



4801 S. Sandhill Rd.
Las Vegas, Nevada 89121
Phone: 702-407-1825
Fax: 702-407-5055

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Nevada Virtual Academy

APPLICATION FOR RENEWAL CLARIFICATION & SUPPLEMENTAL DOCUMENTATION

Nevada Virtual Academy (“NVVA”) is submitting this Clarification and Supplemental Documentation as part of its 2018 Application for the Renewal of a Charter Contract package for a six-year renewal for grades 6-12. Please note that the State Public Charter School Authority’s (“SPCSA”) renewal application had very limited options in the drop-down menus, and those options were not always on point or accurate for NVVA. Thus, NVVA is providing clarifying information to expand upon what was submitted in the renewal application. Moreover, NVVA attempted to provide all of the information enumerated in NRS §388A.285(3) as it relates to the minimum requirements of a renewal application, but the SPCSA’s application did not provide space for said information. NVVA is now providing such clarifying and supplemental documentation.

In preparing this Application for Renewal, NVVA relied on the Renewal Report, which the Authority issued on June 29, 2018. It is NVVA’s understanding that this Report was issued pursuant to NRS §388A.285(1), which among other things requires that the charter sponsor identify any deficiencies which may result in nonrenewal, if not corrected. The SPCSA’s statutorily required report did not include any such information so it is the understanding of the NVVA governing board that no such deficiencies exist, or they would have been included in the Report, as required by state law. Moreover, footnote 3 of the Stipulated Agreement between NVVA and SPCSA states that “SPCSA staff expect to recommend renewal of those [middle and high school] programs based on those programs’ historical performance, and assuming no significant changes related to those programs’ performance.”

Below, NVVA is providing clarifying language to the Application for Renewal, supplemental documentation, improvements already undertaken or planned, and goals for the next term of the Charter Contract. NVVA looks forward to collaboratively working with the SPCSA in providing Nevada families with this critical public-school option.



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Clarification to Application Answers

NVVA's Elementary School Program

The application form has sections to complete as it relates to an applicant's elementary school program. Pursuant to a Stipulated Agreement between the NVVA and the SPCSA, NVVA is not including grades K-5 in this renewal application nor does the renewal encompass those grade levels. The elementary school program is scheduled for closure at the end of this school year. Therefore, NVVA has marked each line on the application requesting information on an applicant's elementary school program as "N/A" as that information is not applicable to NVVA's application for renewal.

2017 & 2018 Rising Stars List

Within the "Academic Performance" section of the renewal application, unlike areas within the "2018 NSPF Rating" and "2017 NSPF Rating," there is no area within the Rising Star Status section that can be separated to discuss programs that may or may not have appeared on these lists.

As such, for the 2017 and 2018 school year, Nevada Virtual Academy as a whole was not on the Rising Stars List. NVVA's Middle and High School programs, which are the only programs included in this Application for Renewal, did not appear on the Rising Stars list. Therefore, the school put "Not Identified as Rising Star by NDE" for both sections.

2013 Notice of Concern & 2014 Notice of Breach

Both the 2013 Notice of Concern & 2014 Notice of Breach status need a further explanation as the school officially disputed the status given, stating that the original designation was assigned in error. NVVA has previously documented its written responses to these notices issued in error. NVVA continues to contest these improperly issued notices. NVVA's past correspondence is attached to this document, and they are incorporated herein.

The school takes issue with these notices for a number of reasons, most notably due to the fact that, by definition, the school was not defined by Persistent Underperformance as follows:

"Persistent Underperformance which is defined as a school with any combination of "Unsatisfactory" or "Critical" designations on the Authority Framework and a two-star or one-



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star ranking on the Nevada School Performance Framework for three consecutive academic reporting cycles.” (NVVA’s Charter School Performance Framework, page 7)

Nevada Virtual Academy was issued a Notice of Breach due to alleged “academic underperformance on the 2013-2014 Authority Framework (Approaches), and the Nevada School Performance Framework (Elementary School Rating -2-Stars, Middle School Rating- 3-Stars, High School Rating- 2-Stars).”

NVVA disputed the Notice of Breach since the school received an Approaches on the Authority Framework, therefore, by definition, removing it from the “Persistent Underperformance” designation since it required underperformance on both frameworks – the NSPF and the SPCSA’s framework. Moreover, the underperformance under both frameworks was required under both frameworks for three consecutive years, which again did not exist. Furthermore, the SPCSA board took this matter up in a public meeting and made the decision not to act on the staff’s related recommendations. NVVA considers this matter to be settled with no action taken.

2016 Financial Notice of Concern

Nevada Virtual Academy contested the 2016 Financial Notice of Concern. The school’s written response is attached and is hereby incorporated into this response. In it, NVVA stated that the Notice of Concern was issued in error due to clerical errors in projected enrollment numbers utilized by the Authority, as well as issues dealing with Total Margin and Cash Flow measures of the school.

Moreover, NVVA is sensitive to the fact that the SPCSA board has expressed concerns with SPCSA staff as it relates to the Financial Framework. At the June 28, 2018 SPCSA meeting, Chairman Guinasso motioned to continue the agenda item regarding the Financial Framework indefinitely until the board receives a workshop and modifies the framework accordingly. NVVA believes that this section of the application must be read in conjunction with the current fluidity as it relates to the Financial Framework.

Projected Enrollment

As a result of the Stipulated Agreement, NVVA faithfully implemented grade level caps for the 2018-2019 school year. As was previously mentioned, as a result of the Stipulated Agreement, NVVA’s elementary school program, which was the main focus of the Stipulated Agreement, is closing at the end of this school year. Under a renewed contract, NVVA will be serving students in grades 6-12. NVVA’s projected enrollment information in the application incorporates a 10% increase year over year. Anything over that annual 10% increase in enrollment would be considered a material amendment, necessitating approval of said amendment prior to it becoming effective.



Supplemental Documentation

Student Demographics

Since the renewal of its charter in 2013, the NVVA Board of Directors, with the school’s administrative team and staff, have worked to increase academic outcomes for students and provide families with a viable, high-quality, alternative education. The first step the team took was to revise the school’s mission statement to ensure it clearly reflected and communicated the ideals and goals of the school. NVVA’s mission statement is:

To promote student achievement by preparing EVERY student for college and career readiness EVERY day.

Since its inception, NVVA has prided itself on its demographic profile and for being inclusive of every student. NVVA has traditionally attracted many of the state’s students who need additional support. These “uniquely brilliant,” but many times academically disadvantaged, students and their families are in search of a program that can fill a deficiency from what they felt was lacking in their previous school. As the table below details, NVVA’s diverse student population can be seen from almost every demographic area.

Figure 1: Demographic Profile Comparison

Demographics	2017-2018 NVVA	2017-2018 SPCSA
American Indian/Alaskan Native	1.53%	0.59%
Asian	5.53%	6.58%
Hispanic	24.23%	29.42%
Black/African American	17.26%	10.19%
White/Caucasian	48.74%	44.05%
Pacific Islander	2.72%	1.65%
Individualized Education Program (IEP)	11.68%	9.09%
Free or Reduced Lunch (FRL)	46.92%	21.94%
English Language Learners (ELL)	1.48%	6.55%

As shown in Figure 1, almost half of NVVA students qualify for FRL status during the 2017-2018 school year. While NVVA works to ensure that its student population mirrors that of the state, it is clearly unique among many other Nevada charter schools. NVVA’s population of FRL students is more than twice the rate of the SPCSA’s portfolio as a whole.



NVVA's Goals for the Next Term

Background and Purpose

NVVA's Middle School and High School programs have performed well these past few years. However, every school endeavors to improve and to utilize the vast data available to continue to drive results. In the next term, NVVA will continue focusing on the needs of its students and identifying ways to make further progress. NVVA will use this data to make academic decisions based on annual data with specific and reliable recommendations each year of the next six-year term. In particular, NVVA will look at overall student growth, engagement and persistence, and teacher performance.

Note: Growth goals do not include students who take the Alternative Assessments.

Overall Student Growth

Section 1: Overall Student Growth	Not Met	Partially Met	Met	Comments
1.1 An annual increase in the percentage of students who will attain their Student RIT Growth Projection in Mathematics (NWEA) in Grades 6-8				The 2018/19 SY is a baseline year, and NVVA will strive for a 2% improvement YOY over the course of the renewal term.
1.2 A 2-point annual increase in students who attain their Student RIT Growth Projection in Reading (NWEA) in Grades 6-8				2017/18 MS MAP baseline= 50% 2018/19 MS MAP Average= 52%
1.3 A 2-point annual increase in student course completion rates for core courses will be set for Grades 6-8 (OMS) and 9-12				2017/18 MS Course Completion Rate= 70% 2018/19 MS Average= 72% 2017/18 HS Course Completion Rate= 82% 2018/2019 HS Average- 84%
1.4 A 2-point annual increase in number of proficient students in				2017/18 Math ACT Proficiency 18.23% 2017/18 ELA ACT Proficiency 39.8% 2018/19 Math ACT Proficiency 20.23%



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Math & ELA ACT proficiency				2018/19 ELA ACT Proficiency 41.8%
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Engagement/Persistence

Section 1: Engagement/Persistence	Not Met	Partially Met	Met	Comments
2.1 A 2-point increase in attendance for Class Connect sessions in grades 6-12				2017/18 MS Class Connect Rate= 62.3% 2018/19 MS Average= 64.3% 2017/18 HS Class Connect Rate= 34.2% 2018/2019 HS Average= 36.2%
2.2 10% decline in Chronic Absenteeism for grades 6-12				2018 MS Chronic Abs.= 4.5% 2018/19 MS Average= 4% 2018 HS Chronic Abs.= 13.07% 2018/19 HS Average= 11.75%
2.3 95% of all groups will participate in NWEA, SBAC, Science, and ACT assessments for grades 6-12				In line with federal law
2.4 A 2-point increase in students completing Back on Track plans by the FAST teams for grades 6-12				Baseline MS= 16.65% 2018/19 MS Average= 18.65% Baseline HS= 29.19% 2018/19 HS Average= 31.19%
2.5 100% of new families will participate in school's orientation				Maintain 100%

Teachers

Section 4: Teachers	Not Met	Partially Met	Met	Comments
3.1 An acceptable growth benchmark for each teacher in grades 6-8 (NWEA Math & Reading)				Every teacher is held accountable to work with their students to mirror the Overall Student Growth Goals (1.1 & 1.2)
3.2 An acceptable benchmark for improved persistence measures for				Every teacher is held accountable to work with their students to mirror school-level Chronic Absenteeism goals (2.2)



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each teacher in grades 6-12				
3.3 An acceptable benchmark for Class Connect attendance for each teacher in grades 6-12				Every teacher is held accountable to work with their students to mirror school-level Class Connect attendance goals (2.1)
3.4 95% of teacher's homeroom will participate in NWEA, SBAC, Science, and/or ACT assessments for each teacher in grades 6-12				Every teacher is held accountable to ensure his/her homeroom has a 95% assessment participation rate