



STATE PUBLIC CHARTER SCHOOL AUTHORITY

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BRIEFING MEMORANDUM

TO: SPCSA Board
FROM: Mark Modrcin, Director of Authorizing
SUBJECT: Doral Academy of Nevada - Charter Renewal Request
DATE: November 2, 2018

1. Background

Doral Academy has submitted a request to renew its charter contract as the current charter contract for Doral Academy of Nevada expires on June 30, 2019. Doral Academy of Nevada currently operates five campuses:

- Doral Academy – Cactus Campus, which opened in 2012
- Doral Academy – Fire Mesa Campus, which opened in 2015
- Doral Academy – Pebble Campus, which opened in 2017
- Doral Academy – Red Rock Campus, which opened in 2016
- Doral Academy – Saddle Campus, which opened in 2012

After a thorough review of the historical data and charter renewal application, staff strongly recommends that the Authority approve the charter renewal of Doral Academy of Nevada for a six-year term, beginning July 1, 2019.

2. The Process Related to Renewal Applications and the Standards Under Which an Application for Renewal of a Charter Contract Will Be Granted

The first step in the renewal process is the submission by the SPCSA of a renewal report to the charter school.¹ Specifically, on or before June 30 immediately preceding the final school year prior to expiration of a charter school's charter contract, the SPCSA submits to the governing body a report regarding renewal. This document can be found within the supporting documentation for the item.

¹ Both charter school regulations and the Authority's Performance Framework provides for an expedited and streamlined renewal process for high-performing charter schools. Generally, charter schools qualifying for expedited renewal review are those charter schools that are consistently rated as four-and five-star schools under the NSPF and have received no notices of concern or notices of breach for academic, organizational or financial performance. See R089-16A(10)(2), and the Authority's Charter School Performance Framework, at page 7.

The renewal report summarizes the performance of the charter school under the terms of the charter contract, identifies any deficiencies related to performance of the charter school that might lead to non-renewal of the charter contract, sets forth the requirements for the renewal application, and identifies the criteria that the sponsor will apply in making a determination on the application for renewal. The charter school may submit a response to the renewal report. [See NRS 388A.285\(1\) and \(2\).](#)

Next, the governing body of the charter school must submit a written notice of intent to submit an application for renewal to the SPCSA 45 days prior to submitting a renewal application. See [R089-16A\(10\)\(1\)](#).

In regard to the renewal application, the window to submit the actual renewal application is October 1 through October 15. See [NRS 388A.285\(3\)](#) and [R089-16A\(10\)\(1\)](#). The application for renewal must include, without limitation:

- (a) The requirements for the application identified by the sponsor in the performance report prepared by the sponsor;
- (b) A description of the academic, financial and organizational vision and plans for the charter school for the next charter term;
- (c) Any information or data that the governing body of the charter school determines supports the renewal of the charter contract in addition to the information contained in the performance report prepared by the sponsor and any response submitted by the governing body; and
- (d) A description of any improvements to the charter school already undertaken or planned.

See [NRS 388A.285\(3\)](#).

Decisions to renew a charter school contract or deny a renewal application are made and based upon the [SPCSA's Charter School Performance Framework](#) and Nevada's charter school statutes and regulations related to charter school renewal. See [NRS 388A.285](#), and R089-16A. As stated in the SPCSA's Charter School Performance Framework, "merit-based" charter renewal decisions will be made "in accordance with statute and regulation and based on longitudinal information over a school's charter term." See Charter School Performance Framework, at 7.

The SPCSA's Charter School Performance Framework makes clear that charter school renewal applications are based on the charter school's academic, financial and organizational performance, and the expectation is that charter schools seeking renewal will be rated under the NSPF as a three-star school or above. See Charter School Performance Framework, at page 7. Note that no factor may be given more weight than the academic performance of pupils at the charter school, and the academic performance of the charter school is the touchstone of any renewal decision. See [R089-16A\(10\)\(10\)](#).

In making its recommendation to the Authority regarding a renewal application, SPCSA staff considers the past performance of the charter school, including information contained in the application for renewal, any optional site visits, academic achievement of pupils, and any other information that is determined to be relevant to whether the charter contract should be renewed. See [R089-16A\(10\)\(6\)](#).

When determining whether to grant an application for renewal of a charter contract, the Authority Board considers the foregoing factors, any other information that the Authority Board determines is relevant to whether the charter contract should be renewed. The Authority Board will consider the "totality of the evidence" presented to it when making a renewal decision. See [R089-16A\(10\)\(9\)](#). Again, as stated above, no factor is to be given more weight than the academic performance of pupils at the charter school. ² See [R089-16A\(10\)\(10\)](#).

² See R089-16A(10)(10) b and c. With regard to a second renewal, the Authority is required to place an even greater weight on academic performance than was assigned to it on the first renewal.

At its sole discretion, the Authority Board may renew a charter contract for a term of 6 years, or, alternatively, deny the renewal application. See [R089-16A\(10\)\(11\)](#)³. If a charter contract is renewed, that Authority Board may include a provision for a high stakes review during the term of the renewed charter contract which may result in the termination of the renewed charter contract prior to its expiration, or renew the charter contract and include “any additional provisions, requirements or restrictions which the State Public Charter School Authority determines are appropriate....”

3. Analysis

Academics

Doral Academy has exhibited at least satisfactory academic performance throughout its initial charter term. Most recently, the Nevada State Performance Framework (NSPF) rated the campuses of Cactus middle school, Pebble elementary, Red Rock elementary and Red Rock middle as 5 stars. The campuses of Cactus elementary, Fire Mesa middle, Pebble middle, and Saddle elementary were ranked as 4-star schools. Saddle’s middle and Fire Mesa’s elementary were ranked as 3-star schools.

Historically, the Doral Academy network of schools shows continuous strong performance across each campus.

Year	NSPF Rating
2018	Cactus Campus elementary: 4 stars Cactus Campus middle: 5 stars Fire Mesa elementary: 3 stars Fire Mesa middle: 4 stars Pebble elementary: 5 stars Pebble middle: 4 stars Red Rock elementary: 5 stars Red Rock middle: 5 stars Saddle elementary: 4 stars Saddle middle: 3 stars
2017	Elementary: 5 stars Middle: 5 stars
2016	Elementary: 5 stars Middle: 3 stars
2015	Elementary: 5 stars Middle: 3 stars
2014	Elementary: 5 stars Middle: 3 stars

Year	SPCSA Academic Programmatic Audit Findings	SPCSA Academic Intervention Ladder Status
2014	Adequate	Good Standing
2013	N/A	Good Standing

Organizational

In its current iteration, the SPCSA Organizational Framework is a rolling evaluation of school organizational performance. Based on verified complaints and spot checks of school organizational performance, the Authority issues Notices of Concern or Notices of Breach for Organizational Performance. Schools which have not received such notices are presumed to be in Good Standing. Doral Academy has not received a

³ Note that upon recommendation by SPCSA staff to deny a renewal application, or the Authority Board denying a renewal application, Nevada’s charter school regulations provide for reconsideration and other mechanisms by which the charter school may provide additional information to the SPCSA. See R089-16A(14).

Notice of Breach or Notice of Concern since the inception of the Framework, has been classified as in Good Standing in each year from 2013 – 2016 and maintained a Good Standing rating in 2017.

SPCSA Organizational Programmatic Audit Findings

2017	Good Standing
2016	Good Standing
2015	Good Standing
2014	Good Standing
2013	Good Standing

The total number of staff across all Doral Academy campuses, including central office, is 457, with 250 of those – 55% being instructional staff members.

In addition to robust enrollment with 5531 students across all campuses, Doral has a waitlist of 7230 students – more than their current enrollment. Per the school’s renewal application, 2% of waitlisted students have preference status.

Financial

Doral Academy of Nevada has a history of clean audit findings. The SPCSA Financial Framework monitors a variety of indicators of financial health. This is supported by the school being classified within the financial rating system as in Good Standing each year since 2013.

SPCSA Financial Programmatic Audit Findings

2017	Good Standing
2016	Good Standing
2015	Good Standing
2014	Good Standing
2013	Good Standing

4. Recommendation: Approve Renewal

Doral Academy of Nevada has shown commendable academic and organizational performance in its initial charter term. They are financially viable, and SPCSA staff is confident the school will continue its current trajectory and performance outcomes. They currently have strong enrollment with a healthy waitlist, and they are financially viable.

The Authority is strongly encouraged to renew Doral Academy of Nevada for a six-year term, beginning July 1, 2019.

School Demographics, 2017-18

Campus Name	Total Enrollment	AI/AN	Asian	Black	Caucasian	Hispanic	Mixed Races/ Two or more races	Pacific Islander	IEP	ELL	FRL
Doral Academy - Cactus	997	0.1%	9.5%	4.4%	53.5%	18.0%	12.8%	1.7%	7.9%	3.1%	-
Doral Academy - Fire Mesa	985	0.1%	6.2%	10.2%	44.8%	28.8%	8.4%	1.5%	9.3%	4.6%	14.9%
Doral Academy - Red Rock	1423	0.4%	8.9%	4.1%	55.7%	19.3%	9.4%	2.1%	9.4%	3.1%	-
Doral Academy - Saddle	972	0.2%	11.1%	8.1%	46.3%	20.0%	12.2%	2.1%	7.7%	2.6%	1.7%
Doral Academy - Pebble	796	0.1%	17.0%	6.3%	41.3%	22.7%	9.8%	2.8%	5.2%	2.8%	1.6%

Additionally, Doral Academy projects strong continued enrollment through a renewed charter term.

	2019-2020	2020-2021	2021-22	2022-23	2023-24	2024-2025
Planned Total Enrollment	6,001	6,163	6,276	6,276	6,276	6,276
Kindergarten	525	525	525	525	525	525
1st grade	525	525	525	525	525	525
2nd grade	546	546	546	546	546	546
3rd grade	546	546	546	546	546	546
4th grade	588	588	588	588	588	588
5th grade	588	588	588	588	588	588
6th grade	698	698	698	698	698	698
7th grade	682	682	682	682	682	682
8th grade	682	682	682	682	682	682
9th grade	224	224	224	224	224	224
10th grade	224	224	224	224	224	224
11th grade	111	224	224	224	224	224
12th grade	62	111	224	224	224	224