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ACTION MEMORANDUM

TO: SPCSA Board
FROM: Mark Modrcin, Director of Authorizing, SPCSA
Danny Peltier, Management Analyst III, SPCSA
SUBJECT: **Girls Empowerment Middle School Las Vegas Request to Reduce 2022-2023 Enrollment Cap**
DATE: December 16, 2022

Summary of Request and Recommendation

Girls Empowerment Middle School Las Vegas (GEMS) has submitted an amendment application requesting that the State Public Charter School Authority (SPCSA) grant a Good Cause Exemption and approve the request to reduce its 2022-2023 enrollment cap from 140 students to 100 students.

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 3 of this memo.

Background and Overview of the Amendment

GEMS is located at 4220 S Maryland Parkway, Bldg B-390, Las Vegas, Nevada, 89119. GEMS mission is, "To empower girls to excel academically, develop their voices, and lead fearlessly in a safe, caring educational environment. Its vision is a world where all young people have the tools and ability to create a better future for themselves and their communities." As of Validation Day 2022, GEMS had 92 students enrolled.

According to the application, GEMS is seeking to reduce its enrollment cap to 100 students from its currently approved enrollment of 140 students due to lower than expected enrollment.

The Authority approved a name change, modified mission and vision, modified academic and organizational plans, and a reduction of the enrollment cap to 140 students at its June 27, 2022 meeting. Prior to the 2021 – 2022 school year, the school was known as Girls Athletic Leadership School (GALS). According to the most recent amendment application, when GEMS filed their amendment to change its school name over the summer, it had almost 120 students enrolled for the 2022-2023 school year. Unfortunately, a large number of those students ultimately were unable to attend GEMS and actual enrollment dipped when the school year began. GEMS did note that it has added new students since August and continues to add some students each week. The amendment states that GEMS anticipates enrollment remaining around 100 students for the remainder of the 2022-2023 school year.

GEMS also is preparing to launch an enrollment campaign in the coming weeks according to the application. The school hopes to be able to increase enrollment for the 2023-2024 school, and as such, the school is not requesting a reduction to the school’s cap beyond the current year. GEMS requests that the enrollment cap for the remaining years of the charter term remain unchanged.

If approved, GEMS enrollment cap for the remainder of its charter term would be:

School Year	2022-23	2023-24	2024-25	2025-26
Grade Levels	6 th – 8 th	6 th – 8 th	6 th – 8 th	6 th – 8 th
Total Enrollment	100	165	190	215

GEMS also provided updated an updated budget that takes into account the lower than expected enrollment. According to the budget narrative, the board, Executive Director, and Principal continue to seek out grants and fundraising opportunities. GEMS also stated that it is in talks with a potential benefactor, but it is too soon to have specifics to share about length and amount of funding.

Legal Authority

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. When determining whether to approve an amendment request, the sponsor considers the charter school’s compliance with applicable local, state and federal laws and regulations and evidence relating to the academics, finance and organization of the charter school. (See NAC 388A.400(8) and NRS 388A.276).

Analysis and Staff Recommendation

When reviewing an amendment application, SPCSA staff reviews the academic, financial and organizational performance of the applicant charter school. According to the most recent organizational data, GALS – Las Vegas earned 100 points on the 2021 – 22 Organizational

Framework, meeting performance standards for the past school year. Additionally, the school was determined to be meeting performance standards under the SPCSA Financial Framework for the most recent year. While the school has yet to be rated under the Nevada School Performance Framework (NSPF), GEMS was found to be Meeting the Standard on the SPCSA’s 2021-2022 Academic Performance Framework.

SPCSA staff recommends the SPCSA board approve the request of GEMS to change its enrollment cap from 140 students to 100 students for the 2022-2023 school year in order to comply with terms in the charter contract. SPCSA staff will continue to monitor the enrollment of GEMS throughout the 2022-2023 school year.

Proposed Motion: Grant the Good Cause Exemption request and approve Girls Empowerment Middle School Las Vegas’s request to reduce its enrollment cap for the 2022-2023 school year to 100 students.

If approved, GEMS enrollment cap for its charter term will be:

School Year	2022-23	2023-24	2024-25	2025-26
Grade Levels	6 th – 8 th	6 th – 8 th	6 th – 8 th	6 th – 8 th
Total Enrollment	100	165	190	215

The current GEMS enrollment cap for its charter term is:

School Year	2022-23	2023-24	2024-25	2025-26
Grade Levels	6 th – 8 th	6 th – 8 th	6 th – 8 th	6 th – 8 th
Total Enrollment	140	165	190	215

School Demographics since 2020 – GEMS

GEMS

Year	Enrollment	A	B	C	H	I	M	P	IEP	ELL	FRL
20-21	96	4.1%	18.7%	6.2%	65.6%	0%	3.1%	2%	11.4%	17.7%	>95%
21-22	103	2.9%	26.2%	6.7%	52.4%	0%	9.7%	1.9%	17.4%	21.3%	>95%
22-23	92	2.1%	26.0%	2.1%	56.5%	0.0%	10.8%	2.1%	13.0%	22.8%	>95%

- 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

GEMS Financial Performance

2021	Meets Standard
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GEMS Organizational Performance

2021	Meets Standard
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Nevada School Performance Framework (NSPF) – GEMS (Formerly GALs)

Year	NSPF Ratings
2019 – 2020	N/A
2020 - 2021	N/A

GEMS 2021-22 SPCSA Academic Performance Results¹

	2021-22 SPCSA Academic Framework Score	2021-22 SPCSA Academic Framework Rating
Middle	58.5	Meets Standard

¹ The Nevada Department of Education (NDE) calculated NSPF index scores for the 2021-22 school year but did not calculate corresponding star ratings (shown as N/A). 2021-22 NSPF details and rules can be found at: <http://nevadareportcard.nv.gov/DI/MoreDownload?filename=Nevada%20School%20Performance%20Framework%20Manual%202021-22%20School%20Year.pdf>