

Charter School Application Report

# TEACH Las Vegas

*Recommendation for the Resubmitted Summer 2020 Charter Application Cycle*

## General Information

<b>Proposed Name</b>	TEACH Las Vegas
<b>Proposed Mission</b>	To create a high quality, innovative K – 12 teaching and learning environment in North Las Vegas that focuses on literacy; integrating state-of-the-art technologies across the core curriculum to achieve academic proficiency for all students.
<b>Proposed CMO</b>	TEACH Public Schools
<b>Proposed Grade Configuration</b>	Opening: Kindergarten – 7 <sup>th</sup> grade Full-Scale: Kindergarten – 12 <sup>th</sup> grade
<b>Proposed Opening</b>	August 2021
<b>Proposed Location</b>	4624 – 4660 N. Rancho Drive Las Vegas, NV 89130  School anticipates primarily serving 89130, 89108, 89032, 89107, 89129 zip codes.

## Process/Key Dates for TEACH Las Vegas

- April 13, 2020 – New Charter Application Training
- March 2, 2020 – Notice of Intent is received
- October 1, 2020 – Application is received<sup>1</sup>
- November 12, 2020 - Capacity Interview is conducted<sup>2</sup>
- December 11, 2020 – Application is denied by the Authority
- February 2, 2021 – Resubmitted application is received by the Authority
- February 12, 2021 – SPCSA staff discussed resubmission with the applicant team
- February 26, 2021 – Resubmission recommendation is presented to the Authority

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<sup>1</sup> The Authority approved a Good Cause Exemption for the TEACH Las Vegas on June 26, 2020, allowing the application to be submitted outside the normal Summer Application window (July 1 – 15, 2020).

<sup>2</sup> The TEACH Las Vegas 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	75	75	75	75	75	75
1	50	75	75	75	75	75
2	25	50	75	75	75	75
3	25	25	50	75	75	75
4	25	25	25	50	75	75
5	25	25	25	25	50	75
6	50	50	50	50	50	75
7	50	50	50	50	50	75
8		50	50	50	50	75
9			75	75	75	75
10				75	75	75
11					75	75
12						75
<b>Total</b>	325	425	550	675	800	975

## Executive Summary, Process and Recommendation

During the December 11, 2020 Authority meeting, SPCSA staff presented the findings of the initial review committee and SPCSA staff for the TEACH Las Vegas charter application. The initial application was found to exhibit shortcomings within all five of the components of the application. The review committee and SPCSA staff found that the proposed Academic, Organizational and Financial plans approached the standard as outlined in the charter application rubric. Both the Meeting the Need and Addendum sections were also rated as 'Approaches the Standard'

A second committee comprised of SPCSA staff reviewed the resubmitted TEACH Las Vegas application after it was received on February 3, 2021. The review committee approached rating the resubmission with two primary considerations:

- 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 found that a number of deficiencies identified in the original application review had been resolved. Within the Meeting the Need section, which was previously rated as Approaches the Standard, the Committee to Form presented additional evidence that there was demand for the proposed model in the community. Additionally, evidence of developed partnerships to support students and families was also provided. This led to a final rating of Meets the Standard for this section.

A few improvements within the Academic Plan of the resubmitted application also led to a final

rating of Meets the Standard. These included a more robust plan to adequately serve at-risk students and special populations, including the addition of multiple full-time employees over the course of the first charter term. The Committee to Form also provided clarity around the proposed calendar and schedule while also ensuring that the school would meet the minimum state seat time standards.

The Operations Plan within the initial application was rated as Approaches the Standard. The review team determined that some concerns within the original application had been addressed through the resubmission process. Most notably, the Committee to Form added two additional proposed board members to the governing body with financial expertise. As previously mentioned, the staffing plan was modified to ensure that there was adequate capacity for serving at-risk students and special populations, and additional clarity was provided around the roles and responsibilities of the leadership team. This led to a final rating for this section of Meets the Standard.

After resubmission, the shortcomings previously identified within the Financial plan were determined to have been addressed. The proposed staffing changes appear to have reasonable cost allocations, and all other major expenditures, including student transportation, also appear to have reasonable and justified. As a result, this section was also rated as Meets the Standard.

The Addendum, which is required of all applicants proposing to contract with an Educational Management Organization or Charter Management Organization, was also rated as Meets the Standard upon resubmission. Prior concerns related to the draft contract were resolved, and the roles and responsibilities of the CMO and school staff were further clarified.

For these reasons, in addition to those described throughout this memo, staff's recommendation is to approve, with conditions, the charter school application for TEACH Las Vegas.

*Proposed motion:* 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 #4, all other conditions must be met to staff's satisfaction for the school to open for the 2021-22 school year.

## 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, plus an addendum, as outlined below. 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	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	Approaches the Standard	Approaches the Standard
<b>Academic Plan<sup>3</sup></b>	<b>Approaches the Standard</b>	<b>Meets 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	Meets the Standard	Meets the Standard
Dual Credit Partnerships	Approaches the Standard	Approaches the Standard
Driving for Results	Approaches the Standard	Approaches the Standard
At-Risk Students and Special Populations	Approaches the Standard	Meets the Standard
School Structure: Culture	Meets the Standard	Meets the Standard
School Structure: Student Discipline	Meets the Standard	Meets the Standard
School Structure: Calendar and Schedule	Approaches the Standard	Meets the Standard
<b>Operations Plan</b>	<b>Approaches the Standard</b>	<b>Meets the Standard</b>
Board Governance	Approaches the Standard	Meets the Standard
Leadership Team	Approaches the Standard	Meets the Standard
Staffing Plan	Does Not Meet the Standard	Meets the Standard
Human Resources	Approaches the Standard	Approaches the Standard
Student Recruitment and Enrollment	Approaches the Standard	Meets the Standard
Incubation Year Development	Approaches the Standard	Meets the Standard
Services	Meets the Standard	Meets the Standard
Facilities	Meets the Standard	Meets the Standard
Ongoing Operations	Meets the Standard	Meets 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>Meets the Standard</b>
Leadership for Expansion	Approaches the Standard	Approaches the Standard
Scale Strategy	Approaches the Standard	Meets the Standard
School Management Contracts	Approaches the Standard	Meets the Standard

<sup>3</sup> The TEACH Las Vegas proposal did not contemplate Distance Education or Pre-Kindergarten. Therefore, the corresponding sections of the rubric were not scored.

## Meeting the Need Section

As previously noted, the initial application was rated as 'Approaches the Standard'. Previous strengths were determined to have remained in place upon resubmission, and are detailed again below.

Within the resubmission, the review committee identified a few improvements. The Committee to Form was able to demonstrate that there is significant demand, presenting evidence of nearly 200 parents and families interested in sending their students to the proposed school beginning in the 2021 – 22 school year. Additionally, the resubmission provided concrete evidence and support from relevant community partners that plan to contribute to the school's efforts if approved. These proposed partners include the Boys and Girls Club, Leaders in Training and Cristo Rey St. Viator, among others, and these partners intend to take an active role once the school is in operation.

These improvements resulted in this section being rated as 'Meets the Standard' upon resubmission.

### Areas of Strength

- The mission of the school is clear, with a focus on literacy while integrating state of the art technologies to achieve proficiency. Additionally, the vision describes how the school will foster student success both inside and outside of the school, helping to explain how the school will work with the community to achieve student success.
- The Committee to Form and proposed CMO demonstrate a desire to serve a disadvantaged population of students by specifically planning to locate in an area of Las Vegas with some 1 and 2-star schools and giving priority to students qualifying for free and reduced-price lunch. Additionally, the TEACH Public Schools network has experience educating students from low-income backgrounds, EL students and students with disabilities.
- The Committee to Form and proposed CMO present a plan to continue parent engagement through the opening of the school with materials/information presented in parents' home languages and schoolwide family events that will be organized by the Executive Director and future parents. Parent workshops are also contemplated in the application and aim to cover topics that are of interest to students and parents.
- The resubmission provides adequate evidence of demand by prospective students and families, presenting evidence of nearly 200 interested students and families. While the zip codes of the interested families includes a number of zip codes, the applicant intends to provide transportation to serve families that may not be in close proximity to the campus location.
- Evidence of community partnerships is evident in the resubmission. Cristo Rey St. Viator, Leaders in Training and Better 4 You Meals have all committed to be involved in the start-up and operational phases of the school.

### Areas of Concern

- After resubmission, limited evidence was provided that there was significant involvement of prospective parents, neighborhood, or community members representative of the target population in the development of the plan.

## Academic Section

The initial rating for this section of the application was rated as 'Approaches the Standard'. Previous strengths found in the original application were determined to have remained upon resubmission, and are listed again below.

In the resubmission, the Committee to Form made a number of enhancements. First, previous gaps in the assessment plan were closed. Additionally, questions about the proposed calendar and schedule were answered with additional, more detailed information. A number of improvements were made to the At-Risk Student Population section to resolve previous inconsistencies, and the Committee to Form supplemented the staffing model with more full-time employees to serve these key demographics.

As a result of these improvements, and the strengths that were identified in the original submission, this section was rated as 'Meets the Standard' upon resubmission.

### Areas of Strength

- The proposed academic program places a strong emphasis on data as each student will have a Personalized Educational Program (PEP) which will outline goals based on assessment data. Goals will be tracked, and the applicant provides a plan to drive student achievement at a school level based on disaggregated student data to ensure goals reflect all subgroups.
- Plans for professional development are robust, fully developed and connect to the proposed instructional model. The application details plans to provide professional development for teachers through summer sessions, Professional Learning Communities (PLCs), and other ongoing opportunities to support them in the delivery of the model. Additionally, the application outlines a thoughtful approach to develop teachers through the observation process. It is clear that systems and structures are in place to identify and support teachers that may need additional help.
- The Committee to Form provides evidence of a strong plan to ensure promotion and graduation requirements are met. The applicant team demonstrates a plan to regularly communicate progress to parents and students through monthly progress reports, report cards twice a year, and parent-teacher conferences twice a year. The application demonstrates a clear understanding of Nevada's graduation requirements.
- The application includes a fully developed curricula and materials that show a multi-tiered approach while also aligning with the proposed instructional strategies such as differentiation. The detailed plan provides evidence that the academic model aligns to the Nevada Academic Content Standards (NVACS), and the application notes various electives that will also be offered as part of the proposed academic program.
- The resubmission provided credible plans and capacity for how the school will successfully serve key at-risk student demographics, including special education and EL students. An ELL Coordinator position was added in Year one, additional special education staff have been added as the school scales, and the Counseling position will be added in Year 2, one year earlier than previously planned.



## Areas of Concern

- The application emphasizes project-based learning as a key component of the proposed academic model. While the resubmission provided a realistic approach to implementing project-based learning from year one and refining implementation it over time, some questions remain about how this approach may be leveraged successfully for younger students enrolling at the school.
- While the proposed school would not serve high school grades in the first two years of the charter contract, 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 are not included. More information is needed to understand how the school would meet this requirement.

## Operations Section

The initial rating for this section of the application was rated as 'Approaches the Standard'. Previous strengths found in the original application were determined to have remained upon resubmission and are listed again below.

The resubmitted application included notable improvements in a number of subsections within the operations plan. The proposed Board for TEACH Las Vegas includes two new members, both with financial experience. As mentioned within the academic section, the proposed staffing plan was bolstered by additional full-time employees to better serve at-risk student populations, and multiple positions included in earlier year budgets. The resubmission process also clarified the differences between the Executive Director and Superintendent roles within the proposed organizational chart.

While there are some minor questions about aspects of the human resources plan for the opening year, this section was found to 'Meet the Standard' upon resubmission.

### Areas of Strength

- Members of the originally proposed governing board demonstrated a great deal of knowledge regarding the proposed academic plan, oversight of the CMO, as well as a next steps with regard to community engagement. Two additional members have been added, augmenting the financial acumen of the board and their ability to effectively monitor the financial performance of the school.
- The Committee to Form proposes to partner with a CMO comprised of staff with significant experience working in Los Angeles-based TEACH Public Schools.
- The Committee to Form and proposed CMO have identified a realistic facility option, and the application includes a realistic projection of the number of classrooms required to execute the proposed academic plan. Furthermore, the application notes that the proposed facility does include space for other activities outlined in the narrative such as physical education. Finally, during the capacity interview, it was made clear that the CMO has established relationships and experience to effectively oversee facilities.
- The proposed school plans to offer transportation to students in response to feedback from the community. While there may be some questions about the allocation of funds in the budget to adequately cover these expenses, a commitment to transporting students is a key feature of the operational plan and ensures that the academic program is accessible to students.
- The resubmitted application provides additional capacity to serve a large number of EL students, as well as additional full-time employees to support special education students in later years of an initial term. The staffing plan now aligns to the proposed academic program, and is more likely to meet the needs of the expected student population.

### Areas of Concern

- The presented plan to recruit and hire high-quality teachers raises some questions given the short incubation year. More information is needed to better understand how the leadership and proposed board will ensure that the school is meeting all hiring benchmarks prior to the start of school.
- The proposal contemplates serving a large number of students in grades 6-7 in year one, yet

there are some concerns about the ability of the school to fully fill these grades as few strategies were presented to ensure that that these hard-to-fill grade levels are fully enrolled in year one.

## Financial Section

The financial section of the initial application was rated as 'Approaches the Standard'. After a review of the resubmission, the review committee found that the strengths identified in the first submission remained. These are detailed below.

The resubmitted financial plan accounts for proposed staffing changes mentioned in previous sections, and assumptions used appear to be conservative and reasonable. Additionally, the budget provides for reasonable estimates for funding transportation, which is planned to be offered to students beginning in the first year of operations. appears to account for all major expenditures and generally aligns with the narrative.

These improvements, coupled with the added financial expertise to the proposed board, led the review committee to rate this section as 'Meets the Standard'.

### Areas of Strength

- In general, the financial plan and budgeting priorities align to the proposed model. Key staffing and programming elements appear to be captured within the budget and anticipated costs are reasonable. Proposed teacher salaries appear to be reasonable.
- During the capacity interview, the Committee to Form and CMO representatives were able to describe a variety of reasonable approaches and or steps that could be taken in response to potential budget cuts. Mission-critical expenses were protected and realistic cuts, such as eliminating teaching positions or specific grade levels in Year 1, were contemplated.
- The presented budget does not suggest that the school will become insolvent or lack access to a necessary amount of liquidity. CMO representatives possess significant experience and the appropriate expertise to provide accurate and timely information to the proposed governing board. Additionally, the Committee to Form demonstrated a strong understanding of cashflows as they relate to grants.
- The applicant noted that while the budget did not include any additional funds beyond those that are guaranteed, they have identified additional sources of revenue that could be made available to the school. During the capacity interview, the applicant named the Revolving Loan program as well as possible funding from Opportunity 180 as potential sources of funds, neither of which are included in the proposed budget.

### Areas of Concern

- While the resubmission makes clear that TEACH is pursuing additional grants and philanthropic dollars, and that at least some of these funds are likely to be awarded should the school be authorized, failure to be awarded any grants raises concerns. The Committee to Form will need to closely monitor these awards and the impact on the school's cash balance.

## Addendum

The addendum section is required for those applications that seek to contract with a CMO or EMO or are applying for sponsorship directly. Because TEACH Las Vegas contemplates contracting with a CMO, this component of the application was required. This section of the original application was rated as 'Approaches the Standard'.

The review committee identified a few improvements within this section of the resubmitted application. The roles of the leadership team and CMO are now clarified, particularly during the incubation year. Additionally, the proposed contract between the CMO and local board has been modified to address concerns related to monitoring performance. Valuable context and information was also provided about the results of the current TEACH schools in California schools, and how the CMO plans to leverage this experience to help the proposed school be more successful.

These improvements provided sufficient information, and the review committee rated this section as 'Meets the Standard'.

### Areas of Strength

- The proposed school is to be part of the TEACH Public Schools network, an established network in Los Angeles, CA. It is also clear the applicant understands the need to have high performing schools in Nevada.
- The Committee to Form has identified a school leader that has a wealth of experience, is qualified, and is familiar with the TEACH Public Schools model.
- A draft contract between the proposed governing board and the CMO is included within the charter application. The contract specifies the duties/services that the CMO will provide to the governing board and school at the beginning of the charter term.

### Areas of Concern

- The past performance of the current schools affiliated with the proposed CMO still leave some lingering questions despite the Committee to Form providing helpful context and information. More information is needed to ensure that the proposed school in Nevada can earn the equivalent of a 4- or 5-star performance on the NSPF.

# 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 TEACH Las Vegas was conducted on Thursday, November 12, and lasted approximately 120-minutes. All members of the Committee to Form attended the interview. Additionally, two representatives from TEACH Public Schools, the proposed Charter Management Organization (CMO), and a representative from Charter Impact, a financial management and operational support service provider, attended the capacity interview. Questions during the capacity interview focused primarily on these areas:

Curriculum and Instructional Design	Mission and Vision
Driving for Results	Board Governance
At-Risk Students & Special Populations	Leadership Team
School Structure: Calendar and Schedule	Staffing Plan
Parent and Community Involvement	School Management Contracts
Targeted Plan	Financial Plan

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

## Meet and Confer

The TEACH Las Vegas Committee to Form met with SPCSA staff to discuss the deficiencies on January 14, 2021 prior to their resubmission on February 3, 2021. During this meeting, the applicant team asked a number of 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.

- October 7, 2020 – Memo sent to CCSD soliciting input.
- November 13, 2020 – Written input provided from CCSD to SPCSA.
- December 28, 2020 – Written notification from the SPCSA to CCSD regarding the denial of the original TEACH Las Vegas charter application.
- February 16, 2021 – Written notification from SPCSA to CCSD confirming that the TEACH Las Vegas resubmission had been received. The SPCSA outlined a tentative timeline for possible action on the TEACH Las Vegas 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*.

### Meetings 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.*

### Academic Plan

#### Curriculum and Instructional Design

- *Instructional strategies are proven to be well-suited to the student population.*

#### Dual Credit Partnerships

- *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.*
- *The partnership reflects in the memorandum of understanding is shown to be both appropriate for high school students seeking advanced coursework.*

#### Driving for Results

- *There is a clear process for setting, monitoring and/or revising internal leading indicator academic goals.*
- *There is a clear delineation between assessments utilized for internal monitoring by the governing body, staff, and leadership and those which are sufficiently rigorous, valid, and reliable to be presented to the Authority, the state, parents, and the general public.*

### Operations Plan

#### Human Resources

- *Articulates process for recruiting and hiring high quality teachers and leaders.*

#### Student Recruitment and Enrollment

- *The enrollment plan, including annual growth, is reasonable and supported by a clear rationale.*

### Financial Plan

- *No essential services are funded at amounts that would preclude the committee to form from implementing their plan.*

### Addendum

#### Leadership for Expansion

- *Data for schools affiliated with the CMO/EMO demonstrate strong performance equivalent to 4- or 5-star performance on the NSPF.*