, credible plans, and thorough research and analysis in order to intentionally serve the following student populations, each of which has been identified as persistently underperforming based on data provided by the Nevada Department of Education: Students qualifying for free or reduced-price lunch, English Learners, and students with IEPs. Successful applicants will demonstrate the capacity to support these student populations in achieving academic performance at or above the state average.

**Academic Needs: Geographies with 1 and 2 Star Schools:** Applicants meeting this need will seek to provide access to 3, 4 and 5-Star schools in zip codes where students are attending a 1- or 2-Star school. A map and list of zip codes will be provided; SPCSA public charter schools will be removed from the data set used to identify zip codes.

**Academic Need: Students at Risk of Dropping out of School:** Applicants meeting this need will propose a public charter school model that includes demonstrated capacity, credible plans, and thorough research and analysis in order to prevent at-risk students from dropping out of school. Models may include but are not limited to programs designed for populations most at-risk of dropping out or programs aimed at enabling credit-deficient students to get back on track to graduate. Applicants should demonstrate a strong understanding of grade-level appropriate indicators for successful high school completion, such as early literacy, attendance, and credit sufficiency and plans to enable students to successfully meet these milestones.

Given the above definitions, please describe how your proposed school would meet one or more of the needs defined in the Academic and Demographic Needs Assessment. Note that the SPCSA will evaluate charter applications based upon both the public charter school application rubric and the proposed school's plans to meet statewide academic and demographic needs found within the Needs Assessment. More information can be found within the Needs Assessment, which can be found [here](#).

GALS Las Vegas will address all three areas of need as follows:

1) Academic Needs: Geographies with 1 and 2 star schools.

GALS Las Vegas mission is to provide high quality education as measured by 4 and 5 stars in a supportive environment that fosters the academic mastery and personal development necessary for every girl to become a powerful advocate for herself and a leader of her community. GALS Las Vegas aims to achieve 10% or higher academic growth year over year to achieve that goal. GALS Las Vegas has identified a temporary location at the Gaughn Boys and Girls Club in the 89119 zip code and is searching for a permanent location within that zip code and neighboring areas in the 89104, 89102, 89107, 89101, 89169, 89120, and 89109 zip codes. This area has the following 1 and 2 star middle schools.

School name	Zip Code	Rating
Cashman	89102	2
Martin	89101	2
Fremont	89104	2
Orr	89119 (and serves 89169 and 89019)	1
Cannon	89120	2
Woodbury	89121	2
Garside	89107	2

## 2) Demographics.

The proposed geographic area for GALS Las Vegas noted in 1) above includes the following demographics:

School Name	FRL:	IEP:	ELL:
Cashman	78%	10%	26%
Martin	83%	10%	26%
Fremont	100%	11%	28%
Orr	100%	12%	28%
Cannon	84%	13%	25%
Woodbury	83%	16%	23%
Garside	86%	15%	27%

GALS Las Vegas will implement the following preferences to applicants based on NRS 388A.486 (g and h) as follows:

g) At the time his or her application is submitted, is enrolled in a public school that received an annual rating established as one of the two lowest ratings possible indicating underperformance of a public school, as determined by the Department pursuant to the statewide system of accountability for public schools for the immediately preceding school year. If a charter school enrolls pupils who are enrolled in such a public school before enrolling other pupils who are eligible for enrollment, the charter school must enroll such pupils who reside within 2 miles of the charter school before enrolling other such pupils.

(h) Resides within the school district and within 2 miles of the charter school if the charter school is located in an area that the sponsor of the charter school determines includes a high percentage of children who are at risk. If space is available after the charter school enrolls pupils pursuant to this paragraph, the charter school may enroll children who reside outside the school district but within 2 miles of the charter school if the charter school is located within an area that the sponsor determines includes a high percentage of children who are at risk.

With this in place, GALS Las Vegas assumes the schools' population will reflect that of neighboring district schools and GALS Las Vegas will serve a high need demographic consisting of upwards of 80% FRL students, 12% IEP students and 25% ELL students. The GALS model is well suited to serve this demographic.

The GALS Denver school has over 10 years of experience implementing the model. Their school demographic is 49% FRL students, 50% students of color, 17% ELL students and 10% Special Education. In this context, GALS Denver places 2<sup>nd</sup> of all Denver Public Schools for Language Arts growth and outperforms the district in Math growth. The school demonstrates strong growth and proficiency scores that outperform Denver Public School averages year after year. Additionally, GALS Denver student survey results indicate that:

- 87% Think they are smart
- 87% Agree that morning movement at GALS improves their ability to focus and learn
- 95% Believe they will graduate from high school
- 99% Believe they will go to college

These responses indicate a high level of self-efficacy for GALS Denver students, based on positive thoughts and beliefs. Persons with high self-efficacy have a strong sense of confidence in their ability to take on and complete challenging tasks, are committed to goals despite setbacks, more readily explore new or creative environments.

GALS Las Vegas leverages GALS Denver and the network's experience to provide a small community school learning environment tailored to best serve the needs of middle school girls. We believe that all students can and will meet and/or exceed Nevada Common Core State Standards (CCSS) for math, English Language Arts and Science, regardless of their background or circumstances. Several key strategies will be implemented at GALS that are well suited to serve the demographic while achieving steady academic growth.

- a) Single gender school environment that places student safety and a tailored approach to best serve the needs of girls. The National Coalition of Girls Schools finds that girls thrive in environments where their learning preferences take the forefront.<sup>1</sup> A study by Valerie Lee and Anthony Bryk found that girls' schools are beneficial in a variety of ways: whether considering academic achievement, future educational plans, affective measures of locus of control or self-image, sex role stereotyping, or attitudes and behaviors related to academics, single-gender schools appear to deliver specific advantages to their students; the results are particularly strong for girls' schools.<sup>2</sup> Dr. Cornelius Riordan, an educational researcher and professor of

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<sup>1</sup> The National Coalition of Girls Schools. [www.ncgs.org](http://www.ncgs.org) 2008.

<sup>2</sup> Valerie E. Lee and Anthony S. Bryk, "Effects of Single-gender Secondary Schools on Student Achievement and Attitudes". *Journal of Educational Psychology*. October 1986. p. 381-395

sociology at Providence College, found that the performance of minority students in single-gender schools is stronger on all tests, on average, almost one academic year above that of their peers in coeducational settings.<sup>3</sup> Further research indicates the unique ability of all-girls settings to identify how girls learn and succeed and, as a result, provide “a certain comfort level that helps them develop greater self-confidence and broader interests, especially as they approach adolescence.”<sup>4</sup>

- b) “Whole child” approach that integrates health and wellness into the academic curriculum to provide for the physical, emotional and psychosocial needs of female adolescents;
- c) Project-based learning for students to *do* and *experience*. The GALS daily schedule provides for project based learning during Science/Social Science extended block. While projects will stem from themes in science and social science, literacy skills, writing, math and the arts will all be integrated. Teachers in the project-based learning block will be able to frontload key vocabulary and concepts and engage in multiple modes of instruction within one class period, therefore meeting the needs of diverse learners. Project-based learning also naturally allows for multiple modes of input and output, providing students with real-world applications and built-in visuals and realities to contextualize new learning. Students experience making choices, social interactions, collaboration and cooperation with this learning approach.
- d) Active or movement pedagogy that engages mind and body simultaneously. GALS begins each day with Morning Movement to awaken the brain for learning. Following this, teachers keep the brain engaged by instructing and reviewing content through movement, using brain breaks and movement-based classroom practices to help students retain focus and optimize their learning potential. Neuroscientist, Dr. John Ratey<sup>5</sup>, has studied the benefits of activity to the brain for decades and provides evidence that incorporating movement within the first two hours of a student’s day boosts cognitive performance best.
- e) The GALS Series teaches girls to be personally responsible and aware/involved in their community and world. GALS teaches practices in the areas of healthy relationships, positive self-image, making healthy choices, and critical life skills. The girls will understand the traits and characteristics of strong leaders and how to be a strong leader for their community.
- f) Data driven instruction to tailor instruction to meet individual needs of each student. Regular assessments will be used to identify skill-specific academic needs. Direct instruction particularly in phonics, reading fluency, reading comprehension, sentence structure, grammar, and arithmetic are examples of skill areas that will be introduced and reinforced explicitly by teachers working with students individually, in small groups, and as a whole class.
- g) Setting learning targets and engaging in monthly reviews and planning sessions based on assessment data;
- h) Using Interventions to address underperforming students with small skill-driven studies to improve a student’s proficiency. At GALS Denver and Las Angeles campuses these tools have proven effective.

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<sup>3</sup> Cornelius Riordan, *Girls and Boys in School: Together of Separate* (New York: Teachers College Press, 1990). See, also, Cornelius Riordan, “Single-Gender Schools: Outcomes for African and Hispanic Americans,” *Research in Sociology of Education and Socialization* (Vol. 18, 1994), 177---205.

<sup>4</sup> Dr. Rosemary Salomone. *Same, Different, Equal: Rethinking Single-gender Schooling*. 2005.

<sup>5</sup> [http://www.mdc.edu/main/images/exercise\\_seen\\_as\\_priming\\_pump\\_for\\_students\\_tcm6-22258.pdf](http://www.mdc.edu/main/images/exercise_seen_as_priming_pump_for_students_tcm6-22258.pdf)

- i) Forming a Student Success Team (SST) to develop an action plan with the student, parent and teacher(s) to maximize success both at school and at home.
- j) Response to Intervention (RTI) model that incorporates behavioral/emotional assessments to determine a response in order to maximize student classroom time, while being responsive to students needs. This process includes a way to assess student behavior and determine whether it requires immediate attention in the “reset” room, counseling or discipline. GALS belief is that not all outlier behavior should be funneled into behavior which could quickly result in unnecessary administrative decisions that often lead to more time out of the classroom, suspension or expulsion. As educators, our job is to assess and help to resolve the root of the conflict and not just the outcomes.
- k) Progressive discipline based on restorative justice whereby the offender takes responsibility for the harm done and making things as right as possible for all those impacted – an approach that teaches skills for problem solving, conflict resolution, self-discipline, and personal and communal responsibility.
- l) Wellness Teams and Coaches compete against one another to win points for positive impacts to school culture – e.g. fewest number of tardies, fewest absences, etc. The winning teams are celebrated during weekly Community Meeting and publicly recognized.
- m) Specialized instruction for language development for ELL students.

Based on GALS experience in Denver and Las Angeles working with students of a similar demographic and applying the GALS education model, GALS Las Vegas projects a 10% annual academic growth rate and aims to achieve a 4 to 5 star rating within about six years of operation.

### 3) Academic Need: Students at Risk of Dropping out of School

As stated in the Needs Assessment, minority students, special student populations and economically disadvantaged students have higher drop out rates than their peers. This is further defined to include students in ELL, IEP, FRL programs as well as all minority racial groups.

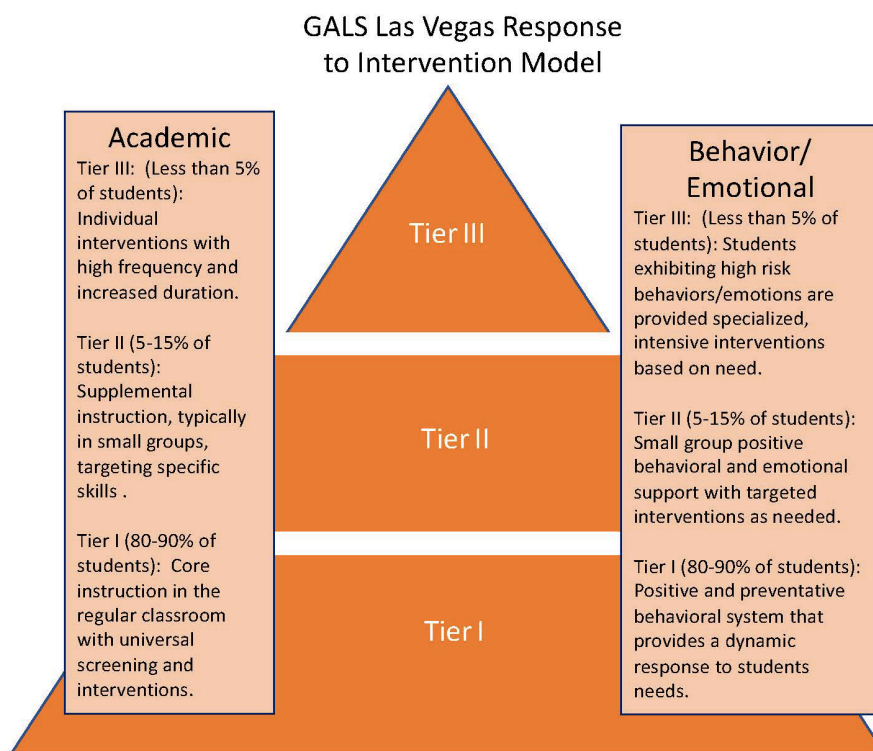
NRS 388A.045 defines this as “a pupil is “at risk” if the pupil has an economic or academic disadvantage such that he or she requires special services and assistance to enable him or her to succeed in educational programs. The term includes, without limitation, pupils who are members of economically disadvantaged families, pupils who are English learners, pupils who are at risk of dropping out of high school and pupils who do not meet minimum standards of academic proficiency. The term does not include a pupil with a disability.”

The target geographic area for GALS Las Vegas includes all of these elements of an “at risk” student population. Specifically, the response to 2) above addresses that GALS will serve a high ratio of ELL, IEP and FRL students. Additionally, the geographic area GALS is targeting as described in response 1) above is economically disadvantaged whereby 20-40% of the population falls below the Federal Poverty Level (FPL). Furthermore, GALS anticipates serving a high minority population as described from the surrounding schools below:

Demographic data as reported by the Nevada Department of Education (values are % of students)										
	Student enrolled	Am Indian/AK Native	Asian	Black	Hispanic	White	Pacific Islander	Two or more races	Male	Female
Cashman	1,546	–	8.93	10.61	60.74	13.07	–	4.27	55.3	44.7
Martin	1,513	–	3.44	7.73	77.92	7.87	–	2.05	46.86	53.04
Fremont	799	–	3.8	14.64	70.34	7.01	–	2.38	52.57	47.43
Orr	1,000	–	8.60	18.21	58.55	8.94	1.12	4.13	52.29	47.71
Cannon	995	–	2.71	9.81	66.74	15.45	–	3.61	55.58	44.42
Woodbury	851	–	2.7	9.75	64.86	15.75	–	4.82	53.82	46.18
Garside	1,208	–	.02	14.20	67.88	8.07	1.2	4.30	45.11	54.89

In addition to the educational strategies articulated in 2) above which will well serve the target population, GALS specifically provides for ‘at risk’ students through the use of a Response to

Intervention (RTI) model that address both the academic and behavior/emotional problems:



Once a student is identified as Tier II or III through observation and a review of classroom-based assessment and standardized achievement data, teachers develop specific accommodations, modifications, and interventions to support the student, including additional curriculum support. GALS has developed specific academic interventions that have proven to be effective in the GALS Denver and Las Angeles schools and has a robust counseling program, school wellness culture promoted through Wellness Teams and Coaches, a Somatic Toolkit and GALS Series classes to develop personal responsibility, positive self-image and life skills.

In summary, GALS Las Vegas addresses Nevada's educational needs by providing a high-quality school choice in an area of high need.