

Charter School Application Report

PilotED Schools of Nevada

Recommendation for the Winter 2021 Charter Application Cycle

General Information

Proposed Name	PilotED Schools: North Las Vegas
Proposed CMO	PilotED Schools of Nevada, Inc.
Proposed Mission	To empower elementary students in the ways in which they see themselves and the world around them through the use of a school model that embodies social identity development, a robust civic engagement system, and a rigorous culturally relevant academic curriculum
Proposed Grade Configuration	Opening: Kindergarten – 4 th Grade Full-Scale: Kindergarten – 5 th grade ¹
Proposed Opening	August 2022
Proposed Location	501 N. Mojave Road Las Vegas, NV 89101 ² School anticipates primarily serving 89032, 89084, 89031, 89081, 89085 and 89106 zip codes.

Process/Key Dates for PilotED Academy

- October 26, 2020 – New Charter Application Training
- September 15, 2020 – Notice of Intent is received
- January 15, 2021 – Application is received
- March 26, 2021 - Capacity Interview is conducted³
- April 23, 2021 – Recommendation is presented

¹ The cover sheet indicates that this would be a K-5 school if approved, but the application makes references to serving MS grades at various points in the academic section.

² This address was provided during the capacity interview.

³ The PilotED 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

	2022-23	2023-24	2024-25	2025-26	2026-27	2027-28
K	81	81	81	81	81	81
1	81	81	81	81	81	81
2	81	81	81	81	81	81
3	54	81	81	81	81	81
4	54	54	81	81	81	81
5		54	54	81	81	81
6						
7						
8						
9						
10						
11						
12						
Total	351	432	459	486	486	486

Executive Summary, Process and Recommendation

The review committee, which included one member of the SPCSA staff and two external reviewers, unanimously recommends that the application for PilotED be denied. Shortcomings were identified in each of the five components of the submitted application. The review committee and SPCSA staff find that the proposed Meeting the Need, Academic, Operations, Financial plans, in addition to the information included in the Addendum section, did not meet the standards as outlined in the charter application rubric. These ratings are a result of concerns and remaining questions in a number of areas, mainly in the Meeting the Need and Organizational areas. These are briefly outlined below and in subsequent pages.

The review committee and SPCSA staff find that PilotED application attempts to meet the Geographic component of the Academic Needs within the SPCSA Academic and Demographic Needs Assessment. Minimal evidence of community engagement exists and partnerships are underdeveloped. It is also not clear that the proposed school would serve the communities and zip codes that are outlined in the application, and it is not clear that the application reflects the input of prospective parents and other members of these local communities. The input from the Clark County School District states that the application mostly aligns to the SPCSA's Academic and Demographic Needs Assessment, with the exception of the geographic component as it relates to three specific zip codes. It is also noteworthy that both the City of Las Vegas and City of North Las Vegas provided input on this applicant, with one raising questions about the level of community engagement that has occurred to date. Given the findings of the review committee, as well as the input received from other stakeholders, the Meeting the Need section was rated as

‘Approaches the Standard’.

Both the review committee and SPCSA staff find that the proposed academic plan, when considering the additional information provided through the capacity interview portion of the review process, does not meet the standard as outlined in the charter application rubric. The proposed academic model is innovative and would bring a unique model to Clark County and the North Las Vegas area, but the application fails to present compelling evidence that the program has been successful and is meeting performance standards in Indiana. Some data was provided to indicate that students are growing at a high rate, but proficiency rates appear to be low. There remain questions about whether the proposed plans to provide interventions to struggling students and specific supports for special education students are adequate.

The operations plan included a few strengths, including the Leadership Team subsection which the review team and SPCSA staff determined to meet the standard as outlined in the charter application rubric. A school leader has been identified, and the school has robust professional development plans in place. However, concerns about the underdeveloped board, staffing plan, facility and incubation year plan remain. Additionally, insufficient evidence of student demand to date signals that outreach and community engagement is just beginning. These concerns resulted in an overall rating of ‘Approaches the Standard’ for this section.

The review committee and SPCSA staff find that the financial plan also ‘Approaches the Standard’ as outlined in the application rubric. The budget is heavily reliant on philanthropic dollars and grants, but commitments of these funds are not presented. Additionally, the current school in Indianapolis has not consistently met the financial performance standards of their authorizer.

Lastly, the Addendum section was also rated as ‘Approaches the Standard’ by the review team and SPCSA staff. The application does not present sound evidence that the current school in Indianapolis is meeting performance goals and standards, and the proposed management services agreement lacks important details such as what performance indicators the local board, when fully constituted, will use to effectively evaluate the CMO and their services.

For these major reasons, in addition to those outlined throughout this document, staff’s recommendation is to deny the PilotED Schools of Nevada charter application.

Proposed motion: Deny the PilotED Schools of Nevada charter application as submitted during the 2021 Winter Application Cycle based on a finding that the applicant has failed to satisfy the requirements contained in NRS 388A.249(3).

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/

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
Meeting the Need	Approaches the Standard
Mission and Vision	Approaches the Standard
Targeted Plan	Approaches the Standard
Parent and Community Involvement	Approaches the Standard
Academic Plan⁴	Approaches the Standard
Transformational Change	Approaches the Standard
Curriculum & Instructional Design	Approaches the Standard
Promotion & High School Graduation Requirements	Approaches the Standard
Driving for Results	Meets the Standard
At-Risk Students and Special Populations	Approaches the Standard
School Structure: Culture	Approaches the Standard
School Structure: Student Discipline	Approaches the Standard
School Structure: Calendar and Schedule	Meets the Standard
Operations Plan	Approaches the Standard
Board Governance	Approaches the Standard
Leadership Team	Meets the Standard
Staffing Plan	Does Not Meet the Standard
Human Resources	Approaches the Standard
Student Recruitment and Enrollment	Does Not Meet the Standard
Incubation Year Development	Approaches the Standard
Services	Approaches the Standard
Facilities	Does Not Meet the Standard
Ongoing Operations	Approaches the Standard
Financial Plan	Approaches the Standard
Addendum	Approaches the Standard
Leadership for Expansion	Approaches the Standard
Scale Strategy	Approaches the Standard
School Management Contract	Approaches the Standard
Charter Management Organizations Applying Directly	Approaches the Standard

⁴ The PilotED proposal did not contemplate Distance Education, Dual Credit Partnerships or Pre-Kindergarten. Therefore, the corresponding sections of the rubric were not scored.

Meeting the Need Section

The applicant team presents a clear picture of the cornerstones of the proposed academic model—social identity development, academic excellence, civic engagement—which have the potential to be impactful to prospective students. Additionally, multiple members of the proposed board appear to have ties to the local community of North Las Vegas, and could help inform future decisions of the local board.

Many shortcomings were identified, however, that prevented this section from being rated as ‘Meets Standard’. First, while the application appears to have identified a target community that aligns to the geographic component of the SPCSA Academic and Demographic Needs Assessment, the application does not present clear evidence of demand for this model, nor is it clear that the model would serve the communities and zip codes outlined in this section. Evidence of input from the community on the proposed model is in the early stages. Additionally, proposed partnerships are underdeveloped, and do not provide for clear commitments outlining accountabilities and specific deliverables that are relevant to the proposed target population. The applicant also does not provide compelling evidence that demonstrates the capacity to effectively serve the identified student populations. Very limited academic data is presented from the current school in Indianapolis, which is only in its third year of operations, that suggests the school is meeting or exceeding academic performance goals. For these reasons, as well as those detailed further below, the review committee and SPCSA staff rated this section as ‘Approaches the Standard’.

Input provided by the Clark County School District indicate that there are 19 elementary schools within the six identified zip codes and reaffirms that many of these are 1 and 2-star schools. Only two schools in these identified zip codes are rated as a 4 or 5-star school. Data provided indicates that some of these district schools are at or above capacity, while others are below capacity. In addition, one of the 19 schools has had additional capacity added through the 2015 Capital Improvement Program at CCSD. Finally, the input from the Clark County School District shows that the application mostly aligns to the SPCSA’s Academic and Demographic Needs Assessment, with the exception of the geographic component as it relates several zip codes: 89084, 89085 and 89086 zip codes. Additionally, the Clark County School District believes that “existing schools in the proposed locations offer similar types of opportunities.” Details regarding the input provided by the Clark County School District can be found alongside this agenda item. Finally, the cities of North Las Vegas and Las Vegas both provided input on the PilotED application. The City of Las Vegas expressed concerns about the proposal’s connection to the proposed community the school intends to serve. The City of North Las Vegas provided input that can be generally characterized as supportive, and the text of the communication from both cities can be found alongside this agenda item.

Areas of Strength

- The pillars of the PilotED program, Social Identity Development, Academic Excellence, and Civic Engagement are clear, compelling and are interwoven throughout the application. Additionally, the key outcomes appear relevant to the proposed community of North

- Vegas, and describe what success for students beyond their time at PilotED looks like.
- Multiple members of the proposed board appear to have strong ties and knowledge of the local North Las Vegas community.
 - The applicant team outlines plans to effectively engage parents, community members, and other neighborhood partners through focus groups, town halls, and other community activities, although only limited evidence is included in the application that demonstrates parents, the neighborhood and community members have been involved in the development of the application.

Areas of Concern

- The application does not present a clear case, with supporting data, that the school model is responsive to demonstrated demand for a particular model in the North Las Vegas community. While the applicant team notes that the proposed community has a number of low-performing schools, more information is needed to understand the problem that the applicant is seeking to solve, and that demand for the specific model exists.
- The application does not provide evidence of clear, well-developed partnerships that are tied to the local community or have a direct parallel to the school and its stated outcomes. Proposed partnerships appear to be in their early stages and are underdeveloped as letters of support from potential partners do not outline the accountabilities of both parties, rarely contemplate actionable deliverables, and may not be relevant to the needs of the target population.
- More information is needed to confirm that these resources and collaborative efforts can be impactful for the proposed community.
- The application does not present sufficient and comprehensive evidence that the proposed model can create a 3, 4 or 5-star school for the proposed community. The applicant team provided some assessment data from PilotED's current school in Indianapolis, which is only in its third year of operations. While student growth results are promising, proficiency scores from interim testing signal that scores do not meet the Indianapolis school's internal performance benchmarks, and raise questions about the applicant's ability to meet performance targets in Nevada. Additional evidence of success at the current school is needed to address this concern as it is not clear that the model has a strong track record of success. This deficiency is compounded by the lack of available standardized test scores for the operator.
- Evidence collected from the application and the capacity interview suggest that parent and community involvement in the development of the school is in the early stages. While the intent of the applicant team to work with and create a school with the community should be applauded, and a community coordinator was hired recently, there is very limited evidence that parents, the neighborhood, and local stakeholders have been involved in the development of the plan. The applicant team makes commitments to engagement through town halls, focus groups, and with established organizations in the community, but more evidence is needed to understand the involvement of the local stakeholders and how the proposed model meets identified community needs.

Academic Section

The Academic section of the application included a number of identified strengths, including further development and clarity on the three key pillars of the proposed school along with research supporting their emphasis in the academic program. Primary instructional methods have the potential to be successful, and would be enhanced by the proposed assessments used to help implement data-driven instruction that is responsive to student needs. Additionally, the applicant team proposes a unique school calendar for the Las Vegas area that intends to leverage intersessions to support additional remediation time for students.

Notwithstanding these strengths, a number of deficiencies and questions remain that ultimately resulted in this section not meeting the standard. With regard to special student populations and students requiring significant interventions, more information is needed to understand that the proposed school plans to assign students to intervention tiers and how the school will provide adequate supports to ensure that these students are successful. Gaps were also identified with regard to school culture. Specifically, multiple plans and systems are proposed, but it is not clear how these will collectively support a positive school culture, nor is it clear that the tracking systems for culture will be able to sustain it. For these reasons, as well as those detailed further below, the review committee and SPCSA staff rated this section as 'Approaches the Standard'.

Areas of Strength

- The application has a well-articulated theory of change that centers on three key pillars of the proposed school: academic excellence, identity development, civic engagement. Research is provided in the application to support the proposed program, and these pillars appear to be central to the mission and vision of the school.
- The application outlines many primary instructional methods within the academic plan, few of which will require significant professional development and have the potential to be successful. The proposed academic program includes interventions and different techniques, such as *PilotPods*, that have the potential to reach students effectively.
- The written application provided sufficient information regarding the types of internal assessments to be used to monitor student progress. Additional information was provided through the capacity interview that accentuated that the network has a strong plan for measuring and reporting academic performance and progress of students through interim assessments such as NWEA-MAP.
- Performance goals for the proposed school are lofty, and rely on internal assessments that provide sufficiently rich data. While some questions remain about current performance of the current school in Indiana, whether all proposed interim goals are achievable, and which schools in Las Vegas were used to inform these goals, the proposed internal metrics have the potential to guide the school to a high rating under the Nevada School Performance Framework (NSPF).

- The proposed calendar appears to meet the state requirements, to align to the assessment calendar, and to support key elements of the proposed program such as intersession remediation times. Additionally, the proposal includes a 95% attendance goal, which has the potential to lead to stronger results under accountability mechanisms.

Areas of Concern

- The academic plan, and specifically the transformational change section, contains many belief statements that describe how the school will achieve its goal while implementing the proposed program. However, the proposal lacks compelling evidence of that this program has been successful in the current school in Indiana. Some data was provided to indicate that students are growing at a high rate, but proficiency rates appear to be below performance standards. Moreover, it is not clear that the proposed program has been adapted to a likely different demographic of students in Clark County and specifically North Las Vegas.
- Questions remain surrounding the proposed curriculum, both in terms of development and alignment, particularly for social studies. After the capacity interview, it is not clear that all curriculum has been vetted for the proposed school in Nevada, nor is it certain that the applicant has a clear and thorough process to ensure that all of the proposed curricula would be aligned to Nevada Academic Content Standards (NVACS). It is not clear that curriculum currently used in Indiana, a former Common Core state, will be aligned for use in Nevada without additional work.
- Intervention descriptions are underdeveloped as they relate to promotion and retention decisions. The application does not provide sufficient detail about what techniques will be used to ensure that students are proficient and prepared to enter the subsequent grade. More information is needed to understand the support structures to be in place to support students identified as at-risk for retention. Promotion standards are also relatively undefined.
- Various elements of the applicant team's plan to adequately serve at-risk students and special populations are underdeveloped and need additional detail to better understand if the proposed remediation techniques can be successful, and if the applicant team has appropriate strategies and supports that correspond with the needs for identified students. Response to Intervention percentages based solely on the current school in Indianapolis raise questions as it is not clear that the demographic of students in Indianapolis would be similar to that of the student population in North Las Vegas. Additionally, the intervention tiers described in the application are vague in terms of how students are assigned.
- The applicant does not describe a practice for push-ins or content/instructional differentiation to address the academic needs of at-risk or special populations of students. Additionally, it is unclear as to how students are identified for special education services, and the plan for providing special education and related services is underdeveloped.

Finally, it is not clear that the applicant team has a demonstrated track record of success serving a wide range of students with disabilities.

- More information and clarity are needed to understand how the proposed PRIDE system and PBIS behavioral intervention system will support a positive school culture collectively, and how these two systems align with the identity development component of the school. These strategies may be effective in supporting a positive school climate, but more information is needed to understand how the elements create a concrete plan to establishing a culture of high expectations with students/families and teachers/staff. Given this ambiguity, it is also not clear if the plans to monitor school culture through a Teacher-Student Rapport (TSR) survey and behavior points are sufficient to track student progress.
- It is not clear that the proposed approach to student discipline, including suspension, will be effective in the community where the school proposes to locate. Available data from the current Indianapolis school indicates that it suspends students at a much higher rate than the statewide average, and that chronic absenteeism is much higher. During the capacity interview, the applicant team shared that suspensions and expulsions have trended in a positive direction, but more information is needed to verify this information and understand how this improvement impacted the proposed systems for the school in Las Vegas. It also does not appear that the proposed discipline plan includes goals for behavior.

Operations Section

The review committee identified a number of strengths within the operations section of the application. First, the applicant team has selected a school leader that has relevant experience in the local school district, and plans to support this individual's professional growth throughout the incubation year through fellowship and leadership development programs. The applicant also prioritizes hiring a diverse staff and the application presents a vision for the ideal qualities and characteristics in prospective employees. Within this section, the PilotED team also makes a commitment to providing student transportation.

Despite these strengths, a number of deficiencies and concerns were identified within this section. Identified board members appear to be well-qualified for their proposed role, but the proposed board is incomplete as presented in the application, and the applicant team does not provide a clear timeline for adding board members, or transitioning governance to the formal board. The draft management services agreement is underdeveloped and does not provide sufficient clarity around performance targets and the formal evaluation of the CMO. Additionally, the incubation year plan is not fully developed and does not clearly outline which individuals are responsible for key tasks and milestones. The plan for facilities is also in the early stages and insufficient information is presented to justify cost assumptions in the proposed budget. The application does not provide a clear rationale for choosing a potential school site in a different city, well outside of the proposed communities it proposes to serve.

For these reasons, coupled with the lack of demonstrated demand for the proposed model from the target communities as described in the Meeting the Need section, the review committee and SPCSA staff rated this section as 'Approaches the Standard'.

Areas of Strength

- The three identified board members in the application appear to have strong ties to the proposed local community. Additionally, the proposed structures, reporting and delineation of responsibilities appears to lay the foundation for a strong working relationship between all parties. A committee structure is outlined in the application to assist the full board in decision-making.
- The applicant team has identified a proposed school leader who has experience in the local school district, and provided data supporting his past instructional leadership as an assistant principal and learning strategist. During the capacity interview, additional information was provided on the professional development and fellowship programs and opportunities (Harvard Business School program, Relay and New School Venture Fund) in which the identified principal would participate to further ensure he is prepared to become a principal.
- The applicant provides a thorough, detailed description of qualities and characteristics that it will be looking for in prospective employees, and during the capacity interview, emphasized the importance of a diverse staff. The application also identifies one potential source of talent, Teach For America, which provided a written letter of support to assist the school in staffing effectively.

- The PilotED application notes that the school plans to participate in the National School Lunch Program (NSLP), which should support students who qualify for free and reduced price lunch attending the proposed school.
- The application makes a commitment to provide student transportation to those students that may have difficulty accessing the school on a daily basis. While some questions remain about the cost and implementation of this plan, transporting students can be an effective way to ensure access to the proposed program to students and families.

Areas of Concern

- The current proposed board, made up of three members, shows potential, but during the capacity interview, it was stated that they are in the process of adding more members in the months ahead. As such, the applicant does not demonstrate that the proposed membership meets the qualifications requirements, nor does it effectively show that the governing body has a wide range of relevant knowledge and expertise to effectively oversee the school. More information is needed to understand the timeline for formally adding new board members.
- The management services agreement provided is underdeveloped and does not outline performance targets (academic, organizational, financial) for the school and CMO. During the capacity interview, it was shared that this work is a priority for the incubation year, but significantly more evidence is needed to understand the goals of the board, how they will oversee the CMO and school leader through a set of developed, data-driven standards. This work is in the early stages, and is referenced in the incubation year plan, but no timeframe is established. Furthermore, it is not clear when the CMO will formally transition from a founding entity to a service provider to the proposed local board.
- Insufficient evidence was presented in the application and during the capacity interview that establishes a strong commitment by the school to meet the identified needs of a high-quality school in Las Vegas. The CMO does have experience hiring a qualified, staff in Indiana despite a statewide teacher shortage, but more details and information are needed to understand how the CMO and proposed board will ensure the school is adequately staffed in Nevada. This is especially true given the uniqueness of the proposed model and the applicant's acknowledgement during the capacity interview that it requires significant professional development prior to the school year to ensure teachers are prepared to successfully implement the academic program.
- The PilotED applicant team makes a commitment to employ a staff that is reflective of the student body, but few specifics for doing so are offered beyond basic letters of support. The applicant team was able to speak to the internal pipeline for leadership development during the capacity interview, but more information is needed to understand the performance evaluation system for how these individuals are selected.
- The written application presents very limited evidence of demand for the proposed academic model. When requested to provide additional information during the capacity interview, the applicant team was able to add some additional evidence of student recruitment and enrollment but was not able to definitively demonstrate that interested parents and students are coming from the proposed communities that the school intends

to serve. This deficiency is compounded by the current school in Indianapolis being under enrolled during its first two years of operation. More evidence of demonstrated interest in the school is needed. Outreach to parents appears to be in the early stages, as verified by the recent hiring of a local coordinator.

- The incubation year plan is underdeveloped and does not identify individuals responsible for leading Year 0 initiatives. More information and clarity are needed to ensure that key tasks are adequately captured and that sufficient capacity exists within available employees or the CMO.
- Few specifics regarding the proposed facility are detailed in the written application. When asked for additional information during the capacity interview, the applicant team shared that a preferred facility has been identified that met the basic requirements to deliver the academic program. Upon further review, this preferred facility is well outside of the six zip codes/communities that the school proposes to serve in other parts of the application, and is also outside of the city of North Las Vegas. While the school does commit to offering student transportation as previously noted, plans are vague. There remains insufficient information to justify cost assumptions, and engagement with the local jurisdictions has been limited. Available information regarding the facility and the timeline to purchase and/or lease is underdeveloped.

Financial Section

The applicant team presents a budget that, for the most part, appears to rely on accurate, conservative, and legally compliant assumptions. Generally, the review team found that the priorities within the budget also appear to align with the mission and vision of the school. Additionally, the applicant team has identified Trinet to provide the proposed school with comprehensive back-office services. According to the application, PilotED has an established relationship with Trinet through their current school, which signals that the CMO is satisfied with the level of services provided.

The review team and SPCSA staff identified a number of shortcomings, however, that prevented this section from being rated as 'Meets the Standard'. For these reasons, as well as those detailed further below, the review committee and SPCSA staff rated this section as 'Approaches the Standard'.

Areas of Strength

- The applicant has identified a comprehensive back-office service provider, Trinet, that has an established relationship with the network. Trinet would provide the proposed school important services such as payroll, human resources, health benefit management and retirement plan management.
- Most projections are based on accurate, conservative, and legally compliant assumptions, and budget priorities are aligned with the mission and vision of the school provided within the narrative.

Areas of Concern

- The application includes a facility lease draft, but limited additional information about the proposed facility was included in the application or capacity interview outside of the preferred address/location of the school. The application lacks evidence that the facility-related budget assumptions are realistic.
- Nearly a million dollars of private fundraising is included in the proposed budget, and the application also includes a sizable grant to be used to replicate and expand the PilotED model. However, no letters of commitment are provided for the private fundraising dollars that make it clear that funds are committed for the proposed school, or that current awards can be used for this proposal in addition to the school in Indianapolis. Additionally, the application does not include confirmation that the replication and expansion (Charter School Program/CSP) grant has been secured.
- The budget narrative assumes that the school will be able to fundraise between 20 and 30 percent of its operating costs annually, raising questions about the sustainability of the proposed model. By years five and six of the proposed first term, the narrative states that the school would still have 22% of their budget coming from philanthropic revenues. This is not a balanced, evidence-based approach given the proposed school has not yet secured any philanthropic dollars specifically for the Las Vegas school.
- Discrepancies between the staffing plan and proposed budget exist. Multiple positions that appear in the staffing chart are not accounted for in the budget, including:

operations manager, facilities manager, and nurse. There also is a disparity in the number of classroom teachers provided in the budget and the count provided in the staffing plan beginning in Year 2. More information and clarity are needed to confirm the correct numbers, and if the budget can sustain the anticipated staff, raising questions about the applicant's commitment to meeting the needs identified in the Academic and Demographic Needs Assessment. If positions cannot be funded, the applicant may not be able to adequately serve the anticipated student population, including special populations.

- Available data for the current school in operation in Indianapolis indicates that past financial performance has not met the standards outlined in the authorizer's performance framework. The Indianapolis school has also been significantly under enrolled in past academic years. Taken together with the current lack of demand for the proposed model, there is not a clear demonstration of strong financial health.

Addendum

The addendum section is required for those applications that seek to contract with a CMO or EMO, or if a CMO is applying for sponsorship directly. Because PilotED is applying for sponsorship directly, this component of the application was required.

The review committee identified several strengths within this section of the application. As previously mentioned, the school has an identified school leader. The applicant team also presents a clear plan for decision-making, demonstrating that responsibilities between the CMO, school leader and local board have been discussed in detail.

Despite these strengths, there were a number of identified shortcomings. The application does not present sound evidence that the current school in Indianapolis is meeting performance goals and standards, questions about the staffing plan lead to concerns about the ability of the applicant team to effectively scale an effective plan to meet the needs of the proposed community, and the proposed management services agreement lacks important details such as what performance indicators the local board, when fully constituted, will use to effectively evaluate the CMO and their services. Overall, these shortcomings resulted in a final rating of 'Approaches the Standard' for this section.

Areas of Strength

- The applicant already has a school leader identified that appears to meet the qualifications and criteria outlined by the CMO and the proposed governing board. Additionally, the proposed school leader plans to participate in professional development through reputable fellowship programs. The proposed leadership team structure presents a clear allocation of duties.
- While the CMO is applying directly for sponsorship, it is clear that a local board would hold the charter, and the application provides distinct delineation for decision-making. Even though no firm timeline for when the board will be fully established is provided, the decision-making authority seems to be aligned with the appropriate parties.

Areas of Concern

- Logical evidence that the current school in Indianapolis is meeting performance benchmarks is not presented. Given that this is a proposed replication, this shortcoming results in significant questions about the proposed school's ability to earn a 3, 4 or 5-star rating under the NSPF as well as a high rating under the SPCSA Performance Framework. More academic data is needed to confirm that there has been strong student performance at the current school, despite some recent data showing strong student growth results for the current year. The current school is only in Year 3 of operation and has not yet been rated by the Indiana statewide accountability system.
- It is not clear that the proposed applicant team has a clear, ambitious, data-driven set of standards and criteria that must be satisfied in order to keep the network on track to achieve its vision. The application included some performance goals for the school, but during the capacity interview, it was shared that performance standards for the CMO were not yet finalized. This raises questions about the accountability structure of the

school.

- As noted in the staffing plan, there are significant questions about how the proposed school is staffed. The narrative staffing plan does not match the proposed budget in a number of places. Given the additional questions and concerns about the budget, it is not clear that the plan to scale the model is adequately resourced and staffed appropriately.
- It does not appear that the CMO is following its own greenlighting process as outlined in the application. When asked for clarification during the capacity interview, CMO representatives noted that when there are performance shortcomings, they try to identify where the school has been successful so as to build on those strengths, citing student diversity, teacher retention, and parent satisfaction with the current school. Ultimately, there is insufficient academic performance data to demonstrate that the current school in Indianapolis has been highly successful, and there are questions about past performance from both organizational and financial perspectives as well. Additionally, while this is the first expansion, more information is needed on how this proposed school impacts the CMO and their ability to support a successful scale-up.
- The proposed contract between the CMO and local board raises some questions and appears underdeveloped in a few key areas. The proposed performance goals state that the CMO has veto power over the hiring of critical positions, raising questions about the autonomy enjoyed by the local board, and the proposed services contract does not reference renewal.

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 PilotED was conducted on Friday, March 26, and lasted approximately 120 minutes. Members of the applicant team that participated in the capacity interview included CMO representatives, a member of the PilotED Foundation Board, two of the three proposed board members for Nevada, the proposed principal and the local community coordinator that was recently hired. Questions during the capacity interview focused primarily on these areas:

Targeted Plan	Leadership Team
Parent and Community Involvement	Student Recruitment and Enrollment
Transformational Change	Facilities
Curriculum & Instructional Design	Financial Plan
Driving for Results	Leadership for Expansion
Board Governance	Scale Strategy

Lastly, the capacity interview included a scenario-based question that probed the applicant team’s capacity to develop a plan in response to information.

District Input

Per Assembly Bill 462 (2019), now codified in NRS 388A.249, the SPCSA solicited input from the Clark County School District regarding this application.⁵ The timeline regarding this request for input is below and the response provided by the Clark County School district is attached.

- February 16, 2021 – Memo sent to CCSD soliciting input.
- March 26, 2021 – Written input provided from CCSD to SPCSA.

⁵ NRS 388A.249(2)(a): “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

Mission and Vision

- *The mission statement identifies the role of the school in addressing the problem or demand that the school seeks to address in the community in which it seeks to serve.*
- *The committee to form proposes a school model that solves a problem related to student outcomes that is either shown to exist with data or is in response to demonstrated demand for a particular school model.*

Targeted Plan

- *Clear and comprehensive explanation of how the proposed model meets identified community needs.*
- *A demonstrated commitment to meet at least one of the identified demographic and academic needs as defined by the most recent SPCSA Academic and Demographic Needs Assessment*
- *Demonstrated capacity, credible plans, and thorough research and analysis in order to intentionally serve the identified student populations, prevent at-risk students from dropping out, and/or provide more high-quality schools in underserved areas, as defined in the Academic and Demographic Needs Assessment.*

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.*
- *Identifies specific partnerships which are shown to be relevant to the needs of the target population, including partners located in the community that the applicant intends to serve.*
 - *Partnerships are evidenced by specific letters of commitment outlining the accountabilities of both parties and clear, measurable, time-specific deliverables from the partner which are clearly relevant to the needs of the target population.*

Academic Plan

Transformational Change

- *Distinguishing features of the proposed schools are supported by compelling evidence of success in schools implementing similar programs serving a similar target population.*
- *For all plans the applicant will implement, there are clear, corresponding responsible parties, timelines, delivery methods, and rationales.*
- *The committee to form demonstrates that the key features of the proposed school can be implemented together in a coherent and cohesive manner that will drive towards meeting the proposed mission and vision.*

Curriculum and Instructional Design

- *A clear explanation, supported by evidence, demonstrating how the school's academic program aligns to the Nevada Academic Content Standards, including both the Common Core Academic Standards and the Next Generation Science Standards, and that the school teaches all required subjects at each grade level.*

Promotion and High School Graduation Requirements

- *Graduation/promotion standards for students are clearly defined and measurable, demonstrating high expectations for all students.*

At-Risk Students and Special Populations

- *The committee to form outlines the methods according to which the school will remediate academically underperforming students, including the system according to which the school will track progress, facilitate teacher collaboration, and the research supporting the school's remediation strategy.*
- *The committee to form demonstrates that the school's response to early signs of behavioral needs will be met with positive interventions and restorative justice practices. The school will utilize differentiated support for each student in collaboration with the students' parents, fellow teachers, and with support, as needed, from the school's social worker.*
- *The committee to form outlines comprehensive and logical plans to train staff in modifying the curriculum and instruction to address the unique needs of students with disabilities.*

School Structure: Culture

- *Plan to establish a culture of high expectations with students/families and teachers/staff and promote positive behavior.*
- *Well-defined goals around school culture and plans to monitor progress.*

School Structure: Student Discipline

- *Presents sound policies for student discipline, suspension, and expulsion including procedures for due process.*
- *If components are based on other states, districts, and/or schools, they have been adapted to meet the local context and proposed target community.*
- *Goals for student behavior are clear and measurable; there is a plan, and designated personnel, for monitoring and reporting related to behavior goals as well as ongoing maintenance of discipline records.*

Operations Plan

Board Governance

- *Demonstrates that the membership of the governing body will contribute the wide range of relevant knowledge, skills, and commitment needed to oversee a successful charter school, including but not limited to educational, financial, accounting, legal, and community experience and expertise, as well as special skill set to reflect school-specific programs, if applicable.*
- *Goals are clear and measurable, and contribute to improved academic outcomes for students and overall advancement of the organization.*
- *The board articulates a clear, ambitious, data-driven set of standards and criteria that the school leader must satisfy in order to keep the school on track to achieve its vision.*
- *The board provides logical evidence that the school will achieve its target student outcomes pursuant to the NSPF and the SPCSA Performance Framework if the school leader satisfies the standards set forth by the board.*

Staffing Plan

- *Appropriately staffed to meet the needs of the expected student population, including special student populations.*
- *Staffing plan matches the proposed budget and is explicitly aligned to both budget narrative assumptions and to budget calculations.*
- *Staffing plan aligns to the applicant's commitment to meet the needs identified in the Academic and Demographic Needs Assessment.*
- *Sound understanding of staffing needs necessary for the new-school(s) proposed.*

Human Resources

- *Articulates process for recruiting and hiring high quality teachers and leaders.*
- *School performance management system is likely to retain and promote talented staff, allows*

for re-structuring and removal of staff as needed, creates opportunities for leadership development, and sets clear expectations.

Student Recruitment and Enrollment

- *The enrollment plan reflects and understanding of the Nevada context.*
- *Articulates aggressive plan for recruiting eligible students to the school and describes specific actionable steps for ensuring the school is fully enrolled.*
- *Mailers sent to all households with children within a 2-mile radius of each facility.*
- *Minimum 45-day notification period followed by 45-day enrollment period OR a combined 90-day notification and enrollment period.*
- *Campaign leverages grassroots, data-driven outreach and recruitment strategies versus the internet, social media, or other passive tactics which disproportionately benefit more advantaged populations.*
- *Demonstrated interest and intent to enroll commitments by a significant number of parents for Year 1. These forms should include the following information at minimum:*
 - *Parent name and contact information*
 - *Zip code of residency*
 - *Student name(s) and grade levels for the proposed opening year*

Incubation Year Development

- *Outlines the function of any employees in Year 0, as well as the funding sources for associated compensation.*
- *The staffing outlined for Year 0 will enable the school to reach its Year 0 milestones and goals.*

Services

- *Operations plan includes logical plans for all essential and program-specific non-academic services, including but not limited to:*
 - *Supporting transportation, food service, facilities management, nursing, and purchasing processes, and school safety.*
 - *Staff structure/plan is adequate for the proposed school and aligns with the educational program; lines of authority are clear.*
 - *Costs of services are realistic and align with budget and academic program.*
 - *Committee to form articulate clear metrics and process for evaluating effectiveness of services.*

Facilities

- *Identifies a viable educational facility or facilities that meets the needs of the students and accommodates the programmatic and operational needs of the school(s) over the charter term as described throughout the application—OR—outlines in detail the plan and timeline to identify and secure facilities as needed.*
- *Provides facilities costs including, as applicable, cost of purchasing, leasing, building, or renovating and educational facility that confirms to applicable health, safety, and occupancy requirements.*
- *If a facility has not yet been identified*
 - *Description of anticipated facilities needs including evidence that the facility will be appropriate for the educational program of the school and adequate for the projected student enrollment.*
 - *Inclusion costs associated with the anticipated facilities needs in the budget including renovation, rent, utilities, insurance and maintenance.*
 - *Evidence to indicate that facilities-related budget assumptions are realistic based on anticipated location, size, etc.*

- Assurance that the proposed location will be in compliance with applicable building codes, health and safety laws, and with the requirements of the American with Disabilities Act (ADA).
- Plan for finding a location including a proposed schedule for doing so.
- A clear, timebound plan to engage with local jurisdiction(s) and municipalities.

Ongoing Operations

- Safety and security plans likely ensure a safe environment for people and property that corresponds with the core elements of the state-mandated school safety plan and the requirements in statute and regulation.
- Provides for adequate insurance coverage that meets the mandatory minimums for each charter school and scales depending on the size the school and number of proposed campuses.

Financial Plan

- School level budget priorities are consistent with the operator’s model, including but not limited to: educational program, staffing, and facility.
- Both school and network level budgets present balanced, realistic, evidence-based revenue and expenditures assumptions (including, if applicable, any plan to incur and repay allowable debt).
- Sufficient detail and specificity of assumptions for ALL budget line items to allow for the assessment of fiscal viability.
- No essential services are funded at amounts that would preclude the committee to form from implementing their plan.
- Demonstrates sufficient financial health of the network through audited financial documents (if applicable).
- All funds from external sources are guaranteed with money in-hand or letter of award and grant terms.
- No essential services are funded at amounts that would preclude the committee to form from implementing their plan.
- Assumptions about facilities in all financial statements correspond to a conservative facility plan and account for possible contingencies.

Addendum

Leadership for Expansion

- The board articulates a clear, ambitious, data-driven set of standards and criteria that the regional leader must satisfy in order to keep the network and each school on track to achieve its vision.
- The board provides logical evidence that the network and each school will achieve its target student outcomes pursuant to the NSPF and the SPCSA Performance Framework if the regional leader satisfies the standards set forth by the board.

Scale Strategy

- The plan to scale the model to new sites is adequately resources and staffed appropriately.
- Previous scale-up endeavors are show to have been successful with student performance data, organizational and financial data.

School Management Contracts

- Clear rationale for selection of Educational Management Organization (EMO)/Charter Management Organization (CMO).
- Demonstrates capacity and commitment of the governing board to oversee the EMO/CMO effectively:

- *Plan for board to monitor/evaluate the EMO/CMO's performance.*
- *Appropriate internal controls guide the relationship.*
- *Describes how the governing board will ensure fulfillment of performance expectations.*

Charter Management Organizations Applying for Sponsorship Directly

- *If the charter management organization is from another state, the application provides a comprehensive, actionable plan to ensure that the board will balance fidelity to its mission with appropriate input and oversight from Nevada residents.*