



STATE PUBLIC CHARTER SCHOOL AUTHORITY

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**ACTION MEMORANDUM**

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**TO:** SPCSA Board  
**FROM:** Mike Dang, Manager, Financial and Organizational Performance  
Mark Modrcin, Director of Authorizing  
**SUBJECT:** **Pinecrest Academy of Nevada Amendment Request to**  
**- Adopt a Weighted Lottery Policy**  
**DATE:** December 3, 2021

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**Summary of Request and Recommendation**

Pinecrest Academy of Nevada (Pinecrest) currently operates five campuses across the Las Vegas metropolitan area, serving 6,849 students in grades K – 12. The school has submitted an amendment application<sup>1</sup> to implement a weighted lottery policy for student applications for the 2022 – 2023 school year.

**After a thorough review of the amendment application, SPCSA staff recommends that the Authority approve the amendment request to implement a weighted lottery policy for the upcoming application window and enrollment for the 2022 – 2023 school year.**

**Background and Analysis**

Pinecrest opened its first campus in Nevada in 2012, initially serving students in Kindergarten through 7<sup>th</sup> grade. According to the amendment application, the mission of Pinecrest Academy of Nevada is to unite the community to prepare students for college and career. The vision of Pinecrest Academy of Nevada is for scholars to perform at the highest level on all academic measures.

The amendment application notes that Pinecrest is affiliated with and replicates the highly successful Pinecrest Academy charter school network based in Florida. Additionally, Pinecrest Academy of Nevada proposes to implement a weighted lottery across the network of campuses in preparation for the 2022 – 2023 school year.

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<sup>1</sup> As noted in the Executive Summary of the amendment application by Pinecrest Academy of Nevada, the school has also submitted requests to expand enrollment in existing grades and facilities as well as implement a blended-learning program. SPCSA staff continues to review the other requests submitted in the full amendment package and may request additional information of Pinecrest. At this time, SPCSA staff anticipates bringing forward recommendations regarding these requests at the Authority meeting on January 28, 2022.

The submitted policy was approved by the Pinecrest board on July 13, 2021 in an effort to ensure that the student population of Pinecrest would closely resemble the student population of the community where the school is located term according to the application.

According to the amendment, Pinecrest's Weighted Lottery Policy will provide a weighted preference of 5.0 in its enrollment lotteries to students who qualify for free/reduced lunch services. This weighted lottery will take place only if it is determined that the percentage of students at the Pinecrest campus who qualify for free and reduced lunch is less than 90% of the percentage of students eligible for free/reduced lunch services in the Clark County School District.

Pinecrest plans to utilize its weekly emails and news bulletins to provide its current students and families a comprehensive overview of these lottery changes. Additionally, the Pinecrest website will provide additional information regarding these changes, if approved by the SPCSA. In order to communicate these changes to the broader community, the amendment submission notes that Pinecrest will provide marketing materials, such as flyers, as well as social media targeted campaigns to advise potential families of these changes.

A copy of the complete lottery policy can be found within the amendment submission from Pinecrest.

### **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, the current Nevada School Performance Framework (NSPF) Report Card for all campuses is at or above the 3-star level. A table summarizing the academic performance of Pinecrest Academy of Nevada schools is provided on pages 4 – 5 of this memo<sup>2</sup>.

The most recent graduation rate data released in December 2021 revealed that the network has maintained high four-year graduation rates over the past two years<sup>3</sup>. Data for the Cadence campus for the Classes of 2020 and

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<sup>2</sup> 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.

<sup>3</sup> Pinecrest Sloan Canyon currently offers grades K-11. SPCSA staff anticipates that this campus report graduation rate data starting with Class of 2023.

2021 is provided in the tables below. While the school had a graduating class of 2019, data was suppressed due to a low n-count.

It is worth noting that the four-year validated graduation rate for each of the last two school years was higher than both the state and SPCSA averages.

	<u>2019 – 2020</u>	<u>2020 – 2021</u>
Graduation Rate	93.6%	91.9%

Financially, SPCSA staff finds that the school 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 Pinecrest network was ‘Meeting the Standard’ under five of the seven indicators, and ‘Did Not Meet Standards’ under the remaining two indicators. Despite these shortcomings, the Authority did not place Pinecrest Academy of Nevada into the SPCSA Performance Framework intervention ladder, and SPCSA staff finds the network is in good financial health. These results were approved by the Authority on January 22, 2021.

From an organizational perspective, SPCSA staff also finds Pinecrest Academy of Nevada to be ‘Meeting Standards’. The school earned 100 points under the 2020 Organizational Performance Framework as approved by the Authority on November 6, 2020.

Given the historic academic performance, the recent results under both the Financial and Organizational frameworks, SPCSA staff finds there is sufficient evidence to consider Pinecrest eligible for this portion of the amendment request submitted.

### **Summary and Recommendation**

It is important to note that individual Pinecrest campuses serve free and reduced-price lunch populations ranging from approximately 13% to nearly 32% according to the most recent validation day numbers. Additionally, the network serves a smaller percentage of EL students than CCSD, SPCSA and statewide averages. The number of special education students served across the network is comparable to the CCSD, statewide and SPCSA average.

Overall, SPCSA staff finds the portion of the Pinecrest application to adopt a weighted lottery policy to be in alignment with the spirit of the SPCSA’s Strategic Plan and Academic and Demographic Needs Assessment. A weighted lottery policy can help the entire Pinecrest network become more representative of the communities the network currently serves while simultaneously addressing the aforementioned demographic gaps.

As such, SPCSA staff recommends the SPCSA board approve the request of Pinecrest to adopt a weighted lottery policy for the upcoming application and enrollment periods.

### **Proposed Motion:**

**Approve the portion of the Pinecrest Amendment request to adopt a weighted lottery policy for the upcoming student application and enrollment period for the 2022 – 23 school year.**

If approved, the enrollment cap for Pinecrest Academy of Nevada at each campus will be as follows for the remainder of the charter term:

School Year/Campus	2021 – 2022	2022 – 2023	2023 – 2024
Cadence	1,910	1,910	1,910
Horizon	910	910	910
Inspirada	1,090	1,090	1,090
Sloan Canyon	1,595	1,829	2,025
St. Rose	1,010	1,010	1,010
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>6,515</b>	<b>6,749</b>	<b>6,945</b>

***Historical Performance and Demographic Information***

**Nevada School Performance Framework (NSPF) – Pinecrest Academy of Nevada**

Year	Ratings		
2021 <sup>4</sup>	Cadence ES: 4-star Horizon ES: 4-star Inspirada ES: 5-star St. Rose ES: 4-star	Cadence MS: 5-star Inspirada MS: 5-star St. Rose MS: 5-star	Cadence HS: Not Rated
2020 <sup>5,6</sup>	Cadence ES: 4-star Horizon ES: 4-star Inspirada ES: 5-star St. Rose ES: 4-star	Cadence MS: 5-star Inspirada MS: 5-star St. Rose MS: 5-star	Cadence HS: Not Rated
2019	Cadence ES: 4-star Horizon ES: 4-star Inspirada ES: 5-star	Cadence MS: 5-star Inspirada MS: 5-star St. Rose MS: 5-star	Cadence HS: Not Rated

<sup>4</sup> 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.

<sup>5</sup> 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.

<sup>6</sup> The Sloan Canyon campus opened for the 2019 – 2020 school year and has yet to earn an NSPF rating.

	St. Rose ES: 4-star		
2018	Cadence ES: 5-star Horizon ES: 5-star Inspirada ES: 5-star St. Rose ES: 5-star	Cadence MS: 5-star Horizon MS: 5-star Inspirada MS: 5-star St. Rose MS: 5-star	Cadence HS: Not Rated
2017	Network ES: 5-star	Network MS: 5-star	Network HS: N/A

### School Total Enrollment and Demographics since 2017<sup>7</sup>

#### CADENCE

Year	Enrollment	A	B	C	H	I	M	P	IEP	ELL	FRL
17-18	1261	5.2%	6.5%	53.0%	25.3%	0.2%	8.5%	0.9%	11.4%	<5	18.0%
18-19	1628	5.8%	7.2%	49.2%	26.9%	0.3%	8.7%	1.5%	11.6%	<5	30.8%
19-20	1814	5.4%	7.2%	48.3%	27.9%	0.4%	8.9%	1.5%	12.5%	<5	30.8%
20-21	1941	5.4%	7.7%	45.7%	28.9%	0.5%	9.5%	2.0%	12.1%	<5	28.8%
21-22	2078	5.5%	6.0%	44.5%	30.6%	0.4%	10.6%	2.1%	13.7%	<5	32.3%

#### HORIZON

Year	Enrollment	A	B	C	H	I	M	P	IEP	ELL	FRL
17-18	866	3.8%	8.1%	55.1%	25.2%	0.3%	6.0%	1.1%	11.2%	<5	17.6%
18-19	703	4.5%	5.1%	51.6%	29.8%	0.2%	7.8%	0.7%	10.2%	<5	27.7%
19-20	771	3.6%	7.2%	47.4%	31.6%	0.3%	8.6%	0.9%	12.0%	*	31.1%
20-21	816	3.9%	7.1%	45.7%	33.3%	0.3%	8.7%	0.8%	9.9%	<5	32.3%
21-22	871	3.5%	6.7%	45.5%	33.2%	0.2%	9.4%	1.1%	11.1%	<5	32.3%

#### INSPIRADA

Year	Enrollment	A	B	C	H	I	M	P	IEP	ELL	FRL
17-18	1017	10.4%	3.9%	52.0%	18.5%	0.6%	12.8%	1.4%	9.6%	*	<5
18-19	1099	10.6%	4.5%	50.3%	19.1%	0.3%	13.2%	1.6%	8.4%	*	11.0%
19-20	1193	12.0%	4.5%	49.8%	18.4%	0.4%	12.9%	1.7%	9.0%	<5	9.8%
20-21	1224	12.7%	4.2%	47.7%	19.9%	0.3%	13.2%	1.7%	8.3%	*	12.5%
21-22	1186	13.4%	3.7%	45.9%	21.0%	0.3%	13.3%	2.0%	9.1%	<5	13.3%

#### SLOAN CANYON

Year	Enrollment	A	B	C	H	I	M	P	IEP	ELL	FRL
19-20	1236	14.0%	4.9%	38.4%	25.8%	0.1%	14.4%	2.1%	8.8%	<5	17.0%
20-21	1473	15.1%	4.4%	37.2%	25.9%	0.3%	14.7%	2.1%	9.0%	<5	17.5%
21-22	1706	15.8%	5.0%	36.2%	25.3%	0.2%	14.8%	2.2%	10.0%	<5	17.3%

<sup>7</sup> \*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.

**ST. ROSE**

<b>Year</b>	<b>Enrollment</b>	<b>A</b>	<b>B</b>	<b>C</b>	<b>H</b>	<b>I</b>	<b>M</b>	<b>P</b>	<b>IEP</b>	<b>ELL</b>	<b>FRL</b>
<b>17-18</b>	982	12.0%	5.2%	44.7%	23.0%	0.4%	10.4%	4.0%	7.3%	<5	8.2%
<b>18-19</b>	992	13.2%	5.0%	42.1%	23.8%	0.2%	11.6%	3.8%	8.5%	<5	19.0%
<b>19-20</b>	980	15.8%	6.6%	34.1%	27.5%	0.2%	12.6%	2.9%	8.5%	<5	26.0%
<b>20-21</b>	1007	15%	7.7%	33.5%	28.0%	0.1%	11.8%	3.5%	8.1%	<5	26.0%
<b>21-22</b>	1008	13.9%	8.1%	34.8%	27.1%	0.1%	12.7%	2.8%	7.3%	<5	28.0%

A – Asian

B – Black

C - White

H – Hispanic

I – American Indian/Alaskan Native

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