



## NEVADA STATE PUBLIC CHARTER SCHOOL AUTHORITY

**March 19, 2021**

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

### **MINUTES OF THE MEETING**

#### **BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT (via video):**

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

#### **AUDIENCE IN ATTENDANCE:**

Gabe Shirey (via video)  
Ben Salkowe (via video)  
Monica Johnson (via video)  
Jana Wilcox Lavin (via video)  
Gabe Shirey (via video)

#### **AUTHORITY STAFF PRESENT (via video):**

Rebecca Feiden, Executive Director (in-person)  
Ryan Herrick, General Counsel (via video)  
Mark Modrcin, Director of Authorizing (in-person)  
Danny Peltier, Management Analyst I (via video)  
Michael Dang, Management Analyst IV (via video)

**Agenda Item 1 – Call to Order and Roll Call, and Pledge of Allegiance [00:00:42]**

State Public Charter School Authority (SPCSA), Board Chair, Melissa Mackedon called the meeting to order at 9:00am, with attendance reflected above. Member Moulton facilitated the pledge of allegiance.

**Agenda Item 2 – Public Comment #1 [00:03:25]**

Public comment on the line:

1. Ben Salkowe, Equipo Academy, Principal, spoke about the impact COVID-19 has had on their school's community. He asked for the Authority to add an item on the agenda at the April meeting, to allow Title I school leaders to present the needs they have for students, families and communities in terms of what resources they've been given and discuss how to adjust the gaps and candidly share the data and realities they are seeing.

**Agenda Item 3 – Approval of February 26, 2021 Board Meeting Action Minutes. [00:08:56]**

*MOTION: Member Moulton made a motion to approve the February 26, 2021 board meeting action minutes. Member Holmes-Sutton seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.*

**Agenda Item 4 – SPCSA Executive Director's Report. [00:09:43]**

**a. COVID-19 update**

Executive Director Rebecca Feiden said not much has changed since the update from the last meeting but addressed a few topics. In terms of school models, many SPCSA-sponsored charter schools are continuing to increase in-person learning in alignment with the Governor's directives from February. They have continued to see case rates and test positivity come down across the state and they continue to monitor this data. The SPCSA has been working with schools that are interested to set up a rapid COVID-19 testing program and with the assistance of the Department of Health and Human Services they have received authorization for their first few sites to begin administering those tests. Moving to updates on emergency funding, for some context there have now been three emergency relief packages signed into law. The first was the CARES Act signed into law in Spring 2020, the second they refer to as Corona Virus Response and Relief Supplemental Appropriations Act (CRRSAA), signed into law in December 2020 and most recently the American Rescue Plan which was signed into law this month. Each of the bills has a portion dedicated to education. Under the first two bills the K-12 education funding was referred to as the Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief fund (ESSER). They refer to the first set of funds as ESSER 1, the second set of funds as ESSER 2, and the new set they don't know if they will call ESSER 3. ESSER 1 funds went out to schools last spring, ESSER 2 this week and they are waiting on additional guidance from the Nevada Department of Education (NDE) before they can actually submit their budgets and plans for the use of those funds. As for the American Rescue Plan, they have not received their allocation for that bill yet but expect it in the coming weeks and under this newest legislation, there are two additional requirements that she highlighted. First is 20% of the funds for K-12 education must be spent towards learning loss recovery and second to establish re-opening plans. Finally, both the CARES and CRRSAA, had the Governor's Emergency Education Relief (GEER) funding to provide additional supports, this funding is at the Governor's discretion. GEER 1 was received and allocated to schools, GEER 2 is forthcoming. They continue to work close with NDE to make sure they roll those out in a smooth and timely manner.

Member Moulton asked if the 20% recovery funds could go towards summer school? Executive Director replied those are allowable costs certainly under all three of the buckets for funding. There was further discussion between Member Moulton and Executive Director Feiden regarding the rapid testing.

Member Cyr asked about the funds distributed to schools. Executive Director Feiden clarified which funds have been distributed and are in process. Member Cyr asked as far as allocations, was there a process to reviewing it to say this school has 300 students so they are going to give it a per pupil amount or how did that look as far as distributing it making sure schools in higher need receive what would serve them? Executive Director Feiden said the GEER funds came with specific allocations, so they did not have flexibility with how those were allocated. ESSER funds they did have some flexibility and so on ESSER 1 they allocated with an extra weight for their free

and reduced lunch students. ESSER 2, they recently published and added a weight for students with IEPs, students that are English learners and students that qualify for free and reduced lunch. SPCSA leadership team investigated options about how to fund that and ultimately decided to use the weights established by the funding commission for those three populations. Member Cyr said with regard to Mr. Salkowe's comments, did the SPCSA see that there were allocation requests that the Authority could not approve for Title I schools or related to his concern about there not being appropriate allocations to a certain group of schools, did anything stand out that wouldn't align with the requirements of the funding request? Executive Director Feiden said she has not seen anything to that affect. SPCSA staff spent a significant amount of time on this topic and most of the grants they receive have a specific formula. She discussed further details regarding their process.

Member Kirner asked if there is any money left over or if the state would come back and offer more allocation? Executive Director Feiden said generally the grants are determined to the LEAs on a formula basis as well, however with ESSER 1 NDE did set aside an allowability up to 10% and so 90% sent to districts and SPCSA on a formula basis, and 10% can be held back and can be used for a competitive grant process. Last summer, the SPCSA did apply for a competitive grant and prioritized schools with the highest need in that process.

Member Randolph asked about the data points, is it in one of the reports as it relates to the ESSER 1 funds, how much did the Authority get and how was that allocated to our schools previously with a side-by-side comparison going forward.

**b. Initiatives related to Serving All Students Equitably [00:34:17]**

Executive Director Feiden shared a few brief updates. SPCSA staff provided a training during one of their school accountability and assessment technical assistance calls related to how to look at discipline data by student group. Second, they had an information session for schools interested in participating in the SPCSA's Project Aware Grant and Multi-Tiered Systems of Support (MTSS) coaching and staff is looking for schools to finalize their interest by early April. The program focuses on creating a strong culture that is responsive and supportive of students as well as incorporates components of restorative justice. Third, they are working to make updates to their website that will help to centralize key data that will be useful for families. Fourth, the Community Working Group's Subcommittee on Equity is meeting in April to discuss professional development that incorporates diversity, equity, and inclusion.

**c. Planning for SPCSA initiatives for school year 2021-2022. [00:36:30]**

Executive Director Feiden said as the Authority knows, each school year SPCSA staff identify initiatives to take on aligned to their strategic plan and to further their vision. This year they had 9 initiatives, including the development of the Grant Management System to roll out this spring, the creation of formal performance reports for academic, financial, and organizational performance for their schools which are now available on their website. As they work to plan for their 2021-2022 initiatives, they are seeking feedback through a portfolio wide survey about the charter leaders experience working with the SPCSA and this will be helpful in identifying their initiatives. They plan to send this survey out this month.

**d. Special Education Enrollment Monitoring. [00:37:48]**

Executive Director Feiden said last year the SPCSA began an initiative to enhance their oversight of special education monitoring in charter schools. This year the enrollment monitoring support will kick off in late March and they look forward to fully launching this program as last year they had to pause implementation due to COVID-19. Through this program, SPCSA staff will pose as parents of students with IEPs and inquire about enrolling a student with a disability via a phone call. In the event they come across a barrier, they will reach out to the school and provide support.

Member Cyr commented about site visits and thinking about how their kids get back into the classroom, what this will look like and if there is any feedback that staff might be providing to schools and if they are doing site visits in-person. She asked if there was any sort of extra support or physical presence to see and hear the needs they

have and challenges they are experiencing and what they might be noticing during a site visit that might be related to the challenges they faced over this past year? Executive Director Feiden said most of their site evaluations has been virtual, there has been one member on site in a couple of instances. April's site evaluation is still completely virtual, and they certainly are available to schools and try to make sure they know to contact staff with concerns. They've maintained their every two week, twice a month contact, staff one-on-one contact with schools to make sure if there are issues they are aware of them. She also held focus groups in February and heard a lot of valuable insights from their schools. As they move into site evaluations, they can look for and identify that.

**Agenda Item 5 – Charter School Contract Amendment Applications. [00:42:27]**

**a. Eagle Nevada Charter Schools (defer opening until the 2022-23 school year)**

Director Modrcin provided a brief overview of the request for amendment submitted by Eagle Nevada Charter Schools. The school is requesting to defer their opening from the 2021-2022 school year to the 2022-2023 school year. SPCSA staff are recommending approval of this request.

***MOTION:** Vice Chair Kirner made a motion to approve the contract amendment application from Eagle Nevada Charter Schools to defer opening until the 2022-2023 school year. Member Moulton seconded the motion. Motion carried unanimously.*

**b. Signature Preparatory (facility bonding and acquisition) [00:45:53]**

Mike Dang, Manager of Financial and Organizational Performance, provided a brief overview of the amendment application submitted by Signature Preparatory. Signature Preparatory is requesting the Authority approve its request for a good cause exemption to hear this matter and to approve its acquisition of its current facility that will not affect approved enrollment. SPCSA staff have reviewed the application and recommend approval of both requests. Additionally, the amendment notes the projected possible savings if the amendment is approved, depending on final issuance terms. This is shown in the two scenarios listed in the supporting materials.

***MOTION:** Member Moulton made a motion to approve the Signature Preparatory requests, first for a good cause exemption to hear this matter and, second, for it to acquire its campus and facilities in a way to not affect its approved enrollment level, subject to the condition that Signature submit its bond prospectus or offering memorandum and the final terms received upon issuance, including total debt encumbrance, term of years, interest rate, cost of issuance and issuance cost breakdowns. Staff will work directly with the school on the format of this information. Vice Chair Kirner seconded the motion. Motion carried unanimously.*

**Agenda Item 6 – Opportunity 180 [00:53:26]**

Executive Director Feiden said as the Authority knows, the SPCSA recently approved a new strategic and growth management plan and initiated several diversity, equity, and inclusion initiatives. They have also strengthened their communication with school districts including becoming a member of NASS. As part of these efforts, they have engaged with numerous stakeholders and a few meetings ago the Authority heard from Charter School Association of Nevada (CSAN). Today they have a chance to hear from Jana Wilcox Lavin, Executive Director with Opportunity 180, another Education non-profit. Opportunity 180 was recently awarded the Federal Charter School Program grant. This has a direct connection with our work with newly approved charter schools or expansions. She turned it over to Jana Wilcox Lavin to share about their organization and how they work relates to charters.

Ms. Lavin spoke about the organization's vision which they call their North Star: Every public school student graduates from high school college and career ready. Opportunity 180 has supports and operates sort of cross sector, meaning they support public charter schools, district schools, and have recently expanded their work across the state of Nevada from beyond just Clark County. Their current working goal is to ensure 100,000 more kids have access to a quality school in their neighborhood by 2030. She provided some examples of the work they do. Several SPCSA-sponsored charter schools have partnered with the organization. She closed with talking about the Great Schools for NV Charter School Program (CSP) Grant. Opportunity 180 was awarded \$23 million for the

Great Schools for Nevada CSP Grant from the from the U.S. Department of Education in order to meet three major program objectives: increase the number of quality public charter schools over the next 5 years, ensure the state authorizer is a leader in quality authorizing, sponsoring schools with strong academic performance, and to share the successes and lessons of high-quality charter schools to broader education system. See presentation in the supporting materials for more details.

There was further discussion between the Authority and Ms. Lavin regarding the organization.

**Agenda Item 7 – 2021 Legislative Update. [01:40:46]**

Mr. Herrick gave a quick update and provided background regarding the movement of the bills and the timelines. Staff are watching about 60 education bills about a dozen of those very closely. The deadline was moved from individual legislator bill introduction from this Monday to this coming Monday which is also the deadline for committee bill introduction, so they expect this weekend and Monday to be busy as far as bill introductions. Staff are continuing to watch their bill AB 68, Executive Director Feiden presented that yesterday and it was voted out of the Assembly Ed Committee unanimously. Staff did make one amendment to that bill. He went over the other bills they are closely watching including AB 109, AB 194, AB 195, and SB 173.

**Agenda Item 8 – Long-Range Calendar. [01:46:44]**

Executive Director Feiden flagged a couple of brief things on the long-range calendar. She said they are happy to add an agenda item related to grants and speak to the first two sets of legislation that came through though they do not anticipate on having American Rescue Plan funding until at least April or early May and are happy to put it on the agenda and see what information they have at that time. In addition, she flagged the new charter applications which are on track and staff expect to bring the recommendations to the April board meeting.

**Agenda Item 9 – Public Comment #2 [01:49:00]**

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

**Agenda Item 10 – Adjournment [01:50:21]**

The meeting was adjourned at 10:50am.