



STATE PUBLIC CHARTER SCHOOL AUTHORITY

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ACTION MEMORANDUM

TO: SPCSA Board
FROM: Mike Dang, Manager, Financial and Organizational Performance
Mark Modrcin, Director of Authorizing
SUBJECT: **Equipo Academy Amendment Request to**
- **Change Lottery Policy Preferences**
- **Enter into an Articulation Agreement with Futuro Academy**
DATE: December 3, 2021

Summary of Request and Recommendation

Futuro Academy currently operates one campus in East Las Vegas, located at 4131 E. Bonanza Road, serving 832 students in grades 6 – 12. The school has submitted a Good Cause Exemption request to consider their proposal adopt a lottery policy creating enrollment preferences for students that are enrolled at Futuro Academy with which Equipo has an articulation agreement pursuant to [NRS 388.456\(1\)\(d\)](#). Equipo Academy seeks approval of these preferences and the articulation agreement prior to the upcoming application and enrollment period for the 2022 – 23 school year.

After a thorough review of the amendment application, SPCSA staff recommends that the Authority grant Equipo a Good Cause Exemption request and approve the request to enter into an articulation agreement with Futuro Academy prior to the upcoming application window and enrollment for the 2022 – 2023 school year.

Background and Analysis

Equipo Academy opened for the 2015 – 16 academic year with the goal of providing the students and families of East Las Vegas with a high-quality school of choice. The mission of Equipo Academy sets the school apart from both traditional public high schools and strict no excuses charter networks. The founding team of teachers and families designed the school to offer an open pathway to and through college. Equipo Academy aims to provide students with a positive team and family environment to ultimately lead students to high growth in the middle school and high school grades. Renewed for a second term starting July 1, 2021, Equipo Academy plans to continue to deliver college-preparatory instruction to all students in the upcoming six years.

According to the amendment, Equipo is seeking to change current lottery policy by entering into an articulation agreement with Futuro Academy, a public K-5 college preparatory charter school sponsored by the SPCSA in East Las Vegas. Equipo Academy is seeking to put in place an articulation agreement as governed by [NRS 388A.456\(1\)\(d\)](#). The requested lottery change seeks to create:

- Priority enrollment for students seeking to matriculate from 5th grade at Futuro Academy into 6th grade at Equipo Academy; and
- Establish reciprocal priority enrollment for siblings enrolled at both campuses, and children of staff or board members employed at both campuses.

The amendment application states that the central goals of these requests are as follows:

- To provide an integrated, comprehensive K-12 education experience from two schools that share significant similarities in mission and vision
- To promote greater collaboration in enhancing the family experience transitioning between elementary and secondary grades
- To ultimately promote greater proficiency and mastery of academic content resulting in college and career readiness of students in East Las Vegas enrolled at Futuro Academy and Equipo Academy.

A copy of the proposed lottery policy to be implemented under these changes is included in the amendment submission. Equipo Academy has also provided a copy of the proposed articulation agreement. The amendment maintains that there are no planned changes to governance, management, or fiscal structures for the school.

Legal Authority and Requirements Related to Amendment Requests

Existing charter schools sponsored by the SPCSA may submit a charter school contract amendment application to the SPCSA. The application is reviewed by SPCSA staff and presented for SPCSA Board action. Amendment requests typically are to, among other things, increase enrollment, add grade levels above and beyond what the charter school is approved to serve, add a new campus, or change mission and vision statements. In this case, SPCSA staff finds that a change to the lottery policy of a charter school represents a material change to the charter contract, necessitating consideration and possible approval by the Authority.

Applicant Eligibility

For this specific type of Amendment request, the sponsor of the charter school shall review the written request to determine if the written request: (a) Complies with NRS 388A.010 to 388A.640, inclusive, and the regulations applicable to charter schools; and (b) Is complete in accordance with regulations of the Department. This review also includes an assessment of the charter school's compliance with regards to such applicable law, regulations and SPCSA requirements including those described in the Academic Performance Framework, Organizational Performance Framework, and the Financial Performance Framework.

When reviewing an amendment application, SPCSA staff reviews the academic, financial and organizational performance of the applicant charter school. Academically, Equipo is currently highly rated under the Nevada School Performance Framework (NSPF) Report Card, with the middle school program earning a 5-star rating and the high school program earning a 4-star rating. The middle school program did earn a 2-star rating under the NSPF ratings in the 2016 – 2017 school year, resulting in a Notice of Concern being issued to the school. However, Equipo has exhibited improvement since that time and is no longer in the SPCSA Performance Framework intervention ladder. A table summarizing the academic performance of Futuro Academy is provided

on page 4 of this memo¹. Additionally, the school exhibits high graduation rates, outperforming both the state and SPCSA portfolio averages the past three years.

	<u>2018 – 2019</u>	<u>2019 – 2020</u>	<u>2020 – 2021</u>
Graduation Rate	98.0%	96.3%	87.3%

Financially, SPCSA staff finds that Equipo Academy is meeting performance standards as adopted by the Authority under the Financial Performance Framework. The results from the 2019 – 20 school year indicated that the school was ‘Meeting the Standard’ under six of the seven indicators, and ‘Did Not Meet Standards’ under the remaining indicator. Despite this shortcoming, the Authority did not place Equipo into the SPCSA Performance Framework intervention ladder, and SPCSA staff finds the school to be in good financial health. These results were approved by the Authority on January 22, 2021.

From an organizational perspective, SPCSA staff found Equipo Academy to be ‘Meeting Standards’ for the 2019 – 2020 school year. The school earned 100 points under the 2020 Organizational Performance Framework as approved by the Authority on November 6, 2020.

Overall, SPCSA staff finds that Equipo is eligible for this amendment request to be considered by the Authority.

Summary and Recommendation

SPCSA staff find that the proposed articulation agreement can be mutually beneficial to both schools. Given their proximity, offering enrollment preferences to families can help ensure that students have access to a high-quality school of choice that share various similarities, including a college preparatory environment.

As such, SPCSA staff recommends the SPCSA board approve the request of Equipo Academy to enter into an articulation agreement with Futuro Academy prior to the upcoming application window and enrollment for the 2022 – 2023 school year.

Proposed Motion:

Grant the Good Cause Exemption request and approve Equipo Academy to adopt modified enrollment preferences and to enter into an articulation agreement with Futuro Academy as permitted under NRS 388A.456(1)(d) on the condition that the school provides the SPCSA with a fully-executed copy of the articulation agreement with Futuro Academy.

¹ Due to COVID-19, the Nevada Department of Education (NDE) applied for and was granted a school year waiver from the US Department of Education for certain assessment, accountability, school identification, and reporting requirements established by the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) for both the 2019 – 20 and 2020 – 21 school years. For the 2019 – 20 school year, Nevada statewide assessments were not administered and the NDE did not calculate Nevada School Performance Framework (NSPF) school ratings. For the 2020 – 2021 school year, Nevada statewide assessments were administered, but the NDE did not calculate new NSPF school ratings for the 2020 – 21 school year.

If approved, the enrollment cap for Equipo Academy will be as follows for the remainder of the charter term:

	2021 – 2022	2022 – 2023	2023 – 2024	2024 – 2025	2025 - 2026	2026 - 2027
Enrollment Cap	756	756	756	756	756	756

Historical Performance and Demographic Information

Nevada School Performance Framework (NSPF) – Equipo Academy

Year	Ratings
2021 ²	Middle School: 5-star High School: 4-star
2020 ³	Middle School: 5-star High School: 4-star
2019	Middle School: 5-star High School: 4-star
2018	Middle School: 3-star High School: Not Rated

School Total Enrollment and Demographics since 2017⁴

Year	Enrollment	A	B	C	H	I	M	P	IEP	ELL	FRL
17-18	759	0.5%	1.9%	2.6%	93.9%	0.3%	0.2%	0.2%	6.3%	16.3%	>95%
18-19	753	0.6%	1.0%	2.2%	95.6%	0.1%	0.1%	0.1%	5.0%	23.2%	>95%
19-20	761	0.6%	1.4%	2.1%	95.4%	0.1%	0.1%	0.1%	6.5%	34.6%	>95%
20-21	797	0.6%	1.6%	1.8%	95.4%	0.0%	0.2%	0.1%	5.5%	35.2%	>95%
21-22	832	0.4%	1.0%	1.6%	96.2%	0.0%	0.2%	0.2%	7.8%	30.2%	>95%

- A – Asian
- B – Black
- C - White
- H – Hispanic
- I – American Indian/Alaskan Native

² Due to COVID-19, the Nevada Department of Education (NDE) applied for and was granted a 2020-21 school year waiver from the U.S. Department of Education for certain requirements established by the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA). Nevada statewide assessments were administered in the 2020-21 school year, but the NDE did not calculate new Nevada School Performance Framework (NSPF) school ratings for the 2020-21 school year.

³ Due to COVID-19, the Nevada Department of Education (NDE) applied for and was granted a 2019 – 20 school year waiver from the US Department of Education for certain assessment, accountability, school identification, and reporting requirements established by the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA). Accordingly, for the 2019 – 20 school year, Nevada statewide assessments were not administered and the NDE did not calculate Nevada School Performance Framework (NSPF) school ratings.

⁴ *indicates a population size >0 and <10; count and rate data are suppressed to protect privacy. <5 is shown for rates below 5% to protect student privacy.

M – Two or more races

P – Pacific Islander

IEP – Individualized Education Plan –A student with a disability/special education student

ELL – English Language Learner

FRL – A student who qualifies for Free or Reduced-Price Lunch

* - Suppressed data due to n-count