



STATE PUBLIC CHARTER SCHOOL AUTHORITY

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**ACTION MEMORANDUM**

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**TO:** SPCSA Board  
**FROM:** Mark Modrcin, Director of Authorizing  
Mike Dang, Management Analyst IV  
**SUBJECT:** **Girls Athletic Leadership School – Las Vegas (GALS-LV)**  
**Request for Approval of a Short-Term, Temporary Facility for Start of 2021-22**  
**School Year**  
**DATE:** July 30, 2021

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**Summary of Request and Recommendation**

GALS-Las Vegas is requesting that the State Public Charter School Authority (SPCSA) grant a Good Cause Exemption request and grant temporary approval for the school to remain at its current location, the Boys & Girls Club at 920 Cottage Grove Avenue, in the short-term due to permitting delays at their permanent location. According to the information provided, GALS plans to move the school to the permanent facility, located at 4220 S. Maryland Parkway, shortly after all appropriate permits have been issued.

SPCSA staff has reviewed the information submitted and recommends that the Authority grant the school's request for a Good Cause Exemption and conditionally approve the school's amendment, with conditions as outlined within this memo.

**Background**

GALS Las Vegas is a middle school specifically designed to meet the needs of girls with plans to ultimately enroll approximately 405 students in grades 6 – 8. GALS was conditionally approved to open for the 2020 – 21 school year by the Authority at its January 31, 2020 board meeting.

The school's stated mission is to provide high quality education as measured by four and five stars in a supportive environment that fosters the academic mastery and personal development necessary for every girl to become a powerful advocate for herself and a leader of her community. GALS Las Vegas envisions a world where all young women, regardless of their background have the opportunity to access the skills, knowledge, and self-determination to succeed in secondary school, college, and in their communities and the world.

GALS Las Vegas opened this past August with 96 students at the Boys and Girls Club located at 920 Cottage Grove Avenue Las Vegas, NV 89119. The school has secured a long-term lease for a facility at 4220 S.

Maryland Parkway, Las Vegas, NV 89119, and planned to move the school over the summer. Relocation to this facility was approved by the Authority at its April 23, 2021 board meeting.

Since that time, the leadership and Board of the school has been closely monitoring facility progress to ensure a smooth transition for students, families and staff. In recent weeks, the school has been preparing a contingency plan in case of any construction or permitting delays that would impact the availability of the permanent facility. According to the amendment submission, GALS is seeking to maintain an August 9 start date to align with Clark County School District (CCSD). SPCSA staff was notified by GALS leadership on July 21<sup>st</sup> that it did not appear permitting would occur on or before August 3<sup>rd</sup>, less than a week prior to the start of school. This timeline raised concerns that the permanent facility would not be available for an August 9<sup>th</sup> start date.

GALS has been in close communication with its current landlord, the Boys and Girls Club, about the possibility of extending its agreement to start the school year at this site. Recently, GALS secured a Facility Use Agreement with the Boys and Girls Club to remain at that site given the permitting delays at the permanent location. GALS has also received confirmation from the State Fire Marshall that the current Certificate of Compliance does not expire at the Boys and Girls Club according to the amendment submission. Finally, the amendment notes that GALS staff has coordinated with the Southern Nevada Health Department to extend the current health permit.

The submitted amendment does not propose any changes to the grade configurations or enrollment cap for the school.

### **Legal Authority and Requirements Related to Amendment Requests**

Existing charter schools that are sponsored by the SPCSA may submit a charter school contract amendment application to the SPCSA – which is reviewed by SPCSA staff and presented for SPCSA Board action – in order to, among other things, increase enrollment, add grade levels above and beyond what the charter school is approved to serve, or add a new campus. Only those existing charter schools that are meeting expectations in regard to academics (under both the Department of Education’s Nevada School Performance Framework -- the “Star Ratings” -- and the SPCSA’s Academic Performance Framework), are compliant in regard to the SPCSA’s Organizational Framework, and are fiscally sound may be approved for expansion. Furthermore, the academic, organizational, and financial performance of other charter schools that contract with the same Charter Management Organization or Educational Management organization is taken into account when reviewing an expansion application.<sup>1</sup>

GALS Las Vegas just completed its first year of operations, and as such, no final organizational or financial data is available. To the best of staff’s knowledge and observations, the school is compliant with applicable contract, state and federal requirements. SPCSA staff also finds the school to be financially viable based upon available information.

### **Analysis, Summary and Recommendation**

SPCSA staff recommends that the Authority approve the request for GALS Las Vegas. The school has worked to identify a viable contingency plan over the last several weeks, and current information indicates that permitting will not occur on an acceptable timeline. It should be noted that the Boys and Girls Club is approximately 0.5 miles from the permanent facility on Maryland Parkway. SPCSA staff believes that the close proximity of these two locations will reduce any issues in the eventual transition to the permanent facility shortly after the school year begins. Furthermore, information provided by the school indicates that the permanent facility will be ready in the coming weeks.

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<sup>1</sup> There are limited exceptions to these eligibility requirements for those charter schools that have been approved by the State Board of Education and the SPCSA Board to be rated under Nevada’s Alternative Performance Framework.

SPCSA staff also believes this is the best option for the school, students and families given the desire to start school on August 9<sup>th</sup>.

For these reasons, SPCSA staff recommends that the Authority approve GALS to temporarily locate at the Boys and Girls Club to start the 2021 – 22 school year. Furthermore, staff recommends that the Authority require the school to complete the SPCSA Pre-Opening Process, which includes providing sufficient evidence of all required permitting, prior to occupying the permanent facility at 4220 S. Maryland Parkway.

**Proposed Motion:**

**Grant GALS Las Vegas a Good Cause Exemption and approve the request of the school to temporarily locate at the Boys and Girls Club (920 Cottage Grove Avenue) for the start of the school year with the condition that GALS complete the SPCSA Pre-Opening process prior to relocating to its permanent facility at 4220 S. Maryland Parkway.**

If approved, the enrollment cap for GALS Las Vegas will be as follows for the remainder of the charter term:

|                       | 2021 – 22 | 2022 – 23 | 2023 – 24 | 2024 – 25 | 2025 – 26 |
|-----------------------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|
| <b>Enrollment Cap</b> | 160       | 325       | 405       | 405       | 405       |
| <b>Grades</b>         | 6 – 8     | 6 – 8     | 6 – 8     | 6 – 8     | 6 – 8     |

School Demographics and Enrollment since 2020

| Year  | Total Enrollment | A    | B     | C    | H     | I    | M    | P    | IEP   | ELL   | FRL    |
|-------|------------------|------|-------|------|-------|------|------|------|-------|-------|--------|
| 20-21 | 96               | 4.1% | 18.7% | 6.2% | 65.6% | 0.0% | 3.1% | 2.0% | 11.4% | 17.7% | 100.0% |