



NEVADA STATE PUBLIC CHARTER SCHOOL AUTHORITY

February 15, 2022

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

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

MINUTES OF THE MEETING

BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT IN-PERSON:

Member Erica Mosca
Member Tamika Shauntee Rosales
Member Mallory Cyr
Vice Chair Sheila Moulton

AUTHORITY STAFF IN-PERSON:

Rebecca Feiden, Executive Director
Mark Modrcin, Director of Authorizing
Mike Dang, Management Analyst IV

BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT VIRTUALLY:

Chair Melissa Mackedon
Member Lee Farris

AUTHORITY STAFF PRESENT VIRTUALLY:

Ryan Herrick, General Counsel
Danny Pelter, Management Analyst I

BOARD MEMBERS ABSENT:

Member Tonia Holmes-Sutton

AUDIENCE IN ATTENDANCE IN-PERSON:

Jesse Welsh
Ercan Aydogdu
Elizabeth Kazelskis
Bridget Peevy
Janelly Corona
Gabe Shirey
Renee Fairless
Imer Cespedes
Jesse Welsh
Gil Lopez
Kristin Serrano
Rachel Galbraith
Nick S.

AUDIENCE IN ATTENDANCE VIRTUALLY:

Lina Sierra
Michael Olsen
Gretchen Larsen
Steve Albrecht
Mike Vigil II
Tawni Novotny
Michael Olsen
Ryan Fox
Ron Coe
Adam Larson
Michael O'Dowd
Lisa Satory
Justin Baiardo
Jessica Scobell
Lee Esplin

Agenda Item 1 – Call to Order and Roll Call, and Pledge of Allegiance [00:00:38]

Melissa Mackedon, State Public Charter School Authority (SPCSA), Board Chair, called the meeting to order at 9:00am and Vice Chair Moulton facilitated the pledge of allegiance.

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

Written public comment received:

1. Attached, regarding the mask mandates.
2. Attached, regarding agenda item 4.

Public comment on the line [00:04:04]

1. Imer Cespedes, student representing Coral Academy of Science Las Vegas, regarding agenda item 4(b).

Agenda Item 3 – SPCSA Annual Review and Overview of SPCSA-Sponsored Public Charter Schools [00:08:11]

Executive Director Feiden said this item is their annual report on the State of the SPCSA. This meeting marks the 10th anniversary of the SPCSA’s first board meeting. Prior to the SPCSA, charter schools were sponsored by local school districts and the State Board of Education. When the SPCSA was created, it inherited those schools that had previously been sponsored by the State Board. The first official meeting of the SPCSA occurred on February 10, 2012, approximately 10 years ago. Before she shared a bit about how the SPCSA has grown over the last 10 years, she shared a few observations and recognized Chair Melissa Mackedon and staff member Danny Peltier, for 10 years of service to the SPCSA and the students and families of Nevada. Mr. Peltier and Chair Mackedon shared brief remarks. Executive Director Feiden compared the statistics from when the SPCSA was created and today before talking through the creation, purpose, and overview of schools and students served. Moving on, she discussed the strategic plan. Finally, she closed with a brief review of recent statutory and regulatory changes. In closing, since the passage of their strategic plan, there has been a lot of progress despite the substantial challenges that they’ve faced over the last two years. There is a lot to celebrate and certainly always more to do as they strive to realize their vision.

There was brief discussion between the Authority and Executive Director Feiden.

Agenda Item 4 – Update on approved new charter school campuses for Fall 2022 [00:35:42]

a. Nevada State High School – North Las Vegas Campus

Mark Modrcin, Director of Authorizing, provided a brief overview of the background for Nevada State High School – North Las Vegas campus. Jesse Welsh, Chief Operations Officer of Nevada State High School, provided the update. He said they have secured their location at 4280 W. Craig Rd, Stes 102 and 103. The lease was signed in September and since that date they’ve continued to make progress towards the new facility. They anticipate the Certificate of Occupancy most likely this week. They also continue to make progress with their registration and recruitment efforts.

b. Coral Academy of Las Vegas – Cadence Campus [00:39:26]

Member Farris abstained from this agenda item.

Director Modrcin provided a brief overview of the background for Coral Academy of Las Vegas – Cadence campus. Ercan Aydogdu said he joined by Beth Kazelskis, Board Secretary, Bridget Peavy, HR Director, and Janelly Corona, Community Outreach Coordinator. Ms. Corona spoke to the school’s recruitment and community outreach efforts to date. Mr. Aydogdu spoke to some of the facility updates. Ms. Peavy spoke to the staffing and recruiting strategies.

There was further discussion between the Authority and school representatives.

A 10-minute break was taken.

Agenda Item 5 – State Public Charter School Authority Financial Performance Framework [01:46:56]

Mike Dang, Management Analyst IV, provided the financial reviews and recommendations presentation for the final 12 schools that were not presented at the recent January 28 board meeting. He began with the overview of the SPCSA financial framework along with the timeline of the key milestones. Mr. Dang noted that if these results and recommendations are approved, SPCSA staff wants to reiterate that all schools not under a Notice of Concern are considered to be meeting performance standards under the financial performance framework.

Justin Baiardo provided remarks on behalf of Explore Academy.

MOTION: *Vice Chair Moulton made the motion to Direct Explore Academy to develop a Targeted Remediation Plan as the school is not Meeting Performance Standards as described in the technical guide, raising concerns about the financial health of the school. Member Shauntee Rosales seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.*

MOTION: *Vice Chair Moulton made the motion to rescind the Notice of Concern for Nevada Virtual Academy, removing them from the Financial Performance Framework intervention ladder as the school is Meeting Standards as described in the technical guide. Member Shauntee Rosales seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.*

Gabe Shirey, Executive Director, Signature Preparatory provided remarks. There was further discussion between the Authority, SPCSA staff and Mr. Shirey.

MOTION: *Vice Chair Moulton made the motion to issue a Notice of Concern for Signature Preparatory Academy, placing them on the Financial Performance Framework intervention ladder as the school is not Meeting Performance Standards as described in the technical guide, raising concerns about the financial health of the school. Additionally, require the school to develop a financial performance improvement plan in collaboration with SPCSA staff and provide a written report on progress to date in implementing the plan by April 1, 2022. Member Farris seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.*

MOTION: *Vice Chair Moulton made the motion to adopt the presented financial performance framework results for the schools listed in the attached ratings summary document for FY21 for all indicators except the Enrollment Forecast Accuracy measure, which was not rated. Member Mosca seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.*

Agenda Item 6 – Charter School Contract Amendment Applications. [02:22:52]

a. Mater Academy of Nevada – expansion of PK at East Campus and addition of Dual Credit program

Director Modrcin said Mater Academy of Nevada (Mater) is requesting that the Authority grant a Good Cause Exemption and approve the school's requests to offer a Dual-Credit program to comply with NRS 389.310 and offer Pre-Kindergarten at the Mater East campus beginning in the 2022 – 23 school year. After review and analysis of Mater's request and supporting documentation, staff recommend that the Authority grant the school a Good Cause Exemption and approve both requests, subject to the conditions outlined on page 4 of this memo. He gave a quick overview of Mater's background.

MOTION: *Vice Chair Moulton made the motion to grant Mater Academy of Nevada a Good Cause Exemption and approve their requests to add a Dual Credit program and approve the Mater East campus to offer up to two sections of PreKindergarten starting in the 2022 – 23 school year, subject to the following conditions:*

- *That Mater provide evidence that the governing body of Mater Academy of Nevada has applied and been approved by the State Board of Education, thereby permitting students to earn credits;*
- *That Mater provide SPCSA staff copies of fully-executed agreements between the school and the College of Southern Nevada and the school and Western Nevada College so that students may earn dual credit pursuant to NRS 389.310; and*

- *That by May 1, 2022 or sooner, Mater determine if Pre-Kindergarten will be offered at the East campus, and subsequently communicate this information on its website and to SPCSA staff.*

Member Farris seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

b. Alpine Academy – expansion within grade levels already offered/approved [02:29:16]

Director Modrcin said Alpine Academy has submitted an amendment request to expand enrollment to the middle school grades as well as to increase its enrollment cap and implement a weighted lottery. He gave a quick overview of Alpine Academy’s background. SPCSA staff recommends the Authority approve a modified version of the enrollment cap increase requested by Alpine Academy and approve the request of the school to implement a weighted lottery. SPCSA staff is also prepared to continue working with the governing board and leadership team of the network. Director Modrcin then provided the background information with regard to the submitted amendment request and staff’s recommendation which can be found in the supporting materials.

Tawni Novotny, Executive Director, and Adam Larson, Vice Chair, Alpine Academy, provided remarks. There was further discussion between the Authority, SPCSA staff and Alpine Academy representatives.

MOTION: *Vice Chair Moulton made the motion to approve a modified version of the Alpine amendment request to increase the enrollment cap for the school from 140 to 160 starting in the 2022 – 23 school year for grades 9 -12; and adopt a weighted lottery policy for the application and enrollment period beginning in the 2022 – 23 school year. Member Shauntee Rosales seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.*

c. Pinecrest Academy of Nevada – expansion at existing campuses and addition of virtual campus [02:41:24]

Director Modrcin said Pinecrest Academy of Nevada (Pinecrest) seeks an amendment to expand enrollment in existing grade levels and facilities, as well as approval to open a virtual campus, Pinecrest Virtual Academy, beginning in the 2022 – 23 school year. After review and analysis of the amendment and supporting documentation, SPCSA staff is recommending approval of a modified version of their request to increase the caps at the brick-and-mortar campuses and approve the network to open a small virtual academy beginning next fall. Director Modrcin then provided the background information with regard to the submitted amendment request and staff’s recommendation which can be found in the supporting materials.

Jessica LeNeave, Principal, Kristin Serrano and Rachel Galbraith, Pinecrest Cadence, were present. There was further discussion between the Authority, SPCSA staff and Pinecrest representatives.

MOTION: *Member Shauntee Rosales made the motion to approve a modified version of the Pinecrest Academy of Nevada amendment request to:*

- *Increase the enrollment caps for the Cadence and Sloan Canyon campuses. Under this modified proposal, the enrollment cap for the Cadence campus would increase by 130 seats, and the enrollment cap for the Sloan Canyon campus would increase by 71 seats for the 2022 -23 school year. Pinecrest Academy of Nevada may submit a RFA to modify the enrollment cap for future years in advance of conducting their lottery and subject to the typical review and approval process.*
- *Approve the opening of the Pinecrest Virtual Academy to open in the 2022 – 23 school year with an enrollment cap of 80 students in the initial year, and an enrollment cap of 170 in the 2023 – 24 school year.*

Additionally, the following conditions are attached to this motion:

- *That the enrollment cap of 170 students remain in place with a decision to possibly adjust this number at the time of Pinecrest’s renewal, which is anticipated to occur during the 2023 – 24 school year when results are available;*
- *That Pinecrest submit evidence which verifies the virtual courses to be offered at the Virtual Academy have been approved by the Nevada State Board of Education process prior to the start of the 2022 – 23 school year; and*

- *That the school provide SPCSA staff with quarterly, written updates on recruitment and enrollment efforts to enroll a more representative student populations across all campuses. SPCSA staff will work with the Pinecrest leadership and governing board to determine the exact timing of these reports.*

Vice Chair Moulton seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

d. Somerset Academy of Las Vegas – reduction in enrollment and change in grade levels at North Las Vegas Campus [03:10:58]

Director Modrcin said Somerset Academy of Las Vegas (Somerset) is requesting a Good Cause Exemption for its amendment submission which seeks an amendment to modify the existing grade levels at the North Las Vegas campus, specifically to change the grade level configuration from a K – 8 to a K – 5. Additionally, Somerset seeks to implement a new weighted lottery policy. SPCSA staff recommends that the Authority grant Somerset a Good Cause Exemption and approve the requests to modify the grade configuration and enrollment caps at the North Las Vegas campus as well implement a weighted lottery policy across the network. Director Modrcin then provided the background information with regard to the submitted amendment request and staff’s recommendation which can be found in the supporting materials.

Lee Esplin, Lead Principal at Somerset and Principal at Somerset Sky Pointe and Jessica Scobell, Principal, Somerset Losee provided remarks. There was further discussion between the Authority, SPCSA staff and Somerset representatives.

MOTION: *Member Farris made the motion to Grant Somerset Academy of Las Vegas a Good Cause Exemption and approve the amendment submitted by the school to modify the grade configuration of the North Las Vegas campus to K – 5 and adjust the enrollment cap in alignment with this change starting in the 2022 – 23 school year; and adopt a weighted lottery policy for the application and enrollment period for the 2022 – 23 school year. Vice Chair Moulton seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.*

Agenda Item 7 – Charter School Enrollment and Lotteries [03:24:29]

Director Modrcin provided the presentation for the SPCSA lottery information which can be found in the supporting materials. About 3 weeks ago, staff provided a similar presentation to their portfolio and sponsored schools as January and February are traditionally the months when most of their schools have their application windows open. He provided the overview of the presentation and before diving into the lottery requirements, allowable enrollment preferences and weighted lotteries.

There was further discussion between the Authority and SPCSA staff.

Agenda Item 8 – COVID-19 Update and Plan for the Safe Return to In-Person Instruction [03:51:21]

Executive Director Feiden said there were some recent developments with regard to state-wide emergency directives. Before she proceeded with the update for the Plan for the Safe Return to In-Person Instruction, she provided a quick summary of recent changes. With regard to the update, it was most recently updated based on feedback from the Nevada Department of Education (NDE) at the December meeting. Today she presents an additional set of updates based on both feedback from NDE and more recently to incorporate the changes under Emergency Directive 052. The updates can be found in the supporting materials and staff has highlighted the changes for reference. Executive Director Feiden briefly summarized the changes. There was discussion between the Authority and Executive Director Feiden.

MOTION: *Vice Chair Moulton made the motion to accept the Plan for the Safe Return to In-Person Instruction as presented by staff. Member Cyr seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.*

Agenda Item 9 – Long-Range Calendar. [04:03:50]

Executive Director Feiden flagged two items they will potentially add to the current list, one being the update on the emergency funds and that will be added to the March agenda. In addition, earlier today there was a request to have the Coral Academy of Science Las Vegas team to present again in March on their progress.

Agenda Item 10 – Public Comment #2 [04:04:45]

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

Agenda Item 11 – Adjournment [04:05:03]

The meeting was adjourned at 1:06pm.