

Charter School Application Report

Sage Collegiate Public Charter School

Recommendation from the Summer 2020 Charter Application Cycle

General Information

Proposed Name	Sage Collegiate Public Charter School
Proposed Mission	Driven by excellence for all in a supportive, rigorous, and ambitious school community, Sage Collegiate Public Charter School educates K-8 students for academic achievement, college success, and a life of opportunity.
Proposed Grade Configuration	Opening: Kindergarten – 2 nd grade Full-Scale: Kindergarten – 8 th grade
Proposed Opening	August 2021
Proposed Location	The school proposes to locate in the 89107, 89108, or 89146 zip code. The school proposes to serve students in the same zip codes (89107, 89108, and 89146)

Process/Key Dates for Sage Collegiate Public Charter School

- New Charter Application Training
- March 9, 2020 – Notice of Intent is received
- July 15, 2020 – Application is received
- September 28, 2020 - Capacity Interview is conducted¹
- November 6, 2020 – Recommendation is presented

¹ The Sage Collegiate Capacity Interview was conducted virtually as a result of prevailing Emergency Directives which limit capacity of gatherings, along with space limitations within the SPCSA’s offices.

Planned Enrollment Chart

	2021-22	2022-23	2023-24	2024-25	2025-26	2026-27
K	56	56	56	56	56	56
1	56	56	56	56	56	56
2	56	56	56	56	56	56
3		56	56	56	56	56
4			56	56	56	56
5				56	60	60
6					60	60
7						60
8						
9						
10						
11						
12						
Total	168	224	280	336	400	460

Executive Summary and Recommendation

The review committee, which included one member of the SPCSA staff and two external reviewers, unanimously recommends approval of the Sage Collegiate Public Charter School application with conditions as outlined herein.

The review committee and SPCSA staff find that the Sage Collegiate Public Charter School application meets the Geographic component of the SPCSA Academic and Demographic Needs Assessment and meets the standard for the Meeting the Need section of the application. The applicant has proposed a school model that includes demonstrated capacity, credible plans, and thorough research and analysis in order to intentionally provide access to 3, 4 and 5-Star schools in zip codes where students are attending a 1- or 2-Star school. This proposed model is built on elements of successful schools serving high-need communities across the country. The applicant intends to serve a population that is representative of the targeted community. Through the written application and capacity interview the applicant provided tangible evidence of community outreach and input on the application.

Both the review committee and SPCSA staff find that the proposed academic plan meets the standard as outlined in the charter application rubric. The plan is detailed, coherent and throughout the capacity interview, the Committee to Form demonstrated deep knowledge of the plan and how it would be brought to life. In particular, the academic model includes a strong focus on data-driven decisions, extensive and ongoing professional development, high expectations for student growth and performance, and a warm-strict atmosphere focused on learning. Multiple proposed board members were able to speak in detail about the proposed academic model.

The review committee and SPCSA staff find that the operations plans 'Meets the Standard' as outlined in the charter application rubric. The proposed members of the governing board and the school

leader bring a wealth of experience and a clear understanding of their roles, which they consistently demonstrated during the capacity interview. Overall, the operational plan is detailed and reasonable, though as outlined in the proposed motion below, additional details regarding staffing and facilities will need to be clarified during the incubation year.

The review committee and SPCSA staff find that the financial plans 'Approaches the Standard' as outlined in the charter application rubric. Specifically, while the budget is generally reasonable and based on realistic assumptions, it is not clear that sufficient resources have been allocated for serving at-risk students, particularly if the population of special education students and/or English Learners is larger than expected or requires more substantial supports.

Proposed motion: Approve the Sage Collegiate Public Charter School application as submitted during the 2020 Summer Application Cycle, with the conditions outlined below, based on a finding that the applicant meets the requirements contained in NRS 388A.249(3).

1. Provide an updated staffing plan and budget that addresses a scenario in which additional services are needed so as to meet the needs of special education students, English Learners, and students with behavior and/or social-emotional needs.
2. Provide a specific timeline and action plan for selecting and preparing a facility and engaging with the local jurisdiction by January 31, 2021.
3. Provide an updated list of proposed partnerships which also includes draft Memorandums of Understanding with each identified partner, and outlines deliverables and responsibilities of each party.

SPCSA Staff recommends that the Authority delegate the review and approval of these conditions to staff, with the understanding that the school will provide updates to the Authority periodically throughout the incubation year.

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 located on the SPCSA Application website:

http://charterschools.nv.gov/OpenASchool/Application_Packet/

Summary of Application Section Ratings

Rating options for each section are Meets the Standard; Approaches the Standard; Does not Meet the Standard.

Application Section	Rating
Meeting the Need	Meets the Standard
Mission and Vision	Meets the Standard
Targeted Plan	Meets the Standard
Parent and Community Involvement	Approaches the Standard
Academic Plan²	Meets the Standard
Transformational Change	Meets the Standard
Curriculum & Instructional Design	Meets the Standard
Promotion & High School Graduation Requirements	Meets the Standard
Driving for Results	Meets the Standard
At-Risk Students and Special Populations	Approaches the Standard
School Structure: Culture	Meets the Standard
School Structure: Student Discipline	Approaches the Standard
School Structure: Calendar and Schedule	Meets the Standard
Operations Plan	Meets the Standard
Board Governance	Meets the Standard
Leadership Team	Meets the Standard
Staffing Plan	Approaches the Standard
Human Resources	Meets the Standard
Student Recruitment and Enrollment	Meets the Standard
Incubation Year Development	Meets the Standard
Services	Approaches the Standard
Facilities	Approaches the Standard
Ongoing Operations	Meets the Standard
Financial Plan	Approaches the Standard

² The Sage Collegiate proposal did not contemplate distance education, Pre-Kindergarten nor do they propose to contract with an EMO or CMO. Therefore, the corresponding sections of the rubric were not scored.

Meeting the Need Section

The applicant intends to serve the 89107, 89108 and 89146 zip codes, and to locate within one of these zip codes. Each of these zip codes includes at least four elementary and/or middle schools that are rated as 1- or 2-star schools according to the Nevada School Performance Framework (NSPF) and appear in the SPCSA Academic and Demographic Needs Assessment. In addition, schools within these zip codes consistently serve a high percentage of students qualifying for free or reduced-price lunch as well as a large population of English Learners. The applicant anticipates serving a population in which 80% of students qualify for free or reduced-price lunch, 30% are English Learners, and 10% receive special education services. The proposed school is modeled after several high-performing charter schools across the country serving similar demographics and has a clear focus on ensuring academic and lifelong success for students, regardless of zip code, race, ethnicity, or socio-economic status. Through the written application and capacity interview, the applicant provided tangible evidence of community outreach and input on the application. For these reasons, as well as those detailed further below, the review committee and SPCSA staff rated this section as 'Meets the Standard'.

Areas of Strength

- The mission statement sets forth the school's role in ensuring academic achievement, college success and a life of opportunity. In addition, the application articulates a clear focus on equity and lays out a vision for a high-quality academic program that focuses on literacy and math while providing access to a variety of learning opportunities to ensure students are ready for a 21st century global workplace.
- The applicant lays out a theory of action, based in research, replicating best practices through adhering to the model and adjusting for community need.
- The applicant provides detailed data and a rationale for serving the 89107, 89108, and 89146 zip codes which have a substantial population of students attending 1- and 2-star schools. The applicant also draws a connection to the SPCSA's mission and strategic goals and explicitly discusses the lifelong impacts of educational attainment and states that the proposed school aims to ensure a strong K-8 foundation that enables students to attend a "strong high school, get to and through college, and have a life of opportunity."
- Several members of the Committee to Form live or work within the zip codes that the proposed school intends to serve. This reinforces that the application is tied to the community, and that representatives have been involved in shaping the proposal.
- In addition to the survey data provided in the written application with approximately 100 responses, when asked about the input the community has had on the school model during the capacity interview, the Committee to Form provided several examples. First, the Committee to Form indicated that families wanted the school to offer one-to-one computer technology and coding which had been incorporated into the plan. The character education approach is also informed by conversations with families. The applicant indicated that families expressed the need for school-based supports so that their children could "be focused and build habits for long-term success." Families also indicated that they want their children "to be kind, and to persevere." Lastly, the applicant reported that the field studies referenced in the charter application would be based on family input. The applicant indicated that field studies would involve parents and staff sharing ideas and suggestions for places where they would like students to explore and learn.

These examples provided tangible evidence that the community has been an active partner in the development of the school proposal.

Areas of Concern

- While the applicant was able to more fully explain the community engagement and partnerships during the capacity interview, the number and scope of these partnerships is still limited. Additional work is needed to ensure sufficient partnerships that are directly tied to the needs of the target population. During the capacity interview, the Committee to Form indicated they would look to formalize additional partnerships once the location had been finalized.

Academic Section

The academic plan describes a model based on research and elements from high-performing schools across the country. The plan includes a strong focus on data-driven decisions, extensive and ongoing professional development, high expectations for student growth and performance, and a warm-strict atmosphere focused on learning. Through the capacity interview, the committee to form provided additional details and examples illustrating a high level of thought and planning that has gone into the academic section of the application. For these major reasons, and despite a few minor concerns, the review committee and SPCSA staff rated this section as 'Meets the Standard'.

Areas of Strength

- The application demonstrates a clear data-driven focus on monitoring and accelerating student achievement. The applicant proposes to use inclusion models for students that are English Learners and students with disabilities, with small group remediation and/or enrichment for students above and below grade level as part of a response to intervention model.
- During the capacity interview, the Committee to Form provided comprehensive responses to reviewers' questions about the academic plan. For example, while the application was vague on details regarding the school's proposed blended learning approach, the applicant described the process as involving different learning modalities (e.g., audio, visual, tactile, etc.), differentiated instruction, small group instruction, and the use of digital learning platforms like IXL for English language arts. In many cases, these details were provided by proposed board members and not just the school leader, demonstrating that the entire Committee to Form was actively engaged in the development of the proposal.
- The written application lays out specific instructional materials and how they will be used in alignment with the daily schedule. In addition, during the capacity interview, the Committee to Form repeatedly spoke to the backwards design process beginning with assessments aligned to the Nevada Academic Content Standards (NVACS).
- During the capacity interview, the Committee to Form discussed, in-depth, teacher professional development, and how training would be both targeted and universal. Targeted professional development will be based on teachers' individual professional development plans, and universal professional development will include "data days" during which staff review data to inform instruction. In addition, the Committee to Form was able to provide a detailed description of how teachers would be supported and evaluated during the early years of the school's operation. Specifically, the proposed Board recognizes that it is not ideal for the Executive Director to both support teachers and conduct evaluations in the first few years of operation. However, during this period, great care will be taken to ensure teachers know when interactions are strictly coaching activities, and when teachers are being observed for evaluation purposes.
- Promotion requirements are clear, measurable and demonstrate high expectations for academic performance, growth and attendance. In addition, the application describes five strategies for engaging with parents around promotion expectations and their students' progress towards those standards. Finally, plans for student summer remediation and re-testing are included for students in danger of retention in middle school grades.
- The applicant outlines a multi-faceted set of academic goals that look at absolute performance, growth, and comparative measures. These goals establish reasonable baselines and become

more ambitious the longer the school is in operation. The goals align to achieving a 4- or 5-star rating on the Nevada School Performance Framework.

- During the capacity interview, the applicant also was able to provide a comprehensive description of the school's assessment system. The Committee to Form indicated that the NWEA MAP would be used to identify students not performing at grade level, and the diagnostic would be used to guide instruction. Fountas & Pinnell would be used to identify skill deficits and enable teachers to track real-time performance.
- The application outlines a multi-step process to develop a positive school culture that begins with home visits. The school's proposed culture will be research-based grounded in the principles of grit and development a growth mindset. The applicant also discusses the importance of using research-based instructional strategies such as *Teach Like A Champion*. The applicant includes a very robust table detailing its family engagement goals. The table includes school action, method of assessment, and person(s) responsible, thereby outlining the goal and each stakeholder's responsibility in achieving the goal.
- The proposed school will provide an extended school year with significantly more learning time than required in statute. Sample bell schedules for regular and early dismissal days are provided for all grade levels and there is a clear description of each learning block included in the scheduling discussion. Finally, the applicant has outlined ambitious goals for student attendance and detailed plans to monitor students and follow up with students and families in the event of absences.

Areas of Concern

- As with most schools that open with a small student body, the application proposes a lean staff in the first few years of the school. In year one, the staffing model includes one Coordinator of Student Services who has numerous duties and responsibilities related to the Response to Intervention process, oversight of Individualized Education Programs (IEPs), and support with identifying and serving English Learners. While the applicant indicates that additional funds for special education supports and services are included in the budget, this plan is not fully developed. In addition, the staffing plan for English Learner assumes that sufficient numbers of general education teachers will be TESOL certified (Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages) to account for needed services. Depending on the number of students with disabilities and English Learners, as well as specifics regarding the types of services needed, the applicant may not have devoted adequate resources and staff to meeting the needs of all students.
- It is not clear how the restorative justice practices described will work in conjunction with the rewards-based systems described in the application. In addition, the plan for the use of restorative justice practices prior to suspension/expulsion is not clearly described.
- The application is lacking specific behavior goals and it is not clear who is responsible for maintaining the disciplinary records for the school, including the daily behavior tracking.

Operations Section

The Committee to Form brings a wide range of expertise and the members of the proposed governing board demonstrate a clear understanding of their responsibilities for oversight, governance, and accountability, while recognizing the role of the proposed school leader in day-to-day management. The applicant provides a strong plan for the incubation year and ongoing operations. While the staffing and facilities plan are generally strong, there are lingering questions regarding both. As discussed in the *Academic Section*, it is not clear that the staffing plan ensures adequate resources to meet the needs of the expected student population, including special student populations. In addition, while the applicant has identified a strong facility option, a specific time-bound plan for selecting a facility and engaging with local jurisdictions was not provided. Despite these noted concerns, the review committee rated this section as 'Meets the Standard'.

Areas of Strength

- Proposed board members demonstrate a wide range of expertise across, legal, human resources, finance and education. In addition, the application outlines robust board training with content and a timeline that will adequately support the board in managing its responsibilities.
- The application clearly defines the roles and responsibilities of the board (policy, oversight, etc.) and those that are delegated to the school leader (management of the school). During the capacity interview board members and the school leader consistently operated within their scope of responsibilities. This was particularly evident during the scenario-based question where proposed board members asked questions of the proposed school leader who provided detailed responses and suggested specific adjustments to the program to address the hypothetical mid-year student growth and performance data. In response to the scenario, the proposed board established a clear plan for monitoring progress in the near term.
- The proposed school leader is well qualified, with teaching experience in a variety of school settings, school leadership, and teacher coaching experience. Her experience in schools is exclusively in schools with high populations of at-risk students including Title I schools, which increases her qualifications for managing a school with the proposed demographics. In addition, the proposed Executive Director has completed the Building Excellent Schools (BES) fellowship and will have two years of follow-on support from BES. While there is substantial responsibility for the school leader in the first few years of operations, the prospective board members were able to understand this outsized burden and identify specific areas of strength in the school leader that will lead to success in the incubation year.
- The application includes a clearly defined hiring process that aligns with the school's expectations for educators and includes a strong commitment to growth mindset through the sample lesson and feedback session. The teacher evaluation process is clear and includes a variety of inputs and considerations, including frequent observations which account for 50% of the evaluation score.
- The application outlines a multi-faceted approach to student recruitment including working with partner organizations, direct outreach (including mailers) and social media. Finally, the applicant demonstrates a commitment to serving a student body that is reflective of the local community both through recruitment efforts and enrollment preferences³.

³ The applicant indicates that should the school be awarded funding through the Charter School Program Grant, the school would ensure compliance with any enrollment and lottery provisions set forth in the Grant.

- The applicant provides a detailed incubation year plan that contains concrete action items which are time bound and logically assigned to owners. While the incubation plan is heavily reliant on the proposed school leader, the fact that she will be compensated, have support from Building Excellent Schools, and have two additional staff members join part-time during the spring mitigates these concerns. In addition, funding to pay these staff members has been secured through a grant.
- The applicant provides well thought out process for developing emergency plans, demonstrates knowledge of core components and required documentation, and identifies staff responsible for developing and executing these plans.

Areas of Concern

- As with most schools that open with a small student body, the application proposes a lean staff in the first few years of the school. In year one, the staffing model includes one Coordinator of Student Services who has numerous duties and responsibilities related to the Response to Intervention process, oversight of Individualized Education Programs (IEPs), and support with identifying and serving English Learners. While the applicant indicates that additional funds for special education supports and services are included in the budget, this plan is not fully developed. In addition, the staffing plan for English Learner assumes that sufficient numbers of general education teachers will be TESOL certified to account for needed services. Depending on the number of students with disabilities and English Learners, as well as specifics regarding the types of services needed, the school may not be appropriately staffed to meet the needs of the expected student population, including special student populations.
- While the applicant intends to partner with Building Hope to secure a facility and has identified a strong facility option, a specific timeline and plan for selecting a facility and engaging with the local jurisdictions and municipalities was not provided.
- Most non-academic services will be contracted with outside providers, including needed transportation, food service, facilities, and nursing. However, the application provides minimal detail on prospective vendors and how the effectiveness of services will be evaluated. In addition, the application is lacking details regarding how the proposed school would ensure security of data and information technology infrastructure.

Financial Section

The application presents a detailed budget based on clear, specific, and reasonable assumptions of revenue and cost basis for expenditures. Additionally, the proposed Board demonstrates a clear understanding of the critical components of financial controls and segregation of duties. While the budget is consistent with the application narrative, depending on the student population and specific needs of students with disabilities and English Learners, the proposed budget may not devote sufficient resources to students in need of additional supports. During the capacity interview, the proposed board was not able to clearly identify specific budget adjustments that could be made to free up additional resources if needed. For these reasons, as well as those detailed further below, the review committee and SPCSA staff rated this section as 'Approaches the Standard'.

Areas of Strength

- The application clearly identifies the criteria which will be used to select a back-office provider through a formal Request for Proposal process to support all areas of financial management, including but not limited to bookkeeping, budgeting, financial reporting, and grant writing. In addition, the board has already engaged with EdTec, a charter school back-office provider with local experience, for the development of the application budget. EdTech represents one potential back-office provider, though a selection will be made through a formal Request for Proposal process.
- The budget narrative includes clear, specific, and reasonable assumptions of revenue and cost basis for expenditures. The application is consistent with the staffing plan. In addition, the applicant outlines a plan to build a 20% reserve over the first charter term.
- During the capacity interview, the Committee to Form was able to succinctly provide information about critical components of segregation of financial duties and financial controls and clarified that specific policies would be adopted by the board following potential application approval.

Areas of Concern

- As with most schools that open with a small student body, the application proposes a lean staff in the first few years of the school. In year one, the staffing model includes one Coordinator of Student Services who has numerous duties and responsibilities related to the Response to Intervention process, oversight of Individualized Education Programs (IEPs), and support with identifying and serving English Learners. While the applicant indicates that additional funds for special education supports and services are included in the budget, this plan is not fully developed. In addition, the staffing plan for English Learner assumes that sufficient numbers of general education teachers will be TESOL certified to account for needed services. It is also not clear who will be responsible for providing counseling services for students. During the capacity interview the board was not able to clearly identify specific budget adjustments that could be made to enable increased resources for special education, English Learner supports, or counseling. Ultimately, depending on the student population and the specific services needed, the school may not have allocated sufficient resources to meet the needs of all students.

Capacity Interview Summary

Based on the independent and collective review of the application, the review committee conducted a virtual capacity interview of the applicant to assess the capacity to execute the application’s overall plan. The capacity interview for Sage Collegiate was conducted on Monday, September 28, and lasted approximately 120-minutes. All of the proposed members of the Committee to Form attended on behalf of the applicant. Additionally, one representative from EdTec, a potential back-office contractor, attended the capacity interview. Questions during the capacity interview focused primarily on five key areas:

Mission and Vision	Board Governance
Parent and Community Engagement	Leadership Team
Curriculum & Instructional Design	Staffing Plan
Driving for Results	Facilities
At-Risk Students & Special Populations	Financial Plan
School Structure: Culture	

Lastly, the capacity interview included a scenario-based question that probed the proposed board and school leader’s capacity to develop a plan in response to mid-year academic performance data.

District Input

Per Assembly Bill 462 (2019), the SPCSA solicited input from the Clark County School District regarding this application.⁴ The timeline regarding this request for input is below and the response provided by the Clark County School district is attached.

- August 26, 2020 – Memo sent to CCSD soliciting input.
- September 28, 2020 – Written input provided from CCSD to SPCSA.

⁴ 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.”

Appendix (Rubric Detail)

The information below indicates *rubric criteria that the applicant did not substantially meet*.

Meeting the Need

- Parent and Community Involvement

- *Identifies specific partnerships which are shown to be relevant to the needs of the target population, including partners located in the community that the applicant intends to serve.*
 - *Partnerships are evidenced by specific letters of commitment outlining the accountabilities of both parties and clear, measurable, time-specific deliverables from the partner which are clearly relevant to the needs of the target population.*

Academic Plan

- At-Risk Students and Special Populations

- *The committee to form presents a monitoring plan that will enable relevant staff to track the progress of all students with IEPs towards the goals articulated in their respective plans.*
- *The committee to form demonstrates that they will be able to provide all special education and related services needed either by the staff listed on their organization chart or identified external groups with whom they can contract to provide needed services.*
- *Devotes adequate resources and staff to meeting the needs of all students.*

- School Structure: Student Discipline

- *Goals for student behavior are clear and measurable; there is a plan, and designated personnel, for monitoring and reporting related to behavior goals as well as ongoing maintenance of discipline records.*
- *Student behavior plan integrates clear, logical use of methods of restorative justice per Assembly Bill 168*

Operations Plan

- Staffing Plan

- *Appropriately staffed to meet the needs of the expected student population, including special student populations.*

- Services

- *IT plans should include consideration of 1) Strategy for information backups and disaster recovery, 2) Intruder prevention strategies, including physical and electronic intrusion, and 3) Malware and malicious software prevention and removal strategy.*
- *Committee to form articulate clear metrics and process for evaluating effectiveness of services.*

- Facilities

- *If a facility has not yet been identified: 1) Plan for finding a location including a proposed schedule for doing so, and 2) A clear, time bound plan to engage with local jurisdiction(s) and municipalities.*

Financial Plan

- *School level budget priorities are consistent with the operator's model, including but not limited to: educational program, staffing, and facility.*
- *The charter committee to form protects mission-critical expenses when faced with budget cuts.*