



STATE PUBLIC CHARTER SCHOOL AUTHORITY

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ACTION MEMORANDUM

TO: SPCSA Board
FROM: Mike Dang, Manager, Financial and Organizational Performance
Mark Modrcin, Director of Authorizing
SUBJECT: **Sports Leadership and Management (SLAM!) Amendment Request to**
- Expand Enrollment in New Grade Levels
DATE: January 22, 2021

Summary of Request and Recommendation

Sports Leadership and Management (SLAM!) Nevada currently operates one campus in Henderson, NV that serves 1,066 students in grades 6 – 12. The school has submitted an amendment application to expand their enrollment to grades Kindergarten – 5th grade beginning in the 2021 – 2022 school year.

According to the application, it has become the intent of the SLAM governing board to establish an elementary school educational experience for the younger siblings of currently enrolled students as well as additional elementary-aged students. By establishing a new SLAM campus with elementary grades, the governing board believes that families would benefit from the unique SLAM model while also creating greater unity and outcomes for all students attending the school. Additionally, the application states that the school community will benefit from providing earlier exposure to the school's rigorous culture and model as elementary student matriculating to the established middle school and high school programs will be better prepared.

The proposed expansion location of the elementary school program would be on the current land occupied by the middle school and high school programs, which are located at 1095 Fielders Street Henderson, NV. The application states that the school would build a second building to house the elementary program.

SPCSA staff has reviewed the application request and recommends that the Authority conditionally approval the expansion of the SLAM request to expand their enrollment to grades K – 5, subject to the conditions described further below.

Background and Analysis

SLAM is currently in its fifth year of providing instruction to students in middle school and high school grades, operating under a charter contract that expires on June 30, 2022. The amendment application notes that the school's mission is to prepare students for postsecondary studies and careers through an engaging educational program emphasizing sports leadership and management career preparation. The amendment application goes on to state that the educational model is derived from research-based strategies proven successful in raising student achievement nationwide, is based on a 'career academy' concept, and is grounded on the philosophy of the three R's: Rigor, Relevance, and Relationships. According to the amendment, the school emphasizes sports science in the STEM fields through STEM project-based learning courses as well as a computer science course. Through the school's unique curriculum, students have an opportunity to engage in real-world situations.

The amendment proposal outlines the instructional strategies to be implemented in the elementary program. Differentiated instruction will be woven throughout the lessons in a seamless manner that allows students to work in a small group setting, using instructional materials to explore and expand their skill development. According to the amendment submission, SLAM also plans to incorporate project-based learning to allow students to reflect, research, discover, apply and share. Additionally, teachers will leverage scaffolding, cooperative learning and explicit instruction, among other strategies, to ensure that teachers are connecting with individual student's learning needs. It should be noted that SLAM's current Principal, Dan Triana, has experience working in elementary school programs and is familiar with the SLAM model and expectations.

According to the application, the proposed elementary school program plans to primarily serve students in the southeast corner of the Las Vegas Valley, including the zip codes surrounding the school's location: 89011, 89122, 89120 and 89014. While all four zip codes appear on the SPCSA's Academic and Demographic Needs Assessment, two of them, 89122 and 89120, have multiple schools rated below three stars and a significant percentage of students enrolled in schools rated below three-stars. SPCSA staff find that this proposal aligns to the Geographic Component of the Needs Assessment. Additionally, the current SLAM school is serving a somewhat representative student population of surrounding schools. As of the most recent Validation Day data, over half of the current SLAM student body qualifies for Free or Reduced Price Lunch (FRL). While SLAM's student population is more in line with state and local demographics than the SPCSA's overall student population, there continues to be room for improvement to ultimately serve a representative population of students. More information regarding the demographics of SLAM can be found at the end of this memo.

The submitted amendment application identifies the proposed curricula to be implemented at the school, if approved by the Authority. The curricula span all core subject areas (ELA, Math, Science, Social Studies) and align with the Nevada Academic Content Standards (NVACS). Additionally, the school plans to use iReady to ensure that instruction is personalized and that teachers and staff are able to monitor student progress and growth towards proficiency.

SLAM Nevada proposes to open in the 2021 – 2022 school year with grades Kindergarten through 5th grade with the following planned enrollment for the proposed school:

	2021 – 22	2022 – 23	2023 – 24	2024 – 25	2025 – 26
Kindergarten	75	75	75	75	75
1 st Grade	100	100	100	100	100
2 nd Grade	100	100	100	100	100
3 rd Grade	75	100	100	100	100
4 th Grade	50	50	100	100	100
5 th Grade	25	50	100	100	100
TOTAL	425	475	575	575	575

The proposed building to accommodate these students would be on the current SLAM property at 1095 Fielders Street in Henderson. To ensure that the school is sufficiently enrolled and viable, the school conducted an

Elementary School Interest survey. According to the amendment submission, of the 516 responses, 230 families have elementary students. Of these families, over 95% responded that they would send their students to a SLAM elementary school, if approved.

While the application notes that demand for the elementary school program is high, the school plans to continue engagement with the local community. SLAM plans to use multiple modes of marketing to ensure that all families are informed of this educational option through the school's website, social media, flyers, direct mailers, advertisements in varying English and Spanish media, building relationships with community groups, and a door-to-door approach. According to the amendment application, SLAM will post flyers in local public facilities such as the post office, community centers and other locations of public access. The school also plans to setup several community meetings where parents and students can learn of the proposed expansion.

Given the timing of the amendment and possible approval, SPCSA staff reviewed the school's incubation year plan. Prior to the start of school in August 2021, the plan appears to include all relevant operational pieces to ensure that the school can launch successfully. It is noteworthy that the plan includes a benchmark related to construction and permits being completed and obtained, respectively, at least one month prior to opening so as to comport with [NRS 388A.360](#).

Applicant Eligibility

When reviewing an amendment application, SPCSA staff reviews the academic, financial and organizational performance of the applicant charter school. Academically, the NSPF Report Card website shows that the SLAM middle school program most recently earned a three-star rating in 2019¹. For the 2017 – 2018 school year, the school earned a two-star rating, but has shown improvement since that time. Additionally, the most recent graduation rate data released in December 2020 revealed a four-year graduation rate of 94.3%. This number is higher than both the state and SPCSA averages, and represents the first graduation cohort at the school. While SLAM's overall academic performance is adequate and showing improvement, the school was identified for Targeted Support and Improvement (TSI) by the Nevada Department of Education based on data from the 2017 – 2018 school year due to academic performance gaps for certain student groups.

Financially, SPCSA staff finds that the school is meeting performance standards as adopted by the Authority under the Financial Performance Framework. From an organizational perspective, SPCSA staff also finds the school to be meeting standards. The school earned 100 points under the 2020 Organizational Performance Framework as approved by the Authority on November 6, 2020. Consequently, staff finds SLAM to be eligible to submit the amendment request.

Summary and Recommendation

Overall, SPCSA staff finds the SLAM application to expand their program to the elementary grades to be in alignment to the Geographic component of the SPCSA's Academic and Demographic Needs Assessment. With over 52% of current SLAM students qualifying for Free or Reduced Lunch and over 8% of students identified as English Learners, SLAM serves a more representative population than many SPCSA-sponsored schools, though there remains room for continued improvement.

Additionally, the school has provided strong evidence that the proposed school is supported by and representative of the community it intends to serve. The school also has a strong incubation year plan to ensure that the school can be fully operational for the start of the 2021 – 2022 school year. As such, SPCSA staff recommends the SPCSA board approve the SLAM request, subject to the below conditions.

¹ Due to COVID-19, the Nevada Department of Education (NDE) applied for and was granted a 2019 – 20 school year waiver from the US Department of Education for certain assessment, accountability, school identification, and reporting requirements established by the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA). Accordingly, for the 2019 – 20 school year, Nevada statewide assessments were not administered and the NDE did not calculate Nevada School Performance Framework (NSPF) school ratings.

Proposed Motion:

Approve the SLAM Amendment request to expand to grades Kindergarten – 5th grade beginning in the 2021 – 2022 school year, with the following condition:

- That the SLAM Board approve a formal plan, developed in collaboration with SPCSA staff, to address the school’s current Targeted Support and Improvement (TSI) designation.**
- That the SLAM Board approve a formal plan to build on previous progress toward serving a population that is representative of the local community, particularly with regard to English Learners and Students Qualifying for Free and Reduced-Price Lunch.**

If approved, the enrollment cap for SLAM for the remainder of the current contract will be as follows:

School Year	2021 – 2022
Total Enrollment Cap	1,668 students
Grade Levels	K-12

Background:**Academic Performance of SLAM**

Year	NSPF Rating
2020 ²	High School: Not Rated Middle School: 3 stars
2019	High School: Not Rated Middle School: 3 stars
2018	High School: Not Rated Middle School: 2 stars
2017	High School: Not Rated Middle School: 3 stars

School Total Enrollment and Demographics since 2017

Year	Enrollment	A	B	C	H	I	M	P	IEP	ELL	FRL
17-18	738	3.0 %	8.0%	28.6%	51.1%	0.7%	6.8%	1.9%	8.5%	7.3%	32.7%
18-19	921	3.5 %	12.2%	23.5%	52.2%	0.3%	6.1%	2.3%	9.6%	10.3%	52.0%
19-20	1043	3.6 %	11.0%	21.9%	54.7%	0.6%	5.8%	2.5%	11.3%	10.7%	52.3%

A – Asian

B – Black

C - White

H – Hispanic

I – American Indian/Alaskan Native M –

Two or more races

P – Pacific Islander

IEP – Individualized Education Plan –A student with a disability/special education student

ELL – English Language Learner

FRL – A student who qualifies for Free or Reduced-Price Lunch

² Due to COVID-19, the Nevada Department of Education (NDE) applied for and was granted a 2019 – 20 school year waiver from the US Department of Education for certain assessment, accountability, school identification, and reporting requirements established by the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA). Accordingly, for the 2019 – 20 school year, Nevada statewide assessments were not administered and the NDE did not calculate Nevada School Performance Framework (NSPF) school ratings.