



STATE PUBLIC CHARTER SCHOOL AUTHORITY

1749 North Stewart Street Suite 40  
Carson City, Nevada 89706-2543  
(775) 687 - 9174 • Fax: (775) 687 - 9113

---

---

BRIEFING MEMORANDUM

---

---

**TO:** SPCSA Board

**FROM:** Patrick Gavin, Executive Director  
Mark Modrcin, Director of Authorizing

**SUBJECT:** Pinecrest Academy of Nevada Charter Contract Amendment: Addition of Supplementary Distance Education Courses

**DATE:** June 28, 2018

---

Pinecrest Academy of Nevada, operating under a charter contract entered in 2018, is located in Las Vegas, Nevada, and is currently rated as a 5-star school serving 4,126 students in Kindergarten through 10<sup>th</sup> grade. Pinecrest is requesting an amendment to its charter contract to allow it to begin offering distance education courses starting in the 2018-19 school year. As discussed below, Staff recommends approval of the amendment request, with conditions.

**Summary of Request:**

The vision statement of Pinecrest Academy of Nevada is to foster a learning environment where scholars perform at the highest level on all academic measures. To help achieve this vision, the school is seeking to expand its high-performing school network by increasing the school's capacity to serve students already enrolled in the middle school and high school program. Through offering distance education, the school will supplement and enhance its traditional courses with access to virtual learning opportunities for students in need of credit recovery, academic challenges such as advanced math courses, or a more diverse selection of electives such as foreign language that the school may not otherwise offer. **Stated another way, the proposed addition of distance education courses will not replace the current delivery of instruction in a brick-and-mortar atmosphere; the school will offer distance education as a supplement for students with specific needs.** The school seeks to implement an exemplary virtual learning program to effectively prepare students for success in college and career.

According to the submission, the rationale behind this proposal is to enhance its current innovative coursework with a blended model, combining face-to-face and online distance education to allow the school to pool and leverage its teaching resources to offer middle school and high school students the opportunity to take credit bearing courses if they are credit deficient, more robust and

academic challenging courses if they are exceptional learners, or electives that the school may not be able to otherwise offer. This distance education offering would be particularly beneficial to those students in need of additional credit opportunities to avoid falling further behind in their pursuit of graduation. The online supplement will also expand its advanced coursework available to students to ensure that they are college and career ready at the time of their high school graduation, including the opportunity to take some Advanced Placement courses. Lastly, the expansion of online electives such as foreign languages or industry certification classes will be available as it can be difficult to staff full sections given the staffing constraints of multiple campuses.

Students will be selected to participate in Distance Education based on their individual needs. This student-driven approach will begin in the Fall of 2018, but all students enrolling in supplementary distance education courses will still be required to attend classes full-time at their home school. For students enrolled in the distance education courses, the school has set forth the following performance expectations and goals:

- 1) Expand student learning opportunities and enhance success for middle and high school students currently enrolled in Pinecrest Academy of Nevada;
- 2) Create and strengthen community and educational partnerships;
- 3) Create a culture of innovation and collaboration that empowers teachers and students to achieve their goals to their maximum potential; and
- 4) Ninety percent (90%) of middle and high school students enrolled in blended Distance Education classes will successfully pass the course.

To track and monitor progress towards these goals, the school will require students enrolled in distance learning courses to interact with their virtual teacher one time per week. All weekly communications between teachers and students are logged into the student information system (Bocavox/MAESTRO) and stored for seven years. Moreover, evidence that communication between the student and virtual teacher is required, and data will be available 24 hours a day and 365 days each year. The attendance reports reflect real-time data will be generated by designated school staff every Monday, or more frequently, to comply with the weekly communication requirement for attendance. Furthermore, student attendance and participation in courses is also tracked in the learning management system (Agilix/Buzz) each time a student logs into their course. Time is tracked by minutes and seconds.

According to the proposal, the school will employ various progress-monitoring tools to ensure that courses are assisting students in achieving their academic goals. These include:

- Daily progress reports for both students and teachers that use real-time data;
- Assessment reports (generated weekly, monthly, interim or quarterly) for teachers that include disaggregated data;
- Weekly teacher reports generated to identify those students having difficulties with the distance education course. Students not progressing or falling behind pace will be identified and contacted by the academic coach to determine next steps; and
- Progress reports sent via email to students and parents by the 15<sup>th</sup> of every month, or the previous Friday if the 15<sup>th</sup> falls on a weekend.

**Legal Authority and Requirements Related to Amendment Requests:**

Pursuant to [NRS 388A.276](#) and [NRS 388A.279](#), the Authority may, at a duly noticed public meeting, approve, approve with conditions, or deny a request to amend a charter contract. Authority staff believes that the addition of supplementary distance education courses constitutes a material amendment to the current contract for Pinecrest Academy of Nevada pursuant to [NAC 386.3269](#).

**Recommendation: Approve with Conditions**

Pinecrest Academy of Nevada has been classified as at least a 3-star school since the inception of the Star rating system, and was rated as both a 5-star elementary and middle school during the most recent set of ratings for the 2016 – 2017 school year. The school also exhibits both a healthy enrollment and waitlist.

The school is proposing to begin offering distance education courses during the fall of the 2018 – 2019 school year. As mentioned above, the school includes a number of performance monitoring strategies as part of the proposal, in addition to performance benchmarks that the school aims to achieve upon implementation. The school has also submitted verification that each of the proposed courses in this distance education package have been approved by the Nevada Department of Education.

Authority staff recommends approval, but with conditions, to ensure that the first year of implementation runs smoothly, and the school is working to ensure that it maintains strong oversight of these programmatic additions. The school should submit the following to Authority staff:

- A year-end report of the student performance against the performance expectations outlined both in the memo and on page two of this memo; and
- A student enrollment summary or course log that notes the number of students enrolling in supplemental distance education courses during the 2018 – 2019 school year.

**Total Current Enrollment Across All Campuses:**

Grade Level	Total Amount Across All Existing Campuses - Number of Students					
	2012-13	2013-14	2014-15	2015-16	2016-17	2017-18
Pre-K	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
K	117	94	94	288	445	447
1	93	123	94	292	423	448
2	96	96	112	303	445	464
3	97	98	93	296	442	470
4	96	97	94	301	470	469
5	97	97	97	309	456	495
6	75	121	101	289	415	469
7	51	80	95	172	334	388
8	N/A	46	64	90	197	316
9	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	74	95
10	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	65
11	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
12	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
<b>Total</b>	<b>722</b>	<b>852</b>	<b>844</b>	<b>2,340</b>	<b>3,701</b>	<b>4,126</b>

**Background:**

**Pinecrest Academy of Nevada Academic Performance**

Year	NSPF Rating
2013	Elementary: 3 Star
	Middle School: 3 Star
	High School: 4 Star
2014	Elementary: 3 Star
	Middle School: 4 Star
	High School: 5 Star
2015	Elementary: 3 Star (frozen from 2014)
	Middle School: 4 (frozen from 2014)
	High School: 5 Star (frozen from 2014)

2016	No star rating published by State
2017	Elementary: 5 Star
	Middle School: 5 Star
	High School: N/A

### School Demographic Change since 2015

Pinecrest	TOTAL ENROLLED	A	B	C	H	I	M	P	IEP	ELL	FRL
15-16	2340	6.3%	3.9%	57.4%	21.2%	0.5%	8.7%	1.6%	6.7%	0.5%	6.8%
Pinecrest	TOTAL ENROLLED	A	B	C	H	I	M	P	IEP	ELL	FRL
16-17	3701	7.1%	5.0%	54.4%	21.4%	0.4%	9.7%	1.5%	8.1%	1.6%	15.2%
Pinecrest	TOTAL ENROLLED	A	B	C	H	I	M	P	IEP	ELL	FRL
17-18	4126	7.8%	5.9%	51.2%	23.1%	0.4%	9.5%	1.8%	9.9%	2.1%	11.9%

I – American Indian/Alaskan Native

A – Asian

H – Hispanic

B – Black

C - White

P – Pacific Islander

M – Two or more races

IEP – Individualized Education Plan –A student with a disability/special education student

ELL – English Language Learner

FRL – A student who qualifies for Free or Reduced-Price Lunch

Pinecrest Academy of Nevada was approved by the State Board of Education in 2012, renewed in 2018 and currently operates charter contract with four campuses: Horizon, Inspirada, St. Rose and Cadence. Three new campuses were opened in 2015, and the system has expanded to serve students in Kindergarten through 10<sup>th</sup> grade. The school has received only one Notice of Concern related to their financial performance in 2015 – 2016, but has not received either a Notice of Concern or Breach since that time, indicating that the financial health of the school has improved and is once again stable. The school currently operates a 5 star level across its elementary and middle school programs. Serving only 9<sup>th</sup> graders in 2016-2017, there is insufficient data for the school to be rated at the high school level according to the state rating system. The school is scheduled to graduate its first class in 2018-19 and will receive its first high school star rating in the fall of 2020.