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## STATE PUBLIC CHARTER SCHOOL AUTHORITY

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### RECOMMENDATION MEMORANDUM

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**TO:** SPCSA Board

**FROM:** Mike Dang, Manager, Financial and Organizational Performance  
Mark Modrcin, Director of Authorizing

**SUBJECT:** Somerset Academy of Las Vegas – Contract Amendment Request: Addition of a Program where Students may Earn College Credits

**DATE:** October 4, 2019

#### **Summary of Request**

Somerset Academy of Las Vegas (Somerset) is seeking from the Nevada State Public Charter School Authority approval **to implement a dual credit program for all eligible high school students enrolled in the Somerset Academy of Las Vegas network**. Under NRS 389.310, each school district and charter school shall enter into cooperative agreements with one or more community colleges, state colleges and universities to offer dual credit courses to pupils enrolled in the school district or charter school.

Somerset also requests a good-cause exemption to submit this after-the-fact RFA. This is an after-the-fact request as the school has already begun their Dual Credit program.

Somerset Academy's mission is to prepare students to excel in academics and attain knowledge through life-long learning by dedicating themselves to providing equitable, high-quality education for all students. The school promotes a culture that maximizes student achievement and fosters the development of accountable 21st Century learners in a safe and enriching environment. The school's vision is to be a college prep school cultivating effective leaders, good character, and a desire to render service.

## **Background**

Somerset opened its first campus in the fall of 2011 with its North Las Vegas campus.

The school is modeled after Somerset Academy of Florida, originally founded in 1997. Today, the Somerset Academy Charter School Instructional Model has been successfully replicated in several states across the country, serving all grades K-12.

The Board of Somerset Academy of Las Vegas operates the school under a current contract starting July 1, 2016 with a six-year term that expires on June 30, 2022.

Somerset today includes seven campuses across the Las Vegas Valley, serving approximately 9,700 students, supported by 466 teachers. All of its seven campuses are governed by Somerset Academy of Las Vegas' seven member Board of Directors.

Somerset Academy has established a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with the College of Southern Nevada (CSN) to offer these dual enrollment courses for its student body and believes that this program will further support the school's vision of being a quality "college prep school."

Per the submitted application, the school will leverage current employees to support the execution of the dual credit program. The Somerset Governing Board will have oversight of the program.

Somerset indicates that the "duration of the relationship between Somerset Academy of Las Vegas (SA) and the College of Southern Nevada (CSN) will begin on July 1, 2019 with an expiration ending on May 31, 2024.

For the purposes of this amendment, Somerset employees will provide instruction aligned to CSN's Jumpstart Program for the first year of the agreement. For each year following, CSN staff will provide the instruction to Somerset students. CSN staff will also provide an orientation to Somerset students as well as assign students an academic advisor or success coach. Somerset students can receive counseling services to the same extent as regular CSN students."

As to the scope of services, Somerset will "provide students access to counseling services to the same extent as regular CSN students. Additionally, each student will be assigned an academic advisor/success coach."

With regard to tuition and fees, "Somerset is responsible to pay for all fees applicable to students enrolled at CSN. CSN will charge within thirty (30) days of the start of the courses and Somerset will remit payment of fees within thirty (30) days of receipt of CSN's invoice, for each student enrolled in CSN courses. Somerset may pursue grants and other funding opportunities to help support its students in the Jumpstart or dual enrollment programs. CSN acknowledges that Somerset students will pay all tuition and fees, not covered by grants."

## **Eligibility Requirements**

To be eligible for consideration of approval of a contract amendment a school must timely submit a complete and accurate RFA, in accordance with the requirements and directions stated in the RFA application.

Regarding its eligibility, otherwise, the SPCSA and the Executive Director also consider “a charter school’s compliance with applicable local, state and federal laws and regulations and evidence relating to the academics, finance and organization of the charter school when determining whether to approve a request for an amendment to its charter contract,” pursuant to NAC 388A.400.

Staff have reviewed the above factors and finds:

1. **Academic performance:** Somerset’s school academic ratings for its seven campuses range from two to five stars. Its two high schools received two-star ratings for the SYE19.
2. **Financial performance:** Somerset’s meets standards
3. **Organizational performance:** Somerset meets standards

## **Recommendation**

Despite submitting this request for amendment after-the-fact, SPCSA staff believe that offering dual credit courses is in the best interest of students. Because this amendment will both enable the school to come into compliance with NRS 389.310 and to provide access to college-level coursework to students, SPCSA staff recommend that the board:

- 1) Approve the Good-Cause exemption;
- 2) Approve amending the Somerset Academy of Las Vegas (Somerset) contract to enable the school to enter into a contract with CSN;
- 3) Approve the Somerset RFA to implement a dual credit program for all eligible high school students enrolled in the Somerset Academy of Las Vegas network, subject to the following conditions:
  - a. Somerset ensures that all details related to the dual-credit program are in place immediately in this SYE 2020.
  - b. That the following are submitted by the school to SPCSA immediately:
    - Supporting documentation that the governing body of Somerset has applied and been approved by the State Board, thereby permitting students to earn credits during the upcoming school year; and
    - Acknowledgement in writing by the chairperson of the governing body of Somerset that late Requests For Amendments may result in delayed approvals and a possible loss of points in Organizational Performance Ratings for the school.

## APPENDIX

### I. School Academic Performance (NSPF Star) SYE 2019 Ratings

<b>School</b>	<b>Rating-19</b>	<b>Rating-18</b>
Somerset Aliante ES	2	-
Somerset Aliante MS	5	-
Somerset LoneMtn ES	5	4
Somerset LoneMtn MS	5	5
Somerset Losee ES	2	3
Somerset Losee HS	2	-
Somerset Losee MS	2	3
Somerset NLV ACAD ES	2	2
Somerset NLV ACAD MS	4	3
Somerset Skye ES	5	-
Somerset Skye MS	5	-
Somerset SkyPt ES	5	4
Somerset SkyPt HS	2	3
Somerset SkyPt MS	5	3
Somerset Steph ES	5	4
Somerset Steph MS	5	5

### II. Enrollments by % Ethnicity and Special Populations (SYE 2019)

<b>School Name</b>	<b>Total Enrollment</b>	<b>A</b>	<b>B</b>	<b>C</b>	<b>H</b>	<b>Am/Ind</b>	<b>M</b>	<b>P</b>	<b>FRL</b>	<b>IEP</b>	<b>ELL</b>
Somerset Aliante	831	45	95	274	297	5	87	28	149	72	16
Somerset LoneMtn	958	25	61	487	294	5	74	12	234	90	29
Somerset Losee	1949	80	346	450	887	7	147	32	876	225	165
Somerset NLV	1161	47	264	231	503	0	90	26	500	125	118
Somerset Skye	855	10	13	155	206	0	467	4	94	71	19
Somerset SkyPt	1908	40	136	1179	372	5	158	18	251	233	30
Somerset Steph	964	51	67	459	270	5	92	20	342	116	35
<b>Totals</b>	<b>8,626</b>	<b>298</b>	<b>982</b>	<b>3,235</b>	<b>2,829</b>	<b>27</b>	<b>1,115</b>	<b>140</b>	<b>2,446</b>	<b>932</b>	<b>412</b>
<b>Percent of Total</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>3%</b>	<b>11%</b>	<b>38%</b>	<b>33%</b>	<b>0%</b>	<b>13%</b>	<b>2%</b>	<b>28%</b>	<b>11%</b>	<b>5%</b>

- A – Asian
- B – Black
- C – Caucasian
- H – Hispanic
- I – American Indian/Alaskan Native
- M – Two or more races
- P – Pacific Islander
- 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

### III. Enrollment by Grade Level (SYE 2019)

School Name	TOTAL	K	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
Somerset Aliante	831	125	124	126	123	98	100	107	28	-	-	-	-	-
Somerset LoneMtn	958	101	99	100	100	99	100	120	120	119	-	-	-	-
Somerset Losee	1,949	125	125	125	125	125	125	208	211	205	207	179	118	71
Somerset NLV ACAD	1,161	120	125	124	125	124	124	143	142	134	-	-	-	-
Somerset Skye	855	98	100	101	100	126	125	110	70	25	-	-	-	-
Somerset SkyPt	1,908	125	125	125	125	125	125	175	177	180	204	178	126	118
Somerset Steph	964	98	98	100	100	123	125	119	117	84	-	-	-	-
	8,626	792	796	801	798	820	824	982	865	747	411	357	244	189
	100%	9%	9%	9%	9%	10%	10%	11%	10%	9%	5%	4%	3%	2%