

NEVADA STATE PUBLIC CHARTER SCHOOL AUTHORITY

January 31, 2020

Nevada Department of Education
2080 East Flamingo Road
Board Room
Las Vegas, Nevada

Nevada Department of Education
700 East 5th Street
Board Room
Carson City, Nevada

MINUTES OF THE MEETING

BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT:

In Las Vegas:

Member Holmes-Sutton
Member Soifer
Member Cyr
Member Randolph
Member Moulton
Vice Chair Kirner
Chair Mackedon

In Carson City:

AUTHORITY STAFF PRESENT:

In Las Vegas:

Rebecca Feiden, Executive Director
Ryan Herrick, General Counsel
Mark Modrcin, Director of Authorizing
Jennifer King, Administrative Assistant IV

In Carson City:

Danny Peltier, Management Analyst I
Michael Gawthrop-Hutchins, Management Analyst III

Beacon Center Overflow Location:

Lisa Dzierbicki, Education Programs Professional
Michael Dang, Management Analyst IV

AUDIENCE IN ATTENDANCE:

In Las Vegas:

(see attached sign-in sheet).

In Carson City:

(see attached sign-in sheet).

Beacon Center:

(see attached sign-in sheet).

Agenda Item 1 – Call to Order, Roll Call, and Pledge of Allegiance

Chair Mackedon called the meeting to order at 9:00am, with attendance reflected above.

Agenda Item 2 – Approval of the December 13, 2019 and December 17, 2019 State Public Charter School Authority Board Action Minutes

Member Cyr provided that on page 9, Agenda Item 4(c), she opposed that vote and it did not carry unanimously, and on page 13, Agenda Item 4(f), it does note her varied vote, but the vote did not carry unanimously.

With those corrections, Member Soifer moved to approve the minutes of the December 13, 2019 and December 17, 2019 Authority Board Meeting. Member Moulton seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

Agenda Item 3 – SPCSA Executive Director’s Report

Executive Director Rebecca Feiden provided an update regarding the following:

a) SPCSA Staff Update

- New Administrative Assistant in Las Vegas
- Temporary support in the North with regard to the grant processing
- Currently working on filling vacancies

b) Charter School Applications: 2019 Summer Cycle Resubmissions

- All five denied applicants resubmitted within the 30-day window
- One resubmission on calendar for today (GALS)
- Remaining four resubmissions will be on the March 6, 2020 agenda

c) Charter School Applications: 2020 Winter Cycle Applications

- One application submitted

d) January 23, 2020 Presentation to the Legislative Committee on Education

- SPCSA staff presented and talked about the work they have done related to the Needs Assessment and Growth Management Plan as well as provided updates on staff’s action items related to Assembly Bill 78
- Expecting feedback from the LCE in coming weeks – update to follow in March
- Presentation given to LCE attached in the Board materials

e) Regulatory Update (Senate Bill 441 (2019))

- NDE hosted a regulatory workshop regarding Senate Bill 441
- Regulation hearing was held in early January
- NDE invited staff to participate in the process and has asked staff to convene a group of stakeholders to engage and discuss what those regulations should look like, staff expects to do that in the coming weeks
- Expect a hearing in the next few months

f) Special Education and Grant Monitoring (LEA responsibilities)

- In the most recent legislative session, there was some clarifying language in Assembly Bill 78 regarding our agency’s role as the local education agency and with that language we have been looking closely at our responsibilities related thereto
- Continuing to monitor federal grants they pass through to schools as well as special education
- In the process of launching a new grant management system which will

help to streamline the process for ensuring our schools get their federal dollars reimbursed quickly

- With regard to Special Education, staff is taking on a pilot based on a best practice used from Washington D.C., Mystery Parent Program – draft memo in Board materials

g) Enrollment and Demographic Information

- Staff conducted their own analysis, refer to the supporting material item “Enrollment Comparison Summary”

No public comment related to this agenda item.

Agenda Item 4 – Annual Report to Nevada’s Department of Education

Executive Director Feiden provided a summary of the report required from the SPCSA pursuant to NRS 388A.351. The report is included in the supporting materials for this meeting. *No action taken for this item.*

No public comment related to this agenda item.

Member Moulton moved to accept the Annual Report to Nevada’s Department of Education with any changes that may be necessary as a result of today’s meeting. Member Holmes-Sutton seconded the motion. Chair Mackedon called the vote. The motion carried unanimously.

Agenda Item 5 – SPCSA Annual Review and Overview of SPCSA-Sponsored Public Charter Schools

Executive Director Feiden gave her presentation for the SPCSA Overview. See supporting materials from the meeting.

No public comment related to this agenda item.

Agenda Item 6 – Beacon Academy of Nevada Charter School Contract

Executive Director Feiden provided that staff received notification from the school earlier this week that while they potentially thought that this facility purchase would work, it turns out that the facility is not going to be up for sale and so they have removed this item. *No action taken for this item.*

Agenda Item 7 – Pinecrest Academy of Northern Nevada

Executive Director Feiden provided an update on the work staff has been doing with Pinecrest Academy of Northern Nevada. Staff believes the school has been committed to meeting the conditions as set forth.

Jake Wiskerchen, Chair of the Board, Pinecrest Academy of Northern Nevada, provided an update with their progress with each condition as set forth.

Megan Salcido, Vice Chair of the Board, Pinecrest Academy of Northern Nevada, provided input regarding their progress. *No action taken for this item.*

No public comment related to this agenda item.

11:17am Member Cyr had to step out.

Agenda Item 8 – Girls Athletic Leadership School (“GALS”) Resubmission

Mark Modrcin, Director of Authorizing, provided a summary of staff’s recommendation, which can be found in the supporting materials for this meeting.

Jennifer McCloskey, Executive Director, GALS, said that she wanted to introduce her partners that the Board has not had a chance to meet.

Dhyia Thompson, Deputy Chief of Planning and Performance for GALS, Inc., representing the network, Liz Wolfson, GALS Founder, representing the network and Lisa Windom, Proposed Board Member and parent of a future GALS student.

No public comment related to this agenda item.

Member Soifer moved to approve Girls Athletic Leadership School charter application as resubmitted during the 2019 Summer Application Cycle, with conditions outlined in staff’s recommendation in the supporting documents, based on a finding that the applicant now meets the requirements contained in NRS 388A.249(3). Member Holmes-Sutton seconded the motion. Chair Mackedon called the vote. The motion carried unanimously.

Agenda Item 9 – Charter School Contract Renewal Applications

a. American Preparatory Academy

Director Modrcin provided staff’s recommendation which can be found in the supporting materials for this meeting.

Rachelle Hulet, School Leader, American Preparatory Academy, provided an update regarding American Preparatory Academy and their renewal application. She extended the invitation of the school’s groundbreaking ceremony taking place on Thursday, February 6, 2020, at 3:00pm.

No public comment related to this agenda item.

Member Holmes-Sutton moved to approve the charter renewal of American Preparatory Academy for a five-year term, beginning on July 1, 2020. Member Moulton seconded the motion. Chair Mackedon called the vote. The motion carried unanimously.

b. Founders Academy of Las Vegas

Director Modrcin provided an overview of staff’s recommendation which can be found in the supporting materials for this meeting.

Ronald Fick, Principal CEO, Founders Academy of Las Vegas, provided his background and experience with the school.

Kelly Heide, Board Vice President, Founders Academy of Las Vegas spoke with regard to their board’s training.

No public comment related to this agenda item.

Member Holmes-Sutton moved to approve the charter renewal of Founders Academy of Las Vegas for a five-year term, beginning July 1, 2020. Member Moulton seconded the motion. Chair Mackedon called the vote. The motion carried unanimously.

c. Leadership Academy of Nevada

Ryan Herrick, General Counsel, provided a summary regarding the legal framework of renewal decisions.

Director Modrcin provided staff's recommendation which can be found in the supporting materials for this meeting.

Bryon Richardson, Executive Director, Leadership Academy of Nevada, provided a presentation which can be found in the supporting materials for this meeting.

No public comment related to this agenda item.

Member Holmes-Sutton moved to approve the charter renewal of Leadership Academy of Nevada for a 5-year term, beginning in July 1, 2020. Member Kirner seconded the motion. Chair Mackedon called the vote. The motion carried unanimously.

d. Nevada Connections Academy

Including a request by Nevada Connections Academy for a postponement of consideration of its charter school renewal application pursuant to NAC 388A.415(7).

Member Cyr has returned and Vice Chair Kirner has left for the remainder of the meeting.

Mr. Herrick provided an overview of the legal framework.

Executive Director Feiden provided an outline of the school's history and performance.

Chair Mackedon said since the building is at capacity, we will be taking a 30-minute recess to allow for time to travel to overflow location and to reconvene 1:38pm. Meeting convened at 1:48pm.

Member Soifer asked for clarification regarding the school performance framework and star-ratings.

Executive Director Feiden responded that the Nevada School Performance Framework (NSPF) is determined by the Department of Education and that it is required to comply with the Federal Every Student Succeeds Act. All public schools are rated under the NSPF and it is the same for all schools.

Scott Harrington, School Board Chair, Nevada Connections Academy (NCA), said that he has been with NCA for ten years. He provided background regarding the school and some of his experiences.

Chris McBride, Superintendent, NCA, provided a brief overview of the school's history with the Board and SPCSA staff. He talked about their progress and said that their context will be provided through the students in the school and additional presentations from NCA school. Mr. McBride said that the school is asking that the Authority approve their renewal so they can continue much needed service to students and families in Nevada.

Jeremy Nork, Holland and Hart and counsel for NCA, said he would like to respond to the things addressed by Mr. Herrick. Regarding the Open Meeting Law and overflow capacity, he said the school feels that the meeting was improperly noticed. Mr. Nork said his next point has to do with the broad

discretion that this Board enjoys in making its decision. The school is requesting a postponement and that the Board should measure their school by the same standards that Beacon was measured by which was to give greater weight to the school's performance against those metrics outlined in the charter contract.

Alyssa Walters, Ph.D., Director of Research and Analysis, Pearson, provided a presentation on behalf of NCA, regarding their academics and data. See the PowerPoint within the supporting materials.

Matthew Wicks, Director of School Accountability, Pearson, provided a presentation on behalf of NCA, regarding their graduation rate, credit deficiency, and other data analyses. See the PowerPoint within the supporting materials.

Christine Dzarnoski, Administrator and Educator, NCA, gave a presentation regarding the middle school and the 6th-12th initiatives. See the PowerPoint within the supporting materials.

Victoria Neer, High School Support Specialist, Response to Intervention Coordinator, Certified Staff Trainer for Social and Emotional Learning Supports, began her presentation regarding the high school initiatives. See the PowerPoint within the supporting materials.

Laura Granier, Partner with Holland and Hart and counsel for NCA, began speaking with regard to the information provided to the Authority that she believed to be incomplete. She referred to the contract provisions in documents that were provided to the Authority. She asked the Authority to consider all of the evidence.

Public Comment:

Las Vegas Board Room:

Michele Spiger
Tessa Spiger
Teri McNabb
Gloria Terrazas
Jessica Licea
Chitiaka Henry
Audra Brennan
Autumn Adriana Ombrese
Faith Ashley Ombrese
Carey Gonzalez
Sarah Pamatier
Emma Palmtier
Naomi Carden
Nola Rodgers
Dr. Dona Thomas Rodgers
Maria Elenstaya
Albert Scarati
Charity Marshall
Kim Ackerson
Lucas Cruz
Brenden Hernandez
Jennifer Fletcher
Katelyn Saunders
Tawnya Burks
Jamie Smith
Jon Bennett
Angel Flores

Carson City Board Room:

Jennifer Slider
Kim Woodruff
Chad Venters
Levi Venters
Mary McLaughlin
Mary Kay Koch
Alicia Trusty
Alejandro Sabogal

Member Cyr left the meeting at 4:30pm.

Chair Mackedon and Mr. Herrick discussed the options regarding the school's request for postponement.

Member Moulton moved to approve, based on Nevada Revised Statute 388A.285, Nevada Administrative Code 388A.415, the criteria of the SPCSA for the renewal of a charter contract, the recommendation of the Executive Director Feiden, the totality of the evidence, and, most importantly, the academic performance of students at Nevada Connections Academy and the performance of Nevada Connections Academy during the term of its charter school contract, I move that Nevada Connections Academy's charter school renewal application be denied. Member Randolph seconded the motion.

There was further discussion between the Authority regarding the proposed motion.

Chair Mackedon called the vote. Member Soifer opposed the motion. The motion carried 4-1.

e. Quest Preparatory Academy

Director Modrcin provided staff's recommendation which can be found in the supporting materials for this meeting.

John Kern, Receiver, Quest Preparatory Academy, provided an update on behalf of the school. They made a settlement agreement with CSP Bridger, which was executed today and provided to the Board this morning. In addition, there was a lease amendment which will be executed once CSP Bridger becomes the owner and landlord at two of the four properties; the draft of that has also been submitted to the Board as of this morning.

Janelle Veith, Principal, Quest Preparatory Academy, responded to the Authority's questions regarding the student growth and the staff turnover.

No public comment related to this agenda item.

Member Kirner moved to approve, with conditions as outlined in staff's recommendation in the supporting documents, the charter renewal of Quest Preparatory Academy for a 3-year term, beginning in July 1, 2020. Member Moulton seconded the motion. Chair Mackedon called the vote. The motion carried unanimously.

Agenda Item 10 – Long Range Board Calendar

Executive Director Feiden said to expect the schools that received a Notice of Breach in October to come before the Board and provide their updates at the March meeting. The schools that were on Notice of Concern had to provide a written update and staff will provide a summary of that. In addition, staff expects the resubmitted applications to be on the March agenda and staff anticipates the application received during the winter cycle will go on the April agenda. There will also be some Discovery and Quest updates.

Member Moulton said that professional development for the Board is important and inquired about the status of that being set up. Executive Director Feiden said that she will follow-up with potential professional development.

No public comment related to this agenda item.

Agenda Item 11 – Public Comment

No public comment related to this agenda item.

Agenda Item 12 – Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 6:09pm.