



NEVADA STATE PUBLIC CHARTER SCHOOL AUTHORITY

February 26, 2021

In compliance with the Governor's Emergency Directives related to COVID-19, the February 26, 2021 Meeting of the State Public Charter School Authority was conducted virtually and livestreamed.

MINUTES OF THE MEETING

BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT (via video):

Member Lee Farris
Member Tamika Shauntee Rosales
Member Don Soifer
Member Tonia Holmes-Sutton
Member Mallory Cyr
Member Sami Randolph
Member Sheila Moulton
Vice Chair Randy Kirner
Chair Melissa Mackedon

AUTHORITY STAFF PRESENT (via video):

Rebecca Feiden, Executive Director
Ryan Herrick, General Counsel
Mark Modrcin, Director of Authorizing
Danny Peltier, Management Analyst I
Michael Dang, Management Analyst IV
Brettani Berry, Project Manager
Sara Jorgensen, Education Programs Professional

AUDIENCE IN ATTENDANCE:

Amanda Orosco
Eve Breier
Jessica LeNeave
Ercan Aydogdu
David Blodgett
Rob Mallery
Paola Gonzalez
Biante Gainous
Chris McBride
Sandra Kinne
Jennifer Bratner
Carlos Alvarez
Mary Scott
Ms. Gonzalez
Nick Fleege
Christine Dzarowski
Kathryn Vaughan
Ann Diggins
Maria Pimienta
Kelle Snow
Janelle Veith
Raul Carranza

Agenda Item 1 – Call to Order and Roll Call, and Pledge of Allegiance [00:00:33]

Chair Melissa Mackedon called the meeting to order at 9:00am, with attendance reflected above and facilitated the pledge of allegiance.

Agenda Item 2 – Public Comment #1 [00:02:48]

There was no public comment submitted via email or on the line.

Agenda Item 3 – Approval of January 22, 2021 Board Meeting Action Minutes. [00:03:05]

MOTION: Vice Chair Kirner made a motion to approve the January 22, 2021 board meeting action minutes. Member Farris seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

Agenda Item 4 – SPCSA Executive Director’s Report. [00:31:39]

a. Update on Financial Performance Framework Ratings approved by the Authority on January 22, 2021.

Executive Director Rebecca Feiden said following last month’s action by the Authority, SPCSA staff wanted to provide an update that they have sent final financial performance framework ratings to schools and issued appropriate action and notices. All performance frameworks are now available to the public on the SPCSA website. These will be updated annually going forward.

b. Initiatives related to Serving All Students Equitably, including preliminary data regarding educator demographics. [00:05:40]

Executive Director Feiden shared the update on the SPCSA’s work which began almost a year ago. She provided the recent updates in the initial steps in the following areas:

- Site evaluations
- New school and amendment applications
- Renewal application
- Access to equity data
- Focus on schools
- Growth Management Plan working group
- SPCSA-wide training
- Equitable access

See the memo in the supporting materials for details regarding the actions that they outlined this year as well as Appendix A for the data which shows a comparison between the demographics of students enrolled in SPCSA-sponsored schools and licensed teachers employed by SPCSA-sponsored schools.

Member Moulton arrived at the meeting.

c. Overview of SPCSA’s project aware and MTSS pilot. [00:11:41]

Executive Director Feiden provided the background to the SPCSA’s project aware and MTSS pilot. This is a 5-year grant program focused on promoting equity, restorative practices, cultural responsiveness, and social-emotional learning (SEL), and mental health awareness. She said they have Sara Jorgensen, Education Programs Professional and Brettani Berry, Project Manager here today to talk about the overview. There are 6 schools who have opted in for this pilot. Ms. Berry provided the high-level overview of MTSS and project aware. See supporting materials for the PowerPoint for more details. There was further conversation between the Authority and SPCSA staff regarding the project aware and MTSS pilot.

d. Future SPCSA Board meetings (virtual / in-person). [00:31:41]

Executive Director Feiden said they are looking to transition and begin to have some in-person component to their board meetings. Chair Mackedon said the livestream will remain to accommodate the public.

Agenda Item 5 – COVID-19 In-Person Learning Guidance Update. [00:32:48]

Executive Director Feiden provided the update and summarized how they got here today. In the last month, Nevada has seen a significant decline in COVID-19 cases and the test positivity rate, though rates continue to remain high. Each of the counties in which SPCSA-sponsored schools are located, educators are now eligible for and receiving vaccinations. Through focus groups, many school leaders conveyed a strong interest in increasing in-person learning to better meet the educational needs of their students. Finally, on February 12, 2021, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) released updated guidance, including an Operational Strategy for K-12 School through Phased Mitigation. Based on these factors, she is recommending that the SPCSA remove the additional limits on in-person learning, specifically 40% of the school's enrollment, for counties flagged by the COVID-19 Mitigation and Management Task Force. She emphasized that SPCSA-sponsored schools will continue to be subject to all prevailing directives, including but not limited to Emergency Directive 038. There were follow up questions from the Authority for clarification purposes.

***MOTION:** Member Farris moved to remove the additional limits on in-person learning, specifically 40% of the school's enrollment, for counties flagged by the COVID-19 Mitigation and Management Task Force. SPCSA-sponsored schools will continue to be subject to all prevailing directives, including but not limited to Emergency Directive 038. Member Moulton seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.*

Agenda Item 6 – Charter School Contract Amendment Applications. [00:44:28]

a. Coral Academy of Science Las Vegas – Potential addition of new campus (Fall 2022). [02:02:15]

Member Farris abstained from this item due to a conflict.

Director Modrcin provided the summary of the request for amendment submitted by Coral Academy of Science Las Vegas. The school is requesting to expand to a seventh campus in Henderson that is proposed to open for the 2022 – 2023 school year. SPCSA staff have reviewed the application request and recommends that the Authority conditionally approval the expansion of the CASLV request, subject to the conditions described below. Ercan Aydogdu, Executive Director at Coral Academy of Science Las Vegas, provided comments related to their amendment request and said Ms. Diggins, their board president, is also present. Member Soifer asked how closely the SPCSA tracks the details of the weighted lottery, the extent to which it is weighted, and do they track the results to a point where they have best practices or help inform the decision making that school leaders make because they are making these decisions for the first time? Executive Director Feiden said she wanted to be clear that that one of the conditions includes that they will work with the SPCSA while they finalize the specifics of this weighted lottery policy, so they expect to have firm details on what that will look like but this is only the 3rd campus that has chosen to implement a weighted lottery so they don't have that data to date but it's something they can start to dig into on an annual basis. There was further discussion regarding the proposed motion.

***MOTION:** Member Soifer made a motion to 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 or leased** 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. Member Shauntee Rosales seconded the motion. Motion carries with Member Farris abstained.*

b. Nevada Prep – Relocation of campus, addition of grade levels, and adjustment to enrollment cap.

Mark Modrcin, Director of Authorizing, provided a brief overview of the amendment application submitted by Nevada Prep to request a Good Cause Exemption and requests for three amendments to its current charter contract and relocate to a new facility, expand enrollment to 3rd grade, and increase the enrollment cap for the school. SPCSA staff has reviewed the application and recommends that the Authority grant the school's request for a Good Cause Exemption and approve all three amendments within their application. David Blodgett, Executive Director, Nevada Prep, was present for questions and Rob Mallery and Ms. Gonzalez, Board Members, Nevada Prep, were on the line for questions.

MOTION: *Member Moulton made a motion to Grant Nevada Prep a Good Cause Exemption and approve the requests of Nevada Prep, with the two conditions below to:*

- *Relocate to a facility at 1780 N. Betty Lane in Las Vegas;*
- *Expand to its grade configuration to the 3rd grade beginning in the 2021 – 22 school year. The school is not requesting a change in the enrollment cap for the upcoming school year; and*
- *Expand the enrollment caps for the school beginning in the 2022 – 23 school year as outlined on page 4 of the recommendation memo to accommodate slow growth within grades 3 – 8.*

Vice Chair Kirner seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

Agenda Item 7 – New Schools Updates. [00:56:00]

a. Las Vegas Collegiate

Director Modrcin summarized the update and provided the background of Las Vegas Collegiate. They were conditionally approved in December of 2019 but deferred to opening this fall due to action of this body in May of 2020. The Authority also approved an amendment to their facility plan at last month's meeting. He turned it over to the school to provide their update and answer any questions from the Authority. Bianté Gainous, Executive Director provided updates related to their facility, enrollment, and hiring. A written update can be found in the supporting materials.

b. Sage Collegiate [00:59:56]

Director Modrcin summarized the update and provided the background of Sage Collegiate. They were conditionally approved in November of 2020 to open this fall. He turned it over to the school to provide their update. Sandra Kinne and Jennifer Braster were present on behalf of the school and provided the update related to their facilities. A written update can be found in the supporting materials.

c. CIVICA Nevada Career and Collegiate Academy [01:03:49]

Director Modrcin summarized the update and provided the background of CIVICA Nevada Career and Collegiate Academy. They were conditionally approved in May of 2020 to open this fall. He turned it over to the school to provide their update. Carlos Alvarez, Chief Academic Officer, provided the school's update. He introduced their Principal, Eve Breier who provided more additional details regarding their school's update. Jessica LaNeave, Board Chair, provided additional comments.

d. Eagle Charter Schools of Nevada [01:11:25]

Director Modrcin summarized the update and provided the background of Eagle Charter Schools of Nevada. They were conditionally approved at the meeting last month to open this fall. He turned it over to the school to provide their update. Nick Fleege, Member of the Founding Team at Eagle Charter Schools of Nevada, provided the update for their school. He said they are requesting to defer to 2022 with the Authority's permission so they can take advantage of a full 18-month runway for board training, hiring, parent/community outreach, etc.

Agenda Item 8 – Nevada Connections Academy. [01:15:56]

Executive Director Feiden provided a summary of Nevada Connections Academy’s background. The Authority approved a 3-year charter contract with the school in May of 2020 which goes through June 30, 2023. She highlighted some of the terms in the charter contract. Chris McBride, Superintendent, Nevada Connections Academy, provided the first portion of the school’s presentation and talked about their NSPF targets, 2021 culture shift, updates related to their board, and other updates. Kathryn Vaughan, 11th/12th grade Principal and Christine Dzarowski, 9th/10th grade Principal, provided the update related to the school’s academics.

The Authority took a 10-minute convenience break.

Agenda Item 9 – Quest Academy Update. [02:20:43]

Executive Director Feiden provided the summarized update and background for Quest Academy and their contract that was renewed for a 3-year term beginning on July 1, 2020. This renewal falls in extended receivership and an eventual settlement of several lawsuits that provided confidence of the financial viability of the school. The school is here today to provide an update on their progress and transition from receivership to a fully constituted board. Janelle Veith, Principal at Quest Academy, and Kelle Snow, Board Char, provided updates related to the school’s governing board, academic performance, and financial performance.

Agenda Item 10 – TEACH Las Vegas Resubmitted Charter School Application. [02:32:50]

Director Modrcin provided the overview of the TEACH Las Vegas Resubmitted Charter School Application and SPCSA staff’s recommendation. The initial application was denied at the December 2020 meeting. Each of the sections were rated as ‘Meets the Standard’. For these reasons, in addition to those described throughout the memo in the supporting materials, staff’s recommendation is to approve, with conditions, the charter school application for TEACH Las Vegas. Matt Brown, Chief Operating Officer, CIVICA was present and provided comment.

MOTION: *Member Moulton made a motion to approve the TEACH Las Vegas charter application as resubmitted during the 2020 Summer Application Cycle, with conditions outlined below, based on a finding that the applicant now meets the requirements contained in NRS 388A.249(3).*

1. *Provide End of Year performance results for existing programs and schools in California for the 2020 – 21 school year. This must include NWEA-MAP results, but the school may provide additional evidence.*
2. *Submit NWEA-MAP results from the beginning, middle and end-of-year assessments for the 2021-22 school so that SPCSA staff can monitor the academic progress of students attending the school, specifically those that are at-risk.*
3. *Submit evidence that the school has entered into a cooperative agreement with one or more community colleges, state colleges and universities to offer dual credit courses pursuant to NRS 289.210 before June 30, 2022.*
4. *Submit a revised budget, on or before June 1, 2021, that includes any grant funding or philanthropic dollars awarded.*
5. *Complete the SPCSA pre-opening process for new charter schools.*

With the exception of condition #3, all other conditions must be met to staff’s satisfaction for the school to open for the 2021-22 school year. Vice Chair Kirner seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

Agenda Item 11 – Focus on Schools. [02:48:07]

a. SPCSA-Sponsored schools that contract with Academica

Executive Director Feiden said that as mentioned earlier, when reviewing the demographic data of licensed educators at our schools there was a noticeable disparity and today we have a chance to hear from representatives from a few of our schools that contract for services with Academica Nevada as well as representatives from Academica Nevada to talk about their initial efforts to address this issue. Ryan Reeves, Chief Academic Officer, Academica Nevada, began the presentation with an introduction and provided some data related to the demographics and their growth and diversification of the 9 schools they serve. Amanda Orosco, Director of

Human Resources, Academica, provided the next portion of the presentation. Jessica Scobell covered the portions related to the state and county faculty demographics versus the 9 SPCSA-sponsored charter schools. The last part of presentation was with regard to the steps to faculty diversification.

1. Diversity awareness training
2. Building from within-Increase Opportunities for Support Staff to pursue full licensure and faculty positions within existing schools
3. Building from within-Increase opportunities for Students to pursue careers in education through CTE, Dual Enrollment, and Internship Programs
4. Targeted recruiting

There was further conversation between the Authority and representatives regarding climate surveys to current staff and what is being done to monitor their comfort as well as the engagement of community partnerships.

Agenda Item 12 – Strategic Plan Progress Report. [03:42:45]

Executive Director Feiden provided the update for the Strategic Plan Progress Report. In May of last year SPCSA staff provided the Authority with their initiatives they would be working on to further their strategic plan priorities. She went over the 3 goals: (1) Provide families with access to high quality schools (2) Ensure that every SPCSA student succeeds – including those from historically underserved student groups (3) Increase the diversity of students served by SPCSA schools. She broke each goal down into sections on dashboards in the report provided in the supporting materials. Member Moulton asked how the SPCSA could share this with their schools since they will be helping them fulfill them? Executive Director Feiden replied that SPCSA staff have prepared some information that was sent with an attached memo encouraging our schools to take a look at that data closely and develop plans to achieve progress.

Agenda Item 13 – 2021 Legislative Update. [03:53:38]

Mr. Herrick gave a quick update and provided background regarding the movement of the bills and the timeline they are looking at. SPCSA staff has been meeting with legislators to talk about the bills that will have an impact on charter schools. Member Moulton asked Mr. Herrick to provide the list of the bills the SPCSA is tracking including BDR 671.

Agenda Item 14 – Long-Range Calendar. [03:57:38]

Executive Director Feiden flagged a couple of brief things on the long-range calendar and there will be an update given the information they received from Eagle Charter Schools of Nevada today so they will put that on the March agenda for the Authority to take action on.

Agenda Item 15 – Public Comment #2 [03:59:40]

There was no further public comment.

Agenda Item 16 – Adjournment [04:00:10]

The meeting was adjourned at 12:58pm.