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ACTION MEMORANDUM

TO: SPCSA Authority Board
FROM: Mark Modrcin, Director of Authorizing, SPCSA
Danny Peltier, Management Analyst III, SPCSA
SUBJECT: **Pinecrest Academy of Northern Nevada Charter Amendment Request to**
• **Enter into an Articulation Agreement with the Reno-Sparks Indian Colony Head Start Program**
• **Change Lottery Policy Preferences**
DATE: October 7, 2022

Summary of Request and Recommendation

Pinecrest Academy of Northern Nevada (PANN) has submitted an amendment application requesting that the State Public Charter School Authority (SPCSA) grant a Good Cause Exemption and approve the school to enter into an Articulation Agreement with the Reno-Sparks Indian Colony (RSIC) Head Start program and to change its lottery preferences to incorporate the agreement with the RSIC.

SPCSA staff has reviewed the application and recommends that the Authority grant the Good Cause Exemption and approve the amendment request. A proposed motion along with conditions can be found on page 3 of this memo.

Background and Overview of the Amendment

Pinecrest Academy of Northern Nevada (PANN) is located at 1150 Silent Sparrow Drive, Sparks, in Washoe County. PANN is affiliated with the Pinecrest Academy network of charter schools in Las Vegas and Florida. PANN began operation in 2020 with Grades K-7. As of the 2021 Validation Day, PANN had 868 students enrolled in Grades K-8. As stated in the application, PANN's educational program is modeled after innovative learning methods and

strategies that have proven successful in raising student learning and achievement consistently across the Pinecrest system.

According to the application, PANN is seeking to amend its existing charter contract with the State Public Charter School Authority (SPCSA) in order to adopt an updated enrollment lottery policy by entering into an affiliation agreement with the RSIC Head Start program. PANN is seeking to put in place an articulation agreement as permitted by [NRS 388A.456\(1\)\(d\)](#). The requested lottery change proposes priority enrollment for children who are enrolled in, or have ever been enrolled in, the RSIC Head Start program. Also, according to the application, the updated lottery policy states that after students qualifying for priority enrollment slots are determined, all remaining applicants will have an equal chance of being admitted through a random lottery selection unless the student qualifies under the [PANN Weighted Lottery Policy](#)¹. The application goes on to state that the potential change will be communicated with PANN families beginning in Winter 2022 upon approval from the SPCSA.

The application states that the central goals of requesting these amendments are:

1. To provide a high-quality educational experience;
2. To promote greater collaboration in enhancing the family experience transitioning between elementary and middle school; and
3. To ultimately promote greater proficiency and mastery of academic content for students matriculating from the RSIC Head Start Program in their enrollment at PANN.

PANN does not plan on any changes to the governance, management, or fiscal structures currently in place for the charter.

Legal Authority and Requirements Related to Amendment Requests

Existing charter schools that are sponsored by the SPCSA may submit a charter school contract amendment application to the SPCSA – which is reviewed by SPCSA staff and presented for SPCSA Board action – in order to, among other things, increase enrollment, add grade levels above and beyond what the charter school is approved to serve, or add a new campus. Only those existing charter schools that are meeting expectations in regard to academics (under both the Department of Education’s Nevada School Performance Framework -- the “Star Ratings” -- and the SPCSA’s Academic Performance Framework), are compliant in regard to the SPCSA’s Organizational Framework, and are fiscally sound may be approved for expansion. Furthermore, the academic, organizational, and financial performance of other charter schools that contract with the same Charter Management Organization or Educational Management Organization is taken into account when reviewing an expansion application².

¹ Pinecrest Academy of Northern Nevada lottery policy is posted to its website.

² There are limited exceptions to these eligibility requirements for those charter schools that have been approved by the State Board of Education and the SPCSA Board to be rated under Nevada’s Alternative Performance Framework.

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. In the case of PANN, SPCSA staff finds the school to be meeting academic, financial, and organizational performance expectations. Although PANN opened in the 2020-2021 school year and has yet to receive a rating under the Nevada School Performance Framework, the index scores for both the elementary and middle school for the 2021-22 school year indicates that the academic program has been effective and the SPCSA staff finds the school to be meeting academic performance expectations.

Additionally, the school earned 100 points (out of 100) points under the SPCSA Organizational Performance Framework for the 2020 – 21 school year as approved by the Authority on January 28, 2022. As such, SPCSA staff finds the school to be 'Meeting Standards.' PAN has also been found to 'Meeting Standards' on the most recent 2021 SPCSA Financial Performance Framework.

Given the historic organizational, and financial performance under SPCSA Performance Frameworks, and the information available for academic performance review, SPCSA staff finds Pinecrest Academy of Northern Nevada to be eligible for this amendment request.

Analysis and Staff Recommendation

SPCSA staff finds this articulation agreement to be mutually beneficial to the relationship between PANN and the RSIC. Since PANN's initial charter application, the school has worked to build a relationship with the RSIC, and this articulation agreement demonstrates continued progress. SPCSA staff has reviewed the final, signed, articulation agreement approved by both PANN and the RSIC and finds it to be compliant with provisions of [NRS 388A.456\(1\)\(d\)](#).

As such, SPCSA staff recommends the SPCSA board approve the request of Pinecrest Academy of Northern Nevada to enter into an articulation agreement with the Reno-Sparks Indian Colony Head Start program prior to the upcoming application window and enrollment for the 2023 – 2024 school year.

Proposed Motion: Grant the Good Cause Exemption request and approve Pinecrest Academy of Northern Nevada to adopt modified enrollment preferences and to enter into an articulation agreement with the Reno-Sparks Indian Colony Head Start Program permitted under [NRS 388A.456\(1\)\(d\)](#).

Pinecrest Academy of Northern Nevada will continue to have the following Enrollment Caps for the remainder of the charter term:

School Year	2022-23	2023-24	2024-25	2025-26
Grade Levels	K-8	K-8	K-8	K-8
Enrollment	895	957	988	988

School Demographic Change since 2020 – Pinecrest Academy of Northern Nevada

Pinecrest Academy of Northern Nevada

Year	Enrollment	A	B	C	H	I	M	P	IEP	ELL	FRL
20-21	685	1.6%	1.6%	65.6%	20.7%	2.9%	7.0%	0.4%	12.4%	*	17.2%
21-22	868	1.4%	1.9%	65.5%	19.8%	3.3%	7.4%	0.3%	12.9%	*	14.6%

A – Asian

B – Black

C – Caucasian

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

Pinecrest Academy of Northern Nevada School Financial Performance

Year	Rating
2020 – 2021	Meets the Standard

Pinecrest Academy Charter School Organizational Performance

Year	Rating
2020 – 2021	Meets the Standard

Pinecrest Academy of Northern Nevada Academic Performance

Year	NSPF Ratings
2020 – 2021 ³	N/A

³ Due to COVID-19, the Nevada Department of Education (NDE) applied for and was granted a 2020 – 21 school year waiver from the US 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 Nevada School Performance Framework (NSPF) school ratings for the 2020 – 21 school year.