



STATE PUBLIC CHARTER SCHOOL AUTHORITY

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ACTION MEMORANDUM

TO: SPCSA Board
FROM: Mark Modrcin, Director of Authorizing
Mike Dang, Manager, Organizational and Financial Performance
SUBJECT: Nevada Prep
Requests to Relocate to a New Facility, Expand Enrollment to 3rd Grade & Increase the Enrollment Cap
DATE: February 26, 2021

Summary of Request and Recommendation

Nevada Prep is requesting a Good Cause Exemption of the State Public Charter School Authority (SPCSA) to take action on three amendments to its current charter contract: 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 this application.

Background

Nevada Prep has been in operation since the 2018 – 2019 school year under the former Achievement School District (ASD). The current charter contract with the SCPCSA began on July 1, 2020. During the 2020 – 21 school year, Nevada Prep serves 246 students in grades 4 – 8 at a facility located on 2525 Emerson Avenue in Las Vegas. The school is currently approved to serve up to 392 students in the 2021 – 22 school year, and at full growth, would serve up to 468 in grades 4 – 8 by the 2024 – 25 school year.

Nevada Prep is now making three requests within its amendment application:

- 1) Relocate to a facility at 1780 N. Betty Lane, Las Vegas, NV 89156;
- 2) 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
- 3) Expand the enrollment cap beginning in the 2022 – 23 school year to accommodate slow growth within grades 3 – 8.

As previously stated, Nevada Prep has been in operation at 2525 Emerson Avenue for almost three years and since it began operations in the 2018 – 19 school year. According to the amendment application, this location was never intended to be a permanent option due to capacity constraints. The school currently co-locates with another SPCSA charter school, Nevada Rise. Nevada Prep has worked diligently to seek a permanent facility solution so as to better serve families in the 89156 zip code as this is primary base of the school community. The application states that an approval to locate at 1780 N. Betty Lane would make the school more accessible to current families as many families currently rely on bus services provided by the school to reach the campus. Approval of this facility relocation would reduce the time on a bus for many students, resulting in a 5-10 minute bus ride instead of a 30+ ride per the amendment. Approval of this move would also give the school and community more certainty and stability throughout the remainder of the charter term as the proposed facility will be approximately 40,000 square feet after all renovations.

In addition to the relocation request, the school proposes to add 3rd grade beginning in the 2021 – 22 school year with no change to the current enrollment cap. According to the amendment application, the third-grade model will mirror the elementary school model used in fourth and fifth grades, with the same core curriculum, the same teacher collaboration structures, and the same intervention systems. As in other grades at Nevada Prep, scholars would have access to the Power Hour intervention and support structure. The leadership and governing board of Nevada Prep believe that adding third grade will benefit the school for two primary reasons. First, student achievement and high school readiness will improve for students remaining at the school through 8th grade. According to the application, Nevada Prep scholars have demonstrated some of the state’s highest academic growth over the past two year, but proficiency has lagged. Having an additional school year with students would provide the Nevada Prep team valuable extra time to ensure they are meeting or exceeding grade level standards by the time they complete 8th grade.

Finally, the school proposes to continue its slow-growth model, expanding the number of students served in approved grades. The enrollment changes proposed are listed below, and would allow the school to continue to serve the community, scale, and fill out the proposed facility at 1780 N. Betty Lane.

Current Grades and Enrollment Cap

Year	2021-2022	2022-2023	2023-2024	2024-2025	2025-2026
Grades	4 – 8	4 – 8	4 – 8	4 – 8	4 – 8
Enrollment	392	448	448	468	468

Proposed Grades and Enrollment Cap

Year	2021-2022	2022-2023	2023-2024	2024-2025	2025-2026
Grades	3 – 8	3 – 8	3 – 8	3 – 8	3 – 8
Enrollment	392	630	630	630	630

Applicant Eligibility

When reviewing any RFA, SPCSA staff review the academic, financial and organizational performance of the applicant charter school. Nevada Prep has only received one NSPF rating since opening, and that is nearly two years old. The elementary school program earned a two-star rating in 2019 with an index score of 40 points,

while the middle school program earned a five-star rating with an index score of 89.69. As a result, the Authority issued a Notice of Concern to the elementary school. While this notice is still active, it is important to note that students in the elementary program have demonstrated significant growth according to the NWEA-MAP exam. In 2019, the typical NV Prep student showed more growth than 88% of their peers in mathematics and 71% more growth than their peers in ELA. This is exceptional progress given that the school serves a high number of students qualifying for free or reduced price lunch, are classified as EL students and/or are classified as special education.

With regard to financial performance, SPCSA staff find the school to be in Good Standing, meeting the majority of performance standards during the most recent fiscal year (2019 – 20). The current fiscal year will be the first time Nevada Prep is formally rated under the SPSCA framework as it formerly sponsored by the ASD.

From an organizational perspective, SPCSA staff also finds the school to be meeting standards. The school earned 100 points¹ under the 2020 Organizational Performance Framework as approved by the Authority on November 6, 2020.

Given the strong financial and organizational performance, the above average growth demonstrated by the elementary school program in the first year, the fact that the 2019 NSPF rating was based on a small number of students, and the exceptional NSPF scores and data at the middle school, SPCSA staff finds there is sufficient evidence to consider Nevada Prep eligible for these amendment requests.

Summary and Recommendation

Based on the findings above staff recommends the Board approve both the relocation and expansion to 3rd grade requests as submitted in the amendment application.

SPCSA staff further recommends that the Authority approve slightly lower enrollment caps than the Nevada Prep request so as to ensure that the school meets performance expectations while scaling. These are outlined on page 4 of the memo.

Finally, SPCSA staff recommends that the Authority approve these requests subject to the additional conditions below.

- Completion of the SPCSA Pre-Opening process for new charter school facilities.
- Submit NWEA-MAP results from the beginning, middle and end-of-year assessments for the 2021 – 22 school year so that SPCSA staff can monitor the academic progress of students attending the school.

¹ The results for Nevada Prep were for informational purposes only in FY20 as the contract with the SPCSA went into effect on July 1, 2020.

Proposed Motion:

Grant Nevada Prep a Good Cause Exemption and approve the requests of Nevada Prep, with the two conditions outlined above, 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 this memo to accommodate slow growth within grades 3 – 8.**

If approved, the enrollment cap for Nevada Prep for the charter contract will be as follows:

School Year	2021 – 22	2022 – 23	2023 – 24	2024 – 25	2025 – 26
Total Enrollment Cap	392	575	575	575	575
Grade Levels	3 – 8	3 – 8	3 – 8	3 – 8	3 – 8

Historical Performance and Demographic Information

Nevada School Performance Framework (NSPF) – Nevada Prep

Year	Ratings
2020 ²	Elementary School: 2-star Middle School: 5-star
2019	Elementary School: 2-star Middle School: 5-star

School Total Enrollment and Demographics since 2019

Year	Enrollment	A	B	C	H	I	M	P	IEP	ELL	FRL
19-20	214	0.5%	13.1%	15.9%	70.1%	0.0%	0.0%	0.5%	14.5%	22.4%	100.0%
20-21	246	1.2%	15.4%	8.9%	73.1%	0.0%	0.4%	0.8%	100%	25.6%	10.9%

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.