

Charter School Application Report

Strong Start Academy Elementary School

Recommendation for the Summer 2021 Charter Application Cycle

General Information

Proposed Name	Strong Start Academy Elementary School
Proposed EMO/CMO	None
Proposed Mission	Strong Start Academy Elementary School is a culturally diverse learning community that prepares children to excel academically and have a positive impact on an increasingly evolving and global society.
Proposed Grade Configuration	Opening Year: Kindergarten – 2 nd Grade Full Scale: Kindergarten – 5 th Grade
Proposed Opening	August 2022
Proposed Location	Temporary location for first year: Three facilities <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 1617 Alta Drive - 700 Twin Lakes Drive - Bonanza & Wardell (exact address TBD)
Zip Codes to be Served	89101, 89102, 89104, 89106, 89107, 89108, and 89110

Process/Key Dates for Strong Start Academy Elementary School

- March 13, 2021 – Notice of Intent is received
- April 12, 2021 – New Charter Application Training
- July 15, 2021 – Application is received
- September 16, 2021 – Clarifying Questions sent to applicant; responses received within 3 business days
- October 5, 2021 - Capacity Interview is conducted¹
- November 5, 2021 – Recommendation is presented

¹ The Strong Start Academy Elementary School capacity interview was conducted virtually as a result of the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic and space limitations within the SPCSA’s offices.

Planned Enrollment Chart

	2022-23	2023-24	2024-25	2025-26	2026-27	2027-28
K	60	60	60	60	60	60
1	60	60	60	60	60	60
2	60	60	60	60	60	60
3		60	60	60	60	60
4			60	60	60	60
5				60	60	60
6						
7						
8						
9						
10						
11						
12						
Total	180	240	300	360	360	360

Executive Summary, Process and Recommendation

Upon receipt of a charter application, SPCSA staff reviews the submission for completion and ADA compliance. Should an application be deemed complete, it is assigned to a formal review team and moves to the independent review phase. Members of the review team read and rate each application independently and compile a list of clarifying questions in advance of the capacity interview in an effort to gather additional detail and information about the application prior to the interview. After the capacity interview is conducted, review team members rerate each section of the application against the rubric before finalizing a recommendation.

The review committee, which included one member of the SPCSA staff and two external reviewers, identified shortcomings in three components of the submitted application: *Academic Plan*, *Operations Plan*, *Financial Plan*. All three sections were rated as ‘Approaches the Standard’. The *Meeting the Need* section was rated as ‘Meets the Standard’.

The review committee and SPCSA staff find that the Strong Start Academy application meets the demographic component and the academic component (geographies with one- and two- star schools) of the SPCSA’s Academic and Demographic Needs Assessment. Additional data about these communities demonstrated the need for a high-quality school in the proposed communities. The support of the application from the City of Las Vegas is sizeable and noteworthy as the municipality would provide significant financial support to the school, facility solutions, in addition to other resources. As such, the application was found to ‘Meet the Standard’ in this section. Input on this application was requested from the Clark County School District and is expected to be provided following the school district’s board meeting on October 28, 2021 and will be posted alongside this recommendation.

The *Academic Plan* was rated as ‘Approaches the Standard’ by the review committee and SPCSA staff. While a number of powerful instructional strategies, curricula and programs are identified in the application, the plan for implementation was not sufficiently clear or cohesive. Additional details are

needed to understand how the school will leverage performance goals to drive academic success, as well as implement critical professional development given the uniqueness of the proposed model.

The proposed school plans to rely on outside vendors, The New Teacher Project (TNTP) and a human resource firm, for key functions at the school such as teacher recruitment, onboarding, coaching and ongoing support. Specific details of these relationships are underdeveloped, however, and raise capacity questions. The incubation year plan also may not be feasible as presented given the current capacity of the applicant team. For these reasons and others, the *Operations Plan* was rated as 'Approaches the Standard'.

As previously noted, the support from the City of Las Vegas is significant, and the proposal includes a strong facility plan. Despite these strengths, given the aforementioned concerns regarding proposed vendors relationships that are underdeveloped, it is unclear that all elements of the proposed academic program can be executed. More information is needed to confirm programs and services mentioned in the narrative can be executed. As such, the *Financial Plan* was rated as 'Approaches the Standard'.

For these major reasons, in addition to those outlined throughout this document, staff's recommendation is to deny the charter school application for the Strong Start Academy Elementary School.

Notwithstanding the SPCSA staff's recommendation to deny the Strong Start Academy charter application, NRS 388A.255(2) provides applicants with an opportunity to resubmit their charter application. Unsuccessful applicants may resubmit their charter application to the SPCSA within 30 days after receiving written notice from the SPCSA that their charter application was denied and correct any deficiencies noted in the SPCSA's notification. In this regard, please note that SPCSA staff typically sends out the written notification required by NRS 388A.255(2) and containing the deficiencies in the charter application within 7 to 10 days after the SPCSA board votes to deny a charter application.

Given the lengthy and rigorous application process utilized by the SPCSA in regard to charter applications, as well as the limited timeframe specified in NRS 388A.255(2) for an unsuccessful applicant to resubmit their charter application, the SPCSA encourages only those unsuccessful applicants that the SPCSA has found limited or specific areas where the application does not meet standards to resubmit their charter application. Unsuccessful applicants that the SPCSA has found numerous or significant issues within the application that do not meet standard are encouraged to submit a new charter application during the SPCSA's next application window.

Proposed motion: Deny the Strong Start Academy Elementary School application as submitted during the 2021 Summer Application Cycle based on a finding that the applicant has failed to satisfy the requirements contained in NRS 388A.249(3) and designate Director Feiden and Director Modrcin to meet and confer with the applicant.

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	Meets the Standard
Mission and Vision	Meets the Standard
Targeted Plan	Meets the Standard
Parent and Community Involvement	Approaches the Standard
Academic Plan²	Approaches the Standard
Transformational Change	Approaches the Standard
Curriculum & Instructional Design	Approaches the Standard
Promotion & High School Graduation Requirements	Meets the Standard
Driving for Results	Approaches the Standard
At-Risk Students and Special Populations	Approaches the Standard
School Structure: Culture	Approaches the Standard
School Structure: Student Discipline	Meets the Standard
School Structure: Calendar and Schedule	Meets the Standard
Operations Plan	Approaches the Standard
Board Governance	Meets the Standard
Leadership Team	Meets the Standard
Staffing Plan	Approaches the Standard
Human Resources	Approaches the Standard
Student Recruitment and Enrollment	Approaches the Standard
Incubation Year Development	Approaches the Standard
Services	Approaches the Standard
Facilities	Meets the Standard
Ongoing Operations	Meets the Standard
Financial Plan	Approaches the Standard

² The Strong Start Academy Elementary School proposal did not contemplate Distance Education, Pre-Kindergarten or Dual Credit Partnerships. Therefore, the corresponding sections of the rubric were not scored.

Meeting the Need Section

The Committee to Form seeks to provide a high-quality school option to families primarily located in zip codes that are identified in the SPCSA Academic and Demographic Needs Assessment. The zip codes outlined in the application include a large number of elementary schools that are currently rated as one- and two- star schools according to the most recent Nevada School Performance Framework (NSPF) ratings. Supplemental data was provided in the application that underscores the need for a high-quality school in these communities. The review committee concluded that the application meets two of the needs identified in the SPCSA's Academic and Demographic Needs Assessment: Demographics and Academic Need – Geographies with One- and Two- star schools. Additionally, the proposal outlines a unique and powerful partnership with the City of Las Vegas, and builds on the work of ReInvent Las Vegas.³

While this section was rated as 'Meets the Standard', some minor concerns were identified. Specifically, it was not clear that prospective parents have been actively involved in formulating the proposal. The application highlights meetings and conversations that have occurred as the application was being developed, but these appear to be informational and primarily with high-visibility individuals and groups. Additionally, community partnerships beyond the City of Las Vegas appear underdeveloped and lack specificity.

Areas of Strength

- The application clearly outlines core values and components of the model that can have a positive impact on students' long-term quality of life, and may also allow the school to achieve stated outcomes.
- The application makes a compelling case that the communities in and around City of Las Vegas Wards one, three and five have a tremendous need for more high-quality schools, citing evidence from the SPCSA Needs Assessment and poverty statistics. Additionally, research is included in the application that supports the plan to provide more high-quality seats in underserved areas.
- The support of the City of Las Vegas is a clear and significant strength of the application, both in terms of providing resources and committing support to the proposed school as a proposed partner. The structure proposed in the bylaws establishes, and will maintain, a strong connection between the proposed school and local government.
- The Committee to Form stated that they plan to continue to reach out to parents and has a plan for doing so by leveraging established relationships. Additionally, the Committee to Form plans to recruit a parent to join the board.
- During the capacity interview, members of the Committee to Form referenced prior work that has been done through ReInvent Las Vegas as an example of community engagement and input that influenced the model. This work included a unique assessment of needs within the community, as well as significant data and analysis. According to the Committee to Form, the proposed academic program was constructed in response to this data

Areas of Concern

- Despite the description, data and information provided regarding the work of ReInvent Las Vegas, it is not clear that prospective parents of this school have had a direct hand in shaping the proposal. More evidence is needed to conclude that parents, neighborhood and/or community members who

³ ReInvent Schools Las Vegas (RSLV) was launched by the city of Las Vegas in collaboration with Clark County School District to improve outcomes for the Las Vegas community. More information can be found on their [website](#).

are representative of the target population have been directly involved in the development of the plans. Most meetings described in the narrative appear to have focused on the delivery of information to share the committee's model rather than on the solicitation of feedback and/or input on the proposal.

- Other than the commitments made by the City of Las Vegas, a majority of proposed community partners appear to have shared more generic letters of support that lack specific deliverables and accountability structures. During the capacity interview, the Committee to Form provided some additional details about emerging partnerships, but these are very much developing and not yet finalized.

Academic Section

The proposed academic plan includes a number of strengths that were agreed upon by the review committee and SPCSA staff. The performance of the proposed program will be overseen by a number of education experts that possess extensive experience in supporting students and teachers. Additionally, the application emphasizes social emotional learning at an early age, which has powerful potential given the proposed grade levels the school intends to serve. The narrative also describes a thorough data process, particularly as it relates to student discipline.

Despite these strengths, several shortcomings were also identified that prevent this section from meeting the standard. More information and clarity are needed with regard to various elements of the academic program, specifically, individual learning plans, instructional methods and chosen curricula. The application does not establish how each of these aspects will work together cohesively, and additional details are needed to understand how school staff will be prepared to implement each beginning in Year one successfully. School performance and culture goals are underdeveloped. Professional development plans may not be sufficient as described given the complexity of the model, and the lack of information on proposed vendors such as TNTP which will support this work.

For these reasons, in addition to those outlined below, this section was rated as 'Approaches the Standard'.

Areas of Strength

- The Committee to Form was able to explain promotion criteria and how students who are at-risk of retention will be supported. In addition, the application outlines the measures that would be examined in cases where retention is being considered.
- Several board members and advisory committee members are professors with relevant areas of curricular/instructional focus (dual language, etc.), or are current or former educators. These individuals have extensive experience in supporting students and teachers, and can provide the school with additional support within the academic program.
- The application includes an emphasis on social emotional learning at an early age to assist students who may have experienced significant and/or cyclical trauma at home. This approach has the potential to have a substantial impact on student mental and physical wellbeing, and ultimately support strong academic outcomes.
- The application proposes that all staff will be involved in monitoring student discipline data in order to ensure that there are not student populations disproportionately impacted by the proposed policies. This has the potential to create buy-in amongst staff. Additionally, reports will be generated and analyzed, and provided to the board on a monthly basis to identify any concerns and prevent any disparity between subgroups.
- The proposed calendar appears to meet the minimum of 180 instructional days, while offering an extended day to students. The application notes that the attendance goal is 95% on a daily basis, with chronic absenteeism of less than 3%. The application goes on indicate staff will monitor student attendance and regularly reinforce the importance of consistent attendance to students and families.

Areas of Concern

- The written proposal does not describe the key features of the program with consistency and clarity. For example, the proposal establishes the basic premise of individual learning plans, but does not present a detailed plan for implementation (i.e. which staff are responsible for creating the plans, who monitors the plans, who conducts the data analysis following the MAP assessment to

determine if goals are met, etc.). Individual learning plans can be a powerful tool but implementing the concept in an effective manner requires strong systems and is typically time consuming. More detail is required to make the finding that this strategy, as well as others such as multi-sensory learning and inquiry-based learning, will be implemented in a coherent and cohesive manner likely to lead to student success.

- While the applicant team was able to justify each of the instructional methods and curricula chosen in the proposal (project-based learning, multi-tiered systems of support, social emotional learning, and bilingual curriculum), it is not clear how each of these foundational elements will work cohesively together. In particular, the review team was unable to determine that the Committee to Form has clear specific plans for bilingual instruction/dual language immersion. The applicant was able to speak to how teachers would be supported, but more information is needed to understand how each of these areas will be executed effectively starting day one.
- The narrative included proposed curriculum for math, reading and social studies. In response to clarifying questions, the committee to form provided additional information, including newly selected curriculum for these subject areas. While this signals that the Committee to Form is working to finalize the curriculum, and information indicates that these new curricula are aligned Nevada Academic Content Standards, additional information is needed to clarify which curricula will be used and ensure that the academic program aligns with state standards.
- Given the key design features (project-based learning, bilingual instruction, and personal learning plans in particular), it is unclear whether the planned professional development activities described will be sufficient to support teachers as they implement the program. The proposal does not make a direct connection between professional and these core program features, and this concern is compounded by the lack of clarity surrounding a proposed vendor that will assist in professional development. Moreover, the narrative does not discuss an alternative plan if an agreement for these assumed services do not materialize.
- Some but not all of the proposed performance goals are SMART, and it is not clear that all proposed goals are rigorous and can lead the school to a four or five-star school once the school is rated under the NSPF and the SPCSA academic performance framework. For example, some of the ELA and math proficiency goals may not lead to a four- or five- star rating given the established baselines from local district averages. There are also not any subgroup goals provided in the application, which raises questions given the proposed communities and student populations that the school aims to serve. More information is needed to ensure that the Committee to Form has a robust plan prior to opening, including at the Board level, for monitoring performance to ensure students are on track to achieve proficiency standards and skills mastery. Plans and data monitoring strategies are underdeveloped.
- Plans to serve students with disabilities rely heavily on collaborative co-teaching, supplemental services, as well as push-in/pullout support; however, only one special education teacher is planned to be on staff in year one to support an estimated 19-20 students, and two will be on staff year two. This may not be sufficient to support students effectively across three school sites, especially if the special education teacher(s) will also be providing support to students (including pull-out and one-on-one instruction) receiving response to intervention supports and those with 504 Plans. It is not clear that the proposed plan to support and monitor students with IEPs is adequate.
- The description of the services and supports provided to English language learners does not mention dual language immersion. While the narrative does mention bilingual education, a description of these services and how they will be implemented in classrooms is fundamental to understanding how English language learners will be supported. Specific services to be provided to students are not adequately described.

- The application does not provide sufficient data from potential model schools of success for the distinguishing features of the proposed model of Strong Start Academy, and it was confirmed during the capacity interview that the application relied on literature reviews of these model schools in building the proposed academic program. More information and data are needed to understand these model schools, their performance and the demographics they serve as it is not clear that they serve similar populations and communities based on the submitted application.
- The application does not include well-defined culture goals or a description of how progress will be monitored. While the application notes that a stakeholder survey will be distributed to the target audience to gather feedback, more information is needed to understand what this will look like, how it will be used for accountability purposes, and any standards within this survey (or other mechanisms) the Committee to Form plans to achieve to maintain a positive school culture.
- While the narrative indicates that the Executive Director will oversee and report out behavior and discipline trends and there appear to be some benchmarks the application does not include clear, measurable goals for student behavior. Additionally, no information is provided regarding how the benchmarks were established.

Operations Section

A number of strengths were identified during the initial review that were underscored during the capacity interview, including the qualifications and wealth of educational experience within the proposed governing board. These strengths manifested themselves during the capacity interview scenario-based question as the applicant team was able to successfully identify solutions to real-world obstacles that schools encounter during the incubation year. This effort was spearheaded by the proposed Executive Director, who possesses administrative experience in the local community. The application also has a suitable facility plan through its partnership with the City of Las Vegas. Though the capacity interview emphasized that multiple options are being pursued, the review team concluded that a facility can be easily under lease with the City of Las Vegas if the application were authorized.

Noteworthy concerns in this component of the application centered on prospective contractual relationships with The New Teacher Project (TNTP) and an unnamed human resources firm. The narrative outlines a number of key responsibilities for TNTP (teacher recruitment, selection and staffing, teacher onboarding and induction, teacher coaching and support as well as leader coaching and support) and the human resources firm (background checks, employee onboarding), but additional detail is needed to understand the specifics of services to be provided, the cost to the school, and how services will be evaluated for both entities. Elements of the academic program rely on hard-to-staff positions such as TESOL and bilingual endorsed teachers, and it is not clear that the Committee to Form has a robust plan in place to ensure these positions are filled with qualified individuals. Finally, additional clarity around the incubation year is needed to ensure that sufficient capacity exists to execute on all milestones and goals prior to opening.

For these reasons, in addition to those further detailed below, this section was rated as 'Approaches the Standard'.

Areas of Strength

- The proposed governing board possesses the necessary qualifications and experience that demonstrate sufficient capacity and expertise to successfully oversee the proposed school. Additionally, the written application articulates a clear and appropriate delineation of authority and working relationship between the governing body and school staff that is reasonable. The board will ensure that the goals for the school are established and reached while the Executive Director will oversee daily operations and how each goal is met. This understanding of responsibilities is likely to ensure effective governance and meaningful oversight.
- During the scenario-based question, the Committee to Form and proposed Executive Director collectively addressed the possibility that the school encounters staffing and hiring problems throughout the spring of the incubation year. Individuals participated, offered input, and followed the roles and responsibilities as outlined in the narrative. This exercise demonstrated that the proposed board and Executive Director can maintain a working relationship should the school encounter obstacles.
- The proposed Executive Director of the school has a proven track record of success, high marks of satisfaction from stakeholders, and quite a bit of experience in the local community as a former school administrator. Information presented in the application demonstrates a range of experience, including establishing a high-performing culture with students, staff and families.
- While the final facility for Year one has yet to be solidified, the capacity interview provided important clarity in that the proposed school would be located in a site owned by the City of Las Vegas beginning in year one, and that there is an effort to consolidate the proposed school into one site for year one. As a municipal-owned building, safety and security plans are already in place to

ensure a safe and secure environment for people and property.

Areas of Concern

- The possible relationship between the proposed school board and TNTP is underdeveloped, lacks specifics, and it is not clear how TNTP would be held accountable for the many responsibilities outlined in the narrative, including recruitment, selection and staffing, teacher onboarding and induction, teacher coaching and support as well as leader coaching and support. During the capacity interview, this was reaffirmed as the Committee to Form and Executive Director were unable to articulate a clear, detailed vision for the work to be completed by TNTP. A draft scope of work was provided, but is rather general, and no information was provided about how TNTP will be evaluated. More information and evidence is needed to understand the proposed relationship between the Committee to Form and TNTP. Moreover, more details are needed to confirm that the costs of services are realistic and align with the proposed budget and academic program.
- During the capacity interview, the applicant team confirmed that there would be a second vendor that would support various human resource functions, including onboarding employees, etc. Without a clear scope of work for TNTP or this firm, it is challenging to understand their clear roles, responsibilities, how they might work together, or be held accountable by the proposed board. Significantly more information is needed to understand this relationship, and how this vendor would work with TNTP, if at all.
- The proposed academic program relies heavily on both TESOL and Bilingual endorsed teachers to effectively support students, but during the capacity interview, both of these teacher groups were said to be difficult to hire. While the applicant was able to speak to some general strategies to be used in the hiring process for these individuals, it still appears to present a real challenge given the proposed model and projected student demographic. More specific evidence and information for how these teachers will be hired is needed to ensure that the staffing plan aligns to the proposed programming.
- It is not clear that the proposal includes adequate staffing should the school open across three sites in year one of operations. Key roles such as special education teachers, behavioral specialist, learning strategist and the office manager may be supporting students and staff in multiple buildings. This is concerning and may present significant challenges to staff. Additionally, it may be challenging for the Executive Director to oversee the consistent implementation of such a unique model across three buildings.
- The application does not present a clear, fully detailed process for recruiting and hiring teachers. While some steps in the hiring process such as background checks are mentioned, more information is needed to understand how the school will recruit and hire staff that are reflective of the student body, particularly because of the stated involvement by both TNTP and a separate Human Resources firm.
- It was confirmed during the capacity interview that current student demand to date for the proposed model was approximately 66 students, or about one third of the targeted enrollment for year one. Strategies were discussed about how to fill the seats, including the opportunity to partner with pre-kindergarten programs, but more evidence is needed as a result of outreach to confirm that the school is viable and likely to be filled in year one. The application does not present clear evidence that the school has sufficient demand at this time, particularly from the targeted zip codes mentioned throughout the application.
- Many of the critical milestones proposed during the fall of 2021 appear to fall to the Executive Director, but it does not appear that this individual will be full-time until January or February 2022. This may inhibit the school from reaching all year zero milestones and goals as many tasks listed in

this document occur prior to this time. While key objectives are provided, more information is needed to understand how a limited staff will ensure that all tasks are completed in a timely manner, including comprehensive leadership development plans during this time. It is not clear that the proposed staffing for this time will enable the school to successfully start the 2022 – 23 school year.

Financial Section

As previously noted, the support from the City of Las Vegas is substantial. The proposed school would benefit from a one-million-dollar gift that is available through the remainder of FY22 to assist the school through the incubation year. Additionally, the City of Las Vegas has provided facilities available to the school and commits to providing auxiliary and maintenance services so that the governing board and school staff can focus on educational aspects of the proposed school.

Relationships between proposed vendors (TNTP and human resource firm) are underdeveloped, and without additional information, it is unclear that all elements of the proposed academic program can be executed. More clarity on other programs mentioned in the narrative is needed to confirm that the Committee to Form can implement key elements of the proposal. For these reasons, this section was rated as 'Approaches the Standard'.

Areas of Strength

- The City of Las Vegas has authorized one million dollars for FY22 to be spent down by the Committee to Form in support of the school prior to opening. Confirmation of these dollars was included in the application, and this represents a sizeable donation that can help offset key planned expenditures while also offering the school significant latitude should multiple unexpected expenses arise.
- The City of Las Vegas is planning to lease any facilities to be used by the proposed school during Year one, as well as any long-term facilities. Assurances during the capacity interview were provided that these will be very reasonable, providing some budgetary relief.

Areas of Concern

- The possible relationship between the proposed school board and TNTP is underdeveloped, and during the capacity interview, this was reaffirmed as the Committee to Form and Executive Director were unable to articulate a clear, detailed vision for the work to be completed by TNTP. A draft scope of work was provided, but is rather general. More information and evidence is needed to understand the proposed relationship between the Committee to Form and TNTP, and additional details are needed to confirm that the costs of services are realistic and align with the proposed budget and academic program.
- During the capacity interview process, some additional detail was provided about the proposed human resources firm that would be contracted to support the school. While these anticipated costs are incorporated into the budget, insufficient information is provided to justify that their proposed responsibilities are adequately captured in the corresponding line items in the budget. More detail regarding these services and their costs is needed to determine that those line items will not preclude the Committee to Form from implementing their plan.
- Some additional information is needed to determine if key elements of the proposed academic program and parent engagement are accounted for in the budget, specifically special education services, adult education programming and school events. These were priorities in the narrative, but it is not clear that these have been allocated for in the budget.

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 Strong Start Academy Elementary School was conducted on Tuesday, October 5, 2021 and lasted approximately 120-minutes. All members of the Committee to Form attended the interview with one exception. Additionally, four representatives from the City of Las Vegas, the proposed Executive Director, as well as two members of the Advisory Committee attended the capacity interview. Questions during the capacity interview focused primarily on these areas:

Targeted Plan	Staffing Plan
Parent and Community Involvement	Human Resources
Transformational Change	Student Recruitment and Enrollment
Curriculum & Instructional Design	Incubation Year Development
At-Risk Students and Special Populations	Services
Driving for Results	Facilities
Board Governance	Financial Plan

Prior to the capacity interview, the review committee sent the applicant team a list of clarifying questions to provide an additional opportunity for details and information to be presented. These responses were considered by the review team, and were used to better inform the capacity interview.

Lastly, the capacity interview included a scenario-based question that probed the committee to form’s capacity to execute against incubation year milestones.

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.⁴ The timeline regarding this request for input is below and the response provided by the Clark County School District is attached.

- August 5, 2021 – Memo sent to CCSD soliciting input.
- The SPCSA expects to receive input following the CCSD board meeting scheduled for October 28, 2021. This input will be posted alongside this recommendation.

⁴ 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*.

Meeting the Need

- Parent and Community Involvement

- *Demonstrates clear evidence of the involvement of parents, neighborhood, and/or community members representative of target population in the development of the plan. The application establishes that the local community has helped shape the final proposal.*
- *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.*
- *The Committee to Form provides a specific description of how the proposal will be implemented to ensure fidelity to the model.*
- *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, including the curriculum, 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.*
- *Instructional strategies are proven to be well suited to the student population.*
- *Systems of structures exist for observing teachers, identifying teachers that may need additional support, and providing additional support to those teachers.*
- *Plans for professional development show a direct connection to the instructional methods and curricula that teachers will be required to use.*

- Driving For Results

- *Internal and mission-specific framework goals are SMART: goals and objectives are specific, measurable, ambitious and attainable, relevant and time bound.*
- *There is a clear process for setting, monitoring and/or revising internal leading indicator academic goals.*
- *There is a clear delineation between assessments utilized for internal monitoring by the governing body, staff, and leadership and those which are sufficiently rigorous, valid, and reliable to be presented to the Authority, the state, parents, and the general public.*

- At-Risk Students and Special Populations

- *Provides a detailed plan for appropriate professional development to teachers and staff to ensure they can support and accelerate the learning of at-risk and special population students which is aligned to the budget and overall PD plan.*
- *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 presents a monitoring plan that will enable relevant staff to track the progress of all students with IEPs towards the goals articulated in their respective plans.*
- *Describes the specific services that will be provided for students within and outside the classroom, including curriculum and instruction and exposure to co-teaching.*
- **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**
 - *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

- **Leadership Team**
 - *Provides a comprehensive plan for coaching, support and evaluation of school leadership.*
- **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 the budget narrative assumptions and to budget calculations.*
 - *Sound understanding of staffing needs necessary for the new-school(s) proposed.*
- **Human Resources**
 - *Articulates a recruitment and hiring plan that will result in a school staff reflective of the student body.*
 - *School staffing structure that ensures high-quality teacher support/development, student/family support, effective school operations, and compliance with all applicable policies and procedures.*
- **Student Recruitment and Enrollment**
 - *Includes outreach and recruitment strategies that demonstrates an understanding of the community likely to be served and is likely to allow the school to enroll sufficient numbers of students who are representative of either the surrounding zoned schools or a mission-specific educationally disadvantaged population.*
 - *Campaign leverages grassroots, data-driven outreach and recruitment strategies such as door-to-door visits, open houses and forums, and community conversations 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**
 - *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 articulates 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.*

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 expenditure 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.*