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BRIEFING MEMORANDUM

TO: SPCSA Board Members
FROM: Rebecca Feiden, Executive Director
SUBJECT: Proposed Updates to the Academic and Demographic Needs Assessment
DATE: December 11, 2020

Background

Assembly Bill 462 from the 2019 Legislative Session requires the SPCSA to annually conduct an “evaluation of demographic information of pupils, the academic needs of pupils and the needs of any pupils who are at risk of dropping out of school in this State.”¹ The first Academic and Demographic Needs Assessment was published in July of 2019 and the most recent version was approved by the State Public Charter School Authority on December 13, 2019 and can be found on the [SPCSA website](#).

The Academic and Demographic Needs Assessment identifies three needs:

1. *Demographic Needs*
 - A. Student groups that underperform according to graduation rate, the ACT Assessment, and the Smarter Balanced Assessment (both Math and ELA) for the last three years present a demographic need; these student groups may benefit from the creation of high-quality school options focused on meeting their needs;
2. *Academic Needs*
 - A. Geographies with 1 and 2 star schools: In zip codes with a 1- or 2-Star school, students are enrolling in schools that are, based on definitions from the Nevada Department of Education’s Nevada School Performance Framework (NSPF), inadequate and the addition of a 3, 4 or 5-Star school would provide an alternative for these students;

¹ This requirement is now codified in NRS 388A.220(6).

- B. Students at risk of dropping out: Despite a rapidly improving graduation rate, nearly one in five students does not graduate high school in four years, with certain student groups persistently graduating at lower rates than their peers;

To be recommended for approval, new charter school applicants must demonstrate alignment to at least one of the three identified needs, in addition to meeting standards as outlined in the SPCSA's new school application rubric.

Proposed Updates for 2021

Without recent state assessment data and star ratings, the SPCSA staff is proposing a limited number of updates for the 2021 Academic and Demographic Needs Assessment. These include:

- Updates to graphs, tables and statements that include ACT Proficiency Data, *if available*
- Updates to graphs, tables and statements that include Graduation Rate and Dropout Rate
- Updates to graphs, tables and statements that include Enrollment and Demographic information
- The addition of a section on Implementation of the Needs Assessment that summarizes new schools that have been approved and data regarding those schools