

Charter School Application Report

# Pioneer Technology & Arts Academy Nevada

*Recommendation from the Resubmitted Summer 2020 Charter Application Cycle*

## General Information

|                                     |   |
|-------------------------------------|---|
| <b>Proposed Name</b>                | Pioneer Technology & Arts Academy Nevada  |
| <b>Proposed Mission</b>             | To inspire and engage students, especially underserved and unrepresented populations, through an inquiry-based STEM curriculum that emphasizes creativity, collaboration, and innovation. |
| <b>Proposed CMO</b>                 | SSS Education Corp.   |
| <b>Proposed Grade Configuration</b> | Opening: Kindergarten – 8 <sup>th</sup> grade<br>Full-Scale: Kindergarten – 12 <sup>th</sup> grade  |
| <b>Proposed Opening</b>             | August 2021   |
| <b>Proposed Location</b>            | School anticipates primarily serving 89030, 89107, 89032, 89027, 89034, 89115, 89081 and 89117 zip codes  |

## Process/Key Dates for Pioneer Technology & Arts Academy Nevada

- New Charter Application Training
- February 8, 2020 – Notice of Intent is received
- July 15, 2020 – Application is received
- September 25, 2020 - Capacity Interview is conducted<sup>1</sup>
- November 6, 2020 – Application is denied by the Authority
- December 4, 2020 – Resubmitted application received by the Authority
- January 7, 2020 – SPCSA staff discussed resubmission with the applicant team
- January 22, 2021 – Resubmission recommendation is presented to the Authority

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<sup>1</sup> The PTAA Nevada Capacity Interview was conducted virtually as a result of prevailing Emergency Directives which limit capacity of gatherings, along with space limitations within the SPCSA's offices.

## Planned Enrollment Chart

|              | 2021-22 | 2022-23 | 2023-24 | 2024-25 | 2025-26 | 2026-27 |
|--------------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|
| K            | 68      | 115     | 115     | 115     | 115     | 115     |
| 1            | 68      | 115     | 115     | 115     | 115     | 115     |
| 2            | 68      | 115     | 115     | 115     | 115     | 115     |
| 3            | 68      | 115     | 115     | 115     | 115     | 115     |
| 4            | 68      | 115     | 115     | 115     | 115     | 115     |
| 5            | 56      | 85      | 85      | 85      | 85      | 85      |
| 6            | 88      | 115     | 115     | 115     | 115     | 115     |
| 7            | 88      | 115     | 115     | 115     | 115     | 115     |
| 8            | 76      | 106     | 112     | 112     | 112     | 112     |
| 9            |         | 84      | 102     | 102     | 102     | 102     |
| 10           |         |         | 78      | 102     | 102     | 102     |
| 11           |         |         |         | 78      | 102     | 102     |
|              |         |         |         |         | 78      | 96      |
| <b>Total</b> | 648     | 1,080   | 1,182   | 1,284   | 1,386   | 1,404   |

## Executive Summary, Process and Recommendation

During the November 6, 2020 Authority meeting, SPCSA staff presented the findings of the initial review committee and SPCSA staff for the Pioneer Technology & Arts Academy Nevada charter application. The initial application was found to exhibit shortcomings within all five of the components of the submitted application. The review committee and SPCSA staff found that the proposed Meeting the Need, Academic, Operations and Financial plans did not meet the standards as outlined in the charter application rubric. Furthermore, the additional addendum component required of an applicant that is a charter management organization was also found to not meet the standard.

A second committee comprised of SPCSA staff reviewed the resubmitted Pioneer Technology & Arts Academy Nevada application after it was received on December 4, 2020. The review committee approached rating the resubmission with two primary concentrations:

- To determine if the applicant had corrected the original deficiencies found in the initial application; and
- To verify that the applicant's resubmission did not change the rating of any component of the rubric that was determined to previously Meet Standard.

Upon resubmission, the review committee determined that some deficiencies within the original application had been addressed, and the ratings against the charter application rubric reflect these changes. Most notably, the applicant was able to demonstrate evidence of engagement with the local community, both through community surveys and efforts to initiate partnerships with local community organizations. Despite some outstanding areas for improvement, the Meeting the Need section of the application is now rated as 'Meets the Standard'. Additionally, the resubmission exhibited noticeable progress within the Financial Plan, including resolving inconsistencies between the narrative and budget,

and thus the Financial Plan is now rated as 'Meets the Standard'.

While progress in the areas listed above as well as components of the other sections have been noted, the review committee finds that the charter application has not 'Met the Standard' in a sufficient number of application components to be recommended for approval. The review committee finds that a significant number of deficiencies remain within the resubmitted application. The high school program remains underdeveloped and the proposal continues to lack details within several components of the academic plan. Additionally, while the applicant team was able to provide evidence of a secured facility, several deficiencies within the operations plan have not been adequately addressed. Finally, concerns regarding the approach to expansion in Las Vegas and the delineation of roles and responsibilities between the superintendent of the CMO and the proposed principal persist.

For these major reasons, in addition to those outlined within the remainder of this memorandum, SPCSA staff recommends that the Authority deny the Pioneer Technology & Arts Academy charter school application.

***Proposed motion:*** Deny the Pioneer Technology & Arts Academy Nevada application as resubmitted during the 2020 Summer Application Cycle based on a finding that the applicant has failed to satisfy the requirements contained in NRS 388A.249(3).

## Summary of Application Section Ratings

The State Public Charter School Authority is required to assemble a team of reviewers and conduct a thorough evaluation of the application, which includes an in-person interview with the applicant designed to elicit any necessary clarification or additional information about the proposed charter school. The SPCSA is required to adhere to its policies and practices, namely the application guidance, training and rubric, regarding evaluating charter applications. Ultimately, the SPCSA must base its determination on the documented evidence collected through the application process.

Rating options for each section are Meets the Standard; Approaches the Standard; Does not Meet the Standard. These are defined as follows:

- **Meets the Standard:** The response reflects a thorough understanding of key issues. It addresses the topic with specific and accurate information that shows thorough preparation; presents a clear, realistic picture of how the school expects to operate; and inspires confidence in the applicant's capacity to carry out the plan effectively in a way which will result in a 4- or 5-star school.
- **Approaches the Standard:** The response meets the criteria in many respects but lacks detail and/or requires additional information in one or more areas.
- **Does Not Meet the Standard:** The response is undeveloped or incomplete; demonstrates lack of preparation; or otherwise raises substantial concerns about the viability of the plan or the applicant's ability to carry it out.

The rubric is broken into four major sections as outlined below and detailed descriptions of each rubric item can be found in the full rubric located on the SPCSA Application website:

[http://charterschools.nv.gov/OpenASchool/Application\\_Packet/](http://charterschools.nv.gov/OpenASchool/Application_Packet/)

## Summary of Application Section Ratings

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

| Application Section                             | Initial Rating                 | Resubmission Rating            |
|---|--------------------------------|--------------------------------|
| <b>Meeting the Need</b>                         | <b>Approaches the Standard</b> | <b>Meets the Standard</b>      |
| Mission and Vision                              | Meets the Standard             | Meets the Standard             |
| Targeted Plan                                   | Approaches the Standard        | Meets the Standard             |
| Parent and Community Involvement                | Does Not Meet the Standard     | Approaches the Standard        |
| <b>Academic Plan<sup>2</sup></b>                | <b>Approaches the Standard</b> | <b>Approaches the Standard</b> |
| Transformational Change                         | Meets the Standard             | Meets the Standard             |
| Curriculum & Instructional Design               | Approaches the Standard        | Approaches the Standard        |
| Promotion & High School Graduation Requirements | Does Not Meet the Standard     | Approaches the Standard        |
| Dual Credit Partnership                         | Does Not Meet the Standard     | Approaches the Standard        |
| Driving for Results                             | Approaches the Standard        | Approaches the Standard        |
| At-Risk Students and Special Populations        | Does Not Meet the Standard     | Approaches the Standard        |
| School Structure: Culture                       | Approaches the Standard        | Meets the Standard             |
| School Structure: Student Discipline            | Does Not Meet the Standard     | Approaches the Standard        |
| School Structure: Calendar and Schedule         | Approaches the Standard        | Approaches the Standard        |
| <b>Operations Plan</b>                          | <b>Approaches the Standard</b> | <b>Approaches the Standard</b> |
| Board Governance                                | Approaches the Standard        | Approaches the Standard        |
| Leadership Team                                 | Approaches the Standard        | Meets the Standard             |
| Staffing Plan                                   | Approaches the Standard        | Meets the Standard             |
| Human Resources                                 | Approaches the Standard        | Approaches the Standard        |
| Student Recruitment and Enrollment              | Approaches the Standard        | Approaches the Standard        |
| Incubation Year Development                     | Approaches the Standard        | Approaches the Standard        |
| Services  | Does Not Meet the Standard     | Meets the Standard             |
| Facilities                                      | Approaches the Standard        | Meets the Standard             |
| Ongoing Operations                              | Approaches the Standard        | Approaches the Standard        |
| <b>Financial Plan</b>                           | <b>Approaches the Standard</b> | <b>Meets the Standard</b>      |
| <b>Addendum</b>                                 | <b>Approaches the Standard</b> | <b>Approaches the Standard</b> |
| Leadership For Expansion                        | Approaches the Standard        | Meets the Standard             |
| Scale Strategy                                  | Does Not Meet the Standard     | Approaches the Standard        |
| School Management Contracts                     | Approaches the Standard        | Approaches the Standard        |

<sup>2</sup> The PTAA Nevada proposal did not contemplate distance education or Pre-Kindergarten. Therefore, the corresponding sections of the rubric were not scored.

## Meeting the Need Section

The Meeting the Need Section within the initial application was rated as 'Approaches the Standard' and previous strengths were determined to have remained in place upon resubmission and are detailed again below.

The resubmission demonstrates progress in a few noteworthy areas. First, the applicant adjusted the staffing plan to ensure sufficient staff to meet the needs of the target population. Additionally, the applicant team gathered survey input from over 200 families that point to interest in the PTECH model. While details on how the input influenced the proposal are vague, this demonstrates significant community engagement. Finally, the applicant has made some progress securing local partnerships as evidenced through five letters of support. While specifics regarding these partnerships were not provided, this too represents progress in engaging with the local community. Thus, upon resubmission this section was rated as 'Meets the Standard'.

### Areas of Strength

- The mission is clear and aligned with the vision. The mission directly addresses serving underserved children and those underrepresented in Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math (STEM). In addition, during the capacity interview, the applicant team provided compelling rationale for the need for STEM education in Clark County, pointing to current gaps in STEM exposure for early learners.
- The management organization has recently contracted with a local charter school sponsored by the Clark County School District to provide services as of 2020. This provides the management organization with a direct connection to the community.
- The application clearly identifies a proposed target community and provides data on 38 elementary and middle schools located within a 3-mile radius of the proposed location on North Bruce Street. Over half of the 38 schools were most recently rated as 1- or 2-stars according to the Nevada School Performance Framework. In addition, the application states that the proposed school would serve a population representative of the local community and projects an enrollment in which 95% of students will qualify for free or reduced-price lunch, 34% will be English Learners and 12% will have disabilities. The PTAA schools in Texas have shown success and academic achievement results with a diverse student population at the Texas schools.

### Areas of Concern

- The resubmitted application includes survey responses from over 200 parents and families solicited, in large part, through existing schools of choice such as 100 Academy and the Saint Christopher School. The survey is largely targeted at gathering interest in the PTECH college readiness model and responses demonstrate interest in the model. However, inconsistencies between the results of the survey and other component of the application raise questions as to how the application was informed by the input received. For example, the survey asks about interest in Spanish and Mandarin classes, but the High School Course Catalog contained within the High School Handbook (attachment 31) contemplates French classes. Similarly, the survey results point to interest in a Pre-Med pathway which is not contemplated within the plan.
- The resubmitted application includes letters of support from five local organizations, and while these organizations all have the potential to support the needs of the target population, the letters of support provide very limited information about how the proposed school would work

with these organizations. Details such as clear, measurable, time-specific deliverables from the partner which are clearly relevant to the needs of the target population are not provided.

## Academic Section

The initial rating for this section of the application was 'Approaches the Standard' and previous strengths were determined to have remained in place upon resubmission and are detailed again below.

The resubmission showed progress in a few areas which are reflected in the increased ratings against the rubric. Specifically, the applicant has resolved inconsistencies in student demographic projections that existed in the initial application and has added staff to support the needs of English Learners and Special Education students. Additionally, the applicant has provided details regarding the approach to building school culture and how it will be measured and monitored. The applicant has also initiated work to establish a partnership with the College of Southern Nevada as well as provided additional information regarding the high school pathways. However, both the Dual Credit Partnerships as well as the high school program and graduation requirements remain underdeveloped. Ultimately, despite progress, several sections of the Academic Plan continue to lack sufficient detail and therefore, this section continues to be rated as 'Approaches the Standard'.

### Areas of Strength

- The key design elements for the school model, including Project Based Learning, Blended Learning, the need for 21st Century Skills, and a Focus on STEM, are supported by research linking the effectiveness of the approach to positive results for children. This helps establish and reinforce the likelihood of achieving success in Nevada.
- Recent ratings from the Texas Education Agency (TEA) indicate strong performance with the overall "district" rating for PTAA schools in Texas reported as an 'A' for the 2018-19 school year<sup>3</sup>. These schools serve a diverse student body with approximately 56% of students classified as economically disadvantaged and 18% English Learners.
- The application provides concrete information regarding curricular resources to be used in core content areas for grades K-8. In addition, the CMO will provide a scope and sequence aligned to the Nevada Academic Content Standards for each course. For grades K-8, initial versions of the scope and sequences have been developed for implementation at 100 Academy. These will be revised during the incubation year as needed.
- The goals outlined in the application are aligned to the proposed school's mission. They specifically address student academic growth, closing achievement gaps, expanding access and engagement in STEM, and stakeholder satisfaction with the school program.
- The application describes how the school culture will be established using a combination of high academic standards and relationships. In particular, the Innovation Leadership Program to be used during the daily advisory period shows an intentional approach to establishing a culture of connections and relationships. The application also describes a buddy system to help children adjust to the new school when they enter mid-year.
- The attendance goals are clear and rigorous. The narrative provides a description of how attendance will be monitored.

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<sup>3</sup> As of the 2018-19 school year there were three schools receiving ratings, all A's and B's, with two schools that had not yet received ratings. (<https://txschools.gov/districts/057850/school-list>)

## Areas of Concern

- The applicant provides very limited information regarding the curricular resources and academic program for grades 9-12. The CMO intends to provide a scope and sequence for each course, and in the resubmission, a sample was provided for Algebra 1. However, nearly every curricular resource mentioned within the application does not apply to high school grades. In addition, the application does not include a sufficient description of the PTECH/CTE program that will be used at the high school level. While the CMO clearly has experience implementing the PTECH model, and the resubmission includes a crosswalk for courses at the College of Southern Nevada (CSN) for two potential CTE pathways, the application falls short of laying out concrete plans for the proposed Nevada school. Ultimately, there is not sufficient evidence demonstrating how the school's academic program, particularly at the high school level, aligns to the Nevada Academic Content Standards.
- The initial application did not describe a comprehensive plan to meet graduation requirements and stated that the PTECH pathways will be determined in the future based on industry and community needs. In the resubmission, the applicant provides some additional information, including crosswalks for courses at CSN for two PTECH pathways and a proposed High School Handbook. However, the information is incomplete and, in some cases, inconsistent. The courses required for graduation are not defined beyond providing generic information about Nevada's Graduation requirements that does not reflect the unique PTECH model. For example, the application reference multiple foreign language courses, but there is no information as to whether foreign language courses are required. In addition, there are references to industry certification and internship programs, but the details and requirements are not provided. Ultimately, there is not sufficient evidence of alignment with Nevada Graduation Requirements and graduation/promotion standards are not clearly defined and measurable.
- The initial application did not provide evidence of partnerships with local colleges and/or universities to provide dual credit courses. The resubmitted application demonstrate evidence that the applicant team has initiated work with the College of Southern Nevada, including evidence of meetings and crosswalks for courses at CSN for two PTECH pathways. However, the specifics of relationship with CSN are not provided, nor is a draft memorandum of understanding.
- The application outlines a vast set of data that the school will use to monitor elementary and middle school students, including interim and summative assessments, performance-based assessments in K-2 and interdisciplinary projects in grades 3-8, and the resubmission provides additional detail regarding the purpose of each of these assessments. However, there is limited information on the assessment plan for high school. In addition, few details are provided regarding how academic performance data will be aggregated, analyzed and reported.
- Within the *At-Risk Students and Special Populations* section of the application, the proposal states that I-Ready diagnostic is used to determine which students are academically 'at risk'. However, details of this assessment are not provided, and it is not mentioned within the assessment approach outlined in the *Driving for Results* section. The application presents an underdeveloped method for assessing the needs of at-risk students.
- The application states that within enrichment and intervention periods in math and reading will be scheduled daily school wide to provide instruction commensurate to each student's ability level. However, this is not reflected in the schedule and it is not clear how and when this enrichment and intervention will be provided, particularly given that the proposed school plans to provide the minimum number of instructional minutes required in statute.
- The application does not include clear and measurable student behavior goals. While the

resubmission makes clear that disciplinary actions regarding students with disabilities will be conducted in accordance with state and federal laws, the application does not provide a plan to ensure that vulnerable student populations, other than students with disabilities, are not disproportionately impacted by discipline policies.

- The narrative generally describes the structure of the school day but provides limited details. The resubmission included a sample middle school teacher and student schedule, but no details are provided for elementary or high school. While an annual calendar is provided, there is not sufficient information for all grade bands about the breakdown of the school day and how all of the components described through the *Academic Section* will be incorporated. In addition, the narrative indicates that the proposed school will provide the minimum number of instructional minutes required in state statute. This does not appear to support the implementation of the academic program which includes several model-specific components and intends to serve a large population of students who will enter school academically behind. Most notably, the statutory minimum minutes equates to half-day Kindergarten. Not only does this raise questions about alignment to the academic plan, but additionally raises concerns about the revenue assumptions, which don't contemplate half-day Kindergarten. In addition, there is also not sufficient information to determine whether there is alignment between teacher and student schedules.

## Operations Section

The Operations Section was initially rated as 'Approaches the Standard' and many of the strengths identified in the original application were reaffirmed and are listed below.

The resubmitted application showed improvement in a few noteworthy areas. Specifically, the applicant provided evidence that a facility has been secured. Additionally, the applicant provided clarity on services, including how information technology would be managed. The applicant also addressed some significant issues within the initial application. The resubmission includes sufficient staffing to meet the needs of English Learners and Students with Disabilities. Moreover, the applicant has adjusted the membership of the proposed board to ensure that a majority of members are Nevada residents. The applicant has also clarified the organizational chart and reporting relationships.

Despite these improvements, several concerns persist. These include the capacity and makeup of the proposed board, the plans for hiring and retaining high-quality teachers, the recruitment and enrollment plan, the staff capacity to execute against incubation year activities, and the plans for developing safety and security plans. Thus, this section remains rated as 'Approaches the Standard'.

### Areas of Strength

- The narrative demonstrates an appropriate understanding of the role of the board and clearly signals the intention to hold the head of school accountable for performance using a data-driven, formal approach to evaluation. The proposed Board includes several highly experienced individuals with a variety of skill sets, including with education in Clark County. Plans for board development are described and expenses have been considered.
- The superintendent of the CMO and proposed head of school bring ample experience running charter schools and have demonstrated past success.
- The application provides a description of the CMO and school staff that will be responsible for essential HR functions and processes, including background checks, payroll, benefits, and employee relations.
- The management organization has seen success in increasing the enrollment at 100 Academy, a Clark County School District Sponsored charter school that has recently contracted with SSS Education Corp.
- The resubmission includes evidence that the applicant has secured a likely facility with an expected nominal cost.
- The resubmission includes a draft Information Technology Policies and Procedures which provide substantial details regarding how the school will manage user access, provide backups and disaster recovery, and protect against malware.

### Areas of Concern

- While the proposed board is made up of a diverse group of individuals, several of whom have board experience, there are a few concerns regarding the proposed board. First, answers during the capacity interview were largely provided by the superintendent of the CMO and the proposed head of school. There is not evidence that the proposed board is well versed in the proposal and positioned to hold the CMO and head of school accountable for delivering on implementation. In addition, it's not clear that the proposed board has a member with legal experience.

- It is noteworthy that the superintendent is expected to be spread across more than ten schools in three states. In addition, during the incubation year, the proposed head of school plans to split time between this proposed school and 100 Academy. Given that the applicant stated during the capacity interview that the proposed school would not have any staff members in the incubation year, this raises some concerns about whether the leadership team has the capacity to complete all incubation year start-up tasks. It is not clear that the staffing for this critical time is sufficient to enable the school to successfully complete all milestones and goals during the incubation year.
- The application provides general information about hiring, indicating that all teachers will be interviewed, observed teaching, and will submit all background and reference checks. However, the proposal does not provide details on the process for hiring high quality teachers and leaders. Additionally, the narrative states that the hiring process will begin three months before the school opens, raising questions about the ability to recruit and hire close to 40 high-quality staff members in the first year, particularly given the noted concerns regarding capacity to execute against the incubation year plan.
- The proposal indicates that PTAA would use the Nevada Educator Performance Framework (NEPF) for evaluation. However, it is not clear how the evaluation cycle, goal setting, mentoring, training, and supports will be implemented. In addition, the narrative does not describe how the school will identify low performance among staff and there is no discussion of the steps that will be taken in the event that a staff member fails to meet expectations other than indicating that written notice will be provided in the event that a staff member is dismissed.
- The application lists several student recruitment strategies but does not describe how the school will reach out to families in poverty, families with students with disabilities and other students who may be at risk of academic failure.
- The enrollment plan outlines the intention to serve a large number of students and grade levels from the outset. The application states that the enrollment plan has been created based on the facility as well as meeting the community need, but without sufficient explanation or context for this claim. Further, the application states that PTAA schools in Texas have been opened with more than 400 students and three grades, which is actually quite a bit smaller than this proposal which contemplates serving 648 students across nine grade levels in the first year. While the resubmission includes over 200 surveys completed by parents who express interest in the school model, the majority of these appear to represent students currently enrolled in schools that offer elementary and middle school. These surveys may represent potential future high school families, but there is not sufficient evidence that the enrollment plan is reasonable and supported by a clear rationale.
- The application did not include details as to how the school's Emergency Management Plan will be developed. While the resubmitted application included a brief summary of action steps such as assessing needs/issues and contacting resources, there is not sufficient evidence that they will culminate in the development of safety and security plans likely to ensure a safe environment and meet requirements in statute and regulation.

## Financial Section

The section of the application was initially rated as 'Approaches the Standard' under the original submission. In addition to the strengths identified in the initial application, upon resubmission, the applicant provided evidence of a secured facility with nominal cost. Despite the anticipated nominal cost of this facility, the applicant has budgeted conservatively and maintained facility costs in the proposed budget to ensure sufficient funds are available to prepare the facility and to ensure the proposed school would be viable even if the secured facility did not materialize. In addition, the resubmission addressed numerous inconsistencies in student demographic projections and staffing and the financial plan now appears to account for all major expenditures and generally aligns with the narrative.

One additional concern was identified in the resubmission. The application states that the school will provide the minimum number of instructional minutes required in statute, which for Kindergarten equates to a half-day program. Half-day kindergarten is funded at 60% of the typical per pupil allocation, which is not accounted for in the proposed budget. Given the conservative approach taken with the facilities budget, the review committee believes this decrease in revenue can be absorbed without impact to other aspects of the program. Therefore, the review committee rated the financial section within the resubmission as 'Meets the Standard'.

### Areas of Strength

- Based on financial audits for the last three years for PTAA Texas, which show relatively strong financial position and no audit findings, the CMO demonstrates expertise and experience managing charter school finances.
- The applicant provides information regarding the proposed financial system and commits to using the State chart of accounts as well as complying with all required government accounting procedures. In addition, the applicant indicates that if approved the governing body will create a finance committee charged with monitoring the school's budget.
- The resubmission includes evidence that the applicant has secured a likely facility with an expected nominal cost. However, the budget continues to include projected facilities expenses in all years to account for potential facility costs either related to preparing the facility, maintaining the facility, potential future facility needs, or in the event that the arrangement falls through.

### Areas of Concern

- While the proposed budget generally has logical, data-based assumptions, the Academic Section appears to indicate that the school will provide half-day Kindergarten, which is funded at 60% of the typical per-pupil amount. This would result in approximately \$200,000 less revenue in year 1 and approximately \$300,000 less revenue in subsequent years.

## Addendum Section

The addendum section is required for those applications that seek to contract with a CMO or EMO or are applying for sponsorship directly. Because PTAA Nevada contemplates contracting with a CMO, this component of the application was required.

This section of the application was initially rated as 'Approaches the Standard' and after reviewing the resubmission, the review committee was able to confirm that the strengths identified in the original submission remained. In addition, the resubmission provided additional information regarding the leadership team and clarified that the school principal reports directly to the board. However, previous concerns regarding the scale strategy and the delineation of roles and responsibilities between the superintendent of the CMO and the proposed principal persist. Therefore, this section continues to be rated as 'Approaches the Standard'.

### Areas of Strength

- Both the superintendent of the CMO and the proposed head of school bring substantial experience and a strong track record. Given the management organization's recent agreement to provide services for a Clark County School District sponsored school, both the proposed superintendent and proposed head of school have the opportunity to gain local experience.
- The draft management contract provides clear details regarding the services, fees, and terms. The contract does not include any automatic renewal provisions or overly restrictive termination provisions. The management fee is reasonable at 12% in the first three years of the charter and then declines to 10% in subsequent years.
- An annual evaluation of the CMO by the governing board is written directly into the proposed management agreement. This section includes metrics for the evaluation and in the event that the CMO is not meeting standards, lays out terms for a refund of the service fee on a sliding scale as well as a process for putting in place a corrective action plan.

### Areas of Concern

- The capacity interview revealed the CMO and superintendent are working with more than ten schools across three states. In addition, during the incubation year, the proposed head of school plans to split time between this proposed school and 100 Academy. All of these factors raise questions about capacity and potential impacts on quality of programming.
- The application describes a scale strategy with a three-tiered support model but does not indicate which would be used with the proposed school. The narrative indicates that it is a place-based model that required deep community knowledge and relationship. However, this appears to be inconsistent with the *Meeting the Need* section in which the application is not able to provide evidence of deep community engagement or partnerships. In addition, throughout the capacity interview, the vast majority of answer came from the CMO superintendent and proposed head of school, both of whom have less than a year of experience working with schools in Nevada, rather than from the three local board members.
- The narrative does not provide any information about how essential elements of the organizational model will be infused in the proposed schools and suggests instead that the schools are similar primarily in curriculum and STEM and PTECH focus. This is inconsistent with the rest of the application, which is billed as replication of successful schools in Texas.
- The memorandum of understanding (MOU) for the incubation year provides a list of

responsibilities for the CMO, but details regarding deliverables and timeline are not provided. In addition, no information is provided about the proposed \$150,000 no-interest loan and repayment terms.

- Multiple sections of the application charge the superintendent and head of school with the same responsibility. For example, within the addendum, the application outlines several functions that are shared between the head of school and CMO without any delineation of responsibilities.

# Capacity Interview Summary

Based on the independent and collective review of the application, the review committee conducted a virtual capacity interview of the applicant to assess the capacity to execute the application’s overall plan. The capacity interview for PTAA Nevada was conducted on Friday, September 25, and lasted approximately 120-minutes. All of the proposed members of the board, along with the proposed head of school and members of the CMO attended on behalf of the applicant. Questions during the capacity interview focused primarily on five key areas:

|   |                                    |
|---|------------------------------------|
| Targeted Plan                                   | Leadership Team                    |
| Parent and Community Engagement                 | Staffing Plan                      |
| Curriculum & Instructional Design               | Human Resources                    |
| Promotion & High School Graduation Requirements | Student Recruitment and Enrollment |
|   | Incubation Year Development        |
| Dual Credit Partnership                         | Financial Plan                     |
| Driving for Results                             | Leadership For Expansion           |
| At-Risk Students & Special Populations          | Scale Strategy                     |
| Board Governance                                | School Management Contracts        |

Lastly, the capacity interview included a scenario-based question that probed the Committee to Form and proposed Principal’s capacity to develop a plan in response to school performance data.

## Meet and Confer

The PTAA Nevada team met with SPCSA staff to discuss the deficiencies on November 30, 2020 prior to their resubmission on December 4, 2020. During this meeting, the applicant team asked questions and sought clarity about identified deficiencies.

## District Input

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

- August 26, 2020 – Memo sent to CCSD soliciting input.
- September 28, 2020 – Written input provided from CCSD to SPCSA.
- November 10, 2020 – Written notification from the SPCSA to CCSD regarding the denial of the original PTAA Nevada charter application
- December 28, 2020 – Written notification from SPCSA to CCSD confirming that the PTAA Nevada resubmission had been received, and outlining a timeline for possible action on the PTAA Nevada resubmitted application.

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<sup>4</sup> Assembly Bill 462 (2019) section 6.3, subsection 1, paragraph (d): “The proposed sponsor of a charter school shall, in reviewing an application to form a charter school...If the proposed sponsor is not the board of trustees of a school district, solicit input from the board of trustees of the school district in which the proposed charter school will be located.”

## Appendix (Rubric Detail)

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

### Meeting the Need

#### - Parent and Community Involvement

- *Demonstrates clear evidence of the involvement of parents, neighborhood, and/or community members representative of target population in the development of the plan.*
- *The committee to form demonstrates their ties to and/or knowledge of the target community.*
- *Identifies specific partnerships which are shown to be relevant to the needs of the target population, including partners located in the community that the applicant intends to serve.*
  - *Partnerships are evidenced by specific letters of commitment outlining the accountabilities of both parties and clear, measurable, time-specific deliverables from the partner which are clearly relevant to the needs of the target population.*

### Academic Plan

#### - Curriculum & Instructional Design

- *A clear explanation, supported by evidence, demonstrating how the school's academic program aligns to the Nevada Academic Content Standards, including both the Common Core Academic Standards and the Next Generation Science Standards, and that the school teaches all required subjects at each grade level.*
- *Instructional strategies are proven to be well suited to the student population.*

#### - Promotion & High School Graduation Requirements

- *School plans explicitly demonstrate clear evidence of alignment with Nevada Graduation Requirements and ensure college and career readiness*
- *Graduation/promotion standards for students are clearly defined and measurable, demonstrating high expectations for all students*

#### - Dual Credit Partnership

- *A draft memorandum of understanding between the charter school and the college or university through which the credits will be earned and a term sheet, which must set forth:*
  - *The proposed duration of the relationship between the charter school and the college or university and the conditions for renewal and termination of the relationship;*
  - *The roles and responsibilities of the governing body of the charter school, the employees of the charter school and the college or university;*
  - *The scope of the services and resources that will be provided by the college or university;*
  - *The manner and amount that the college or university will be compensated for providing such services and resources, including, without limitation, any tuition and fees that pupils at the charter school will pay to the college or university;*
  - *The manner in which the college or university will ensure that the charter school effectively monitors pupil enrollment and attendance and the acquisition of college credits; and*
  - *Any employees of the college or university who will serve on the governing body of the charter school.*
- *The partnership reflected in the memorandum of understanding is shown to be both appropriate for high school students seeking advanced coursework as well as financially accessible to all students.*

- **Driving for Results**
  - *The assessment plan is sufficiently detailed to demonstrate collection and analysis of individual student, student cohorts, school level, and network- level performance over time (interim, annual, year over year), including a clear process for setting and monitoring ambitious academic goals.*
  - *Sound plan for measuring and reporting academic performance and progress of students for both individual schools and the network (if applicable)*
- **At-Risk Students and Special Populations**
  - *The committee to form provides a logical method supported by research according to which they will assess the needs of at-risk students. The committee to form also outlines a continuum of programs, strategies, and supports that corresponds with the needs identified for each student and is supported by research.*
  - *The committee to form outlines the methods according to which the school will remediate academically underperforming students, including the system according to which the school will track progress, facilitate teacher collaboration, and the research supporting the school’s remediation strategy.*
- **School Structure: Student Discipline**
  - *A plan to ensure that vulnerable student populations are not disproportionately impacted by discipline policies.*
  - *Goals for student behavior are clear and measurable; there is a plan, and designated personnel, for monitoring and reporting related to behavior goals as well as ongoing maintenance of discipline records.*
- **School Structure: Calendar and Schedule**
  - *Proposed Calendar meets or exceeds the minimum of 180 (or equivalent) days of instruction.*
    - *Calendar and schedule support implementation of the academic program.*
    - *Alignment between teacher and student schedules.*

## Operations Plan

- **Board Governance**
  - *Demonstrates that the membership of the governing body will contribute the wide range of relevant knowledge, skills, and commitment needed to oversee a successful charter school, including but not limited to educational, financial, accounting, legal, and community experience and expertise, as well as special skill set to reflect school-specific programs, if applicable (e.g., STEM, fine arts, blended learning, alternative programs, etc.)*
    - *Qualifications and experience levels of governing body members with legal experience significantly exceeds the statutory minimum requirements and demonstrates a proven track record of successful management or oversight of complex, high risk/high profile legal matters.*
  - *The board puts into place a structure that enables it to collect the information it needs to evaluate the EMO/CMO, if applicable.*
- **Human Resources**
  - *Articulates process for recruiting and hiring high quality teachers and leaders.*
  - *School performance management system is likely to retain and promote talented staff, allows for re-structuring and removal of staff as needed, creates opportunities for leadership development, and sets clear expectations.*
- **Student Recruitment and Enrollment**
  - *Includes outreach and recruitment strategies that demonstrates an understanding of the*

*community likely to be served and is likely to allow the school to enroll sufficient numbers of students who are representative of either the surrounding zoned schools or a mission-specific educationally disadvantaged population.*

- *Minimum 45-day notification period followed by 45-day enrollment period OR a combined 90-day notification and enrollment period.*
- *Demonstrated interest and intent to enroll commitments by a significant number of parents for Year 1. These forms should include the following information at minimum:*
  - *Parent name and contact information*
  - *Zip code of residency*
  - *Student name(s) and grade levels for the proposed opening year*
- **Incubation Year Development**
  - *Provides key milestones for the planning year, as well as concrete actions and accountability, that will ensure that the school is ready for a successful launch. These plans should identify the individuals responsible for leading Year 0 initiatives. If a third party (EMO/CMO) is going to implement portions of the Year 0 plan, the committee to form has provided documentation that articulates related terms and services.*
  - *Outlines the function of any employees in Year 0, as well as the funding source for associated compensation*
  - *The staffing outlined for Year 0 will enable the school to reach its Year 0 milestones and goals*
- **Ongoing Operations**
  - *Safety and security plans likely to ensure a safe environment for people and property that corresponds with the core elements of the state-mandated school safety plan and the requirements in statute and regulation.*

## **Addendum**

- **Scale Strategy**
  - *The plan to scale the model to new sites is adequately resourced and staffed appropriately.*
  - *Includes plan to infuse NV schools with the essential elements of the organization's model.*
  - *Clear, appropriate delineation of roles and responsibilities between the management organization and the school sites.*
- **School Management Contracts**
  - *Clearly outlines the roles/responsibilities of the EMO/CMO in the year prior to the school's opening. The committee to form provides a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) that lists specific service agreements for this period of time.*