



## NEVADA STATE PUBLIC CHARTER SCHOOL AUTHORITY

**December 4, 2020**

In compliance with the Governor's Emergency Directives related to COVID-19, the December 4, 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  
Selcuk Ozdemir, Manager of Academic Performance  
Danny Peltier, Management Analyst I  
Brandon Gaytán, Education Programs Professional  
Brian Scroggins, Deputy Director  
Kerry Howard, Education Programs Professional  
Sara Jorgensen, Education Programs Professional

#### **AUDIENCE IN ATTENDANCE:**

Victor Salcido  
Gia Maraccini  
Shari Dunn  
Jami Curtis  
Megan Salcido

### **Agenda Item 1 – Call to Order and Roll Call [00:00:34]**

Chair Mackedon called the meeting to order at 2:05pm, with attendance reflected above.

### **Agenda Item 2 – Public Comment #1 [00:01:32]**

Ryan Herrick, General Counsel, spoke to the written public comment submitted via email. He noted of the 13 public comment currently submitted, 9 were from Doral Academy of Northern Nevada.

1. Lindsey Sanford, wrote with regard to agenda item 4(a).
2. Laura Uschyk, wrote with regard to agenda item 4(a).
3. Megan Gibson, wrote with regard to charter schools returning to full-time in person learning.
4. Danielle Collins, wrote with regard to charter schools returning to full-time in person learning.
5. Richard and Kimberly Spaulding, wrote with regard to charter schools returning to full-time in person learning.
6. Andrew Ward, wrote with regard to charter schools returning to full-time in person learning.
7. Melissa Gabler, wrote with regard to charter schools returning to full-time in person learning.
8. Alex Uschyk, wrote regarding agenda item 4(a).
9. Andres and Jennifer Garzon, wrote regarding agenda item 4(a).
10. Deidre Blanton, wrote regarding agenda item 4(a).
11. Eric Blanton, wrote regarding agenda item 4(a).
12. Erin Capurro, wrote regarding agenda item 4(a).
13. Richard and Donna Gasparre, wrote with regard to charter schools returning to full-time in person learning.
14. Kelly Burnett, wrote with regard to charter schools returning to full-time in person learning.

In addition, public comment was provided on the line during the meeting from the following participants:

1. Donna Catari, parent of a student at Doral Academy of Northern Nevada, spoke regarding the current COVID-19 Learning Guidance.
2. Alicia Johnson, parent at Doral Academy of Northern Nevada, spoke in regard to agenda item 4(a).

### **Agenda Item 3 – Approval of November 6, 2020 Board Meeting Action Minutes. [00:08:10]**

*MOTION: Vice Chair Kirner made a motion to approve the November 6, 2020 Board Meeting Action Minutes. Member Moulton seconded the motion. There was no further discussion. The motion carried unanimously.*

### **Agenda Item 4 – SPCSA Executive Director’s and SPCSA Staff Report. [00:09:49]**

#### **a. COVID-19 In-Person Learning Guidance update**

Rebecca Feiden, Executive Director, provided the update for the COVID-19 In-Person Learning Guidance. She noted the update today is for information/discussion, but next week’s update will be for possible action. She does not anticipate any further changes to the guidance but if there is further discussion or need for action, there’s an opportunity to do that next week. In terms of recent updates, following the Authority’s action on November 6, 2020, SPCSA staff issued a document summarizing the updated and revised COVID-19 In-Person Learning Guidance. In addition, following the Governor’s remarks on November 10, 2020 imploring Nevadans to voluntarily stay home, as well as the subsequent order for a Statewide Pause effective November 24, 2020, SPCSA staff has repeatedly urged schools to exercise caution with in-person learning due to the increasing test positivity and case rate across the State. As a result, many schools have reduced the scale of in-person learning or temporarily returned to full distance learning. Regarding connectivity and devices, Executive Director Feiden provided the summary of where charter school students stand as of November 25, 2020 in that regard. SPCSA

continues to monitor the impact of COVID-19 cases within schools and are grateful for the ongoing support from Southern Nevada Health District, the Washoe County Health District, and the Nevada Division of Public and Behavioral Health. These agencies have been highly responsive and supportive in working with the SPCSA-sponsored schools that have been notified that a member of their school community has tested positive for COVID-19. She spoke to additional supports SPCSA staff has provided to schools.

Member Moulton and Executive Director Feiden discussed the current numbers and efforts related to student device and connectivity.

Member Randolph asked about the next time the board will be able to take action, assuming no emergency meeting, given how fluid things are with the Governor's directives. Executive Director Feiden said the next board meeting is January 22 but if there is a need, they can certainly hold an emergency board meeting in late December or early January.

**b. Initiatives related to *Serving All Students Equitably* [00:20:25]**

Executive Director Feiden provided the overview and then the update related to the SPCSA's initiatives related to *Serving All Students Equitably*. At the July 24, 2020 SPCSA Board Meeting, the Authority discussed actions that the SPCSA can take to support schools in their efforts to serve all students equitably and uphold the SPCSA's values of equity and diversity. At the August 4, 2020 SPCSA Board Meeting, Executive Director Feiden presented a list of proposed initial next steps and the Authority provided additional feedback. She gave the summary of the updated list of Initial Steps including the status of the identified action items related to the following:

- Site Evaluations
- New School and Amendment Applications
- Renewal Application
- Annual Presentation on SPCSA Data
- Focus on Schools
- Growth Management Plan Working Group
- SPCSA-wide Training
- Equity Data
- User-friendly website to address "How to find a school for my child"
- Equitable Access

Member Holmes-Sutton asked about the community working group and the opportunity that has been leveraged to ensure diversity amongst the members of that team. Executive Director Feiden replied that the group is a wide array of individuals and they are continuing to build the group if there are further recommendations.

Member Holmes-Sutton said in acknowledging that there is opportunity provided to families to address how to find a school for their child, she was curious as to whether there were considerations made as to how teachers can find a school at which they would like to work knowing it may be a consideration for teachers to consider a school that may already have teachers of color working there so that they do not end up working up as a solo educator as a representative of that group. Executive Director Feiden replied the SPCSA has not dug into that at this point in time, but staff will take a look at it. She will work with NDE to determine if there are suppression levels in order to protect identity.

Member Shauntee Rosales asked about in dealing with the equity things and with regard to weighted type lotteries, is this something they will look into going forward or is this individually left up to the schools to decide? Executive Director Feiden said that the weighted lotteries are something that the board would have to approve. It is a material change to the charter and at this point we have had two schools that have implemented weighted lotteries for the first time this past year. Earlier in the fall, Director Modrcin and herself provided a presentation

to schools on lotteries with a segment particularly on weighted lotteries and enrollment preferences, in an effort to educate schools that may not be aware of this opportunity about this.

Member Cyr said on the focus on schools she has really appreciated the presentations but if they look at those schools the majority of them serve minoritized students and she would like to see a school that does not serve a minority population come and present and recognize that this is their work to do as well. Her second comment is related to the user-friendly website, and if there is a way to create a universal application where, if nothing else, an interest form through their website that can go to that school and be utilized as an entry to a lottery. Executive Director Feiden said she would get into the website details in a bit, but she wanted to temper the expectations some as the state system is archaic and we may have some limitations. With regard to universal applications, there are some cities that have implemented universal applications. It may be something that deserves further discussion, and we may want to start to talk about it in smaller chunks and contemplate how this would be a benefit to our schools.

Member Soifer asked about what a survey of the trustees of our schools and school leaders in terms of equity and if those are data points we could introduce to this conversation as well.

Member Randolph asked questions related to the working group and the change in name, the carryover from how many were involved last go around that still remain and how large the group is at this point. Executive Director Feiden replied there were about 15 people in the last meeting and several who were not able to join based on timing. Deputy Director Scroggins spoke to the additional specifics related to individuals invited to the working group and discussed their plan to have a subcommittee on equity initiatives this month. There was further conversation around the diversity of the working group as well as the topics of discussions at recent meetings.

**c. 2021 Legislative Session [00:44:50]**

Ryan Herrick, General Counsel, said now through July there will be a standing legislative update item on the agenda. The 2021 legislative session starts February 1st. The SPCSA's bill draft request has been submitted and is on the legislative's website as Assembly Bill 68. The bill is mostly technical clean up with one substantive item. In addition, SPCSA staff is monitoring the education bills as they are posted but they have not seen anything related to charters yet. Lastly, Mr. Herrick provided the update in regard to the election as it relates to our legislature.

**d. Multi-Tiered Systems of Support Pilot Program and Project Aware Grant [00:51:01]**

Executive Director Feiden said this year using some of their grant funding, the SPCSA has partnered with the UNR Positive Behavior Intervention and Supports or PBIS Technical Assistance Center, to provide to our schools some support in implementing strong multi-tiered systems of support, to support individual student needs. We have brought on some contracted support to help this effort, Ms. Brettani Berry is our contracted MTSS Project Facilitator and Coach. She has been working with the UNR team and our 9 schools that have opted into this program in the fall and is supported by our school support team as well. We are seeing strong participation and progress. In addition, earlier this year we agreed to support the Nevada Department of Education's (NDE) application for Federal Project Aware Grant. This grant is focused on providing social emotional and mental health support to students which are particularly important at this moment in time with the pandemic. The SPCSA along with two school districts will be part of this 5-year grant. They are currently in the planning process with NDE and the other two school districts.

**e. SPCSA Annual Initiatives [00:53:32]**

Executive Director Feiden referred to the two-page summary which can be found in the supporting materials for this agenda item. She highlighted the progress made in the initiatives listed in the summary.

Member Cyr followed up about Initiative I, site evaluations and the feedback provided. Is this task related to assessing how they are moving the needle on the items of concern, or what happens to this information? Director

Modrcin said SPCSA staff follows up with individual campuses on specific recommendations that our team finds as a result of the site evaluation process and we also do that in collaboration with other members of the agency, in particular the school support team.

Member Randolph asked about Initiative B, developing the public-facing report on annual school performance, education document or something that can be used to educate the public and legislative officials, when we are talking about our charter schools in general and more of a portfolio approach to what our schools are and how they are performing. Is this that type or document? Executive Director Feiden replied providing the high-level summary. That is the point of Initiative B and we see some overlap with Initiative H which is the online hub. The first step is around creating the reports which will allow us to communicate here and then making them user-friendly. Once this information is centralized, putting this information into something we can print and bring with us will be a much easier task as we consolidate this to one place.

#### **Agenda Item 5 – Focus on Schools [01:09:36]**

##### **a. Democracy Prep at the Agassi Campus**

Executive Director Feiden said as the board is aware, we have as one of our equity initiatives, bringing school leaders to share some of their efforts related to addressing issues of equity and their efforts to address social justice issues. Today we have representatives from Democracy Prep.

Adam Johnson, Executive Director, Democracy Prep, began sharing about what their school has been doing individually and as a network, both parts working in tandem. In February 2019, Democracy Prep appointed interim CEO Natasha Trivers. Ms. Trivers, a long-time educator, committed to changing the tenor of Democracy Prep. In the Spring, the network teams took a deep dive into DPPS systems and determined “Purpose Over Power” to be the main goal for the upcoming school year. Democracy Prep then laid out a framework for its five-year vision. At the peak of the awakening of communities across America, Democracy Prep began to explore its role in systematic oppression in schools. They unveiled their revamped strategic plans with anti-racism being the top priority for the organization and continue to reflect and prioritize their policies and procedures as it relates to plans, boards, and training.

Member Shauntee Rosales asked what is in place if something does happen, for example if a student or staff member that does feel they have experienced an inequity or some form of racism, does Democracy Prep have a pathway to address these issues? Mr. Johnson responded that one of the parts of the culture that he wanted to make sure came across loud and clear is that every voice matters, that he is always accessible and that all opinions are valid. There were some challenges at the network level but now alumni sit on boards across the country to ensure the voice and experience that they have gone through is permanent on their board and so decision making is different. Schools are now listening much more closely to the experience to make sure we have fast pathway to make change to those who feels their voices are not being heard.

Member Cyr commented about their school network and their discussions about the Black Lives Matter movement across public forums where students and staff could be present, and they were accessible to all of them. She said that movement is what brought this to the table as an initiative as far as the diversity and anti-racism work of the SPCSA. She asked about how the equity audits looked for Democracy Prep. Mr. Johnson replied that they will be working with an external third-party for that reason. It is challenging to audit yourself. The third-party will audit at the network level, and the network will have the opportunity to audit at the school level.

Member Cyr asked about the school’s response related to COVID-19 and their response to the pandemic. Mr. Johnson said they had to become more than just a school. They are providing tech support in a way where they never thought they would, their McKinney Vento funds are being leveraged because there are so many families in

need. He can't really quantify it, it feels natural to provide supports to these families but it can be challenging and they are evolving every day.

There was further discussion between the Authority and Mr. Johnson regarding the advantages of being part of a broader network, the training and involvement of their governing board and how they can share the things they are doing with other schools.

#### **Agenda Item 6 – Charter School Association of Nevada. [01:41:12]**

Executive Director Feiden said that the Charter School Association of Nevada (CSAN) will provide an update regarding their ongoing efforts to support charter schools throughout the state.

Victor Salcido, Executive Director, CSAN, provided a brief introduction to CSAN and what they do. CSAN is a membership organization that represents public charter schools at the district and state level. They try to promote, protect, and show progress in the sector for these schools. He talked about some of their current projects and what they are looking ahead to in the coming months.

Further conversation ensued between the Authority and Mr. Salcido regarding CSAN's roles and the work they do.

A 10-minute convenience break was taken and Chair Mackedon left for the remainder of the meeting.

#### **Agenda Item 7 – Information related to student discipline for SPCSA-sponsored charter schools for the 2019-2020 school year, including data disaggregated by student group. [02:23:07]**

Executive Director Feiden said as part of their equity initiatives they are prioritizing taking a deep dive on some of our data and that includes discipline data. Earlier in the year they had the chance to look at data from the civil rights data collection which is unfortunately reported on a delay and several years old. As part of legislation from 2019 schools are required to provide discipline data by student group so for the first time this year, we are able to dig into this discipline data. As we continue to refine this data, we will learn more about it in the future.

Selcuk Ozdemir, Manager of Academic Performance, gave the update regarding the discipline data overview. He talked about the caveats and highlighted one in particular being that it may not be comparable district to district or school to school, as discipline definitions and practices are different across the state and the incidents do not necessarily correspond one-to-one with suspensions/expulsions. Thus, making it difficult to compare or summarize the discipline data. He proceeded with the populations overall findings related to the incidents.

Brandon Gaytán, Education Programs Professional provided the next portion of the presentation related to the incident categories and populations within the SPCSA collected by the NDE with comparisons to the state. In conclusion, compared to the state, the SPCSA has a lower rate of incidents resulting in suspensions overall and for all populations. However, SPCSA students identifying as Black/African American or male, along with those that have a disability, are more likely to be involved in an incident resulting in a suspension than their peers, reflecting state and prior data. These and other data (ex. state assessments, graduation rates) point to inequities in the educational experiences of students.

There was further discussion regarding the information related to student discipline for SPCSA-sponsored charter schools.

## **Agenda Item 8 – Charter School Contract Amendment Applications [03:58:56]**

### **a. Mater Academy of Northern Nevada – addition of distance education component**

Mike Dang, Management Analyst IV, provided the overview of Mater Academy of Northern Nevada's (MANN) request for amendment to amend their charter school contract to add a distance education component. SPCSA staff recommend approval of the request.

***MOTION:** Member Soifer moved to approve MANN's request to implement a distance education program for all eligible middle school students enrolled at the MANN charter school with the conditions listed by SPCSA staff as detailed in [staff's recommendation](#). Member Shauntee Rosales seconded. The motion carried unanimously.*

### **b. Pincrest Academy of Northern Nevada – addition of distance education component [03:03:43]**

Mr. Dang, previously identified, provided the overview of Pincrest Academy of Northern Nevada's (PANN) request for amendment to amend their charter school contract to add a distance education component. SPCSA staff recommend approval of the request.

***MOTION:** Member Moulton moved to approve PANN's request to implement a distance education program for all eligible middle school students enrolled at the PANN charter school with the conditions listed by SPCSA staff as detailed in [staff's recommendation](#). Member Soifer Rosales seconded. The motion carried unanimously.*

### **c. Somerset Academy of Las Vegas – facilities financing/acquisition (that will not affect approved enrollment) [03:07:33]**

Mr. Dang provided the overview of Somerset Academy of Las Vegas' request for amendment to amend their charter school contract and to acquire its Aliante and its Skye Canyon facilities that will not affect approved enrollment. SPCSA staff recommend approval of the request.

***MOTION:** Member Shauntee Rosales made the motion to approve Somerset Academy of Las Vegas's request to acquire its Aliante and its Skye Canyon facilities that will not affect approved enrollment, subject to the following condition in [staff's recommendation](#). Member Moulton seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.*

### **d. Sports Leadership and Management Academy – addition of dual credit [03:11:54]**

Mr. Dang provided the overview of Sports Leadership and Management Academy's (SLAM) request for amendment to amend their charter school contract and to implement a dual credit program for all eligible high school students enrolled at the SLAM charter school. SPCSA staff recommend approval of the request.

***MOTION:** Member Farris moved to approve, with the conditions described in [staff's recommendation](#), SLAM Academy of Nevada's request to implement a dual credit program for all eligible high school students enrolled at the SLAM Academy charter school. Member Moulton seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.*

## **Agenda Item 9 – State Public Charter School Authority Financial Performance Framework. [03:17:22]**

Director Modrcin provided an overview of the information related to the Financial Performance Framework. This tool is really used to measure the viability of our schools both in the long term and short term as well as to clearly communicate our expectations in a transparent model.

Mr. Dang provided the next portion of the presentation. In developing the implementation of this framework, they conducted a number of listening sessions, facilitated board framework discussions, researched best practices, and consulted with leading authorizers. Upon finalizing the recommendations and discussing with charter leaders, in January 2019, the board approved the framework. He spoke to the principles, indicators, and ratings.

Director Modrcin provided the remainder of the presentation including the intervention process and the key milestones as of today. Final data is expected to be reported to the Authority at its January 22, 2021 meeting.

**Agenda Item 10 – Long-Range Calendar [03:30:15]**

Member Kirner asked about the 2021 March and May meetings and scheduling conflicts. Executive Director Feiden said staff will look into those dates.

Member Cyr asked about the updates on new charter schools opening in 2021 and a reflection on AB 462 with regard to enrollment and schools that started this year.

**Agenda Item 11 – Public Comment #2 [03:32:59]**

Danny Peltier, Management Analyst I, spoke to the additional written public comment #14 submitted via email which will be posted on the website later today. This comment was a parent from Doral Academy of Northern Nevada, regarding charters schools returning to full-time in person learning.

**Agenda Item 12 – Adjournment [03:33:55]**

The meeting was adjourned at 5:40pm.