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To: Interim Finance Committee
Through: Tiffany Greenameyer, Executive Branch Budget Officer II, Governor's Finance Office
From: Patrick Gavin, Executive Director
Subject: 2017 Legislative Session Letter of Intent – Progress of New Authorizer Unit
Date: August 1, 2018

In response to the Letter of Intent resulting from testimony during the 2017 Legislative Session, the State Public Charter School Authority (SPCSA) reports the following for the period of January 1, 2018 to June 30, 2018:

1. Eliminating the backlog in reviewing charter applications –

The SPCSA has eliminated the backlog of reviewing charter applications received prior to this reporting period.

2. Conducting required site visits –

Staff on the School Support team have completed supportive site visits for all SPCSA-sponsored charter schools except the Elko Institute for Academic Achievement. Staff expect to schedule and complete a supportive visit to this school during the next reporting period.

The agency has continued work on developing a legally defensible evaluative site visit protocol for existing and prospective schools. The evaluative site visit process is a core component of the performance framework. Staff have continued to contact a number of authorizers to discuss best practice in site visit approaches. Additionally, staff have engaged in productive discussions with a third-party evaluator and technical assistance provider hired by the Nevada Department of Education (NDE). That third-party has been tasked by NDE, in its role as sponsor of sponsors, with developing sample tools, including elements of a recommended model site visit, which the SPCSA will consider as it develops the overall framework and the evaluative site visit protocol component.

3. Revising the academic and organizational framework –

At the SPCSA Board meeting on June 28, 2018, the Board directed agency staff to substantially revise the financial framework. This direction will significantly delay the upcoming revisions to the academic and organizational framework. Nevertheless, in regards to the organizational framework, the Education Programs Director has commenced work with staff in updating the SPCSA Reporting Requirements Manual and the agency has completed the organizational audit questionnaire developed in response to

Section 19(5)(b)(4) of R131-16 both of which are key components of ensuring performance under the organizational framework and the primary mechanism for ensuring consistent enforcement of applicable laws, regulations, and policies. As noted above, staff has completed some preliminary research on elements of the academic framework, such as the site visit protocol. The SPCSA also experienced unanticipated workload that delayed framework research due to the immense amount of research and preparation required to support recommendations to the SPCSA Board regarding the Notice of Intent to Terminate a school's charter contract; the unanticipated decision of a charter school to surrender its charter contract; and the direction of the Board to review multiple improvement plans submitted by charter schools that received Notices of Breach or Intent to Terminate and make recommendations to the Board on conditions that would allow those schools to remain in operation.

The most critical driver of the academic framework remains the Nevada School Performance Framework (NSPF), which was not finalized during the reporting period. Final procedures for the NSPF from NDE are critical path items in the development of SPCSA's legally defensible academic framework, the SPCSA anticipates commencing the revamping of the framework upon notification of final approval from NDE.

4. Eliminating the backlog in written correspondence to applicants recommended for denial –

During this reporting period, the SPCSA fully eliminated the backlog in written correspondence to applicants recommended for denial of a charter school application.

5. Completing reviews to ensure consistent enforcement of applicable laws, regulations and policies –

The Staff Attorney and Education Programs Director have continued work to implement consistent, equitable review processes. Progress includes the work described above in item #3, but the newly approved Management Analyst IV was not filled again until after this reporting period and that incumbent will still need to be trained and educated on the laws, regulations, and policies.