

Charter School Application Report

Young Women's Leadership Academy of Las Vegas

Recommendation for the Summer 2021 Charter Application Cycle

General Information

Proposed Name	Young Women’s Leadership Academy of Las Vegas
Proposed EMO/CMO	EMO: Academica Nevada CMO: Student Leadership Network
Proposed Mission	The Young Women’s Leadership Academy (YWLA) was established to nurture the intellectual curiosity and creativity of young women and to address their developmental needs. We cultivate dynamic, participatory learning, enabling students to experience great success at many levels, especially in the fields of math, science, and technology. Students are encouraged to achieve their personal best in and out of the classroom. YWLA strives to work with families and instill in the students a sense of community, responsibility and ethical principles of behavior – characteristics that will help make them become leaders of their generation.
Proposed Grade Configuration	Opening Year: 6 th and 9 th Grades Full Scale: 6 th – 12 th Grade
Proposed Opening	August 2022
Proposed Location	Temporary location for up to the first two years: 3415 South Mojave Road, Las Vegas, NV 89121
Zip Codes to be Served	89101, 89104, 89119, 89121, 89142, and 89169

Process/Key Dates for Young Women’s Leadership Academy of Las Vegas

- March 15, 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
- September 30, 2021 - Capacity Interview is conducted¹
- November 5, 2021 – Recommendation is presented

¹ The YWLA 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						
1						
2						
3						
4						
5						
6	90	90	90	90	90	90
7		90	90	90	90	90
8			90	90	90	90
9	60	60	60	90	90	90
10		60	60	60	90	90
11			60	60	60	90
12				60	60	60
Total	150	300	450	540	570	600

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 and SPCSA staff find that the Young Women’s Leadership Academy of Nevada (YWLA) application meets the Demographic component and the Academic component (Geographies with 1- and 2-Star Schools) of the SPCSA’s Academic and Demographic Needs Assessment. The application approaches the standard for the *Meeting the Need* section of the rubric due to further needed engagement of both proposed community partners and students residing in the targeted zip codes. The proposal centers around a vision of nurturing the intellectual curiosity and creativity of young women and to address their developmental needs through the YWLA “Whole Girl” approach. This approach is rooted in holistic education, which is formally described as a comprehensive approach to teaching where educators seek to address the emotional, social, ethical, and academic needs of students in an integrated learning format. 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.

Both the review committee and SPCSA staff find that the proposed *Academic Plan* meets the standard as outlined in the charter application rubric. The school’s mission is woven throughout the academic plan section and the academic plan clearly aligns with the overall vision of the school. The

proposed school leader had been identified after the submission of the application and participated in the Capacity Interview. It was clear to the review team that the proposed school leader was fully aware of the school’s focus and was able to speak in detail to both the “whole girl” approach and how it would be intertwined with the local Las Vegas community.

The review committee and SPCSA staff find that the *Operations Plan* meets the standard as outlined in the charter application rubric. The committee to form, brings a range of expertise and demonstrates a clear understanding of the role of the board in governing the school and the role of the school’s leadership in managing day-to-day operations. The Capacity interview also clarified and confirmed the substantial support of the Sands Corporation in helping YWLA in its initial years. The proposed board chair has a range of relevant experiences, which include working with the Andre Agassi Foundation and serving on multiple non-profit boards. This experience went beyond the proposed board chair and was made evident throughout the Capacity Interview, especially during the scenario-based question, where each board member actively participated. As outlined in the proposed motion below, staff believes it will be critical to monitor progress on facilities and student enrollment throughout the incubation year.

The review committee and SPCSA staff find that the *Financial Plan* meets the standard as outlined in the charter application rubric. The budget is realistic, conservative, and aligns with the program in its projections of costs. The support of the Sands Corporation will also allow the school to hit the ground running in the incubation year through hiring and training of the staff.

The *Addendum section* was also found to meet the standard. The combination of operational support from Academica, and training and professional development support from the Student Leadership Network (SLN) showed a clear and manageable plan to ensure the success of the school. The proposed board was well aware of the terms in proposed school management contracts and some board members were also able to visit campuses who had already partnered with the Student Leadership Network.

For these major reasons, in addition to those outlined throughout this document, staff’s recommendation is to conditionally approve the Young Women’s Leadership Academy of Nevada charter application.

Proposed motion: Approve the Young Women’s Leadership Academy of Las Vegas charter application as submitted during the 2021 Summer Application Cycle, with conditions outlined below, based on a finding that the applicant meets the requirements contained in NRS 388A.249(3).

1. By January 1, 2022, and before the school begins accepting student applications, provide an updated school enrollment policy that makes clear that any student, regardless of gender, may apply and enroll at the school.
2. By March 1, 2022, YWLA will submit board-approved procurement policies.
3. By July 1, 2022, YWLA should submit a long-term facility plan to SPCSA staff for review to ensure that the school has sufficient space beyond year one of operations.
4. By July 1, 2022, YWLA Las Vegas enters into a memorandum of understanding with one or more community colleges, state colleges and universities to offer dual credit courses pursuant to NRS 389.310.
5. By July 1, 2022, YWLA Las Vegas provides a signed attestation by both the lessor and YWLA Board Chair confirming that the proposed year one facility and organization will not exercise any control over the educational program of the charter school, pursuant to [NRS 388A.090](#). Additionally, the attestation will confirm the school will comply with any statutes, regulations or guidelines related to any public school operating out of a religious facility.
6. Complete the SPCSA pre-opening process for new charter schools.

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	Meets the Standard
Targeted Plan	Approaches the Standard
Parent and Community Involvement	Approaches the Standard
Academic Plan²	Meets the Standard
Transformational Change	Meets the Standard
Curriculum & Instructional Design	Meets the Standard
Promotion & High School Graduation Requirements	Meets the Standard
Dual Credit Partnerships	Does Not Meet the Standard
Driving for Results	Meets the Standard
At-Risk Students and Special Populations	Meets the Standard
School Structure: Culture	Meets the Standard
School Structure: Student Discipline	Meets the Standard
School Structure: Calendar and Schedule	Meets the Standard
Operations Plan	Meets the Standard
Board Governance	Meets the Standard
Leadership Team	Meets the Standard
Staffing Plan	Meets the Standard
Human Resources	Meets the Standard
Student Recruitment and Enrollment	Approaches the Standard
Incubation Year Development	Meets the Standard
Services	Meets the Standard
Facilities	Approaches the Standard
Ongoing Operations	Meets the Standard
Financial Plan	Meets the Standard
Addendum	Meets the Standard
Readiness for Growth	Approaches the Standard
Scale Strategy	Meets the Standard
School Management Contracts	Meets the Standard

² The YWLA proposal did not contemplate Distance Education or Pre-Kindergarten. Therefore, the corresponding sections of the rubric were not scored.

Meeting the Need Section

The applicant intends to locate in Las Vegas and serve students primarily residing in the following zip codes: 89101, 89104, 89119, 89121, 89142, and 89169. Data from the SPCSA's Academic and Demographic Needs Assessment confirm that these zip codes include numerous 1- and 2-star schools. The applicant's mission is to establish and nurture the intellectual curiosity and creativity of young women and to address their developmental needs. Overall, the applicant has a clear plan which is focused on the whole girl approach aligns with the mission and vision of the proposal.

While the application contained proposed community partnerships, further work is needed in this area. Proposed partnerships in the application, and those submitted after the capacity interview lacked the specificity needed to gauge how they will be relevant to the needs of the target population. The Letters of Commitment lacked clear, measurable, and time-specific deliverables from the partners to meet the needs of the target population. The Committee to Form should continue to pursue relevant partnerships with local community groups that align with the unique model in the proposal and enhance support for students who attend YWLA.

There are additional concerns regarding student demand, particularly from the targeted zip codes, but overall, the review committee and SPCSA staff rated this section as 'Approaches the Standard'.

Areas of Strength

- YWLA's philosophy is informed by a deep belief in the potential of every young woman to achieve at incredibly high levels when nurtured by a program founded in shared values of Equity, Community, and Growth. This manifests itself in a clear and compelling mission statement that is reflected throughout the application.
- The committee to form aims to achieve outcomes that they demonstrate will improve students' long-term quality of life. While YWLA will use a host of different goals and measures to monitor its progress, its mission is driven by three priority goals: 1) student success in English Language Arts/Literacy, Math, and Science, 2) demonstration of at least one year of growth in Reading and Math annually with the ultimate goal of at minimum meeting and/or exceeding proficiency in the core curriculum areas, and 3) reduction of achievement gaps in targeted at-risk student subgroups.
- The applicant team was determined to meet the Geographic component of the Academic Needs section as described in the most recent SPCSA Needs Assessment. The application demonstrates a commitment to opening a 3, 4 or 5-star school in an area otherwise served by a majority of 1- or 2-star schools, that are by definition inadequate or only partially meeting the state's standards as described by the technical guide for the Nevada School Performance Framework (NSPF). A large number of schools in each of YWLA's targeted ZIP codes are rated as 1- or 2-stars, and more than 21,000 students are attending these same schools, which are designated by the state of Nevada as underperforming.
- The applicant has identified a number of potential partners that could be beneficial to the school and students. Additionally, the applicant was able to provide evidence of additional partnerships that were mentioned during the capacity interview which have been developed since the submission of the application. Partnerships included after the capacity interview included Girls on the Run Las Vegas, Heavenly Smiles, and Garden Farms, which are all clearly relevant to the needs of the target population.

Areas of Concern

- While the application outlined some efforts to gather feedback from families through surveys, and the committee to form spoke about ongoing efforts to engage with students and families to

continue to shape the school model, there is not substantial evidence as to how the community to be served has shaped the proposal this far.

- While the application included demonstrated interest from over 150 potential students, only 24 of these students appear to reside in the targeted zip codes. Additionally, attachment 13 provide survey results but does not provide conclusive evidence that the respondents would enroll their student at the proposed school. More information is needed to confirm that sufficient student interest exists for the proposal. During the capacity interview, the committee to form describe additional specific strategies that the proposed school would be using to increase awareness and interest in the intended community. Nevertheless, additional demand will be critical to ensure that the school can fulfill its mission.
- While the committee to form provides evidence of developed partnerships with a few key local organizations, including the Sands Corporation and the Nevada Partnership for Homeless Young, many of the letters of support provided by potential partners lack specific commitments. In addition, some of the listed partners are proposed vendors and the application lacks details as to how these potential vendors were selected.

Academic Section

The proposed academic model demonstrated alignment to the mission and vision of the proposed school, and past results of other schools in the YWLA network signaled that the model can lead positive student outcomes, particularly for underserved populations. Identified curricula will support the integration of YWLA's Whole Girl components of culturally relevant and sustaining practice and gender consciousness. Since the time of submission, the Committee to Form has hired a school leader, who was able to speak to how the mission and vision would be brought to life as the model was implemented. The school leader will be participating in training from the Student Leadership Network (SLN), and during the capacity interview, demonstrated an understanding of the whole girl model and academic programs in the proposal. Supports for teachers in this model were described in detail, and plans for professional development show a direct connection to the instructional methods and curricula that will be implemented. Lastly, the proposed plans to identify and serve at-risk students, students with disabilities, and those identified as English Language Learners are robust and thorough.

A noteworthy deficiency in this section was the lack of an established Dual Credit Partnership which is a required element for all high schools in Nevada. However, given the number of identified strengths, this section was rated as 'Meets the Standard'.

Areas of Strength

- The application includes a well-articulated theory of change and a clear educational strategy that is aligned to the mission and critical to the schools' success. The school proposes access to advanced STEM coursework for girls at their school so they can experience success in these fields which can oftentimes be hostile to women, according to the application, which demonstrates how the proposal will be implemented to ensure fidelity to the model. Of note are the specific, trauma-informed strategies that are designed for schools teaching young women of color.
- The applicant team intends to model the proposed school after a network of successful schools serving marginalized populations in New York. These model schools have shown success in New York, received all A grades on its New York City Department of Education Report Cards, and have outperformed city and state ELA by an average of 16.3 and 17.1 percentage points respectively. As such, distinguishing features of the proposed schools are supported by compelling evidence of success in schools implementing similar programs serving similar target populations.
- The applicant demonstrates with an ambitious, yet achievable plan that they will be able to provide a 4- or 5- star school and that every student in the target population will succeed. To help ensure success, including those students from historically underserved student groups, the application details the importance of having a growth mindset as well as plans to provide MTSS, use data to determine real time academic intervention, utilize mastery-based grading, provide access to advanced coursework, and provide a structured lesson planning and instructional approach.
- The proposed curriculum to be implemented will support the integration of YWLA's Whole Girl components of culturally relevant and sustaining practice and gender consciousness by including an African American, Hispanic American and Women's Contributions to the United States requirement. Additionally, culturally responsive pedagogy will be standard for all teachers and admins which aligns with the overall mission and vision of the proposed school. As previously noted, these features are supported by evidence of strong academic performance and success in currently operating schools in New York City.
- The school proposes using ongoing assessments and interim assessments that align to the Nevada School Performance Framework (NSPF) as well as the SPCSA Academic Performance Framework. The application details how these assessments will be used to identify improvement needs and guide instruction, and the school's internal, leading indicator goals – based on i-Ready and NWEA

MAP – are robust and reliable. There is a clear delineation between assessments utilized for internal monitoring and those which are sufficiently rigorous and valid. Internal and mission-specific framework goals are SMART, and there is a clear process for setting, monitoring and/or revising internal leading indicator academic goals – the Instructional Leadership team will review school-wide data.

- Plans for professional development show a direct connection to the instructional methods and curricula that teachers will be required to use – teachers will engage in Cycles of Professional Learning (CPL) to connect with the content and improve their content-based instruction. Additionally, the application describes planned structures to be used to observe teachers to identify teachers that may need additional support. The application goes on to state that proposed structures will provide the foundation for teachers and leaders to address their own and their students’ learning needs while simultaneously improving curricula. Data will be utilized to support instruction and provide adequate training to teachers and school leaders.
- The proposed school will offer a continuum of services to students through a tiered system of interventions (MTSS), ensuring that all students, including those who are in need of remediation, English Learners, and those who are intellectually gifted, are able to build the knowledge base necessary to access rigorous instruction. For intellectually gifted students, the application demonstrates that the school will extend their learning offerings such that those students have access to unique, tailored opportunities through the use of Personalized learning Plans that will include additional learning goals and plan for extension or acceleration. The lesson plans will frequently incorporate “challenge” problems to ensure that all students encounter materials in each of their classes that they will find engaging. Procedures for identifying gifted students are detailed. Finally, the application 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 application 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. Furthermore, the proposal presents sound policies for student discipline, suspension, and expulsion including procedures for due process, with ultimate responsibility for the implementation of the school discipline plan falling to the school principal, with implementation and maintenance of student records assistance coming from teachers.
- Overall, the proposed plans to identify and serve at-risk students, students with disabilities, and those identified as English Language Learners are robust and thorough. The proposed school provides a logical plan to screen all students and to ensure that struggling students are evaluated for special education services early and accurately. Additionally, YWLA outlines comprehensive and logical plans to train staff in modifying the curriculum and instruction to address the unique needs of students with disabilities. Finally, the application includes well-developed processes for identifying and subsequently supporting ELL students.

Areas of Concern

- Dual-Credit partnership information was not included in the application, which is a required element of all public high schools in Nevada. When asked for clarification regarding this mandatory program during the capacity interview, the applicant team shared that this had yet to be completed given the grade levels offered in Year 1. Significantly more information, including a draft

memorandum of understanding between the charter school and the college or university through which the credits will be earned and a term sheet with pertinent details, is needed to confirm the school is prepared to offer this program.

- The application does not contain specific goals related to student behavior. Additionally, more information is needed to understand how the proposed school plans to ensure that certain student populations are not disproportionately impacted by discipline policies. This raises questions given the target student population that the school anticipates serving.

Operations Section

A number of strengths were identified during the initial review that were reiterated during the capacity interview. Specifically, the board demonstrated they have the necessary background and knowledge to govern a successful school, and conveyed a commitment to the mission and vision. Board members were engaged and demonstrated a vested interest in ensuring the success of the school. Additionally, the school has hired a school leader that has demonstrated results for the targeted population along with the commitment and passion for the vision of the school. The board has ensured that the leader will have a dynamic support system through the partnership with SLN and by hiring a back-office group with demonstrated results that will allow the leader to focus on the students and academics. The board provided clarification regarding the teachers and the fact that they will be onboarded during the launch year and, importantly, funds are available through a donor to pay for them.

The board and the committee to form also demonstrated an understanding of the enrollment laws and the requirement that the school must be an open enrollment school. In the event of a male student enrolling, the applicant confirmed they will make the necessary changes to ensure that all students have access to the same resources. While interest to enroll in the targeted zip code is low at this time, the school has plans to engage in community events and is confident that they can meet the minimum enrollment. The applicant confirmed contingency plans as well as a commitment from a donor that could be used to support lower enrollment for the first year. The board has a clear understanding of what is needed for their facilities and is continuing to work on the facilities with the proposed EMO, Academica Nevada.

During the capacity interview, the Committee to Form spoke to some gaps in the incubation year narrative in the written application in a way that made articulated a deliberate and intentional approach that will enhance the possibilities of success. The applicant team also was able to provide clarifying details during the interview about the facilities costs and rectified concerns of the review committee. For these reasons, in addition to those further detailed below, this section was rated as 'Meets the Standard'.

Areas of Strength

- The proposed governance structure is likely to ensure effective governance and meaningful oversight of school performance, operations, and financials. Proposed board members bring a wealth of expertise, skills and demonstrated commitment needed to oversee a successful school, in particular the proposed board president has served on multiple non-profit boards and has experience working with charter school facility development. Other board members have teaching experience in schools with similar demographics, and the board has substantial experience in financial and legal areas.
- The school staffing plan and organizational chart clearly indicates all positions delineating board and management roles and lines of authority. Board members and proposed staff demonstrated an understanding of their roles and responsibilities during the capacity interview.
- After submission of the application but prior to the capacity interview, the committee to form selected a proposed founding principal for the school. This proposed leader's qualifications as well as experience working in the communities surrounding the proposed school location demonstrate that she is a qualified candidate. During the capacity interview, the proposed principal demonstrated a firm understanding of the proposed model and the capacity to lead the school. Additionally, the proposed staffing and leadership structures demonstrate effective assignment of management roles and distribution of responsibilities for instructional leadership, curriculum and personnel. If approved, YWLA will be affiliated with the Student Leadership Network and the Young Women's Leadership schools in New York City, offering additional support through professional development and recruitment and hiring of staff. In addition, the plan provides a comprehensive plan for coaching, support and evaluation.

- YWLA anticipates implementing the Danielson Group’s Framework for Teaching, a reputable teacher evaluation tool which will be supplemented that with Student Leadership Network’s Classroom Indicators for Whole Girl Education, a tool for identifying the application and implementation of the 11 effective practices of Student Leadership Network’s Whole Girl Education framework, which aligns with the school’s mission and vision. This proposed system has the potential to effectively set expectations, while also address any performance issues. The applicant acknowledges the impact and cost that turnover can have, and in response, has outlined a number of strategies to reduce overall turnover.
- YWLA provides key milestones for the planning year, as well as concrete actions and accountability, that will ensure that the school is ready for a successful launch. Identifies the three parties – Academics Nevada, proposed governing board, and principal – who will be responsible for leading Year 0 initiatives. Additionally, it is noteworthy that the founding school leader plans to be working full time during the remainder of the planning year to lead these efforts.
- The application includes specific outreach and recruitment strategies. YWLA plans to engage with prospective students and families through door knocking, outreach through after-school and neighborhood programs, organizing neighborhood walks, and leveraging community partners. During the capacity interview, the Committee to Form described upcoming engagement opportunities including community meetings and leveraging with the Sands Corporation to reach out to employees who live in the community who have children.
- The Committee to Form has identified a temporary facility within the community that the proposed school intends to serve. The temporary facility is a church, and the application includes a signed letter indicating a commitment to work towards executing a lease agreement.
- The narrative provides logical plans for essential services including nursing, facilities maintenance, and safety and security. The applicant intends to participate in the National School Lunch Program to ensure access to free or reduced-price meals for those students who qualify.

Areas of Concern

- The application includes a number of board goals for the school, but some goals are not ambitious, reliant on completion rather than performance, and may not provide a direct link to improved student outcomes. The governing board may benefit from revisiting these proposed goals to ensure it has a data-driven set of ambitious standards so as to provide logical evidence that the school is on track to achieve academic goals.
- While the application included demonstrated interest from over 150 potential students, only 24 of these students appear to reside in the targeted zip codes. Additionally, attachment 13 provide survey results but does not provide conclusive evidence that the respondents would enroll their student at the proposed school. During the capacity interview, the committee to form describe additional specific strategies that the proposed school would be using to increase awareness and interest in the intended community. Nevertheless, additional demand will be critical to ensure that the school can fulfill its mission and be financially viable.
- While the applicant has found a temporary facility, little information is provided regarding where the applicant proposes finding its final, long-term location. Because the school is proposing to primarily serve specific communities, the targeted student population may be adversely impacted if this is not addressed in a timely manner, and if the permanent facility is not located in close proximity to the year 1 facility. More information is needed to understand the long-term facility plan.
- A small discrepancy between the staffing plan and proposed budget was identified within the school’s plan to support ELL students as the former noted a full-time employee while budget only

allocated for a half-time employee. Should the school be authorized, the Committee to Form and Principal should collectively review this position to ensure that ELL students will have sufficient support.

Financial Section

The applicant confirmed the financial commitment of the Sands Corporation and clarified cash flow questions that had arisen during the initial review of the written application. The guaranteed financial support of Sands Corporation will stabilize the school beginning in the Incubation Year and will continue through remainder of an initial charter term of six years, should the school be authorized. Additionally, there is financial assistance for the school leader to be able to attend training and shadow programs in existing SLN schools, which will ultimately benefit the proposed school as the school leader will fully immerse themselves in the whole girl model proposed by YWLA.

The restated cashflow statement provided an updated picture of the school's financial plan for the first year. The proposed budget provided sufficient information to clarify the revenue source for a few minor budget line items. Given the commitment of \$1.2 million dollars of Sands Corporation over a from a donor along with a conservative budget, the school appears to be financially viable. Moreover, the board was cognizant of the specifics within the proposed budget and demonstrated a willingness during the capacity interview to make any necessary changes. For these reasons and others, this section was rated as 'Meets the Standard'.

Areas of Strength

- The application establishes an appropriate segregation of duties which align to the organizational chart and job descriptions. Additionally, the proposed EMO, Academica Nevada, financial manager for the school has the appropriate expertise to provide accurate and timely financial information to decision-makers and has significant experience supporting schools in Nevada (pg. 5-1).
- Financial projections are based on accurate, conservative, and legally compliant assumptions, and the proposed budget priorities align with the proposed school plan and academic model. Additionally, the budget includes appropriate allocations for required expenditures such as sponsorship fee as well as an accounting for Public Employee Retirement System (PERS) contributions.
- School level budget priorities are consistent with the operator's model, and no essential services are funded at amounts that would preclude the committee to form from implementing their plan. Specifically, during the capacity interview the proposed board shared a plan to send the school leader to New York City for shadowing, and the Sands Corporation gift will fully fund the salary of the school leader during the incubation year.
- School budget has balanced, realistic, evidence-based revenue and expenditure assumptions. Additionally, the Sands Corporation commits to providing up to \$1,200,000 of financial support to the school through the sixth year of operations, and proof of these funds is provided in the form of an MOU with the proposed school.
- The school presents a solid facility plan, and has an identified facility for the first two years of operations. A letter from the current owner of the property is included in the application and voices support for the proposed school. Assumptions about facilities in all financial statements correspond to a conservative facility plan.
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Areas of Concern

- A discrepancy between the staffing plan and proposed budget was identified within the school's plan to support ELL students as the former noted a full-time employee while budget only allocated for a half-time employee. Should the school be authorized, the Committee to Form and Principal should collectively review this position to ensure that ELL students will have sufficient support.

Addendum Section

In accordance with Assembly Bill 419 from the 2021 Session of the Nevada Legislature, the SPCSA is required to consider the academic, financial and organizational performance of any charter schools that currently hold a contract with the proposed CMO or EMO. Information gathered through the Addendum Section examines the past performance of affiliated charter schools, as well as readiness of the CMO or EMO to expand and the specific services that are to be provided to the proposed school.

The capacity interview allowed the review committee to gain a better understanding of the roles and responsibilities of the Student Leadership Network and Academica Nevada. Based upon the findings of the written application and the discussion during the capacity interview, the board is providing the vision for the school and has brought partners such as Academica Nevada and SLN, who have demonstrated success, together to ensure the success of the school. Overall, this section was rated as 'Meets the Standard'.

Areas of Strength

- The committee to form proposes to contract with Academica Nevada for primarily operational, financial, and back-office support. All schools currently contracting with Academica Nevada are in good standing with regard to organizational and financial performance.
- Data provided regarding the performance of schools affiliated with the Student Leadership Network point to strong past academic performance. Specifically, over the last five years of the five Young Women's Leadership Schools (TYWLS) in New York City have outperformed New York City and New York state's English language arts proficiency average by approximately 16.3 and 17.1 percentage points respectively.
- Through responses to clarifying questions, the committee to form clarified the role of the Student Leadership Network. Through a partnership paid for by the Sands Corporation, the Student Leadership Network is providing a range of services to support the launch of the school, including support in designing the proposal as well as providing coaching, professional development, and support to the school leader during the incubation year. Once the school is fully operational, the committee to form intends for the proposed school to be an affiliate of the Young Women's Leadership Network which has an annual cost of less than \$10,000. Through this affiliation, the proposed school will be able to access some professional learning opportunities and resources.
- The narrative outlines clear roles and responsibilities for the school board, leadership, Academica Nevada, and Student Leadership Network. Throughout the capacity interview, these parties demonstrated a clear understanding of their roles and responsibilities, providing confidence that this structure can be effective.

Areas of Concern

- The narrative fails to discuss how Academica Nevada evaluated readiness for expansion. While the majority of schools that Academica Nevada supports have strong academic, financial, and organizational performance, no information is provided as to the criteria that these this EMO used to determine that they have the capacity to expand to serve additional schools.

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 Young Women’s Leadership Academy of Nevada was conducted on Thursday, September 30, 2021 and lasted approximately 120-minutes. All members of the Committee to Form attended the interview. Additionally, two representatives from Student Leadership Network, a potential educational program supporter, and 2 members of Academica, a potential Educational Management Organization, attended the capacity interview. Questions during the capacity interview focused primarily on these areas:

Targeted Plan	Board Governance
Parent and Community Involvement	Leadership Team
Curriculum & Instructional Design	Staffing Plan
At-Risk Students and Special Populations	Incubation Year Development
School Management Contract	Facilities
School Structure: Culture	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 ability to respond to a situation where a new school policy raised concerns among the school community.

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.³ 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.

³ 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

Targeted Plan

- *Clear and comprehensive explanation of how the proposed model meets identified community needs.*

Parent and Community Involvement

- *Outlines plan to effectively engage parents, community members, and other neighborhood partners from the time that the operator is approved (e.g., conducting home visits, community meetings, etc.) and once the school is operating (e.g., parent advisory council, student placement, trainings, communications, volunteers, etc.)*
- *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

Dual Credit Partnerships

- *Pursuant to NRS 389.310, Charter high schools are required to enter into cooperative agreements with one or more community colleges, state colleges and universities to offer dual credit courses.*
- *The proposed duration of the relationship between the charter school and the college or university and the conditions for renewal and termination of the relationship;*
- *The roles and responsibilities of the governing body of the charter school, the employees of the charter school and the college or university;*
- *The scope of the services and resources that will be provided by the college or university;*
- *The manner and amount that the college or university will be compensated for providing such services and resources, including, without limitation, any tuition and fees that pupils at the charter school will pay to the college or university;*
- *The manner in which the college or university will ensure that the charter school effectively monitors pupil enrollment and attendance and the acquisition of college credits; and*
- *Any employees of the college or university who will serve on the governing body of the charter school.*
- *The partnership reflected in the memorandum of understanding is shown to be both appropriate for high school students seeking advanced coursework as well as financially accessible to all students.*

Operations Plan

Board Governance

- *Goals are clear and measurable, and contribute to improved academic outcomes for students and overall advancement of the organization.*
- *The board puts into place a structure that enables it to collect the information it needs to evaluate the EMO/CMO, if applicable.*

Student Recruitment and Enrollment

- *Articulates proactive plan for recruiting eligible students to the school and describes specific actionable steps for ensuring the school is fully enrolled.*

- *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.*
- *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*

Facilities

- *If a facility has not yet been identified, plan for finding a location including a proposed schedule for doing so.*

Financial Plan

- *Sufficient detail and specificity of assumptions for ALL budget line items to allow for the assessment of fiscal viability.*
- *Sufficient cash reserves to cover operations for EACH school and for network or regional operations (if applicable), required minimum of 15-days in Year 1 and increasing each year.*

Addendum

Readiness for Growth

- *Evidence is provided that that CMO/EMO is ready to expand according to the articulated criteria for evaluating readiness.*