

Charter School Application Report

Sage Collegiate Public Charter School

Recommendation for the Resubmitted Summer 2019 Charter Application Cycle

General Information

Proposed Name	Sage Collegiate Public Charter School
Proposed Mission	With a commitment to excellence for all and a belief in the power of an education, Sage Collegiate Public Charter School educates K-8 students for academic achievement, college success, and a life of opportunity.
Proposed CMO/EMO	N/A
Proposed Grade Configuration	Opening: Kindergarten – 2 nd grade Full-Scale: Kindergarten – 8 th grade
Proposed Opening	August 2020
Proposed Location	89107 and 89108 zip codes

Process/Key Dates for Sage Collegiate Public Charter School

- New Charter Application Training
- March 15, 2019 – Notice of Intent is received
- July 15, 2019 – Application is received
- August 11, 2019 – AB 462 Addendum is received
- October 18, 2019 - Capacity Interview is conducted
- December 17, 2019 – Application is denied by the Authority
- January 6, 2020 – SPCSA staff met and conferred with Sage Collegiate committee to form on the method to correct the identified deficiencies
- January 22, 2020 – Resubmitted application is received by the Authority¹
- February 19, 2020 – SPCSA staff discussed resubmission with applicant team

¹ The Sage Collegiate Committee to Form requested one additional meeting prior to January 22, 2020 and sent several questions via email to further discuss the deficiencies within the initial charter application as well.

Planned Enrollment Chart

	<u>2020-21</u>	<u>2021-22</u>	<u>2022-23</u>	<u>2023-24</u>	<u>2024-25</u>	<u>2025-26</u>
<u>K</u>	56	56	56	56	56	56
<u>1</u>	56	56	56	56	56	56
<u>2</u>	56	56	56	56	56	56
<u>3</u>	0	56	56	56	56	56
<u>4</u>	0	0	56	56	56	56
<u>5</u>	0	0	0	56	60	60
<u>6</u>	0	0	0	0	60	60
<u>7</u>	0	0	0	0	0	60
<u>8</u>	0	0	0	0	0	0
<u>9</u>						
<u>10</u>						
<u>11</u>						
<u>12</u>						
<u>Total</u>	168	224	280	336	400	460

Executive Summary, Process and Recommendation

During the December 17, 2019 Authority meeting, SPCSA staff presented the findings of the initial review committee and SPCSA staff for the Sage Collegiate Public Charter School charter application. The initial application was found to exhibit shortcomings within all four of the components of the submitted application. The review committee and SPCSA staff found that the proposed academic, organizational and financial plans did not meet the standards as outlined in the charter application rubric. The review committee and SPCSA staff also found that the application also did not Meet the Standard within the Meeting the Need component of the application.

A second committee comprised of SPCSA staff reviewed the resubmitted Sage Collegiate application after it was received on January 22, 2020. The review committee approached rating the resubmission with two primary concentrations:

- To determine if the applicant had corrected the original deficiencies found in the original application; and
- To verify that the applicant's resubmission did not change the rating of any component of the rubric that was determined to previously Meet Standard

Upon resubmission, the review committee determined that a few deficiencies within the original application had been addressed, and the ratings against the charter application rubric

reflected these changes. Some, minimal improvements were found within the academic, operations, and financial sections. The resubmission provided clarification regarding the proposed curricular materials increasing the rating in this area to 'Approaches the Standard.' In addition, the Committee to Form provided some additional information about their efforts to identify a facility, also leading to an improved rating of 'Approaches the Standard.' The updated budget addressed several deficiencies that had been identified, including inconsistencies between the narrative and budget workbook in areas such as equipment, funding for parent meetings, and staff bonuses.

Despite the modifications within the resubmission, the review committee has determined that the application has not 'Met the Standard' in a sufficient number of application components to be recommended for approval. The review committee finds that a significant number of deficiencies exist within the resubmitted application. The resubmission included five additional letters of support along with narrative outlining efforts to work with local day care facilities in and around the target community. However, the resubmission does not demonstrated clear evidence of the involvement of parents, neighborhood, and/or community members in the development of the plan.

Additionally, the review committee determined that significant deficiencies remain in the Academic, Financial and Organizational sections. The resubmission does not include documentation or evidence to substantiate that the identified facility options will meet the physical and budgetary requirements of the proposed school. In addition, the timelines within the proposed incubation year plan and for filling board vacancies raise concerns about the preparedness of the committee to form to launch a school. While clarity around the curriculum was provided, there is still not sufficient evidence that the academic program fully aligns to the Nevada Academic Content Standards. Finally, there were a number of sections in the initial application that were rated as 'Approaches the Standard' in which limited or no changes were made. Thus, these sections continue to be rated as 'Approaches the Standard.'

For these major reasons, in addition to those outlined, SPCSA staff's recommends that the Authority deny the Sage Colligate Public Charter School application. The proposed school does not meet or exceed the minimum financial or administrative operating standards, procedures and requirements. Sound evidence is not provided which demonstrates the effectiveness of the educational program proposed for the school.

Proposed motion: Deny the Sage Collegiate Public Charter School application as resubmitted during the 2019 Summer Application Cycle based on a finding that the applicant has failed to satisfy the requirements contained in NRS 388A.249(3).

Summary of Application Section Ratings

The State Public Charter School Authority is required to assemble a team of reviewers and conduct a thorough evaluation of the application, which includes an in-person interview with the applicant designed to elicit any necessary clarification or additional information about the proposed charter school. The SPCSA is required to adhere to its policies and practices, namely the application guidance, training and rubric, regarding evaluating charter applications. Ultimately, the SPCSA must base its determination on the documented evidence collected through the application process.

Rating options for each section are Meets the Standard; Approaches the Standard; Does not Meet the Standard. These are defined as follows:

- **Meets the Standard:** The response reflects a thorough understanding of key issues. It addresses the topic with specific and accurate information that shows thorough preparation; presents a clear, realistic picture of how the school expects to operate; and inspires confidence in the applicant's capacity to carry out the plan effectively in a way which will result in a 4- or 5-star school.
- **Approaches the Standard:** The response meets the criteria in many respects but lacks detail and/or requires additional information in one or more areas.
- **Does Not Meet the Standard:** The response is undeveloped or incomplete; demonstrates lack of preparation; or otherwise raises substantial concerns about the viability of the plan or the applicant's ability to carry it out.

The rubric is broken into four major sections as outlined below and detailed descriptions of each rubric item can be found in the full rubric. A copy of the rubric used for this cycle can be found here: <http://charterschools.nv.gov/uploadedFiles/CharterSchoolsnvgov/content/News/2019/191217-Updated-Application-Rubric.pdf>

<u>Application Section</u>	<u>Initial Rating</u>	<u>Resubmission Rating</u>
Meeting the Need	Approaches the Standard	Approaches the Standard
Targeted Plan	Meets the Standard	Meets the Standard
Parent and Community Involvement	Approaches the Standard	Approaches the Standard
Academic Plan	Approaches the Standard	Approaches the Standard
Mission and Vision	Meets the Standard	Meets the Standard
Transformational Change	Approaches the Standard	Approaches the Standard
Curriculum & Instructional Design	Does Not Meet the Standard	Approaches the Standard
Distance Education Requirements	N/A	N/A
Pre-K Requirements	N/A	N/A
High School Graduation Requirements	N/A	N/A
Driving for Results	Meets the Standard	Meets the Standard
At-Risk Students and Special Populations	Approaches the Standard	Approaches the Standard
School Structure (Culture)	Approaches the Standard	Approaches the Standard
School Structure (Student Discipline)	Approaches the Standard	Approaches the Standard
School Structure (Calendar and Schedule)	Meets the Standard	Meets the Standard
A Day in the Life & Scenarios	Meets the Standard	Meets the Standard
Operations Plan	Approaches the Standard	Approaches the Standard
Leadership Team	Approaches the Standard	Approaches the Standard
Leadership for Expansion	N/A	N/A
Staffing	Approaches the Standard	Approaches the Standard
Human Resources	Meets the Standard	Meets the Standard
Scale Strategy	N/A	N/A
Student Recruitment and Enrollment	Meets the Standard	Meets the Standard
Board Governance	Approaches the Standard	Approaches the Standard
Incubation Year Development	Meets the Standard	Approaches the Standard
School Management Contracts	N/A	N/A
Services	Approaches the Standard	Approaches the Standard
Facilities	Does Not Meet the Standard	Approaches the Standard
Ongoing Operations	Approaches the Standard	Approaches the Standard
Financial Plan	Does Not Meet the Standard	Approaches the Standard

Meeting the Need Section

This section of the application was initially rated as 'Approached Standard' due to little to no evidence of engagement in the local community. While the applicant aims to serve a community with a high percentage of students in poverty and where there are a significant number of existing 1- and 2-star schools, there were no letters of support from stakeholders or organizations in the community and there was no evidence of how the community had contributed to the development of the proposal. The strengths of the original application remain in place and the resubmission shows slight progress with regard to community engagement and partnerships. However, the resubmission does not provide evidence of parental and community member involvement in the plan. Given that the applicant proposes to open in less than six months, this is insufficient. Ultimately, this section is still rated as 'Approaches the Standard' for the resubmitted application.

Areas of Strength

- The target community has been identified as zip codes 89107 and 89108. These zip codes have many 1- and 2-star schools. In addition, the schools in the community are largely student populations that are 100% FRL. The capacity interview reinforced the committee to form's commitment to the target zip codes and serving a high-need/at-risk student population.
- A detailed explanation of the target community is presented, and the proposed ED has firsthand experience and knowledge of the identified community. In addition, the proposed ED has previously supported teachers working in schools in the target community. The proposed ED is currently working as a teacher in a school within one of the identified zip codes of the application. Multiple board members also have connections within the identified zip codes.
- The application is very explicit that there will be no mandatory volunteering, donations, or fees as conditions of enrollment in the school.

Areas of Concern

- The applicant does not show evidence of the involvement of parents, neighborhood, and/or community members representative of target population in the development of the plan. Specifically, none of the original letters of support were from community members or organization located in the target community. In the resubmission, the applicant provided five additional letters of support, four of which are from community members and only one of which appears to have elementary age children. It is not clear how these individuals were involved in the development of the proposed school.
- In addition, the resubmitted application describes outreach to three local daycares and participation in the Las Vegas School Choice Fair. When staff discussed the resubmission with members of the committee to form, the committee stated that there were approximately 60 parents interested in the school. However, no intent to enroll or parent interest forms were provided.
- The application rubric asks for applicants to identify and substantiate specific partnerships (with clear, measurable, time-specific deliverables) which are relevant to the needs of the

target population. While the applicant references working with daycares in the community in the resubmission and identifies planned community partners within the application itself, no letters of support have been provided.

Academic Section

This section of the initial application was rated as 'Approaches Standard.' While a range of research-based instructional strategies and programs had been identified, the applicant had not yet decided on or committed to which would be implemented. In addition, many details were lacking, and it was not clear how the multitude of programs and strategies would be implemented in a coherent manner.

Upon resubmission, the applicant attempted to address some of these concerns. Specifically, the applicant provided sufficient information regarding the process for exiting students from special education services. Ultimately, few of the concerns were resolved. While the resubmission provided clarity on the specific curricular programs that would be used for ELA, Math, Science and Social Studies, the applicant still does not provide evidence, demonstrating how each part of the school's academic program aligns to the Nevada Academic Content Standards. In addition, several sections of the application that were rated as 'Approaches Standard' were left unchanged or had limited improvements. Ultimately, the overall rating for this section remains unchanged at 'Approaches Standard.'

Areas of Strength

- Guiding purposes and priorities for the proposed school are very explicit, align with the committee to form's philosophy and mission, and the strategy for measurement is also identified.
- The applicant identifies a range of research-based instructional strategies and programs that could be successful if implemented with fidelity.
- Academic goals and measures are clear, measurable, realistic and ambitious. The applicant states students will have their own data binder to allow for students and families to track their progress. In addition, the applicant uses known reliable (valid) internal assessments STEP and NWEA.
- The applicant has provided a clear and appropriate delineation within the state-mandated Response to Intervention model. The applicant has ensured that the rights of students with disabilities have been considered and appear to be protected regarding discipline within the application.
- The narrative clearly explains how the proposed school will exceed the average number of calendar days in year 1 and assures the calendar will always have 180 days as required. The number of instructional minutes required is met and exceeded at each grade level and the calendar and schedule seem reasonable to support the delivery of the program.

Areas of Concern

- In the resubmission, the applicant specified the proposed curriculum, including a back-up option should there be a need to reduce the cost of curricular materials. During the discussion with the committee to form regarding the curriculum, the applicant specified that Appendix BB is meant to clarify the information regarding the ELA and math curriculum and that the applicant intends to use the science and social studies curriculum as proposed. Ultimately, the proposed math curriculum aligns to the Nevada

Academic Content Standards (NVACS), but insufficient evidence was provided to demonstrate that other content areas also align to NVACS.

- In the resubmitted application, the applicant did not make any changes to the Transformational Change portion of the application, which was initially rated as 'Approaches Standard.' While key components of the model are identified and are research-based, the application is lacking in detail regarding how these components would be implemented in a coherent manner. Responsible parties, target population, actions, timelines, context, delivery methods, and rationale are not provided for many of the identified components.
- In the resubmission, the applicant provided some additional information as to how the resources and books identified in the School Culture section would be used and incorporated into professional development. However, the application still lacks necessary levels of detail as to concrete plans for norming social/cultural expectations at the start of each semester as well as for students who enter mid- semester and plans to establish a culture of high expectations with students/families and teachers/staff and promote positive behavior. While the applicant has a vision for how students and staff will operate within the school, the plan to realize this vision is not fully developed.
- In the resubmission, the applicant provided some clarification that the "core values tracker" referred to in the original application is the respective clip change chart and merit/de-merit systems for elementary and middle schools respectively. However, no additional information is provided to clarify how each of the systems function.
- In the resubmission, the applicant provides brief additional information to identify models for restorative justice practices. However, the approach remains underdeveloped throughout the culture or discipline sections.
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Operations Section

This section of the initial application was rated as 'Approaches Standard.' Among the most significant concerns, at the time of submission, only two proposed board members had been identified. While the applicant has made noticeable progress in identifying three additional, qualified board members, it was not clear that the proposed board was fully prepared to launch the school and hold the proposed school leader accountable. In addition, the applicant did not provide convincing evidence that a facility that meets both the physical and budgetary requirements could be identified and prepared in time for a fall 2020 opening.

Upon resubmission, the applicant provided some additional information related to several of these concerns, but ultimately many are still unresolved. Specifically, the applicant provided clarification about board responsibilities and information about the qualities the board seeks as they fill remaining board vacancies. However, the proposed deadline for filling these vacancies is June 30th, which raises substantial concerns about preparedness to launch the school. While some high-level information about two prospective facilities, the applicant does not provide either necessary documentation to substantiate the viability of these options nor a detailed plan and timeline. Several sections of the application that were rated as 'Approaches the Standard' were left unchanged or had limited improvements. Ultimately, the overall rating for this section remains

unchanged at 'Approaches the Standard.'

Areas of Strength

- The organizational charts presented for year 1 and at scale are clear and reasonable. Each position is included in the draft proposed budget. Positions are clear and leadership responsibilities seem to be reasonably spread across the team. In addition, the year 7 chart includes a HS outreach position and a director of development, as well as enrichment teachers.
- Coaching and PD will be provided to the proposed school leader and proposed board through Building Excellent Schools. The qualifications and competencies of the proposed leader are very well described and paint a clear picture of a capable professional with relevant experience and skills.
- The narrative articulates a clear process for hiring in alignment with the school's core values and academic program. The school plans to offer slightly higher salaries than other local schools as an incentive to recruit talent and has a benefits package. The rationales are explained in the budget narrative.
- A thoughtful approach to teacher observations and evaluations is presented, along with an identified exemplar rubric. The evaluation system includes measures of student growth and achievement, which strongly aligns with the proposed school's identified goals and the standards established by the Authority.
- In order to maximize enrollment for students with special needs or those considered at-risk, the narrative identifies a number of detailed and targeted enrollment preferences to be exercised during the lottery and acknowledges being a Charter School Program grant recipient might hinder the use of the preferences, should grant funds be awarded. This demonstrates a very thoughtful and knowledgeable approach to policies related to student admissions.
- The rationale behind the slow growth model is explained and research is cited to support the approach.

Areas of Concern

- Though the five proposed board members are qualified, it cannot be determined that the governance structure is likely to ensure effective oversight. Specifically, some of the proposed board members have had limited engagement in the development of the proposed school due to when they joined the committee to form. In addition, the application indicates that the deadline for bringing on the two remaining members, including the community representative, is June 30, 2020. This raises questions about the boards capacity to effectively launch the school with proper oversight in approximately six months.
- At the time of submission of the application, a facility had not been identified and details regarding the steps and timeline to secure and prepare a facility were lacking. In addition, the budget assumptions related to leasing and tenant improvement costs raised significant questions as to whether a viable facility exists within the budgeted amount. In the resubmission, the applicant provided a letter of support from Building Hope which states that the organization is "supporting the school as it pursues a facility and financing to

support the facility.” In addition, the letter from Building Hope indicates that they “believe there are facilities opportunities in the communities Sage Collegiate has outlined in its application that will be great temporary and permanent facilities.” While the Appeal for Authorization Memo provided by the Sage Collegiate committee to form states that the applicant has identified two strong options and provides the square footage of these options, no documentation was provided. During the discussion with the committee to form regarding the resubmission, the applicant stated they were hesitant to provide specifics regarding the location due to fears that others would be competing for the same space. The applicant provided some information regarding the leading facility option, but did not provide sufficient details to give confidence that the option would be viable with regard to the timeline and cost. More evidence is needed to assess the viability of the facility and corresponding budgetary assumptions.

- The initial review of the application raised concerns that professional development requirements to keep up with multiple methods of instruction would require large workload for teachers and may lead to burnout. While the applicant states in the Appeal for Authorization Memo provided by the Sage Collegiate committee to form that the planned professional development is “designed based upon the best practices of high-performing schools and based on practices observed by Lead Founder during visits to BES supported schools” and that the planned professional development is comparable with that of Las Vegas Collegiate, the resubmission provides no additional detail or evidence to support these statements or clarify how Sage Collegiate would work to mitigate the risks of burnout.
- The initial review of the application raised concerns that the plan for safety and security is not fully developed. In the Appeal for Authorization Memo provided by the Sage Collegiate committee to form, the applicant reaffirms a commitment to a “strong safety and security plan in place in advance of the first day of school” and speaks to the need to review the details of the facility and speak with local law enforcement prior to developing a safety and security plan, no additional information or details are provided regarding how the applicant will work to develop the plan and ensure it is in line with the requirements of statute and regulation. Ultimately, the applicant does not demonstrate a) safety and security plans likely to ensure a safe environment for people and property, nor b) a strong understanding of the core elements of the state-mandated school safety plan and the requirements in statute and regulation.
- The initial application was rated as ‘Approaches the Standard’ in the following sections: Leadership Team, Staff, and Services. No substantive changes were made to these sections and thus each remained rated as ‘Approaches the Standard.’
- While the Incubation Year Development section of the application was rated as meeting standards in the initial application, the applicant has made no changes to this plan to reflect the shortened timeline before opening, should the applicant be approved. During the discussion regarding the resubmission with the committee to form, when asked about the lottery timeline and target date for being fully staffed, the applicant acknowledged that both of the proposed timelines would need to be adjusted. While the initial application indicated the ability of the applicant to identify and sequence key milestones, it is not clear that the timeline can be adjusted to ensure that the school is ready for a successful launch.

Financial Section

This section of the initial application was rated as 'Does Not Meet Standard.' While the applicant had identified a reputable back office support firm and used conservative estimate regarding revenue, the budget raised many questions and was acknowledged by the committee to form as "very preliminary."

The resubmitted application included an updated budget that directly addressed several of the specific concerns initially identified by the review committee. In addition, the Appeal for Authorization Memo provided by the Sage Collegiate committee to form states that Sage Collegiate has received a Charter School Program grant, contingent upon authorization, that would support several start-up expenses, including the purchase of the desired curricular materials. Although the applicant provided a letter of support from Building Hope, the limited details regarding potential facilities continues to raise significant concerns regarding the viability of a facility that meets the required timeline, physical specification and budget. Ultimately, the rating for this section improved to 'Approaches the Standard,' but still does not 'Meet Standards'.

Areas of Strength

- The proposed school plans to contract with a reputable back office support firm with charter school experience to support basic, operational functions. The narrative demonstrates a thoughtful approach to acquiring this firm and clear expectations for what the process will entail (competitive bids, competitive pricing, mission alignment).
- The applicant used conservative estimates for ongoing school funding.
- In the resubmission, the applicant made several updates to the budget to address issues identified by the review committee in the initial application.

Areas of Concern

- In some cases, budget assumptions do not appear to be realistic and evidence-based. With regard to the lease rates, in the resubmission, the applicant provided a letter of support from Building Hope which states that the organization is "supporting the school as it pursues a facility and financing to support the facility." In addition, the letter from Building Hope indicates that they "believe there are facilities opportunities in the communities Sage Collegiate has outlined in its application that will be great temporary and permanent facilities." While the Appeal for Authorization Memo provided by the Sage Collegiate committee to form states that the applicant has identified two strong options and provides the square footage of these options, no documentation was provided. During the discussion with the committee to form regarding the resubmission, the applicant stated they were hesitant to provide specifics regarding the location due to fears that others would be competing for the same space. The applicant provided some additional limited details regarding the leading facility option, but did not provide sufficient details to give confidence that the option would be viable with regard to the timeline and cost. There are also concerns about the budget assumptions for faculty laptops and utilities.
- The only major contingency outlined for a budget shortfall is short term borrowing. There is no discussion of what, if any programs could be modified if a shortfall were to occur.

Capacity Interview Summary

Based on the independent and collective review of the application, the review committee conducted a 90-minute in-person interview of the applicant to elicit any necessary clarifications or additional information about the proposed charter school and determine the ability of the applicants to establish a high-quality charter school. The capacity interview for Sage Collegiate Public Charter School was conducted on Monday October 28. All but one of the proposed members of the Committee to Form attended on behalf of the applicant. Additionally, one representative from EdTech, a potential vendor to provide back office services, who assisted with the development of the budget attended the capacity interview. Questions during the capacity interview were developed by the team of reviewers to specifically address the details of the Sage Collegiate application and focused primarily on five key areas:

- The ability of the applicant to meet one or more of the academic or demographic needs as outlined in the SPCSA Academic and Demographic Needs Assessment.
- School Leadership and Governance, including the experience, skills, and qualifications of members of the founding team and the proposed board's approach to governance and accountability.
- The academic plan, including curriculum, instructional strategies, programs, professional development, and student supports.
- The operations plan including vendors, services, insurance, and school safety.
- The financial plan, including the proposed budget, prospective facilities, cash flow, and alignment to the proposed academic model.

Information gleaned from the capacity interview were coupled with the initial review of the application to determine final ratings on the rubric. Relevant information from the capacity interview is incorporated in the findings outlined above.

Meet and Confer

Members of the Sage Collegiate Public Charter School Committee to Form met with SPCSA staff to discuss the deficiencies on one occasion and emailed staff with questions prior to the January 22, 2020 resubmission. The applicant team asked several questions and sought clarity about the identified deficiencies.

District Input

Per Assembly Bill 462 (2019), the SPCSA solicited input from the Clark County School District regarding this application². The timeline regarding this request for input is below and the response provided by the Clark County School District is attached.

- September 16, 2019 – Memo sent to CCSD soliciting input.
- November 6, 2019 – Presentation by CCSD staff to CCSD Board of Trustees regarding input.

² Assembly Bill 462 (2019) section 6.3, subsection 1, paragraph (d): "The proposed sponsor of a charter school shall, in reviewing an application to form a charter school...If the proposed sponsor is not the board of trustees of a school district, solicit input from the board of trustees of the school district in which the proposed charter school will be located."

- November 13, 2019 – Written input provided from CCSD to SPCSA.
- January 14, 2020 – Written notification from the SPCSA to CCSD regarding the potential for resubmission of this application.
- January 23, 2020 – Written notification from the SPCSA to CCSD regarding timeline for possible action on the Sage Collegiate Public Charter School resubmitted application.