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December 19, 2016

GUIDANCE MEMORANDUM #16-06

TO: State Public Charter School Authority Governing Board

FROM: Steve Canavero, Ph.D.
Superintendent of Public Instruction

SUBJECT: Charter School Sponsor Letter

On October 14, 2016 the Nevada Department of Education released a list of the State's lowest performing schools. These schools were identified for one of two reasons: 1) Elementary or Middle School in the bottom 5% in pupil achievement and school performance or 2) High School with a graduation rate of less than 60%. This list, previously known as the Underperforming Schools list, now called the *Rising Star Schools List*, fulfills the State Board's annual responsibility to release a report on the State's current state of student achievement.

Based on the *Rising Stars* report, below is a list of charter schools sponsored under your authority that have been identified as one of the state's lowest performing schools. It is the Nevada Department of Education's responsibility to ensure that all sponsors of those identified schools are exercising their authority to oversee school improvement as part of their general obligations to monitor performance and determine if accountability actions are appropriate under NRS 388A.223(1)(e)-(h). For all District-run, non-charter schools, the State may implement either one of its State-led intervention protocols, *Turnaround Designation* or *The Nevada Achievement School District* or work in partnership with the local District on other intervention options. **As for public charter schools, it is the responsibility of that school's charter sponsor to monitor school performance on an ongoing basis and determine additional actions under NRS 388A.223(1)(f)-(h). Evidence of material or persistent failure to carry out the powers and duties of a sponsor prescribed by NRS 388A.223(3) constitutes grounds for revocation of the entity's authority to sponsor charter schools.**

As a sponsor of public charter schools, you have the following schools identified as *Rising Star Schools* in 2016:

School Name	2015 Status	2016 Status
Beacon Academy	-	Below 60% Graduation Rate
Discovery Charter School	-	Bottom 5% Elementary/Middle Schools
NV Connections Academy	Priority School	Below 60% Graduation Rate
Silver State Charter School	One-Star	Bottom 5% Elementary/Middle Schools

Please accept this letter as a formal inquiry into your actions on school accountability that are either in place or planned for all public charter schools under your sponsorship authority that are noted above. Response to this inquiry shall be submitted to the Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction no later than January 15, 2017.

Your responses should include any past or current accountability actions taken with these schools that are available to you through your sponsorship authority and shall align to NRS 388A.300 et seq. Please provide artifacts to support those actions, as available. It is the opinion of this office that there are four pathways available:

1. Revocation or termination of charter contract and students are re-assigned throughout the host district.
2. The school enters receivership with a third-party entity to manage remediation planning and transfer of authority.
3. The charter school chooses to seek a transformation partner and opt in to be considered by the NV Achievement School District.
4. For schools that have been identified for the first time, development of a remediation plan with clear student achievement targets that lead the school to removal from the *Rising Star* designation in a specific period of years and prescribe consequences for failure to meet the specified targets.

Should you or your staff require consultation on how to move forward with either response to this inquiry or activation of a school remediation strategy, you may work directly with Seng-Dao Keo (skeo@doe.nv.gov) under the direction of the Superintendent of Public Instruction.

Thank you in advance for your attention to and cooperation with this matter.

