



NEVADA STATE PUBLIC CHARTER SCHOOL AUTHORITY

August 27, 2021

The State Public Charter School Authority Board Meeting was conducted virtually and at the following physical location:

Nevada Department of Education
2080 East Flamingo Road
Board Room
Las Vegas, Nevada

MINUTES OF THE MEETING

BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT IN-PERSON:

Member Erica Mosca
Member Lee Farris
Member Tamika Shauntee Rosales
Member Mallory Cyr
Vice Chair Sheila Moulton
Chair Melissa Mackedon

BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT VIRTUALLY:

Member Tonia Holmes-Sutton

BOARD MEMBERS ABSENT:

Member Javier Trujillo
Member Sami Randolph

AUDIENCE IN ATTENDANCE:

Dusty Casey

AUTHORITY STAFF IN-PERSON:

Rebecca Feiden, Executive Director
Jennifer King, Administrative Assistant IV

AUTHORITY STAFF PRESENT VIRTUALLY:

Ryan Herrick, General Counsel
Danny Peltier, Management Analyst I
Michael Dang, Management Analyst IV
Karen Gordon, Education Programs Professional
Selcuk Ozdemir, Education Programs Supervisor

Agenda Item 1 – Call to Order and Roll Call, and Pledge of Allegiance [00:00:40]

The State Public Charter School Authority (SPCSA), Board Chair, Melissa Mackedon called the meeting to order at 9:02am, with attendance reflected above and facilitated the pledge of allegiance.

Agenda Item 2 – Public Comment #1 [00:01:49]

There was no written public comment submitted, on the line, or in the board room.

Agenda Item 3 – Approval of July 30, 2021 Board Meeting Action Minutes. [00:02:13]

MOTION: Vice Chair Moulton made the motion to approve the July 30, 2021 board meeting action minutes. Member Shauntee Rosales seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

Agenda Item 4 – SPCSA Executive Director’s Report. [00:02:49]

a. SPCSA staff and Authority board member update

Rebecca Feiden, Executive Director, said as the Authority is aware, Member Kirner’s term ended on July 30th and the Governor’s office announced his replacement and they are excited to welcome Javier Trujillo to the board. He had a prior engagement today and could not be here. Additionally, staff is in the process of hiring on for five additional positions that were authorized during the last legislative session. They expect to fill those positions in October. Staff is also in the process of filling a vacancy for the Education Programs Professional position.

b. Initiatives related to Serving All Students Equitably [00:04:08]

Executive Director Feiden shared a couple updates regarding their diversity, equity, and inclusion training. First, SPCSA staff recently participated in a diversity, equity, and inclusion training and the same facilitator that led the training for staff led two training sessions that were available to their schools. They had 25 school staff participants that were in the trainings, and they are offering another training opportunity in January. In addition, staff is looking to have the focus on schools item to be continued in October and intend to bring at least one school to share their work related to equity.

c. Update on the Summer Cycle for New Charter School Applications [00:04:58]

Executive Director Feiden said staff and external reviewers are in the process of reviewing the nine new charter school applications that they received. All nine applications are posted to the SPCSA’s website and staff has scheduled the capacity interviews for each of the applicants in late September and early October. Staff has also submitted requests to the local school districts for input in accordance with statute and posted a public comment form for each of the applications on their website. Staff anticipates bringing recommendations for all the applications to the November 5th board meeting.

d. Nevada Legislative Session Interim Period Expected Reporting and Presentations [00:05:53]

Executive Director Feiden said during the interim, the SPCSA engages with legislative committees which typically kick off in January. This year they expect to participate in most meetings of the Interim Education Committee (IFC). Staff typically engages with the IFC regarding changes to the agency’s budget and in most cases, these are adjustments to their federal grants that happen once funding is finalized, and student counts are finalized. In addition, they received a Letter of Intent from the Money Committees requiring the Authority to provide semi-annual reports to the IFC regarding site evaluations. As the Authority likely remembers, two of their positions are primarily for conducting site evaluations so the IFC will be monitoring the work that they do with those staff members. They are excited to share the work they are doing related to site evaluations which will be discussed later today.

e. Proposed Regulatory Changes (Nevada Administrative Code 388A.260) [00:07:12]

Executive Director Feiden said as discussed at the last meeting, they are contemplating proposed changes to Nevada Administrative Code 388A.260, with regard to the SPCSA’s application process and timeline. They have scheduled the regulatory workshop for Monday September 13th, at 11 am. This is not a board meeting, staff will run the regulatory workshop but board members and the public are welcome to join in-person or virtually. They

look forward to hearing any feedback. Their aim is to hold the regulatory hearing at the November 5th board meeting. She noted any regulations approved by the Authority are subjected to approval by the legislative commission.

f. COVID-19 Update [00:08:45]

Executive Director Feiden said as the Authority knows, most schools have had their first day of school. The SPCSA is continuing to engage with schools through their COVID-19 liaisons. Schools continue to report cases and the SPCSA collects aggregate data. Staff continues to watch closely and remain in close communication with the local health districts and the state's Department of Health and Human Services. Staff is also focused on expanding access to COVID-19 testing at school sites. Schools from last year have continued with the COVID-19 BinaxNow rapid testing and staff is in the process of onboarding another 10 or so schools to join that initiative as well. Additionally, staff is in the process of setting up, with the support of the Department of Health and Human Services, a mobile testing option that schools can take advantage of.

Agenda Item 5 – Charter School Contract Amendment Applications [00:21:11]

a. Oasis Academy – facility purchase and acquisition

Chair Mackedon recused herself from this agenda item.

Mike Dang, Management Analyst IV, provided the summary of the request and staff's recommendation related to the charter school contract amendment application submitted by Oasis Academy. Oasis Academy is requesting that the SPCSA grant a good cause exemption request and approve the request to amend their charter contract to enable the school to pursue acquiring the facility it is currently leasing space in. After review of the request and accompanying documentation, staff recommends approval of both requests.

Dusty Casey, Oasis Academy, was present on behalf of the school.

***MOTION:** Member Farris made the motion to approve the good cause exemption request of Oasis Academy and the request for approval to acquire the facility it is leasing, subject to the condition that the school submit monthly progress updates to SPCSA staff of its status to acquire the facility through closing and to amend the relevant Easements with Covenants and Restrictions Affecting Land (ECR) or the termination of this acquisition option. Member Shauntee Rosales seconded. The motion carried.*

b. Nevada Prep – contingent temporary facility for the beginning of 2021-2022 [00:18:08]

Executive Director Feiden said as the Authority knows, Nevada Prep was approved to occupy a new permanent facility on Betty Lane in North Las Vegas beginning this school year. That facility had some delays and as a result the school did delay their start of school and are scheduled to start September 7th. In the interim, they were thoughtful about supporting families and offered programming at the Discovery Children's Museum for families that were counting on having their students back at school in August. The facility was scheduled to get the Certificate of Occupancy (COO) this week and staff was nervous about the timeline so they developed a contingency plan and the intent today was that if there was a need the Authority would approve a potential temporary contingency location for the first few days or week of school. The COO was received yesterday and SPCSA staff visited the location and feel confident it will be ready for the September 7th start date.

Agenda Item 6 – Site Evaluation Process [00:27:50]

Selcuk Ozdemir, Education Programs Supervisor, began by providing a brief background and the purposes of the site evaluations. Karen Gordon, Education Programs Professional, spoke to the five changes they are proposing today. The changes are based on feedback from schools and staff's thoughts about continuously improving the process.

Change 1 – Randomization of staff focus group participants.

Change 2 – Reduce redundancies of items requested and better align review of documents

Change 3 – Improve the level of high-quality data collection and reporting

Change 4 – Increase the number of classroom observations conducted at each school

Change 5 – Increasing their differentiation process through three ways related to schools with a strong recommendation or deficiency on a recent site evaluation report, schools identified as having a rating of two stars or below and those with a Notice of Concern or Breach, and schools operating at a four and five-star level, according to the NSPF during their third year of charter operation in good standing.

Ms. Gordon paused and asked for questions before moving to the site evaluation schedule. There was further discussion between staff and the Authority regarding the changes to the site evaluations as presented. Ms. Mosca asked if staff includes looking at diversity of school staff or if its representative of the student community when it comes to site evaluations? Ms. Gordon said yes, prior to going to the school they get all of their frameworks and on the site evaluation report is information about the diversity of the school, in particular they look at the three special populations in accordance with their framework, and often times it becomes a recommendation at the end of the report to improve the diversity of the school.

Member Cyr asked about schools that are on the slow growth model that haven't received their star ratings and where they would be at in the differentiation process (change 5), will they be reviewed every year until they have that star ratings? Ms. Gordon said at this point they haven't decided to do that, but it is a good idea. Member Cyr reiterated that in change 5 part 2, she thinks schools that haven't received a star rating should be reviewed annually. Executive Director Feiden said they can certainly take a look as to whether it would be appropriate to fit in a half day site evaluation for the schools where they didn't see a concern, but they still haven't received a rating yet. Chair Mackedon commented that they may not have to have a full site evaluation but getting the interim data and doing a quick review may be helpful.

Member Cyr commented about change 5, part 3, she understands the abbreviated event, but she thinks that their most important stakeholders are students, and so she wants to know if a student focus group could still be completed in that year, because hearing from the most important part of that school in regard to who you are serving, seems important to document. Executive Director Feiden said they can take a look at that. She added that the provision that allows for an abbreviated site evaluation in the third year is actually a statutory provision and though the site evaluations are a primary major oversight activity, the SPCSA also conducts grant monitoring, and this will include site visits at least once every three years for a low-risk school and regularly for higher risk. Staff also continues to collect interim data from their schools and that has a particular focus on notice of breach schools, and perhaps they can add to that list schools that haven't received a rating.

Ms. Gordon referred back to the site evaluation schedule. Executive Director Feiden said board members are welcome to attend any of the evaluations and to contact staff if interested.

MOTION: *Vice Chair Moulton made the motion to approve the site evaluation changes proposed by staff with the acknowledgement that there may be some additions based on the discussion today. Member Cyr seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.*

Agenda Item 7 – Governance Standards for Sponsored Charter Schools. SPCSA staff will provide the Authority with information related to the development of governance standards for sponsored charter schools pursuant to Assembly Bill 419 (2021). [01:01:28]

Executive Director Feiden said as the Authority is aware Assembly Bill 419 (2021) requires the SPCSA to develop governance standards for the schools they sponsor. Staff conducted research in July looking at both local and national examples of governance standards and studies on school board effectiveness. In late July and early August, they held three focus groups for board members of sponsored schools, and about thirteen of their thirty-eight charter holders had at least one member participate in a focus group. They've taken all the information to develop draft governance standards that are before the Authority today. The draft includes six standards, each

with a series of points to provide detail on what that standard may look like in action. The intent today is to hear feedback from the board and to bring back the final version at the October 1st meeting. They've shared the draft with their school board chairs and all the participants from their focus group meetings. She summarized the standards.

Member Mosca said she didn't see anything about the SPCSA's strategic plan and to possibly include that boards understand the overall strategic plan we are all trying to reach. Secondly, something around standard operating procedures. The third thing, in the Operate in Service of your School Community section, it's important to her that staff members look like the students they are serving and somehow including that. Executive Director Feiden said they can look to add that. Member Cyr added that it may be helpful to add developing an onboarding process and procedure in the Operate in Service of your School Community section.

Member Moulton said she recalled Opportunity 180 has offered to do some training and she thought about what if they incorporated this in their frameworks for student achievement, operations and finance. Executive Director Feiden confirmed that Opportunity 180 has offered to do training and they're hopeful it will accommodate their standards and that they can review the materials to make sure they are in alignment. With regard to the accountability pieces, they have already incorporated into their organizational framework, the 3-year training requirement and into their EpiCenter requirements they are adding an item that they have to provide their board roster, the last time they had training, and who conducted the training.

Agenda Item 8 – Long-Range Calendar. [01:19:41]

Executive Director Feiden said staff anticipates bringing the board an edited and close to final version to the governance standards to the October meeting and they plan to provide an update regarding their emergency grants. They are aiming to have a focus on schools item and will spend a substantial amount of time talking about academic performance at their October meeting. In a typical year, the October meeting is where they view the star ratings and have schools come in and talk about potential concerns and issue notices. This year will be much like last year in not having star ratings and they are going to be looking at data, but they won't have official star ratings. They are also requesting that their schools under a Notice of Concern or Breach report to the board. Finally, they do expect to bring those schools slated to open in the Fall of 2022 forward to provide an update on their progress. As they look ahead, staff plans to bring recommendations to new charter applications in November and hope to have their annual count day data. As for December, they will look at the graduation rates and expect the board to consider renewals and contract amendments.

Chair Mackedon said it would be interesting and important to share the October 1 demographic data with the board and to shed some light to the board on the special education funding and how that is playing out for our schools.

Agenda Item 13 – Public Comment #2 [01:25:40]

There was no written public comment submitted, on the line, or in the board room.

Agenda Item 14 – Adjournment [01:26:02]

The meeting was adjourned at 10:27am.