



2020 Charter Renewal Application

Submitted October 15, 2020

APPLICATION TO RENEW

EQUIPO ACADEMY

Some said it was “Impossible.”

We said, “**Impossible is not.**”



Mark Modrcin
Director of Authorizing
State Public Charter School Authority
2080 East Flamingo Road, Suite 230
Las Vegas, NV 89119

Monday, August 17, 2020

Director Modrcin,

Please accept this letter as notice of our intent to apply for the renewal of the Equipo Academy charter first approved by the Charter Authority in January 2015. Equipo Academy has grown since 2015 from a 6-10 to a 6-12 campus with three graduating classes all earning 100 percent admissions to four year colleges. With our renewal, Equipo Academy plans to continue serving students in grades six through twelve during the next approved charter term.

Our school will continue to operate for the next term at our current location, 4131 E Bonanza Road, Las Vegas, NV 89110, with possible facility improvements at our existing location to expand arts, athletics, and science instructional spaces.

We seek to apply for the longest possible renewal term that is available to us, and look forward to the opportunity to discuss our work with you and the Charter Authority.

Thank you,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Kerry Roberts".

Kerry Roberts
Chair of the Governing Body

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Ben Salkowe".

Benjamin Salkowe
Principal

2020 WRITTEN APPLICATION FOR RENEWAL OF CHARTER

School Name & Contact Info	Name: Equipo Academy Address: 4131 E Bonanza Rd, Las Vegas, NV 89110 Phone: 702-907-0432 Website: www.equipoacademy.org	
School Leader Name & Contact Info	Name: Ben Salkowe Title: Principal Contact info: ben.salkowe@equipoacademy.org 702-907-0432	
Governing Board Names & Contact Info <i>Add rows/names as may be necessary</i>	Chair/President	Name: Kerry Roberts Email: kerry.roberts@equipoacademy.org 702-907-0432
	Vice Chair/Vice President	Name: TBD Email:
	Treasurer	Name: Nathan Reynoso Email: nathan.reynoso@equipoacademy.org 702-907-0432
	Secretary	Name: Miriam Sotelo Email: miriam.sotelo@equipoacademy.org 702-907-0432
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	Member	Name: Jerry Keller Email: jerry.keller@equipoacademy.org 702-907-0432
	Member	Name: Cheryl Adler-Walls Email: cheryl.adlerwalls@equipoacademy.org 702-907-0432

ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE²

2019 NSPF Rating <i>Complete campus boxes as may be applicable</i>	Equipo Academy MS	Equipo Academy HS	
	★★★★★ (83.0)	★★★★ (77.8)	
2018 NSPF Rating <i>Complete campus boxes as may be applicable</i>	Equipo Academy MS	Equipo Academy HS	
	★★★ (51.0)	NR (70.5)	
2017 NSPF Rating	Elementary School Rating	Middle School Rating	High School Rating
		★★ (42.5)	N/A (47)
2015 NSPF Rating (Frozen from 2014)	5 star 4 star 3 star 2 star 1 star	N/A	
2018 Rising Star Status	Identified as Rising Star by NDE	Not identified	N/A
2017 Rising Star Status	Identified as Rising Star by NDE	Not identified	N/A

² For schools applying for a third charter term, NAC 388A.415 provides that the State Public Charter School Authority will give the academic performance of pupils a greater weight than that assigned to it on the first renewal. SPCSA staff will include academic performance data for any previous charter term for the Authority's consideration.

	2015-16	2016-17	2017-18	2018-19
NDE-Validated Four-Year Graduation Rate				94.7

OPERATIONAL OVERVIEW

CURRENT YEAR ENROLLMENT & DEMOGRAPHIC DETAILS							
Total Student Enrollment [as of first day of school 2020] = 784 Students							
Gender				Ethnicity / Race			
Female	Male	White	Black	Hispanic/Latino	Asian	Mixed Race	Other
403	381	15	13	749	5	1	0
Special Populations				Students on Waitlist			
Students w/disabilities (number)	ELLs (number)	Homeless Students (number)	Free/Reduced Lunch Eligibility (number)	Number of Students on Waitlist		Percentage of Waitlist Students w/Preference Status	
48	236	1	784	232		33	
Staff Retention				Discipline Data			
Number of Instructional Staff	Total Number of Staff	Percentage returning staff 2019-20	Percentage returning staff 2020-21	Number of out of school suspensions		Number of expulsions	
62	68	90	94	0 (2020-2021)		0 (2020-2021)	
Year-to-Year Mobility [Student Retention from Oct. 1 to Oct. 1] ³							
2015 - 2016	2016 - 2017	2017 - 2018	2018 - 2019	2019 - 2020			
81	82	79	89	97			

ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE

SPCSA Authority Academic Programmatic Audit Findings				
2019		Good Standing	Notice of Concern	Notice of Breach
2018		Good Standing	Notice of Concern	Notice of Breach
2017		Good Standing	Notice of Concern	Notice of Breach
2016		Good Standing	Notice of Concern	Notice of Breach
2015		Good Standing	Notice of Concern	Notice of Breach

FINANCIAL PERFORMANCE

SPCSA Authority Financial Programmatic Audit Findings				
2019		Good Standing	Notice of Concern	Notice of Breach
2018		Good Standing	Notice of Concern	Notice of Breach
2017		Good Standing	Notice of Concern	Notice of Breach
2016		Good Standing	Notice of Concern	Notice of Breach
2015		Good Standing	Notice of Concern	Notice of Breach

ORGANIZATIONAL PERFORMANCE


SPCSA Authority Organizational Programmatic Audit Findings				
2019		Good Standing	Notice of Concern	Notice of Breach
2018		Good Standing	Notice of Concern	Notice of Breach
2017		Good Standing	Notice of Concern	Notice of Breach
2016		Good Standing	Notice of Concern	Notice of Breach
2015		Good Standing	Notice of Concern	Notice of Breach

³ To calculate student mobility, subtract the number of students from year 2 not returning from year 1, and divide this result by the total number of students in year 1. For example, if there were 5 students in year 1, and 1 student did not return in year 2, the calculation would be: (5-1)/5, or 20%.

NEXT CHARTER TERM

Projected Enrollment & Grade Spans for next charter term <i>(pending any subsequent expansion or contraction amendment that requires Authority Board approval)</i>						
	2021-2022	2022-2023	2023-2024	2024-2025	2025-2026	2026-2027
Planned Total Enrollment	840	872	904	936	968	980
Planned Grade Spans	6-12	6-12	6-12	6-12	6-12	6-12

I certify that the governing body of this charter school has voted that the school and its staff will adhere to the renewal process expectations outlined in the Renewal Guidelines. The information provided in this charter renewal application is true and correct. I also certify that the governing body of this charter school understands that any academic, financial, or organizational performance data collected during the period of the current charter term which is analyzed and reported following a renewal vote may be considered by the Authority in making performance and accountability decisions in the subsequent charter term.

Signature of Head of School: 
Date: 10/5/20

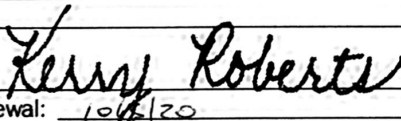
Signature of President/Chair of Governing Body: 
Date Governing Body voted to approve application for renewal: 10/6/20

Table of Contents

Written Narrative to Support Application Form	11
<i>Enrollment Increase</i>	14
<i>Ten Year Charter Renewal</i>	15
Academic Plans for the Proposed Charter Term	17
<i>Academic Vision and Improvements for the Next Charter Term</i>	18
<i>Restorative Discipline</i>	19
<i>Addressing Opportunity Gaps</i>	20
Organizational Viability and Plans for the Proposed Charter Term	22
<i>Board Capacity, Skills, and Qualifications</i>	23
<i>Organizational Improvement and Capacity Building Work</i>	26
<i>Board Member Recruitment</i>	27
Fiscal Soundness and Plans for the Proposed Charter Term	30
<i>History</i>	31
<i>Present Day</i>	33
<i>Looking Forward</i>	34
Additional Information from the Governing Body	36

Narrative

**Written Narrative
to Support Application Form**

Equipo Academy was the first charter school in the State Public Charter School Authority's (SPCSA) portfolio to be founded by East Las Vegas students, families, and educators. The founding team in 2015 sought to establish a five star college preparatory secondary school for their community. Today, Equipo Academy stands on a record of strong academic, financial, and organizational performance. With this 2020 renewal application, the same team now seeks state approval to continue and expand on five years of achievements.

The mission of Equipo Academy sets the school apart from both traditional public high schools and strict no excuses charter networks. The founding team of teachers and families designed the school to offer an open pathway to and through college. This meant that unlike magnet schools or selective charter schools, Equipo would welcome students regardless of past academic, discipline, or attendance records and would hold the same high expectations for college preparatory coursework and college acceptance when they graduated. While this means that absolute proficiency in early grades is often low, the strong supports and interventions offered at Equipo Academy along with the positive team and family environment ultimately lead to high growth over time and across subgroups and metrics. The above average growth of Equipo Academy middle school and emergent bilingual students led directly to the school's four and five star ratings, and the high rates of high school students' college and career readiness participation and completion demonstrate the cumulative effects of the school program over a student's secondary school career.

Students share that their time and experiences on college campuses across the nation fundamentally change their perspectives on what is possible. Over five years, Equipo Academy has brought entire classes of students to colleges in San Francisco, Los Angeles, Denver, Washington D.C., New York, New England, and Boston, with students later earning admissions as seniors to colleges in every metropolitan area visited. Dozens of students have attended summer college programs experiencing dorm living and college courses on their summer vacations or working alongside admissions teams or professors to draft college applications or preview work in a particular

department. In college today, alumni are supported by a full-time College Navigator who becomes a partner in navigating challenges ranging from cashiers' offices to homesickness.

As a school run by educators, Equipo Academy was built to become a great place for educators to work at. Starting from the small team of teachers who stood before the Authority five years ago, Equipo Academy has recruited a staff of 68 with a staff retention rate of 90 percent in 2019-2020 and 94 percent in 2020-2021. The staff compensation plan created by the Governing Body in 2016 has offered school staff a progressive salary schedule with leadership and master teacher pathways based on outcomes. A core consideration of the staff in designing the current compensation plan was ensuring teachers would not feel compelled to enter into administration merely to advance their salary. It was the goal of the founding team to create a space where the pursuit of master teaching experience was a profession in and of itself. Today five of the school's teachers have advanced to those master teacher salaries and evaluation scores through ongoing professional development and exceptionally hard work.

All of these achievements have taken place within a team and family environment led by a unique leadership structure and a dedicated governing body. Instead of a traditional school hierarchy, Equipo Academy is led by a collaborative leadership team in which each member represents a team of people or a specific function of the school. Three Deans (a Dean of Faculty, a Dean of Students, and a Dean of Families) represent the core constituencies of the building while two Directors (a Director of Operations and a Director of College Access) manage the essential services for the school and a Chief of Staff coordinates the team. This horizontal structure ensures that every member of the staff reports directly to a member of the leadership team making decisions and that every member of the staff reports directly to an expert in their area of responsibility.

The leadership team, in turn, reports to a board consisting of community members with experience in education, leadership, fundraising, law enforcement, family engagement,

a parent representative and an alumnus of the school (see “Organizational Viability and Plans”).

The founding team had worked together for five years in the Clark County School District and wrote the founding charter over family dinners, town hall meetings, and late night work sessions. That charter has become a north star for the school’s leadership and decision-making and the current governing body and staff present this application as an explanation of what the school has accomplished and how the school will continue to work towards its ambitious goals.

In this renewal application, Equipo Academy’s Governing Body makes only two material requests: (1) **for the approval of a limited increase in enrollment** to increase efficiency and seats available for the community, and (2) **for the approval of a ten-year renewal** to protect limited staff resources at Equipo Academy and the SPCSA for activities that most directly benefit students and families.

Enrollment Increase

In Equipo Academy’s original charter, a maximum enrollment of 756 students was proposed and approved with ten percent over/under enrollment allowable. Since that time, building improvements, added classrooms, and ongoing work to balance master schedule and class size reduction goals have created conditions that could sustain an increased maximum enrollment of 980 students. The rationale for this increase is grounded in goals of increased operational efficiency and seats available for the East Las Vegas community.

This calculation delivers increased operational efficiency to the school as it is based on an assumption of 140 students per grade level with core teachers teaching five class sections with an average class size of 28 students per class. Currently core teachers

will normally teach four sections of classes at approximately 28 students per class and for their fifth period they teach a tutorial or elective course. This was necessary particularly in the school's founding years when initial enrollments could not support a diverse and complete slate of elective course options. Now in year six, the school has full fine arts, athletics, and advanced science electives which each have growing departments and offerings. Refocusing core teachers each on a single core class will allow them to specialize and refine their instruction in a particular subject and set of standards each year. It will relieve pressure on the master schedule by creating more sections of each class allowing more varied schedule combinations so more students can attend the electives they most want. And while this change may require more sections to be offered, they will be more sections of already existing courses, meaning seats are created without requiring new foundational course planning and design. The efficiency of growth within the existing campus also means more of the per-pupil funding from any new students enrolled can go directly to instructional costs rather than building or start-up costs.

Even more importantly than the operational efficiencies to be found in an increased enrollment, Equipo Academy has a substantial wait list. Even after admitting dozens of students over the course of any year, the present wait list of 232 students represents students seeking a college preparatory education in our community who are unlikely to be admitted. Each time a student is admitted off of the wait list, the staff is reminded of the tremendous potential of every student given high expectations and ongoing support. There is a moral obligation and imperative to offer as many seats as we can in East Las Vegas.

Ten Year Charter Renewal

The Governing Body of Equipo Academy asks for SPCSA members to approve the longest available renewal term.

Equipo Academy has not only maintained its commitments, but also does not present risks to the Authority in any area: academic, financial, or operational. The academic results of the school have continually and steadily improved every year including four and five-star school ratings. In the state's rigorous school climate survey, Equipo Academy students report many of the most positive climate indicators in the SPCSA's portfolio. Families are engaged at the school on a weekly basis through their advisor and a monthly basis with the school itself. There is no record or incident of financial irresponsibility in the school's history. There is no for-profit management organization profiting from the school's work. Equipo Academy does not have plans to multiply into new schools and communities and does not intend to alter its mission or purpose.

It is understood that a charter renewal of any duration does not transmit to any governing body any cloak of invincibility. At any time SPCSA staff may recommend and the Authority members may vote to review or even revoke the charter of a poorly run school. This is the reality of operating a charter school.

A longer renewal period does, however, free resources at a successful school for the work of educating students and engaging with families. Multiple board agenda items, hours of staff work, and Authority presentations can be conserved or dedicated to closing achievement gaps and the costs associated with this work can be saved for direct instructional costs.

Academic Plans for the Proposed Charter Term

Equipo Academy will continue to deliver college-preparatory instruction to all students in its second charter term. While staff expect to continue to increase the rigor of instruction and the efficiency of school interventions, **no material changes are proposed to the school's academic program as it was initially approved in 2015.**

Academic Vision and Improvements for the Next Charter Term

College admissions will continue to become more selective, scholarships and financial aid will continue to become more competitive, and as automation and artificial intelligence change the types of work most valued in the world economy, we believe a liberal arts education and problem solving skills will become ever more essential for future leaders.

Currently Equipo Academy offers college preparatory middle school classes designed to prepare students for Pre-Advanced Placement courses in ninth and tenth grade and for full Advanced Placement courses by their later high school years. By graduation, one hundred percent of Equipo Academy students have taken not one but five Advanced Placement courses. More than half of graduating seniors have earned AP scores making them eligible for college credits on enrollment.

The success of the AP program and the desire for more global, problem-solving focused college preparatory courses has prompted the Equipo Academy team to explore International Baccalaureate (IB) candidacy. The IB program would offer additional rigorous course options that prepare students for leadership in a global society. An IB candidacy would not change the school's mission or goals, IB courses like AP courses would be offered to all students without prerequisites and do not constitute a material change to the school's charter. SPCSA staff have been advised as a candidacy has been explored and will continue to be advised throughout the process as new college preparatory courses are added to the Equipo Academy curriculum.

Restorative Discipline

Prior to the state and local focus on restorative justice, Equipo Academy had written restorative justice practices into the founding charter of the school that was presented to the Authority in 2014. With the exception of state and federal firearms policies, there are no other zero tolerance policies on the campus.

In the school's founding years, the commitment to restorative justice was a challenge to students, families, and staff who believed that the school was a gift and should not be made available to students who made mistakes with substance abuse or who committed acts of academic dishonesty. While every student choice had consequences and students who made mistakes were always expected to restore their integrity and commit to acts that would restore any damage they did to the team, the policies of restorative justice were initially challenging for many to understand.

Now having the vantage point of seeing alumni in college, Equipo Academy has students who have been able to learn and grow and persevere through graduation and into college because of the support of the school's advisors and leaders and the opportunities they had to fix mistakes.

Today in the requested present year disciplinary data, Equipo Academy has had no suspensions or expulsions. It is the commitment of the school administration and staff to continue to create spaces where students have strong peer and mentor relationships that allow them to seek advice before making mistakes, and to find support when they need to repair or solve a problem. Restorative discipline practices will continue to be a core part of the Equipo Academy curriculum as they were in the initial charter approved in 2015.

Addressing Opportunity Gaps

Equipo Academy's instructional program is data-driven and designed to meet students where they are and to find a pathway to and through college.

The school principal and deans use student data to allocate time and resources for student supports, to monitor for potential credit deficiencies, and to determine which interventions are and are not effective. For example, a teacher whose students demonstrate above average mastery of fraction concepts is an ideal support for struggling students in other grades needing to master the concept after school. An innovative character lesson that works in one advisory may have broader potential for the whole team. In short, the use of student data empowers staff to manage resources for interventions, support, and tutoring in ways that prevent or quickly close any gaps in student mastery.

Over the course of the first charter term, a major focus in transitioning new staff from their previous experiences as secondary teachers was developing a focus on mastery-based grading over task-based grading. Because many teacher preparation programs never directly address models for grading and assessment when working in an "AP for all" environment, grading practices that expect immediate proficiency or overly emphasize tasks instead of standards produce frustration for both students and their teachers. A priority for Equipo staff and leadership in the school's first term was the training on grading and assessment practices for teachers to remove non standards-based grade items from grade books and to develop formative assessment systems that led to increased mastery and opportunities for all students. This work has been some of the most critical work towards building a culture of achievement and closing academic opportunity gaps.

Going into the second charter term of the school, Equipo Academy is working to empower all team members to better understand and respond to student mastery data. New mastery grading grade books through the Canvas LMS are being integrated into teacher work and will eventually be rolled out to students and families through new mastery grading progress reports, portals, and report cards. While these shifts do not change the curriculum or the high expectations at Equipo Academy, they allow all learners to know where they are, to know where they need to be, and to know how they will get there.

Organizational Viability and Plans for the Proposed Charter Term

The Equipo Academy Governing Body represents a team of leaders with deep understandings of what works in education, real experiences grounded in East Las Vegas, and firm commitments to the charter that they hold with the members of the State Public Charter School Authority (SPCSA). The body has strived to maintain a membership that is as diverse as the community they serve - including racial, gender, socioeconomic, linguistic, and age diversity.

As part of the board's commitment to developing leadership, each of the board officers is now a second generation leader representing fresh leadership and the capacity of the Governing Body to continue to produce capable leadership and governance. While the board membership has changed due to term limits and transitions, the current board still includes the very first member of the Committee to Form Equipo Academy in the final months of his final term before reaching a term limit, and two members of the year one governing body.

Board Capacity, Skills, and Qualifications

Current Governing Body Chair Kerry Roberts has led the board since 2016 after training under founding Chair of the Committee to Form and Governing Body Shawna Wells. Chair Roberts was a career educator and school administrator in the Clark County School District for three decades, an advocate for the school's charter, and a member of the Equipo Academy governing body from the school's first year. During her tenure, the Equipo Academy has maintained the board's charter promise to the SPCSA by overseeing the graduation of three classes each with 100 percent college acceptance rate, earning four and five-star school ratings, and the improving student achievement and national Advanced Placement course outcomes each and every year.

Due to the timing of the charter renewal application and her nomination, the board's nominee for Vice Chair, Member Cheryl Adler-Walls, has not yet been formally elected

as an officer but is expected to be in place before the SPCSA reviews the charter renewal. She has experience as an educator, administrator, and most recently a district administrator for the FACES program serving Las Vegas and Southern Nevada families. Member Adler-Walls will represent the first member of the board's third generation leadership as the school enters its next five-year planning and work.

Treasurer Nathan Reynoso was the first alumnus of the school to be nominated and elected to the Governing Body while serving as a full-time college student at the University of Nevada - Las Vegas. In 2019, Treasurer Reynoso succeeded founding treasurer Adam Johnson. In partnership with Piercy Bowler Taylor & Kern, the Governing Body completed and reported to the SPCSA the organization's fourth and most recent annual audit that same year on-time and without findings.

Between her own full-time work in the community and her role as a mother of three Equipo students and alumni, Secretary Miriam Sotelo has made herself one of the most prominent faces of the governing body to families. In her role as secretary she took and shared board minutes herself before the school had a staff secretary to support her while participating and translating for parent guests. As the school staff has grown, she is now supported by a Chief of Staff and is able to spend more time speaking directly to families and sharing perspectives on policy discussions over topics as diverse as dress codes and campus mental health services.

The founding documents of the governing body approved in the school's founding charter called for a third of the founding members to serve one-year terms, a third to serve two-year terms, and a third to serve three-year terms. These initial terms combined with a combined two-term limit have ensured a regular refreshing of the board and have oriented members to continually prepare successors for their positions. While this has required staff and governing body members to maintain an active pipeline of future members, it has also demonstrated the capacity of the organization to sustain leadership and bring in fresh leadership with no interruption to

school outcomes or protection of the school charter. Entering into winter 2021, the Governing Body will begin to welcome its newest class of members replacing the final first generation members at the end of their total six-years of service.

The board's additional members bring a wide range of expertise and skill sets to the governing body.

During the 2017-2018 school year amidst an epidemic of national school shootings, Former Clark County Sheriff Jerry Keller joined the governing body to provide expertise in building security and community partnership. Member Keller is a lifelong Nevadan who worked through the ranks of law enforcement before serving two terms as Sheriff and leading the Major Cities Chiefs Association as President. During his tenure leading LVMPD, Member Keller became known as a problem solver and started numerous programs to address community challenges ranging from domestic violence to the unique community policing needs of apartment communities.

The first member of the Committee to Form Equipo Academy, Member Adam Johnson was also one of the first members of the governing body following the school's approval in January 2015. Member Johnson brings expertise in fundraising and budgeting from his time leading Teach For America - Las Vegas Valley's fundraising and donor relationships. He has also served as the Chair of the SPCSA and advised staff on engagement and relationship building with the Authority staff. Today, Member Johnson is also the Executive Director of Democracy Prep at Agassi and brings additional knowledge, connections, and perspectives to Equipo Academy from a national charter non-profit network.

Organizational Improvement and Capacity Building Work

During the school's first charter term, the governing body has invested in partnerships with five organizations including four nationally recognized firms to provide professional development and training that has expanded the board's capacity.

In 2015, Equipo's Governing Body started a now six-year relationship with Charter School Business Management to build board and school capacity in financial oversight and management. This partnership has been critical to the school's ongoing financial success despite all obstacles, and to the board's informed oversight of school budgets and state financial frameworks.

Equipo Academy contracted with Charter Board Partners's Great Boards program in 2016 for targeted development on organizational vision and goal-setting. This work took the school's charter vision and established benchmarks and dashboards for annual goal-setting and quarterly reporting. Using the emerging ideas from the Nevada School Performance Framework which was still under development, the school team and governing body began closely tracking several specific data benchmarks which would go on to drive the school's four- and five-star ratings.

Governing Body members and school staff participated in Authority-wide trainings on Open Meeting Law in 2018 in an effort to improve all charter school's compliance with Open Meeting Law. While Equipo Academy was not found to have committed any substantial violations of Open Meeting Law, all schools were invited to participate and Equipo Academy was advised to include a full mailing address on future board agendas.

Following the 2019 SPCSA site visit and working through Opportunity 180, Equipo Academy contracted with Education Board Partners for professional development and coaching on good governance and effective meeting practices. This training has led to

reformatted agendas, new board member recruitment initiatives, a refined school leader evaluation process, and tighter and more efficient meeting schedules.

Most recently, in response to multiple nationally reported instances of police violence against Black Americans, the Governing Body chose to respond by committing to a new partnership to audit Equipo Academy's own role in persistent inequities and injustices, and to find opportunities to make change in the East Las Vegas community. Work began two months later with Promise54 to introduce equity audits and an antiracist vision and agenda for the organization's future.

Board Member Recruitment

The Equipo Academy Governing Body has benefited from a core of experienced members with established experience on the board and fresh voices and perspectives joining annually to bring new ideas and energy. The organization has demonstrated both the ability to recruit exceptional community leaders to serve the school's purpose and protect the school's charter with the SPCSA, and the ability to adjust and evolve by recruiting board members with different skill sets and experiences to meet the evolving needs of the school team and mission.

Early in the development of the governing body a strong emphasis was put on members with legal, human resources, and fiscal experience and qualifications. The organization was new and underfunded. Many policies and procedures had to be written and reviewed to establish systems in a dynamic environment. And it was understood that the school could need legal experience to navigate the demands of compliance and relationship building with external organizations.

As the governing body matured and expanded, the focus of recruitment shifted to new needs and priorities in years two and three. With baseline data showing the significant

needs of new Equipo students, a priority was set on recruiting experienced school and special education and nonprofit leaders who could help advise on and oversee budgeting, policy development, and organizational planning for the work to achieve high growth across subgroups and regardless of starting points. Additionally given the growing facility needs of the school's increasing enrollment, fundraising and capital campaign experience was sought to develop a fundraising and development program.

Approaching the fifth and sixth years of Equipo Academy and the end of the first charter term, outgoing founding members were replaced with new legal, special education, and family engagement experts to plan for development of the school's next five-year vision and the charter renewal process. Academically and socio-emotionally, special education and emergent bilingual subgroups have experienced significant growth at Equipo Academy. Ensuring their continued success and, in the case of special education, continuing to grow the program and increase enrollment, has become a new priority for an increasingly equitable future. Also recognizing that many founding families have now graduated from the school's day-to-day enrollment and seeking to continue to build and engage new families in new ways, an expert in family engagement was recruited to support this work.

New pipeline and recruitment initiatives for future board members are prioritizing linguistic diversity, political and capital campaign experience, and innovative workplace thought leaders.

While Equipo Academy's governing body, leadership team, and staff all lead the community in many traditional diversity metrics, only one-third of the current board is bilingual. It is the governing body's belief that families have a right to be able to communicate directly with the leaders who hold the school's charter and while translators are always available for communication, the governing body seeks increased linguistic diversity to increase direct engagement and interactions between board members and the families they represent.

Having observed two gubernatorial administrations, three legislatures, and numerous community organizations promoting solutions to the underfunding of education without achieving adequate levels of funding, Equipo Academy seeks board members with political experience to build connections with elected representatives and to communicate the school's story to decision makers who could address the inequities of state funding for education. The organization is cognizant of the need as a non-profit to focus on communication and relationship building while remaining distanced from direct political activity.

Capital campaign experience will be necessary to continue to maintain and improve the school's existing facilities for increasingly advanced instructional work including updating science labs, creating maker spaces, and improving arts and athletics spaces to maintain the school's commitment to the Nevada Interscholastic Activities Association.

Finally, recognizing that people are the most important component of Equipo Academy's success, and the retention of great people has been one of the school's greatest strengths, thought leaders around innovative workplace environments and mental health are now sought to continue advising and overseeing Equipo Academy's work to be a best place to work for talented teachers.

Board member recruitment is conducted through a variety of channels, including colleague referrals, relationship building at professional conferences and lectures, outreach through professional networks including education, nonprofit, legal, commerce and real estate organizations, and often in the case of parent and alumni members through the advocacy of students and families. All incoming board members complete conflict of interest questionnaires, background and/or education licensure checks, board member affidavits of service, and foundational training for their success.

**Fiscal Soundness and Plans
for the Proposed Charter Term**

The current fiscal state of Equipo Academy is strong. The school has five years of strong, independently audited financial statements and is in good fiscal standing by the State Public Charter School Authority's own financial performance framework.¹ The strong financial stewardship of the school by the Governing Body and staff has allowed the school to grow and expand its work each year, and to weather storms like the current economic crisis impacting Southern Nevada.

History

When Equipo Academy first appeared before the State Public Charter School Authority in 2014, everything from the t-shirts worn by families and supporters to the binders and packets provided to the board had been charged to the credit cards of the Committee to Form members and on the individual contributions of future students and families. The school had not yet received authorization to collect donations as a non-profit, there was no national for-profit company backing the proposal, and each of the team members on the proposed staff and Committee to Form was a local parent or educator.

From the school's approval in January 2015, generous gifts from an entirely local, Southern Nevada group of community donors and a lot of grit (including students and families building furniture, laying tiles, and painting walls in an old union warehouse) sustained the school in its earliest days. The school never received a state loan or harbor grant and every staff member made enormous sacrifices and worked at reduced salaries the first year to see the school happen. Where state disbursements

¹ Equipo Academy staff note errors in the SPCSA staff renewal report's description of the school's fiscal health. Equipo Academy was never issued any notice of concern for financial performance. On page six of the renewal report, a notice of concern is described as having been issued on a date when there was no SPCSA meeting for the 2016-2017 school year. On page seven, the renewal report describes a notice of concern that was threatened against a multiple schools in good standing for the same 2016-2017 school year at the June 28, 2018 SPCSA meeting. During that meeting multiple school leaders and school finance experts, as well as the Chair of the SPCSA, questioned the legitimacy of the SPCSA staff recommendation. An argument ensued between members of the Authority and its staff before the SPCSA chair directed staff that it would be inappropriate to issue the recommended notices. The minutes of this SPCSA meeting are included in the appendix for reference. It is the opinion of Equipo Academy staff that this disagreement between the SPCSA and its staff has no relevance to a renewal consideration.

and federal grants were delayed, the school team negotiated with vendors and worked far outside the box to device low cost workarounds to every obstacle.

Despite these challenges, Equipo Academy was able to finish the first school year in good fiscal standing. It was at that time when the Governing Body and staff decided to proceed with a major building improvement to add over twenty classrooms and offices for the school's continued growth. Doing this while providing the upfront technology and staffing resources needed for increased enrollment required the team to make a strategic decision to operate at a one-year loss and carefully dip into cash-on-hand reserves to complete the project. The work was completed on-time, allowed the school to continue growing to serve an additional three hundred students, and every following year the school has continued to accumulate increasing cash reserves.

As an independent charter school operating in Nevada, Equipo Academy has navigated a complex set of realities in order to arrive at this renewal with a record of fiscal strength. It is generally agreed by researchers and practitioners that Nevada's political leaders have consistently underfunded education and that structural factors deliver the impacts of those decisions to underfund education directly to students in communities like East Las Vegas with generally lower property values (relative to communities like Summerlin or Incline Village), less political power (relative to local governments like Henderson or Sparks), and greater systemic inequities. Additionally, charter schools as a group have been excluded from multiple funding increases, must contribute a percentage of their funding to the SPCSA, and fund facilities entirely out of operating funds without public bonds or owned property.

While these challenges can and must be addressed, Equipo Academy has demonstrated that an effective school can be run in East Las Vegas on entirely public operating funds. The organization has produced strong independently audited financial statements since its founding. And as the SPCSA has developed and refined its own financial performance framework, Equipo Academy has met or exceeded those standards each year since their implementation.

Present Day

Despite the unique costs and hurdles of remote and hybrid instruction faced by schools today, Equipo Academy arrived at the present economic and pandemic crisis with a healthy financial reserve. The governing body immediately approved staff applications for public and private funding to expand essential nutritional programs and to support the payroll of employees for those programs. Additional CARES and ESSER funding has helped the school cover new costs associated with new instructional strategies and programs for instruction to continue through the COVID-19 pandemic.

The most substantial financial development for the organization in the present academic year has been the increasing independence of school operational staff in establishing contracts and programs directly with vendors to avoid the overhead of outside management companies.

Shortly after the COVID-19 pandemic began, Equipo Academy's governing body approved ending its five year contract with the Three Square childhood meals program as the local food bank could not commit to sustaining services needed by Equipo families. After consulting with several alternative food service management organizations, operations staff committed to the work of developing and managing their own food service program contracting directly with vendors and managing menus, nutritional calculations, vendor agreements and billing in-house. This decision has already saved the meal program (the single-largest grant program at the school) tens of thousands of dollars with those savings going back into staffing for the program and increased capacity for the community. During the pandemic Equipo Academy has served fresh meals every weekday without interruption since the first day schools closed, including tens of thousands of meals to siblings and community members who do not attend Equipo. Direct and local contracts have meant that rather than purchasing highly processed frozen and preserved meal components from across the

country, more fresh and local meals are being prepared for students and more grant money is staying in the local community with local businesses. All of this has taken place at a reduced cost per meal to Equipo.

Another financial improvement and savings opportunity is currently in progress for related services and providers in the special education program. Equipo Academy is shifting from contracting with larger related services management companies to directly managing relationships with highly qualified and insured subcontractors who develop direct relationships and expertise working at Equipo Academy, with contracts that send more compensation directly to the professional working on the school campus and saving the school on the overhead costs of management organizations and their related fees.

Finally, while Equipo Academy already rents and maintains its facilities as a significantly lower percentage of per-pupil funding than many other charter schools, school staff and the property owner have collaborated and begun work with local banks to support the refinancing of the property to ultimately reduce the annual costs of rent and to potentially increase available funds for facilities improvements in the future.

Looking Forward

Equipo Academy has proven that it is possible to operate a successful school in East Las Vegas in an environment of consistent underfunding. The operating budget is weighted heavily towards staff compensation and development - particularly relative to peer charter schools. This, however, is a strategic decision that has paid dividends in the schools outcomes. The strength of the school's measures including staff retention and student and family satisfaction support this decision.

Expecting Equipo Academy's continued success, the case now needs to be made for the potential of what excellently funded education systems in Nevada could achieve.

Talented professional educators deserve to be compensated with increasingly professional salaries. High achieving students (all students, really) deserve state of the art facilities to push their work further.

To focus on the advocacy of these goals, on the successful outcomes of programs, and to allocate as much of the school's human capital as possible to the mission and purpose of the school, Equipo Academy seeks the longest possible renewal term of ten years.

It is understood that the SPCSA has no statutory authority to increase per-pupil funding, and that the fees currently charged to charter schools for the funding of SPCSA staff and facilities likely cannot be reduced. By reducing the compliance and administrative work required of portfolio schools in good standing, however, the SPCSA can return hundreds of hours of administrator and educator time to students, families, and staff.

**Additional Information
from the Governing Body**

PROPOSED MISSION, VISION, VALUES & MODEL



The school we plan will be grounded in a clear mission, inspired by a powerful vision, and guided by five core values that have defined our work in East Las Vegas.

Mission

Empower students to meet high expectations, excel to and through college, and become no excuses leaders for East Las Vegas.

Vision

Our founding vision is a small, integrated 6th-12th grade campus where every student, regardless of background or starting point, will be on a path to and through the college of their dreams.

Classrooms will reflect consistently high expectations for academics and character, extracurriculars will challenge students to become confident artists and athletes, and our close partnerships with families and community leaders will create a support network that ensures students' continued success.

In four years, our school will graduate the first class of seniors with 100 percent acceptance to four-year colleges.

In eight years, 80 percent of those graduates will have earned college diplomas.

And within sixteen years, our school will be led by an alumnus who has returned to transform East Las Vegas.

Core Values

We will always be guided by five core values that we expect every member of our team, from students to families to staff, to be able to articulate as the foundation for our campus.

High Expectations for All

Every member of our team can and will meet our highest expectations. We will clearly define ambitious achievement goals for students and staff and we will insist on meaningful engagement from parents and families.

Transformational Teachers and Leaders

Nothing will impact our students so much as the teachers supporting them on their journey, and nothing will empower those teachers more than the leadership at the head of the school. We will invest more energy and resources into cultivating exceptional human capital than any other aspect of our campus.

Innovation Driven by Data

We believe there is no silver bullet. Instead, we commit to an ongoing cycle of data gathering, analysis, reflection, and innovation. We will never be afraid to change practices or habits to better meet our mission, but we will always hold ourselves accountable to prove that our innovations deliver on our bottom line.

A Pathway To and Through College

We seek more than college access for our students, we seek college success. We are not only preparing our students to get to college, but preparing our families and community to support them through college as well. We will empower families with the tools, data, and opportunities to transform the odds for their children and advocate for their community.

The Joy Factor

We work hard, so we play hard. Our mission is challenging and the obstacles our students face can be daunting, so we undertake them with joy and creativity. We celebrate successes and recognize achievement. In so doing, we build deep commitment that inspires our team to work harder and work longer to solve problems others call "impossible."

Our Educational Model

Learning from high-achieving schools across the country, we intend to build a campus that will defy the odds from day one and succeed in getting every student to and through the college of their dreams.

Our school will leverage seven defining characteristics of transformational schools:

A small, integrated 6th-12th grade campus

As local teachers and community leaders, we understand the loss of student investment in large urban schools and the struggle to engage parents across separate zones and buildings in East Las Vegas. We intend to build an integrated 6th to 12th grade campus with 108 students in each graduating class, where families build real partnerships with their students' teachers from sixth grade through college graduation.

The "Commitment to Excellence"

All students, families, and staff will sign a "Commitment to Excellence" that codifies our high expectations for student work, family involvement, and staff responsibilities.

Beyond merely demanding that students engage and participate in every class, the commitment challenges families to read together, solve problems collaboratively, and participate in all-team events. We will all hold ourselves to this commitment every day, in every setting, and it will guide us in tackling any challenges we face.

Challenging curricula in every subject at every grade

We will expect all of our students to take rigorous Advanced Placement courses and college entrance exams because we expect all of our students to graduate from four-year colleges. We will backwards plan for this work in their middle school classes to set them up for success, and we will deliberately create rigorous syllabi and seminar course structures in the high school grades to prepare students for college coursework.

Arts and athletics

As a small campus we may not be able to offer every sport or every creative opportunity, but those that we do provide will be exceptional. Our coaches and instructors in extracurriculars will be prepared to extend our high expectations, using their projects and practices as further opportunities to develop students into scholar athletes and scholar artists who can balance their academic and extracurricular work and become leaders in any arena.

More time to learn. More time for team.

The challenges our students face are not limited to a traditional school day and neither are we. We will leverage an extended daily schedule on an extended school year calendar to reach our ambitious goals. We also commit to be there for one another any time a member of our team needs support. All staff will be given cellphones to address student and family challenges after hours, we will partner with local organizations to offer classes and opportunities for parents, and our facilities will be used after hours for potluck dinners, special events and extracurriculars. We will work for our families to see the school as a center of the community and a means for empowerment.

Investment in Human Capital

We will recruit the greatest teachers and staff and then we will invest significant time and energy in their development so they have the capacity to grow our school. With an intensive summer on-boarding, co-teaching structures and an ongoing coaching process, we will create a pipeline of exceptionally talented teachers and leaders with the potential to lead our school or replicate its transformational impact on the community.

Student support for the long-haul

Too many college-prep programs succeed in getting students to college, only to see them struggle and drop out before earning a degree. The challenges of financial aid, living away from home, forming new friendships and interacting with professors can become overwhelming. Many of the country's highest achieving charter schools have only realized 30-40% college graduation rates from their founding classes. We intend to address this challenge from day one. Beyond merely preparing students with the academic and character skills needed for higher education, we will build a support team that fosters independent student problem-solving and the kinds of self-advocacy and grit character traits that our students will need in life.

2021-2022 Equipo Academy Team Calendar - DRAFT 1

First Day of Classes: August 16, 2021 Last Day of Classes: June 10, 2022

August							September							October							November							December							January																																																																										
S	M	T	W	T	F	S	S	M	T	W	T	F	S	S	M	T	W	T	F	S	S	M	T	W	T	F	S	S	M	T	W	T	F	S	S	M	T	W	T	F	S																																																																				
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February							March							April							May							June																																																															
S	M	T	W	T	F	S	S	M	T	W	T	F	S	S	M	T	W	T	F	S	S	M	T	W	T	F	S	S	M	T	W	T	F	S																																																									
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Term Dates
 S1: AUG 16-DEC 17
 S2: JAN 10-JUN 10

Staff Planning Weeks
 Q1: AUG 9-13
 Q2: OCT 25-29
 Q3: JAN 3-7
 Q4: APR 4-8

All-Team Family Events	Student Events	Team Trips	Assessment Days	No School
				JAN 17 MLK, Jr., Day
			SEP 6 Labor Day	FEB 21 Presidents' Day
			OCT 29 Nevada Day	APR 4-15 Spring Break
			NOV 11 Veteran's Day	MAY 27-30 Memorial Day Wknd
			NOV 25-26 Thanksgiving	
			DEC 20-JAN 7 Winter Break	

EA Regular Schedule

Transitions (lun): 2

Transitions (reg): 4

MONDAY, TUESDAY, FRIDAY SCHEDULE

MIDDLE SCHOOL				HIGH SCHOOL			
CLASS	START	END	TIME	CLASS	START	END	TIME
ADVISORY	8:00 AM	8:30 AM	30	ADVISORY	8:00 AM	8:30 AM	30
PER 1	8:34 AM	9:30 AM	56	PER 1	8:34 AM	9:30 AM	56
PER 2	9:34 AM	10:30 AM	56	PER 2	9:34 AM	10:30 AM	56
PER 3	10:34 AM	11:30 AM	56	PER 3	10:34 AM	11:30 AM	56
LUNCH	11:30 AM	12:00 PM	30	PER 4	11:34 AM	12:30 PM	56
PER 4	12:04 PM	1:00 PM	56	LUNCH	12:30 PM	1:00 PM	30
PER 5	1:04 PM	2:00 PM	56	PER 5	1:04 PM	2:00 PM	56
PER 6	2:04 PM	3:00 PM	56	PER 6	2:04 PM	3:00 PM	56
PER 7	3:04 PM	4:00 PM	56	PER 7	3:04 PM	4:00 PM	56

WEDNESDAY BLOCK SCHEDULE

MIDDLE SCHOOL				HIGH SCHOOL			
CLASS	START	END	TIME	CLASS	START	END	TIME
ADVISORY	8:00 AM	9:14 AM	74	ADVISORY	8:00 AM	9:14 AM	74
PER 1	9:18 AM	10:48 AM	90	PER 1	9:18 AM	10:48 AM	90
LUNCH	10:48 AM	11:18 AM	30	PER 3	10:52 AM	12:22 PM	90
PER 3	11:22 AM	12:52 PM	90	LUNCH	12:22 PM	12:52 PM	30
PER 5	12:56 PM	2:26 PM	90	PER 5	12:56 PM	2:26 PM	90
PER 7	2:30 PM	4:00 PM	90	PER 7	2:30 PM	4:00 PM	90

THURSDAY BLOCK SCHEDULE

MIDDLE SCHOOL				HIGH SCHOOL			
CLASS	START	END	TIME	CLASS	START	END	TIME
ADVISORY	8:00 AM	8:18 AM	18	ADVISORY	8:00 AM	8:18 AM	18
ALL-TEAM	8:18 AM	8:48 AM	30	ALL-TEAM	8:18 AM	8:48 AM	30
PER 2	8:52 AM	10:22 AM	90	PER 2	8:52 AM	10:22 AM	90
LUNCH	10:22 AM	10:52 AM	30	PER 4	10:26 AM	11:56 AM	90
PER 4	10:56 AM	12:26 PM	90	LUNCH	11:56 AM	12:26 PM	30
PER 6	12:30 PM	2:00 PM	90	PER 6	12:30 PM	2:00 PM	90

EQUIPO ACADEMY PROJECTED 3 YEAR BUDGET	FY 20-21	FY 21-22	FY 22-23	Notes
Income				
Private & Local Revenue	155,000.00	200,000.00	250,000.00	Donations, bank interest, credit card rewards
Per Pupil Revenue	5,859,200.00	5,917,792	5,976,970	800 students, assumes 0.5% increase.
Per Pupil Revenue - Special Education	125,000.00	125,000.00	125,000.00	Additional sped funds - no increase
State Grants	200,000.00	200,000.00	200,000.00	Zoom, and other misc state funds - no increase
Federal Grants	1,000,000.00	1,000,000.00	1,000,000.00	Title, Food Reimbursement and other misc fed funds - no increase
Total Income	7,339,200	7,442,792	7,551,970	
Expenses				
Salaries	3,742,250	3,779,673	3,817,469	1% inflator
Payroll Taxes & Fringe	510,000	529,154	534,446	14% of compensation
Pension	959,766	982,715	992,542	26% of compensation
Professional & Technical Services	211,000	213,110	215,241	1% inflator
Rent & Occupancy	963,986	973,626	983,362	1% inflator
School Food	367,500	371,175	374,887	1% inflator
Direct Instructional Supplies	259,961	262,561	265,186	1% inflator
Charter Fees	87,888	88,767	89,655	1% inflator
Insurance	52,883	53,412	53,946	1% inflator
Office Expenses	51,828	52,346	52,870	1% inflator
Telephone & Communications	15,240	15,392	15,546	1% inflator
Depreciation	90,000	80,000	70,000	
Total Expenses	7,312,302	7,401,930	7,465,150	
Net Income/(Deficit)	26,898	40,862	86,820	
Depreciation	(90,000)	(80,000)	(70,000)	
Capital Costs	25,000	25,000	25,000	
Cash Income/(Loss)	91,898	95,862	131,820	

MEETING MINUTES - Equipo Academy Governing Body

Equipo Academy Governing Body Regular Meeting Minutes

Equipo Academy
4131 E Bonanza Rd
Las Vegas, NV 89110

Members of the Governing Body may participate in the meeting via telephone conference call. Members of the public are invited to attend. All reasonable efforts will be made for members of the public who are disabled and require special accommodations or assistance at the meeting. Please call Estella Spaine at 702-907-0432 at least two business days in advance so that arrangements can be made.

Public notice is posted in compliance with the Nevada Open Meeting Law at the planned location of the meeting, the Equipo Academy offices, and the East Las Vegas Community Center. Notice of this meeting was posted on the Internet through the Equipo Academy website at equipoacademy.org/board and at notice.nv.gov

Meeting

Date	Monday, October 5, 2020
Started	6:00 PM
Ended	7:30 PM
Location	Equipo Academy
Purpose	Regular scheduled meeting
Chaired by	Kerry Roberts
Recorder	Denise Cisneros

Attendance

Present: Cheryl Alder Wells, Denise Cisneros, Rosa Garcia, Adam Johnson, Jerry Keller, Nathan Reynoso , Kerry Roberts, Ben Salkowe, Estella Spaine
Late: Miriam Sotelo

Meeting documents

None

Minutes

1. Opening Items

1.A. Call to Order and Roll Call

Status: Completed

1.B. Approval of the Minutes from the Sept 14 meeting (for possible action)

Resolution #: All In Favor

Moved: Cheryl Alder Wells

seconded: Nathan Reynoso

Status: Carried

Vote: All in favor

1.C. Adoption of the Agenda for the October 5 meeting (for possible action)

Resolution #: All In Favor
Moved: Adam Johnson
seconded: Jerry Keller
Status: Carried
Vote: All In Favor

2. Public Comment

3. Reports and Presentations

3.A. Principal's Report on Hybrid Reopening Progress (for discussion)

Emily Bassler - Dean of Faculty shared academics report on high school and middle school MAP data as well as Evaluate for middle school students

Anna Parra - Dean of Students shared a **Pulse Check Survey** To get an idea of our students' overall well-being during this hybrid learning environment to see which students would benefit from a check in w/Dean, their advisors, or a leadership team member. **Student Check In Spreadsheet** which categorize students in different situations: Ghosting Yells, "Dark Place," Challenging Home Situation, and Mental Health. **"Yells Working Overtime"** Initiative; to help students (IN PERSON and VIRTUAL) pass their classes during this hybrid learning environment Consists of academic probation, centralized computer labs, check ins w/class advisors, and more

Rosa Garcia - Dean of Families shared current attendance percentage which ranges from 96-98% along with **Connectivity information** which included:

Weekly Parent Meetings, Daily Attendance Calls process, Weekly Challenging Homes List, Technology and Hot spots as well as Linking to Resources

Alvise Sobosan - Director of College Access shared FAFSA and college application completion for the month of October. It includes 31% of seniors with a completed FAFSA and 9% of seniors with a college acceptance letter along with a plan to meet goal of 100% of students submit at least one application by 10/13.

Estrella Spaine - Director of Operations shared Current Enrollment, Breakfast/Lunches Community Distribution process along with meals served, and reviewed Audit Prep that is currently in process along with their perspective due dates.

Denise Cisneros - Chief of Staff shared the number of in-person staff along with in-person students, the daily morning screening process along with the student head count, and the procedure of computer labs (work place for in-person students who have virtual teachers)

Ben Salkow - Principal shared our safety requirements while in campus such as temperature checks and mask requirements, along with sharing that at this point we are in our third month and anyone connected to the school has not tested positive as a result of being exposed to our school which makes us believe we have proven that we can continue with hybrid learning setting following all safety precautions on a daily basis.

Status: Completed

4. Consent Agenda

4.A. Approval of Full Consent Agenda (for possible action)

Resolution #: All in Favor
Moved: Nathan Reynoso
seconded: Cheryl Alder Wells
Status: Carried
Vote: All in Favor

4.B. Approval of FY21 Zoom Application (for possible action)

Status: Completed

4.C. Approval of FY21 Fiscal Policies and Procedures (for possible action)

Status: Completed

4.D. Approval of FY21 ESSER COVID-19 Grant Subaward (for possible action)

Status: Completed

4.E. Approval of 2021-2022 Calendar Draft (for possible action)

Status: Completed

4.F. Approval of 2021-2022 Board Meeting Calendar Draft (for possible action)

Status: Completed

4.G. Approval of 2021-2022 Lottery Policies and Handbook (for possible action)

Status: Completed

5. Financial Items

5.A. Approval of SNDA Agreement for Property Lease Revision (for possible action)

Premier Educational Facilities LLC, have had an ongoing several month process to purchase our current building and then lease it back to us. They are trying to refinance so that they can re up some of the capital that they put in to the building that is currently being held by the bank, and also so they can get the monthly payment down on there end so we can get our monthly payment down as well.

We are having Nevada State Bank come out and appraise the property and review our finances and help rewrite the lease so it can be refinanced down to a lower rate for us. One of the last steps needed will require board approval to switch to Nevada State Bank and be able to refinance and present us with a new lease.

Once this gets to the bank and they get the new term for the new loan they will come back to us with a new lease at a lower rate which would need to be approved in future board meeting.

Resolution #: All in Favor
Moved: Jerry Keller
seconded: Adam Johnson
Status: Carried
Vote: All in Favor

6. Governance Items

6.A. Approval of 2020 Charter Renewal Application (for possible action)

Mr. Salkow presented.

The only new material request from August that is included in this renewal application draft, also needs Authority approval to request our enrollment limit be increased.

We are interested in potentially over the next few years being able to add on to our building or do new construction to create more space to our arts, athletics and our science programs, which require specialized spaces. If we build more space, that would create more space for our regular classrooms and in current building, which would also allow for a slightly larger enrollment.

Our main goal here is strategic just in terms of what we are doing right now. It's not to substantially increase the size of the school, but it's to say that if we had that space, we can get to the point where a 6th grade math teacher teaches five sections of math versus doing four sections of math and an elective or a tutorial. This would maximize the impact of future staff members and if we had that space in our building we would also have the obligation of allowing as many students as we can.

In the future, if we didn't do this, we would need to go back to the State Authority and request an amendment to increase our enrollment limit and reopen the full process, which at this moment it made the most sense to ask for the limit increase at the renewal application process and not have to go back within the next term if we decide to move forward.

Requesting motion to approve the 2020 charter renewal application.

Resolution #: All in Favor

Moved: Jerry Keller

seconded: Nathan Reynoso

Status: Carried

Vote: All in Favor

6.B. Acceptance of Resignation of Member Cates (for possible action)

Chair member Kerry Roberts explained that member Pam Cates Vice Chair felt that working for Teach for America as well as working with some students from the building, creates a form of conflict of interest with her continuing as a board member and cited personal health concerns reducing her overall obligations this year.

Resolution #: All in Favor

Moved: Adam Johnson

seconded: Cheryl Alder Wells

Status: Carried

Vote: All in favor

6.C. Discussion of Recruitment and Officers for Governing Body (for discussion)

We are trying to think of not only filling member Cates seat but also filling in some of the seats that are coming up due to some of our members being termed out, and we would like to have members ready who understand their roles and can move into leadership as those experienced board members start to move out.

-We identified a list of very active parents from our parent committee and will be meeting with a parent who is very interested as well as two others. If a member would like to join, the process would be meeting to explain the commitment and the work that is friendly before the board, we then have them attend a meeting, in this case they

would attend either the special meeting to review the audit or the November committee meeting so that they can get a sense of what your work looks like and then usually it is the second meeting that they attend where we put them up for a nomination.

-There is also one candidate that has a legal background which would help us add somebody with legal experience.

-We are still trying to find somebody in the mental health profession or with deep HR experience which is something we want to prioritize, if we would be able to find somebody with psychology, or mental health background, would help fulfill some of that gap to continue innovating with our workspace for employees.

- It would help if we found somebody with capital campaign and fundraising experience

-Also new a Vice Chair member. Preferably a Vice Chair with the potential to grow into a Chair Role since this is the last year for member Roberts.

Member Jerry Keller mentioned that Governing Body has a natural process of evolution and replacement that the term limits is not something needed to generate fresh thought ideas and commitment to the board. He would like to recommend to include as an item in a future agenda to address and alter the bylaws to revisit term limits.

Status: Completed

6.D. Approval of Special Meeting for Audit Approval and Other Purposes (for possible action)

Motion to approve a special meeting for Audit Approval and for nominating a Vice Chair

Resolution #: All in Favor

Moved: Jerry Keller

seconded: Cheryl Alder Wells

Status: Carried

Vote: All in favor

7. Public Comment

The public is hereby notified that the Equipo Academy Governing Body reserves the right to take agenda items out of posted order, with the exception of public hearings, and items may be pulled or removed from the agenda at any time or combined for consideration. A time for public comment is provided at the beginning and at the conclusion of the meeting. The Governing Body Chair reserves the right to call on individuals from the audience or to allow for public comment at any time. Individuals providing testimony should fill out a Visitor Card which will be numbered in order received by the Governing Body Secretary. A time limit (three minutes) will be imposed by the Governing Body Chair on public testimony in order to afford all members of the public who wish to comment an opportunity to do so within the timeframe available to the Governing Body. No Governing Body action may be taken on items raised in public comment unless those items are already on the posted agenda.

NEVADA STATE PUBLIC CHARTER SCHOOL AUTHORITY

June 28, 2018

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

Nevada Department of Education
9890 South Maryland Parkway
2nd Floor Board Room
Las Vegas, Nevada

MINUTES OF THE MEETING

BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT:

In Las Vegas:

Jeff Hinton
Randy Kirner
Nora Luna
Sheila Moulton

In Carson City:

Jason Guinasso
Melissa Mackedon

BOARD MEMBERS ABSENT:

Stavan Corbett

AUTHORITY STAFF PRESENT:

In Las Vegas:

Patrick Gavin, Executive Director
Mark Modrcin, Director of Authorizing
Brian Scroggins, Deputy Director

In Carson City:

Tanya Osborne, Administrative Assistant III

LEGAL STAFF PRESENT:

In Carson City:

Ryan Herrick, General Counsel, State Public Charter School Authority
Aisheh Quiroz, Legal Assistant, State Public Charter School Authority

AUDIENCE IN ATTENDANCE:

In Las Vegas:

John Hawk
Ben Salkowe
Africa Sanchez
Tricia Wilbourne
Crystal Thiriot
Ercan Aydogan
Rachelle
Carolyn Sharette
Bryan Richardson
Trevor Goodsell
Andrea A.
Amanda Kettleison
Colin Bringham
Phil Bateman
Ryan Reeves
Yolanda Hamilton
Mike Dang
R. Gourrier
Ron Tetirick
Deborah Borges

In Carson City:

None

CALL TO ORDER; ROLL CALL; PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE; APPROVAL OF AGENDA

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

Chairman Guinasso called the meeting to order at 9:00am with attendance as reflected above.

Agenda Item 2 – Public Comment

Trevor Goodsell – Spoke on behalf of Academica schools, specifically Somerset, on the agenda for a Financial Notice of Concern due to financial concerns. He spoke on the bonds Somerset has issued and requests that the bond revenue be removed from the calculations the agency uses to measure schools' financial health. He explained that issuing these notices will negatively impact schools by hampering their ability to apply for loans in the future.

Ryan Reeves – COO Academica Nevada – Spoke on behalf of all Academica schools and urged the Authority and the Board to reexamine the financial framework the schools are using. He said that using the NACSA framework without amending it for Nevada. If the school is in good standing, they don't deserve to be put on financial notice.

Yolanda Hamilton – Spoke on behalf of NVA and their attorney, Kara Hendricks – expressed dismay at being put on the agenda for financial notice in view of the settlement agreement reached on June 25th for their academic underperformance. She cited letters exchanged with Director Gavin in the fall of 2017 and noted that NVA has not received a response to their letter in September of 2017 which itself was a response to a notice of concern issued by the SPCSA. The letter addressed and clarified the relevant financial data. Dr. Hamilton believes that the agreement reached earlier in the week should have hit a “restart” button for NVA’s financial framework in addition to their academic framework. She listed ways in which NVA’s board has resolved outstanding financial issues.

Ben Salkowe – Principal of Equipo Academy – He updated the Board on the progress Equipo has made and explained that Equipo has met all of the goals they set for themselves from their outset in 2015. They just graduated their first class of 38 seniors who have all been accepted to four-year colleges. He expressed his thanks for the 2015 Authority Board’s faith in the school. Mr. Salkowe explained that the financial decisions were made as investments to benefit the school directly. He asked what a school has to do to earn a letter of commendation and requests that the Board and Staff reevaluate the financial framework and clearly delineate what they want from the schools and which actions earn which rewards or consequences. He requested that the Board have a substantive discussion over the opportunity gaps in the demographics of the SPCSA portfolio.

Ron Tetirick – Spoke in objection to Discovery moving to Mt. Olive. He stated the agenda did not adequately reflect the fact that Discovery (a public school) is moving into Mt. Olive (a church). Second, he stated that the Receiver for Discovery claimed that the church is an abandoned building when it is in fact fully operational. Further, Mr. Tetirick cited caselaw that he believes prohibits public schools from using church facilities (*Elmbrook School District vs. Doe*). He asks how the school plans to get around the constitutional prohibition. Finally, Mr. Tetirick does not believe Discovery has exhausted all the other options at their disposal prior to choosing to put their school in a church. He is concerned that this leaves the school vulnerable to lawsuits, which would negatively impact students of Discovery.

Agenda Item 3 – Approval of the May 14, 2018 Action Minutes

Member Kirner abstained from voting, as he was not part of the board at that time the meeting occurred.

Member Moulton moved to approve the minutes of the May 14, 2018 board meeting. Member Luna seconded. The motion carried unanimously.

Agenda Item 4 – SPCSA Staff Report

- Renewal Reports
 - Director Modrcin spoke on the renewal reports that are due for NVA, Doral, Coral, and Learning Bridge. Renewal reports will go out on June 29th.

- Chair Guinasso asked when the renewal application process will begin, Director Modrcin explained that the renewal reports are the first step in the process and that they will be before the board in November or December.
- Coral Academy of Science featured in US World & News Report
 - Coral Academy Leadership spoke on behalf of their school. Coral is the 721st best school in the country, 7th best high school in Nevada, and 157th best Charter School in the country. The school is making great strides in their academic programs and looks forward to serving a more diverse population in the future.
- Coral Academy of Science and Pinecrest (Inspirada) named as a “Nevada Governor-Designated STEM School”.
 - Both of these schools were designated STEM schools, meaning that the governor’s office recognized them for strong STEM instruction, concluded by a robust site-visit process. The schools will host other schools interested in receiving the same designation in the future. Chair Guinasso asked that the schools share their Best Practices with the Board later.

Agenda Item 5 – American Preparatory Academy’s Charter Contract Amendment Request (Expansion)

Staff recommends conditional approval.

School administrators spoke briefly on the school’s behalf. Member Moulton expressed concern about the lack of diversity at APA and is interested to see an increase. Chair Guinasso asked if the school has a weighted lottery and they responded that they are incorporating a weighted lottery as part of their renewal.

Member Kirner moved to accept Staff’s recommendation to conditionally approve American Preparatory Academy’s request to amend their charter contract to include expansion. Member Luna seconded. The motion carried unanimously.

Agenda Item 6 – Discovery Charter School Charter Contract Amendment Request (Relocation)

Staff recommends conditional approval.

Discovery’s current campus is deteriorating and in need of ongoing repair and maintenance. They are requesting to relocate from their Mesa Vista campus to Mt. Olive. The move is advantageous for the school in several ways – improved infrastructure, potential increased revenue, and generally better learning environment.

Director Modrcin clarified legal concerns about the charter school being housed in a church. He stated that if the instruction remains entirely secular and the education is in no way influenced by the church, it is statutorily allowed.

School officials and their legal representation, Africa Sanchez, spoke in support of Discovery. Member Moulton inquired about the diversity at the school and said she understands the concerns about housing a public school in a church building.

Chair Guinasso asked for an update on how Discover's receivership is going and on the performance of the elementary school under the receiver. He wanted the board to know that they are approving an amendment for a charter school that is improving. School staff provided handouts (see supporting documents) showing how well the school has been performing.

Member Moulton moved to approve Staff's recommendation to move its campus without increasing enrollment or grade levels. Member Mackedon seconded. The motion carried unanimously.

Agenda Item 7 – Leadership Academy of Nevada (Dual Enrollment Policy Update)

Staff recommends conditional approval.

Vice Chair Mackedon asked if the proposed program is similar to the Jump Start program. School officials said it is not the same – they will use outside instructors.

Member Moulton asked the school to attempt to increase their diversity. She also clarified that there is no charge for students to enroll in the dual enrollment policy.

Vice Chair Mackedon moved to accept Staff's recommendation and approve Leadership Academy's Dual Enrollment policy update. Member Moulton seconded. The motion carried unanimously.

Agenda Item 8 – Nevada State High School Charter Contract Amendment Request (Expansion/New Campus)

NSHS is requesting to open two new campuses over the next two school years to meet the need of the communities. John Hawk, the COO of NSHS, spoke in support of the amendment and commended the SPCSA, Director Modrcin in particular, for the quality of the communication between the SPCSA and NSHS.

Staff recommends conditional approval.

Vice Chair Mackedon moved to accept Staff's recommendation and approve Nevada State High School's expansion to open one campus in 19-20 and one campus in 20-21. Member Moulton seconded. The motion carried unanimously.

Agenda Item 9 – American Leadership Academy Amendment Request (EMO termination)

The school is looking to change their EMO and rename the school Freedom Classical Academy.

Staff recommends conditional approval.

Member Moulton moved to accept Staff's recommendation for American Leadership Academy to change from one EMO to another. Member Kirner seconded. The motion carried unanimously.

Agenda Item 10 – Quest Preparatory Academy

Quest's receiver, Josh Kern, is requesting that the board approve the school's request to close their Bridger campus. The expansion to the campus was never approved by the board to begin with, and it is ultimately an unaffordable expense for the school. They are currently engaged in litigation over the campus, and Mr. Kern is asking that the board make the distinction that Quest did not open the Bridger campus in the correct manner. The school has made arrangements for the remainder of the Bridger campus students to attend other facilities, including Quest's original campus.

Member Kirner asked why the Board must approve the closure of a campus whose opening was not approved. Mr. Herrick said that this amendment needs to be done to make it official, that the students are no longer at the school and that the campus has been eliminated from their charter.

Quest has argued in court that there cannot be a valid lease if the Charter school did not have the authority to enter into that contract. This issue is at the heart of the CSP Bridger litigation. Mr. Kern asked that the board make it clear that they did not approve the move to Bridger campus, but also make it clear that they are still sanctioning the elimination of that campus.

After conferring with counsel, Mr. Kern asked the board to issue a retroactive resolution to open the Bridger campus and then finding that there was no approval for the opening of that campus, to deny that application, thereby making it clear that Quest has no right to be occupying the Bridger campus. Considering a motion to pass a resolution retroactively denying Quest's request to occupy the Bridger campus. The denial of that application would make it clear that Bridger cannot occupy that campus.

Chairman Guinasso asked how the Board can deny an application they never received. Mr. Herrick shared Chair Guinasso's concerns and said that Staff was not prepared to offer recommendations on something that took place several years ago.

Chairman Guinasso moved to approve the recommendation of Staff to allow Quest to move from its Bridger campus to the new campus with the understanding that Quest never received approval through the normal application process to move to the Bridger campus in the first place. Additionally, the board finds that Quest has been in breach relative to that issue.

After discussion about the precise wording of the motion and the history of the receivership of the school, Chair Guinasso withdrew his motion and tried again.

Chair Guinasso asked that the board find that it has never approved an application from Quest to operate and move into the Bridger campus. Based on that finding, he moved that the board require Quest to vacate the Bridger campus and that further approve the application to move Quest to the Northwest Campus. Vice Chair Mackedon seconded the motion. There was discussion in which the precision of the language of the motion was addressed. The motion carried unanimously.

Agenda Item 11 – Doral Academy Charter Contract Amendment Request (Distance Education Addition)

Staff recommends conditional approval.

Chairman Guinasso motioned to accept Staff's recommendation to approve Doral Academy's amendment request. Member Moulton Seconded. The motion carried unanimously.

Agenda Item 12 – Mater Academy Charter Contract Amendment Request (Distance Education Addition)

Staff recommends conditional approval.

Chairman Guinasso motioned to accept Staff's recommendation to approve Mater Academy's amendment request. Member Moulton Seconded. The motion carried unanimously.

Agenda Item 13 – Pinecrest Academy of Nevada Charter Contract Amendment Request (Distance Education Addition)

Staff recommends conditional approval.

Chairman Guinasso motioned to accept Staff's recommendation to approve Pinecrest Academy's amendment request. Member Hinton Seconded. The motion carried unanimously.

Agenda Item 14 – Somerset Academy Charter Contract Amendment Request (Distance Education Addition)

Staff recommends conditional approval.

Chairman Guinasso motioned to accept Staff's recommendation to approve Somerset Academy's amendment request. Member Kirner Seconded. The motion carried unanimously.

Agenda Item 15 – Sports Leadership and Management Academy – SLAM Charter Contract Amendment Request (Distance Education Addition)

Staff recommends conditional approval.

Chairman Guinasso motioned to accept Staff's recommendation to approve SLAM Academy's amendment request. Member Moulton Seconded. The motion carried unanimously.

Agenda Item 16 – Financial Framework – Notices of Concern/Breach –

In light of public comment and other comments made privately, Chair Guinasso decided to take this agenda item out of order to better prioritize efforts. Director Gavin spoke about the historical context of the financial performance framework for the schools and briefly explained the processes and pitfalls of the current financial framework. He cited auditor error as the reason for a lack of consistency across all the schools. He explained that the schools who are at risk of receiving notices for financial breach were made aware of their underperformance via letters last year. The new notices would address whether those deficiencies cited last year have been resolved. Chair Guinasso asked what effort the SPCSA has made to engage with the schools in its portfolio to clearly explain the financial framework to interested parties and answer any questions to avoid this confusion. Director Gavin answered that the SPCSA does not have a CPA on Staff. He said that the SPCSA has made efforts to communicate with the schools and that the schools had abundant notice of these problems.

Chair Guinasso asked Director Gavin to explain what the financial framework indicates about the overall fiscal health of the schools.

Chair Guinasso asked that “we not elevate form over substance” and ensure that the financial framework actually represents the schools’ fiscal health and not issue notices gratuitously.

Director Gavin again stated that the SPCSA does not have a CPA on staff.

Chair Guinasso called Ryan Reeves, of Academica, to explain the auditing process and how things have gotten to this point.

Vice Chair Mackedon interjected that she does not believe the Board did an adequate job consulting with schools on this framework. Even if that were the case, it was five years ago, and the portfolio has grown significantly since that time. In 2013, the Board largely just accepted NACSA’s financial framework with very few tweaks. She argues that the framework is not working well in the current landscape. She believes it would be wrong to be heavy-handed with this framework when Staff and the Board are well-aware that it is bad framework. She explained that Notices of Breach have very serious financial consequences for the schools. “If we know this tool has some flaws, it would be wrong to be heavy-handed”. She asks for changes to be made to the framework.

Director Gavin stated that it is neither his position, nor Staff’s, that the tool is flawed. He stated that the auditors and audits are flawed, and it is not the SPCSA’s job to oversee auditors.

Chair Guinasso argued that if the board’s information is based on a flawed system, issuing notices based on that flawed information is unfair.

Member Luna weighed in and said that the board approved the work at the time it was introduced and that the board should be consistent.

Ryan Reeves spoke and praised the difference between last year and this year in the approach by the SPCSA and commended Mark specifically. He said that auditors are not interpreters, they are calculators. He said the problem is not the fault of the auditors, but it is the responsibility of this body to put forth adequate instructions so that an accurate reflection of the schools’ financial health is produced. He said that a GASB audit is different from a GAP audit and it is not the fault of the auditors. Mr. Reeves suggested tweaks to the financial framework such as using a three-year average as opposed to an annual calculation. He also gave other examples of ways in which the current framework falls short – for example, not accounting for occasions when schools save up money (over years) for a specific expenditure and are then penalized for spending more money than they made in a single year.

Director Gavin and Mr. Reeves and Mr. Goodsell discussed what measures are and are not on the audit and included in the financial framework. Director Gavin continued to explain different options open to the board to address the issue or rework the financial framework included in the Charter contracts.

Chair Guinasso, after discerning that there is no statute compelling the timeliness of the issuance of notices, proposed that the Board and Authority hold a Financial Framework Workshop in

which Staff would solicit input from the schools and other outside resources to determine what is and is not working in the current framework. He stated that he is not comfortable with issuing notices right now, given the information put forth at this meeting. He suggested that the agenda item be continued indefinitely and that the board have the workshop at one of the August meetings. He suggested sending invitations to the school, asking for information and input, combine this with input from Staff and others, and modify the framework accordingly. After this change, the board will revisit the agenda item and make these decisions.

Chair Guinasso motioned to continue Agenda Item 16, regarding The Financial Framework, indefinitely. Member Moulton seconded. The motion carried unanimously.

Agenda Item 17 – Argent Preparatory Academy

Receiver, Josh Kern, spoke on the progress Argent is making in regard to the closure of the school. He explained that in March, the board approved the closure under the conditions that they offer Summer school for students to finish or make up credits and that they help transition students to other schools. On June 20th, Mr. Kern received a court order granting the motion to close Argent and surrender its charter. They are currently holding Summer School with 39 students enrolled – some through August 17th. Argent has contracted with administrators to help students transition into new schools – twelve in all – and these administrators will visit former students and parents to ensure that the transition has gone well. They have matched students with schools specifically and communicated with students, families, and new schools to facilitate this transition.

Argent is currently working on several points pertaining to the closure of the school. They are working on moving student records to different schools/districts. They are selling the properties they own as well as inventorying and selling off said inventory. Through doing due diligence in selling these properties, they discovered a second deed of trust that lists NDE as the beneficiary. As a result of this second lien, Argent has not been able to sell the properties yet. NDE is executing documents to convey the lien.

Argent plans to liquidate the remaining inventory – worth roughly \$100,000 as a matter of the winding-down process.

Members of the board commended Mr. Kern for his work on this matter.

Agenda Item 20 – Long-Range Board Calendar

Mr. Herrick briefed the Board on its Long-Range Calendar. He noted that the calendar has been updated regarding meeting facilities, renewals and new applications, and the Star Ratings which will dictate much of the rest of the year's meetings. The Financial Framework workshop has been tentatively scheduled for the August 24th meeting. In November, Staff will be prepared to provide recommendations on the renewals and new applications received during the renewal and application windows.

Chair Guinasso asked to put Pat Hickey of CSAN on the calendar for an ACT Aspire conversation. Vice Chair Mackedon noted that schools need to know whether they need to schedule these tests. She asked that Staff place this conversation on the agenda for the September

meeting. Director Gavin expressed that the schools should plan on taking the ACT Aspire exam, just in case. He also expressed concern that Staff does not have the capacity to adequately address the ACT Aspire conversation in addition to the rest of its workload with regard to the Academic Framework and NSPF scores.

Chairman Guinasso asked that Staff schedule Pat Hickey to give a brief talk about ACT Aspire at the September 28th meeting.

Finally, Director Gavin and Chair Guinasso discussed having the board approve the SPCSA budget. Director Gavin stated that the budget is confidential, so the Board can't actually see it, but is supposed to approve it. Chair Guinasso asked Staff to look into this. He asked to put the budget approval as an item on the November meeting.

Agenda Item 21 – Public Comment #2

None.

Agenda Item 22 – Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 2:00pm.

