



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: **Coral Academy of Science – Las Vegas (CASLV) Amendment Request to**
- Expand to a New Campus
DATE: February 26, 2021

Summary of Request and Recommendation

Coral Academy of Science – Las Vegas (CASLV) currently operates six campuses across the Las Vegas metropolitan area, serving 3,885 students in grades PK – 12. The school has submitted an amendment application to expand to a seventh campus in Henderson that is proposed to open for the 2022 – 2023 school year.

According to the amendment application, CASLV is seeking to open a PK¹-12 charter school campus in East Henderson in close proximity to the Pittman and Cadence neighborhoods. CASLV proposes to serve 1850 students at the campus, and has conducted significant outreach in order to serve a majority of students coming from within a 2-mile radius of the proposed location on Pabco Road between Sunset (to the north) and Warm Springs (to the south). To help ensure that the school is serving students from the local community, the school proposes to institute a weighted lottery according to the amendment application. By establishing a new CASLV campus that spans all grades, Pre-Kindergarten through 12th, the governing board believes that this may allow for future grade restructuring at the existing Eastgate campus while also creating a natural feeder pattern for students from other CASLV campuses in the near vicinity.

The proposed expansion would start as a PK-8th grade campus for the 2022 – 23 school year, eventually expanding by one grade each year. This growth pattern would allow the school to serve 1850 students across grades PK-12 by the 2026 – 27 school year.

¹ According to the application, offering PK at the proposed campus is contingent on receiving funds through a bi-annual competitive statewide grant process. CASLV currently offers PK at one other campus through these funds, but they are not guaranteed. SPCSA staff recommends that the Authority conditionally approve a PK-12 grade configuration at the proposed campus. If PK funds are not awarded through the statewide process, the campus would exist as a traditional K-12.

SPCSA staff has reviewed the application request and recommends that the Authority conditionally approval the expansion of the CASLV request to expand to a seventh campus for the 2022 – 2023 school year, subject to the conditions described further below.

Background and Analysis

CASLV is a STEM-focused, college-prep public charter school that gives students in grades K-12 an opportunity to achieve their full potential. The 2020 – 21 school year is the second of the network's current six-year charter term with the Authority, having been renewed in 2018. The mission of CASLV is to provide a safe, rigorous college preparatory environment that promotes social responsibility and a culturally diverse community dedicated to becoming lifelong learners bound for success. The network currently serves approximately 3800 students across six campuses in the greater Las Vegas area, and started as a replication of the Coral Academy of Science – Reno charter school, which is authorized by the Washoe County School District.

The amendment application notes that to accomplish the school's mission, there are several key pillars with regard to the academic program that have been successful at the current campuses and would remain at the proposed campus. These include technology based curricula, rigorous academic probation policy, extra-curricular activities, parent notification, ongoing monitoring and strong communication systems among administrators, teachers and parents through Infinite Campus School Information System. Additionally, the amendment application notes that CASLV's STEM-focused and college-prep education program is based on an inquiry approach to science, technology, engineering, and math to improve access and success in STEM fields in college. The application goes on to state that research conducted about the benefits of an inquiry-based science program for special populations, inquiry-oriented teaching may be especially valuable for many at-risk and diverse populations. Lastly, one study showed that language-minority students were found to acquire scientific ways of thinking, talking, and writing through inquiry-oriented teaching.

As proposed, these key features of the current CASLV program would be replicated at the proposed campus, ensuring that the same quality academic program remains consistent across all campuses.

The amendment application outlines the targeted community that the proposed campus intends to serve, noting that the network has a desire to enroll more student groups that have been historically underserved, including students that qualify for free or reduced price lunch and EL students. CASLV believes that the proposed campus will allow the network to serve a more diverse population of students at the proposed campus. SPCSA staff notes that the amendment submission includes evidence that the network has conducted a significant targeted outreach effort in the proposed community. While the current student population across the CASLV network is not in line with state and local demographics, this evidence gives SPCSA staff confidence that the enrollment at the proposed campus will be more reflective of the demographics of the community and the Clark County School District (CCSD). More information regarding the demographics of CASLV can be found at the end of this memo.

Additionally, SPCSA staff find that the proposed location for this campus is aligned to the Geographic Component of the SPCSA Academic and Demographic Needs Assessment as the nearest traditional public elementary schools are both rated as 2-star schools according to the most recent Nevada School Performance Framework (NSPF) ratings. The amendment submission also includes evidence that parents and students that would otherwise be served by these schools have demonstrated interest in the proposed CASLV campus. The largest interest came from the zip code where the school is being proposed (89011), with two nearby zip codes (89014 and 89015) also generating significant support.

The amendment application goes on to list a number of steps taken by the CASLV Governing Board to ensure that the proposed campus is representative of the demographics of the community while principally serving students that reside in nearby zip codes. These include participation in the National School Lunch Program, a

full breakfast program for all students, and the implementation of a weighted lottery, whereby extra weight would be provided to students that qualify for free or reduced price lunch and/or are identified as an ELL student.

The amendment application also notes that several staffing modifications are to be implemented at the proposed campus to ensure that all students can be successful. These include a Community Outreach Coordinator position based at this campus as well as additional staff to support student interventions and identified special education and English learner students, respectively.

CASLV proposes that the new campus open in the 2022 – 2023 school year with grades Pre-Kindergarten through 8th grade, eventually expanding to a Kindergarten through 12th grade site through a slow-growth model. The following planned enrollment for the proposed school is as follows:

	2022 – 23	2023 – 24	2024 – 25	2025 – 26	2026 – 27
Pre-Kindergarten	40	40	40	40	40
Kindergarten	200	125	100	125	125
1 st Grade	208	208	130	125	156
2 nd Grade	208	208	208	130	156
3 rd Grade	216	216	216	208	156
4 th Grade	216	216	216	208	182
5 th Grade	216	196	216	208	175
6 th Grade	168	196	168	189	130
7 th Grade	168	150	168	162	140
8 th Grade	210	150	140	130	140
9 th Grade	-	145	135	110	120
10 th Grade			113	110	120
11 th Grade				105	110
12 th Grade					100
TOTAL	1850	1850	1850	1850	1850

CASLV has also undertaken the important work of identifying community partners for the proposed school, which can help the school develop and thrive within the local community. The identified partners have also made varying commitments to support students and families that choose to enroll at the proposed school. Identified partners for the school include: Sam and Mary Boyd Boys & Girls Club, Nevada Recycling, Cowabunga Bay, Henderson Police Department, Skyline Hotel & Casino, Henderson Hospital, Community Baptist Church and Optic Gallery. More information regarding each of these partnerships can be found within the Executive Summary submitted with the amendment application.

SPCSA staff also reviewed the school’s incubation year plan as part of the amendment. The plan appears to include all general operational pieces to ensure that the school can launch successfully. As the Authority is aware, the SPCSA Pre-Opening process includes requirements to construction and permits being completed and obtained, respectively, at least one month prior to opening so as to comport with [NRS 388A.360](#). To ensure that the school remains on track to open the campus successfully, SPCSA has included a condition in the final recommendation on page 5 that CASLV complete the pre-opening process for expansion schools.

Applicant Eligibility

When reviewing an amendment application, SPCSA staff reviews the academic, financial and organizational performance of the applicant charter school. Academically, the current Nevada School Performance

Framework (NSPF) Report Card for all but one program (Nellis – ES) is at or above the 3-star level. A table summarizing the academic performance of CASLV schools is provided on page 7 of this memo².

For the 2018 – 2019 school year, the Nellis – ES program earned a two-star rating, with an index score of 48.3 points. According to the NSPF technical guide, a two-star rating identifies a school that has partially met the state’s standard for performance. Students and subgroups often meet expectations for academic performance or growth but may have multiple areas that require improvement. As a result of this rating in 2019, the Authority issued the Nellis – ES program a Notice of Concern, and this notice is still active.

The most recent graduation rate data released in December 2020 revealed a four-year graduation rate of 100%. This number is higher than both the state and SPCSA averages, and it worth noting that the four-year graduation rate for the network has been above 97% each of the past four years.

Financially, SPCSA staff finds that the school is meeting performance standards as adopted by the Authority under the Financial Performance Framework. The results from the 2019 – 20 school year indicated that the CASLV network was ‘Meeting the Standard’ under all eight indicators, indicating that the network is in good financial health, and can support growth and the related operational costs. These results were approved by the Authority on January 22, 2021.

From an organizational perspective, SPCSA staff also finds the school to be meetings standards. The school earned 100 points under the 2020 Organizational Performance Framework as approved by the Authority on November 6, 2020.

Despite the active Notice of Concern at the Nellis-ES campus, SPCSA staff finds overwhelming evidence that the academic programs at CASLV have been performing at high levels since the inception of the NSPF ratings. It is important to note that the CASLV network receives 11 annual ratings under the NSPF based on the current campus configurations. As noted on page 7 of this memo, no CASLV campus has earned lower than a 4-star rating under the NSPF with the exception of the Nellis campus in 2019. This campus was previously rated as a 4-star school in 2018, and has a more transient population than other CASLV charter schools given its location on an air force base.

Given the historic academic performance, the recent results under both the Financial and Organizational frameworks, SPCSA staff is confident that the CASLV network is on the right trajectory in terms of performance at the Nellis campus, and finds there is sufficient evidence to consider CASLV eligible for this amendment request.

Summary and Recommendation

Overall, SPCSA staff finds the CASLV application to add an additional campus to the network to be in alignment to the Geographic component of the SPCSA’s Academic and Demographic Needs Assessment. The amendment application provides evidence that the network has conducted targeted marketing and outreach in the community the network intends to serve, and the network has also established potential partnerships with local community organizations that can help the school continue this outreach while also partnering with the school should it be approved.

It is important to note that individual CASLV campuses serve free and reduced price lunch populations ranging from approximately 16% to nearly 26% according to the most recent validation day numbers. Additionally, the school serves a smaller percentage of special education students as well as EL students than CCSD and the SPCSA average. Despite these shortcomings, SPCSA staff is confident that the community outreach to date as

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.

well as the school's desire to implement a weighted lottery can help the proposed school and network become more representative of the communities the network serves.

The school also has a strong incubation year plan to ensure that the school can be fully operational for the start of the 2022 – 2023 school year. As such, SPCSA staff recommends the SPCSA board approve the CASLV request, subject to the below conditions.

Proposed Motion:

Approve the CASLV Amendment request to expand to a seventh campus, beginning in the 2022 – 2023 school year, as proposed in the amendment submission, with the following conditions:

- **That the CASLV Board provide SPCSA staff with evidence that the network has purchased the parcel described in the amendment, situated on Pabco Road between Sunset and Warm Springs, before June 30, 2021;**
- **That CASLV continue to promote the new campus in multiple languages, and include information about enrollment preferences to be implemented at the new campus;**
- **That the CASLV board review the demographics of each of their existing campuses compared to the demographics of neighborhood schools and the local school district, and develop a formal plan to work towards serving a population that is representative of the community. The plan must include the adoption and implementation of a weighted lottery across the Coral Academy – Las Vegas system before enrollment begins for the 2022 – 23 school year. The adopted lottery policy would provide qualifying FRL and EL students a higher weight in future lotteries, and approval of this is delegated to SPCSA staff to ensure the CASLV policy is compliant with all laws and regulations; and**
- **That the network complete the SPCSA pre-opening process for new schools and campuses.**

If approved, the enrollment cap for CASLV at each campus will be as follows for the remainder of the charter term:

School Year	2021 – 2022	2022 – 2023	2023 – 2024	2024 – 2025
Centennial Hills	647	647	647	647
Eastgate	640	640	640	640
Nellis AFB	885	885	885	885
Sandy Ridge	835	835	835	835
Tamarus	405	405	405	405
Windmill	383	383	383	383
<i>Proposed Campus</i>	-	1850	1850	1850
TOTAL	3795	5645	5645	5645

Historical Performance and Demographic Information

Nevada School Performance Framework (NSPF) – Coral Academy of Science – Las Vegas

Year	Ratings		
2020 ³	Centennial Hills – ES: 4-star	Centennial Hills – MS: 5-star	Sandy Ridge – HS: 5-star
	Eastgate – ES: 4-star	Eastgate – MS: 5-star	
	Nellis – ES: 2-star	Nellis – MS: 5-star	
	Tamarus – ES: Not Rated	Sandy Ridge – MS: 5-star	
	Windmill – ES: 4-star	Windmill – MS: 5-star	
2019	Centennial Hills – ES: 4-star	Centennial Hills – MS: 5-star	Sandy Ridge – HS: 5-star
	Eastgate – ES: 4-star	Eastgate – MS: 5-star	
	Nellis – ES: 2-star	Nellis – MS: 5-star	
	Tamarus – ES: Not Rated	Sandy Ridge – MS: 5-star	
	Windmill – ES: 4-star	Windmill – MS: 5-star	
2018	Centennial Hills – ES: 4-star	Sandy Ridge – MS: 5-star	Sandy Ridge – HS: 5-star
	Nellis – ES: 4-star		
	Tamarus – ES: Not Rated		
	Windmill – ES: 5-star		
2017	Network ES: 3-star	Network MS: 5-star	

Validated Four-Year Graduation Rates – Coral Academy of Science – Las Vegas

2020	100%
2019	97.8%
2018	100%
2017	100%

School Total Enrollment and Demographics since 2017

CENTENNIAL HILLS

Year	Enrollment	A	B	C	H	I	M	P	IEP	ELL	FRL
17-18	682	11.3%	12.5%	46.6%	19.2%	0.3%	9.2%	0.9%	8.2%	4.3%	10.1%
18-19	633	12.8%	10.9%	43.9%	22.3%	0.3%	8.5%	1.3%	7.7%	3.5%	14.4%
19-20	647	13.0%	8.7%	42.8%	24.3%	0.5%	9.7%	1.1%	7.4%	3.7%	25.3%
20-21	684	11.8%	8.4%	40.4%	26.9%	0.4%	10.5%	1.3%	7.3%	2.1%	25.2%

³ 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.

EASTGATE

Year	Enrollment	A	B	C	H	I	M	P	IEP	ELL	FRL
17-18	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
18-19	652	21.3%	9.2%	37.7%	19.6%	0.2%	9.8%	2.1%	6.1%	0.8%	21.0%
19-20	640	19.8%	7.3%	36.7%	22.7%	0.2%	11.3%	2.0%	6.4%	3.9%	26.4%
20-21	641	21.9%	6.5%	33.3%	24.8%	0.1%	10.9%	2.1%	7.0%	3.1%	24.6%

NELLIS

Year	Enrollment	A	B	C	H	I	M	P	IEP	ELL	FRL
17-18	722	3.7%	13.4%	49.4%	18.4%	0.6%	10.5%	3.9%	6.1%	*	29.8%
18-19	791	3.2%	14.0%	45.3%	21.5%	0.9%	10.7%	4.4%	8.6%	1.3%	17.7%
19-20	874	3.1%	14.5%	45.2%	23.7%	0.3%	9.5%	3.7%	9.2%	*	23.8%
20-21	876	4.3%	15.1%	40.2%	25.9%	0.5%	11.6%	2.0%	8.4%	*	16.5%

SANDY RIDGE

Year	Enrollment	A	B	C	H	I	M	P	IEP	ELL	FRL
17-18	817	23.1%	6.5%	43.3%	15.8%	0.7%	8.7%	1.8%	3.4%	2.2%	5.9%
18-19	809	22.5%	6.3%	41.4%	16.4%	0.7%	10.6%	2.0%	4.1%	2.1%	10.0%
19-20	846	25.5%	5.7%	38.7%	16.3%	0.4%	11.1%	2.4%	3.5%	2.1%	13.8%
20-21	860	23.6%	6.2%	37.9%	18.1%	0.3%	11.5%	2.2%	4.1%	2.7%	16.3%

TAMARUS

Year	Enrollment	A	B	C	H	I	M	P	IEP	ELL	FRL
17-18	382	28.3%	4.2%	42.4%	13.6%	0.3%	10.5%	0.8%	4.2%	10.5%	9.7%
18-19	394	28.4%	4.8%	40.6%	13.5%	0.0%	11.9%	0.8%	3.6%	7.9%	11.2%
19-20	394	31.7%	6.1%	35.5%	15.2%	0.0%	10.2%	1.3%	6.1%	9.6%	14.5%
20-21	420	28.8%	7.3%	35.0%	15.7%	0.0%	11.4%	1.6%	7.8%	8.8%	17.3%

WINDMILL

Year	Enrollment	A	B	C	H	I	M	P	IEP	ELL	FRL
17-18	399	29.1%	3.5%	35.8%	13.3%	1.0%	16.0%	1.3%	4.0%	5.0%	4.8%
18-19	403	30.8%	4.2%	39.0%	11.9%	0.5%	11.9%	1.7%	2.5%	4.2%	11.4%
19-20	400	32.8%	3.5%	36.8%	13.8%	0.5%	12.3%	0.5%	3.5%	3.0%	16.0%
20-21	404	27.9%	5.6%	38.3%	15.0%	0.0%	11.8%	0.9%	4.4%	4.9%	17.5%

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

* - Suppressed data due to n-count