

Steve Sisolak
Governor

STATE OF NEVADA

Rebecca Feiden
Executive Director



STATE PUBLIC CHARTER SCHOOL AUTHORITY

1749 North Stewart Street Suite 40
Carson City, Nevada 89706-2543
(775) 687-9174 · Fax (775) 687-9113

2080 East Flamingo Road Suite 230
Las Vegas, Nevada 89119-5164
(702) 486-8895 · Fax (702) 486-5543

ACTION MEMORANDUM

TO: SPCSA Authority Board
FROM: Mark Modrcin, Director of Authorizing, SPCSA
Danny Peltier, Management Analyst III, SPCSA
SUBJECT: **Somerset Academy of Las Vegas – Charter Amendment Request to Enter into an Articulation Agreement with Pinecrest Academy of Nevada**
DATE: November 18, 2022

Summary of Request and Recommendation

Somerset Academy of Las Vegas (Somerset) has submitted an amendment application requesting that the State Public Charter School Authority (SPCSA) grant a Good Cause Exemption and approval of an articulation agreement granting 8th grade students enrolled at the Somerset Stephanie middle school campus to enroll at Pinecrest’s (PAN) Cadence high school campus as permissible under NRS 388A.456(1)(d). Somerset seeks approval of this preference and the articulation agreement prior to the upcoming student application and enrollment period for the 2023 – 24 school year.

SPCSA staff has reviewed the application and recommends that the Authority grant the Good Cause Exemption and approve the amendment request. A proposed motion can be found on page 4 of this memo.

Background and Overview of the Amendment

Somerset first opened in 2011 and on December 3, 2021, the Authority renewed Somerset for a new four-year term which began on July 1, 2022. According to the amendment application, Somerset’s educational program is modeled after specific innovative learning methods and unique strategies that have proven successful in raising student learning and achievement with all

student populations. Somerset serves 9,596 students in grades Kindergarten through 12th across seven campuses according to the 2021 validation day.

Nevada Revised Statute 388A.456(1)(d) provides that, before a charter school enrolls pupils who are eligible for enrollment pursuant to NRS 388A.453, a charter school may enroll a child who is “enrolled at a charter school with which the charter school has an articulation agreement, approved by the sponsor, providing for priority enrollment.”

According to the application, Somerset requests to amend its existing charter contract with the SPCSA and approval of the school’s articulation agreement with PAN to allow for 8th grade students exiting the Somerset Stephanie campus to qualify for priority enrollment at the PAN Cadence campus’s high school as governed by NRS 388A.456(1)(d). The application states that the purpose of the articulation agreement and this amendment is to facilitate a high-quality charter high school pathway for eighth grade students currently attending Somerset’s Stephanie campus.

As noted in the amendment application, the central goals of requesting this amendment are:

1. To provide an integrated, comprehensive educational experience;
2. To promote greater collaboration in enhancing the family experience transitioning between middle and high school; and
3. To ultimately promote greater proficiency and mastery of academic content resulting in college and career readiness of students matriculating from Somerset’s Stephanie campus in their enrollment at PAN’s Cadence campus.

Although the schools seek the SPCSA’s approval to enter into this articulation agreement, there are no planned changes to governance, management, or fiscal structures currently in place for either PAN or Somerset.

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 application¹.

¹ 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 Somerset, SPCSA staff finds the school to be mostly meeting academic performance and meeting financial and organizational performance expectations. The Somerset – North Las Vegas campus is currently operating under an active Notice of Breach. The Somerset – Losee Elementary and Middle campuses are operating under an active Notice of Concern. The Somerset – Aliante Elementary campus is under an active Notice of Concern as well. Specific campus academic ratings are included on page 5 and 6 of this memo.

Additionally, the school earned 96 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.' Somerset has also been found to 'Meeting Standards' on the most recent 2021 SPCSA Financial Performance Framework.

Given the historic academic, organizational, and financial performance under SPCSA Performance Frameworks, SPCSA staff finds Somerset Academy of Las Vegas to be eligible for this amendment request. Importantly, while a few Somerset campuses have been operating under an academic intervention, this proposal does not contemplate an enrollment or grade level expansion at the Stephanie campus.

Analysis and Staff Recommendation

SPCSA staff finds this articulation agreement to be mutually beneficial to the relationship between Somerset and PAN. Due to the location of the Somerset Stephanie campus, in relation to other campuses in the Somerset network, having an agreement between the Stephanie campus and the PAN Cadence campus will provide families an option for a preferred seat in a sister system that is closer to the originating campus.

SPCSA staff has reviewed the final, signed, articulation agreement approved by both Somerset and PAN 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 Somerset Academy of Las Vegas to enter into an articulation agreement Pinecrest Academy of Nevada's Cadence campus, affording Stephanie campus students priority enrollment prior to the upcoming application window and enrollment for the 2023 – 2024 school year, as well as in future years should the articulation agreement remain in effect.

Proposed Motion: Grant the Good Cause Exemption request and approve Somerset Academy of Las Vegas to enter into an articulation agreement with the Pinecrest Academy of Nevada permitted under NRS 388A.456(1)(d) for Stephanie campus 8th graders.

The current, approved, enrollment caps for each Somerset campus are as follows:

School Year	2022-23	2023-24	2024-25	2025-26
Aliante				
Grade Levels	K-8	K-8	K-8	K-8
Enrollment	1,110	1,110	1,110	1,110
Lone Mountain				
Grade Levels	K-8	K-8	K-8	K-8
Enrollment	960	960	960	960
Losee				
Grade Levels	K-12	K-12	K-12	K-12
Enrollment	2,400	2,400	2,400	2,400
North Las Vegas				
Grade Levels	K-5	K-5	K-5	K-5
Enrollment	750	750	750	750
Skye Canyon				
Grade Levels	K-8	K-8	K-8	K-8
Enrollment	960	960	960	960
Sky Pointe				
Grade Levels	K-12	K-12	K-12	K-12
Enrollment	2,200	2,200	2,200	2,200
Stephanie				
Grade Levels	K-8	K-8	K-8	K-8
Enrollment	950	950	950	950
Total Enrollment	9,330	9,330	9,330	9,330

School Demographic Change since 2017 – Somerset Academy

Somerset Aliante

Year	Enrollment	A	B	C	H	I	M	P	IEP	ELL	FRL
17-18	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
18-19	831	5.4%	11.4%	32.9%	35.7%	0.6%	10.4%	3.3%	8.6%	*	17.9%
19-20	982	3.7%	11.5%	34.3%	36.3%	0.5%	10.6%	2.8%	11%	*	17%
20-21	1092	4.4%	12.7%	32.3%	36.7%	0.1%	10.1%	3.3%	13%	*	22%
21-22	1120	4.8%	11.5%	32.7%	37.5%	0.1%	10.5%	2.5%	15.2%	*	23.4%

Somerset Lone Mountain

Year	Enrollment	A	B	C	H	I	M	P	IEP	ELL	FRL
17-18	957	3.1%	6.5%	55.0%	25.6%	0.3%	7.8%	1.4%	10.8%	*	*
18-19	958	2.6%	6.3%	50.8%	30.6%	0.5%	7.7%	1.2%	9.3%	*	24.4%
19-20	957	3.2%	6.8%	48.4%	33.2%	0.3%	6.6%	1.1%	11.7%	*	23.8%
20-21	989	3.0%	7.0%	45%	36.6%	0.3%	7.0%	0.8%	11.3%	*	24.3%
21-22	986	2.8%	6.7%	42.4%	37.7%	0.3%	8.7%	1.1%	12.5%	*	24.2%

Somerset Losee

Year	Enrollment	A	B	C	H	I	M	P	IEP	ELL	FRL
17-18	1754	3.9%	17.1%	27.9%	41.1%	0.2%	7.6%	1.8%	13.2%	7.0%	27.6%
18-19	1949	4.1%	17.7%	23.0%	45.5%	0.3%	7.5%	1.6%	11.5%	8.4%	44.9%
19-20	2079	3.7%	18.7%	18.9%	48.8%	0.2%	7.7%	1.6%	10.8%	8.8%	43.2%
20-21	2120	4.1%	20.6%	14.5%	51.3%	0.2%	7.1%	1.9%	10.6%	8.9%	39.4%
21-22	2195	3.9%	20.2%	13.3%	52.9%	0.2%	7.6%	1.5%	10.7%	9.2%	45.1%

Somerset North Las Vegas

Year	Enrollment	A	B	C	H	I	M	P	IEP	ELL	FRL
17-18	1158	3.7%	18.0%	28.5%	38.0%	0.0%	9.4%	2.0%	10.1%	16.2%	24.2%
18-19	1161	4.0%	22.7%	19.8%	43.3%	0.0%	7.7%	2.2%	10.7%	10.1%	43%
19-20	1160	4.0%	24.5%	18.3%	41.1%	0.0%	9.8%	2.0%	11.1%	9.2%	44%
20-21	1189	4.3%	25.8%	16.8%	41.7%	0.0%	9.7%	1.4%	11.4%	7.9%	43.5%
21-22	1205	4.4%	26.1%	17.1%	40.7%	0.0%	10.4%	0.9%	11.4%	9.8%	47.1%

Somerset Skye Canyon

Year	Enrollment	A	B	C	H	I	M	P	IEP	ELL	FRL
17-18	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
18-19	855	1.1%	1.5%	18.1%	24%	0.0%	54.6%	0.4%	8.3%	*	10.9%

19-20	954	5.5%	4.4%	52.6%	24.5%	0.0%	11.3%	1.5%	8.8%	*	13.3%
20-21	993	5.7%	4.6%	53.1%	23.4%	0.0%	11.6%	1.3%	10.5%	*	12.9%
21-22	995	5.1%	4.6%	52.9%	22.9%	0.2%	13.1%	1.0%	11.1%	*	15%

Somerset Sky Pointe

Year	Enrollment	A	B	C	H	I	M	P	IEP	ELL	FRL
17-18	1914	1.8%	6.4%	64.8%	18.4%	0.2%	7.0%	1.1%	13.3%	*	*
18-19	1908	2.0%	7.1%	61.7%	19.4%	0.2%	8.2%	0.9%	12.2%	*	13.1%
19-20	1999	2.3%	6.9%	57.5%	22.3%	0.3%	9.4%	1.0%	11.1%	*	16.8%
20-21	2146	2.6%	7.7%	53%	25.4%	0.4%	9.4%	1.2%	12.2%	*	18.9%
21-22	2138	3.3%	7.2%	50.8%	27.6%	0.3%	9.3%	1.2%	12.1%	*	20.7%

Somerset Stephanie

Year	Enrollment	A	B	C	H	I	M	P	IEP	ELL	FRL
17-18	906	5.6%	5.7%	48.3%	29.1%	0.4%	9.1%	1.5%	11.1%	*	23.7%
18-19	964	5.2%	6.9%	47.6%	28%	0.5%	9.5%	2%	12%	*	35.4%
19-20	969	5.1%	7.2%	42.1%	32.5%	0.5%	10.6%	1.8%	13.9%	*	34.4%
20-21	959	4.6%	7.5%	39.7%	34.7%	0.3%	10.9%	2%	13.6%	*	33.3%
21-22	957	5.2%	7.7%	38.3%	35.1%	0.5%	11%	1.9%	14.9%	*	30.6%

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

Somerset Academy Charter School Financial Performance

Year	Rating
2019 – 2020	Meets the Standard

2020 – 2021	Meets the Standard
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Somerset Academy Charter School Organizational Performance

Year	Rating
2019 – 2020	Meets the Standard
2020 – 2021	Meets the Standard

Somerset Academy Academic Performance

Year			
2021 ²	Aliante – ES: 2-star	Aliante – MS: 5-star	
	Lone Mountain – ES: 5-star	Lone Mountain – MS: 5-star	
	Losee – ES: 2-star	Losee – MS: 2-star	Losee – HS: 2-star
	North Las Vegas – ES: 2-star	North Las Vegas – MS: 4-star	Sky Pointe – HS: 2-star
	Skye Canyon – ES: 5-star	Skye Canyon – MS: 5-star	
	Sky Pointe – ES: 5-star	Sky Pointe – MS: 5-star	
	Stephanie – ES: 5-star	Stephanie – MS: 5-star	
2020 ³	Aliante – ES: 2-star	Aliante – MS: 5-star	
	Lone Mountain – ES: 5-star	Lone Mountain – MS: 5-star	
	Losee – ES: 2-star	Losee – MS: 2-star	Losee – HS: 2-star
	North Las Vegas – ES: 2-star	North Las Vegas – MS: 4-star	Sky Pointe – HS: 2-star
	Skye Canyon – ES: 5-star	Skye Canyon – MS: 5-star	
	Sky Pointe – ES: 5-star	Sky Pointe – MS: 5-star	
	Stephanie – ES: 5-star	Stephanie – MS: 5-star	
	Aliante – ES: 2-star	Aliante – MS: 5-star	
	Lone Mountain – ES: 5-star	Lone Mountain – MS: 5-star	

² 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

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.

2019	Losee – ES: 2-star	Losee – MS: 2-star	Losee – HS: 2-star
	North Las Vegas – ES: 2-star	North Las Vegas – MS: 4-star	Sky Pointe – HS: 2-star
	Skye Canyon – ES: 5-star	Skye Canyon – MS: 5-star	
	Sky Pointe – ES: 5-star	Sky Pointe – MS: 5-star	
	Stephanie – ES: 5-star	Stephanie – MS: 5-star	
2018	Lone Mountain – ES: 4-star	Lone Mountain – MS: 5-star	
	Losee – ES: 3-star	Losee – MS: 3-star	
	North Las Vegas – ES: 2-star	North Las Vegas – MS: 3-star	Losee – HS: Not Rated
	Sky Pointe – ES: 4-star	Sky Pointe – MS: 3-star	Sky Pointe – HS: 3-star
	Stephanie – ES: 4-star	Stephanie – MS: 5-star	