



NEVADA STATE PUBLIC CHARTER SCHOOL AUTHORITY

October 2, 2020

In compliance with the Governor's Emergency Directives related to COVID-19, the October 2, 2020 Meeting of the State Public Charter School Authority was conducted virtually and livestreamed.

MINUTES OF THE MEETING

BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT (via video):

Member Lee Farris
Member Tamika Shauntee Rosales
Member Don Soifer
Member Tonia Holmes-Sutton
Member Mallory Cyr
Member Sami Randolph
Member Sheila Moulton
Vice Chair Randy Kirner
Chair Melissa Mackedon

AUTHORITY STAFF PRESENT (via video):

Rebecca Feiden, Executive Director
Ryan Herrick, General Counsel
Mark Modrcin, Director of Authorizing
Danny Peltier, Management Analyst I
Michael Dang, Management Analyst IV

AUDIENCE IN ATTENDANCE:

Tambre Tondryk
Amanda Galindo
Carlos Alvarez
Jill Nestor
Ben Salkowe
Jessica LaNeave
Jose Herrera
Victor Salcido
Joshua Kern
Chris McBride
Christine Dzarnowski
Kathryn Vaughan

Agenda Item 1 – Call to Order, Roll Call, and Pledge of Allegiance [00:02:33]

Chair Mackedon called the meeting to order at 9:08am, with attendance reflected above.

Agenda Item 2 – Public Comment #1 [00:04:26]

Written public comment submitted via email:

1. Joseph R. Maridon, Jr., regarding the COVID-19 learning guidance.
2. Joseph R. Maridon, Jr., regarding the COVID-19 learning guidance.
3. Amy Jeffers, regarding the COVID-19 learning guidance.
4. Brittany Bitsko, in support of charter schools opening at 100%
5. Jennifer Loors, regarding the COVID-19 learning guidance.

Public comment via phone during the meeting:

1. Victor Salcido, Executive Director of CSAN, spoke regarding the criteria schools will be measured in for performance and accountability considering the conditions on the ground.

Agenda Item 3 – Approval of August 28, 2020 Board Meeting Action Minutes. [00:09:48]

Member Kirner recused himself from this item as he was absent from the August 28, 2020 meeting.

MOTION: Member Moulton moved to approve the August 28, 2020 Board Meeting Action Minutes. Member Shauntee Rosales seconded. The motion carried unanimously.

Agenda Item 4 – SPCSA Executive Director’s Report. [00:11:24]

a. Response to COVID-19 pandemic and the reopening of schools

Rebecca Feiden, Executive Director provided the overview of the COVID-19 Learning Guidance that is currently in place for SPCSA-sponsored charter schools following the board’s action on August 14. The guidance is based on the new, county-level approach to mitigating the spread of COVID-19 that relies on public health data. Before giving the recap of the guidance that the SPCSA Board established, she walked through some of the state’s data that has been reported in the last month.

Going forward, the SPCSA staff expects to continue to keep tabs on the COVID-19 mitigation and management task force and continue to share weekly updates with SPCSA-sponsored charter schools on these updates. They plan to look closely at the data from schools and the data coming in from across the country regarding cases in schools.

Executive Director Feiden spoke on two additional items, first being connectivity and devices. SPCSA staff are excited to share that they recently signed a contract and put in place a process with Cox Communications to get students in Clark County that do not have internet online. Lastly, she noted they have been in touch with the Taskforce Initiative for Educator Safety and Screening (T.I.E.S.) program which is funded through the Cares Act to provide testing and symptom monitoring for teachers across the state of Nevada and are excited to partner with them to bring that program to our schools in the coming weeks.

b. Initiatives related to *Serving All Students Equitably* [00:34:50]

Executive Director Feiden said they have a subsequent item to hear from two SPCSA-sponsored schools to directly address issues of equity. She provided a brief update on the things SPCSA staff have been working on and the impacts they are seeing on the changes they have made.

c. Academic Performance Framework and Nevada School Performance Framework [00:36:23]

Executive Director Feiden provided the update regarding assessments and academic performance and how it will be monitored by the SPCSA given current circumstances. Since the SPCSA's Academic Performance Framework is based partially on NSPF Star Ratings (which have been suspended for the 2019-2020 school year and applied NSPF star ratings from the 2018-2019 school year) the SPCSA will not issue ratings. Instead, they will provide schools and the Authority with partially completed Academic Performance Reports based on the data available. The SPCSA will work with schools and NDE to prepare for alternative scenarios for the 2020-2021 given the unprecedented situation.

d. Grant Monitoring Protocol [00:42:55]

Executive Director Feiden provided the update regarding the following documents that were sent to schools today:

- Federal and State Risk Assessment Protocol
- Federal and State Grant Monitoring Activities

See supporting materials for documents for additional details. These guidelines will help the SPCSA monitor its schools for federal grant compliance as well as state grant compliance for those grants passed through the SPCSA.

e. Senate Bill 441 [00:45:04]

Executive Director Feiden provided an update regarding Senate Bill 411. During the 2019 Legislative Session, several recommendations were provided to the Legislature from various stakeholders in regard to SB 441's provisions. A more detailed summary of these recommendations can be found in the SPCSA's July 6, 2020 memorandum to Nevada's Superintendent of Public Instruction, which is included in the supporting materials for this agenda item.

Agenda Item 5 – Focus on Schools [00:47:25]

a. Beacon Academy

Tambre Tondryk, Executive Director, joined with Jill Nestor, School Social Worker, Beacon Academy, gave their presentation on addressing equity and their best practices. She highlighted the following areas:

- Staff and student recruitment efforts
- Creating positive school culture
- Community partnerships
- Early identification of at-risk students
- Student application and success plan

Further discussion ensued between the Authority and Beacon Academy staff.

b. Equipo Academy [01:25:37]

Ben Salkowe, Founding Principal, Equipo Academy, spoke about how their board, leadership team, staff and students took on the challenges during the growing and sudden awareness of our society and the trauma the students and teachers of color are enduring on a daily basis. He said they collectively talked about what they could do in their community to recognize and acknowledge the ways in which they could do better. In response to the things that were going on, they decided to make a statement that their students' and staffs' lives mattered to them and they thought it was important to say black lives matter as an organization and a team. He talked about their plan to implement an external audit on their equity, inclusivity, and diversity of their organization and report it to their community and take the feedback and guidance and share it with their team so they know where to fix things.

There was further discussion between Mr. Salkowe and the Authority regarding their efforts related to serving students equitably and the challenges they have faced.

A 5-minute convenience break was taken.

Agenda Item 6 – CIVICA Nevada Career and Collegiate Academy Charter School Update [02:00:03]

Director Modrcin provided the background on the recently conditionally approved school. He said SPCSA staff formerly signed off on one of their three conditions and the two other conditions are very close to being completed. All will be satisfied no later than January.

The CIVICA Nevada Career and Collegiate Academy Charter School (CIVICA) team began their PowerPoint presentation. See supporting materials for PowerPoint.

Jessica LaNeave, Board Chair, CIVICA, provided the update regarding the governance the school has in place. They have formalized their board and are meeting monthly. She spoke briefly to the application condition submissions.

Carlos Alvarez, President and Chief Academic Officer, CIVICA, provided the update regarding what their school has been up to and planning in the coming months. He spoke to their principal leadership and mentoring program they recently put in place.

Jose Herrera, Principal, CIVICA, provided the facilities update.

Amanda Galindo, Director of Communications and Community Relations, Academica Nevada, provided the update related to CIVICA's marketing, communications, and upcoming events.

No action taken on this agenda item.

Agenda Item 7 – Schools Under Receivership or Previously Under Receivership. [02:21:13]

b. Quest Academy Update.

Director Modrcin provided the background for the Quest Academy update. The effective date for Quest Academy transitioning out of receivership is October 15, 2020. Mr. Kern has been working with the board to prepare them for that transition and he is here to provide an update with a member of their board.

Joshua Kern, Receiver, Quest Academy, provided the progress to date related to their board. They had their first meeting and are preparing for their next meeting. He was joined by board member Kelle Snow.

a. Argent Preparatory Academy Update. [02:24:25]

Joshua Kern, Receiver, Argent Preparatory, provided the Authority Board with an update regarding Quest Academy and their transition from receivership to a fully constituted board. They are still under contract for their property and the sales contract has been extended. Unfortunately closing has taken longer than expected. He will keep the Authority and SPCSA staff informed of updates.

There was further discussion between the Authority, SPCSA staff and school representatives regarding the financials.

No action taken on this agenda item.

Agenda Item 8 – Nevada Connections Academy. SPCSA staff and school representatives will provide an update regarding Nevada Connections Academy and the progress related to the 3-year charter school contract for their high school that commenced on July 1, 2020. [02:33:23]

Executive Director Feiden provided a brief background regarding Nevada Connections Academy and their recent contract renewal and SPCSA staff's vested interest in making sure the school is proactive in addressing some of its previous performance challenges. Representatives from the school are here today to provide the update about how the beginning of the school year is going and what they are doing differently.

Chris McBride, Superintendent, Nevada Connections Academy began their PowerPoint presentation which can be found in the supporting materials. He is joined by Principals Christine Dzarnowski and Kathryn Vaughan. The team provided updates in the following areas:

- NSPF Targets
- Academic achievement
- Graduation rate
- College and career readiness
- Student engagement
- Performance framework targets
- 20-21 culture shift
- Governing board

There was further conversation between the Authority and school representatives regarding the school's update and efforts related thereto.

No action taken on this agenda item.

Agenda Item 9 – New School Application Process [03:23:36]

Director Modrcin provided the update for the SPCSA new charter school application process. As the Authority is aware, five charter school proposals were submitted to the SPCSA during the summer application cycle, all of which have been posted in the meeting materials and on the SPCSA's website. He gave the presentation on the overview on the new school application process and highlighted the following areas (see PowerPoint in supporting materials):

- Requirements
- Process and timeline
- Charter school lifecycle
- Evaluation rubric criteria
- SPCSA staff's review team process

He noted the noteworthy changes which were around the revised and updated rubric to eliminate redundancies and streamline the process, the added scenario-based experience in the capacity interview, and the modified financial plan workbook to request additional information and assumptions.

Lastly, Director Modrcin informed the board of the fifteen 2021 winter charter application cycle notices of intent the SPCSA received. These have been posted in the supporting materials. SPCSA staff will be engaging with these applicants in the coming months as they submit their applications and staff is planning a formal training for these applicants and other perspective schools at the end of this month.

No action taken on this agenda item.

Agenda Item 10 – State Public Charter School Authority Organizational Performance Framework. [03:37:00]

Director Modrcin provided the overview for the SPCSA organizational performance framework and discussed the following items from the PowerPoint (see supporting materials):

- Objectives
- Defining performance framework
- Development implementation
- Principles
- Balancing Autonomy and Accountability
- Areas of focus

Michael Dang, Management Analyst IV, continued the presentation and discussed the following areas:

- Ratings
- Scoring: how points are awarded

Director Modrcin, proceeded with the remaining components of the presentation below:

- Interventions
- Key milestones
- Objectives looking forward

No action taken on this agenda item.

Agenda Item 11 – Long-Range Calendar [03:49:54]

Executive Director Feiden provided the overview of the long-range calendar and noted that there are two meetings in December as there are renewals and amendments coming up.

Agenda Item 12 – Public Comment #2 [03:51:06]

Mr. Herrick said they received additional written public comment from Amy Jeffers again, previously mentioned this morning, regarding the COVID-19 learning guidance.

Agenda Item 13 – Adjournment [03:52:00]

The meeting was adjourned at 12:57pm.