



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 Board
FROM: Mark Modrcin, Director of Authorizing
SUBJECT: **Imagine Schools at Mountain View – Charter Renewal Recommendation**
DATE: December 16, 2022

Background and Summary

Imagine School at Mountain View (ISMV) has submitted an application to renew its charter contract as the current charter contract expires on June 30, 2023. ISMV is a brick-and-mortar public charter school that currently serves 679 students in Kindergarten through 6th grade at one campus in Las Vegas.

After a thorough review of the historical data and charter renewal application, staff recommends that the Authority approve the charter renewal of ISMV for a six-year term, beginning July 1, 2023.

The Process Related to Renewal Applications and the Standards Under Which an Application for Renewal of a Charter Contract Will be Granted

The first step in the renewal process is the submission of a renewal report by SPCSA staff to the charter school.¹ Specifically, on or before June 30 immediately preceding the final school year prior to expiration of a charter school's charter contract, the SPCSA submits to the governing body a report regarding renewal. The ISMV renewal report was sent to the board chair on June 30, 2022 and can be found within the supporting documentation for the item.

The renewal report summarizes the performance of the charter school under the terms of the charter contract, identifies any deficiencies related to performance of the charter school that might lead to non-renewal of the charter contract, sets forth the requirements for the renewal application, and identifies the criteria that the sponsor will apply in making a determination on the application for renewal. The charter school may submit a response to the renewal report. [See NRS 388A.285\(1\) and \(2\)](#).

Next, the governing body of the charter school must submit a written notice of intent to submit an application for renewal to the SPCSA 45 days prior to submitting a renewal application. See [NAC 388A.415\(1\)](#). ISMV submitted its notice of

¹ Charter school regulations provide for an expedited and streamlined renewal process for high-performing charter schools. Generally, charter schools qualifying for expedited renewal review are those charter schools that are consistently rated as four- and five-star schools under the NSPF and have received no notices of concern or notices of breach for academic, organizational or financial performance. See [NAC 388A.415\(2\)](#).

Intent to Renew its charter contract on August 31, 2022 and ISMV's notice of intent to renew can be found along with the supporting documents.

In regard to the renewal application, the window to submit the actual renewal application is October 1 through October 15. See [NRS 388A.285\(3\)](#) and [NAC 388A.415\(1\)](#). The application for renewal must include, without limitation:

- (a) The requirements for the application identified by the sponsor in the performance report prepared by the sponsor;
- (b) A description of the academic, financial and organizational vision and plans for the charter school for the next charter term;
- (c) Any information or data that the governing body of the charter school determines supports the renewal of the charter contract in addition to the information contained in the performance report prepared by the sponsor and any response submitted by the governing body; and
- (d) A description of any improvements to the charter school already undertaken or planned.

See [NRS 388A.285\(3\)](#). On October 14, 2022, ISMV submitted its renewal application, which can be found included with the supporting documents.

The ISMV renewal application states that the school's educational program is modeled after specific, innovative learning methods and strategies that have proven successful in raising student learning and achievement. These include but are not limited to: a standards-based curriculum (Engage NY) based on Common Core Standards for Learning; a thematic approach to integrate core areas of study such as mathematics, reading, language arts, writing, science, and social studies; appropriate assessments for learning (screening, progress monitoring, and diagnostic); data-driven high-quality differentiated instruction; supplemental programs for student advancement and remediation; support for teachers and ongoing professional development for advancing technology and other 21st century resources; research-based instructional practices; weekly grade level and monthly staff meetings and ongoing professional development workshops; tutoring for remediation and targeted interventions for struggling readers and students performing below grade-level. The renewal application goes on to note that the school has demonstrated this model can lead to academic gains for educationally disadvantaged students and that ISMV will continue to work towards closing any existing achievement gaps within its target population.

For the upcoming charter term, ISMV states that the school community will continue to provide students the quality education they seek, with administrators and data teams continuing to use data analysis to collaboratively develop instructionally focused calendars with timelines for addressing targeted strands as denoted in assessed benchmarks. Instructors will adjust their instruction, monitor student progress, and select appropriate classroom activities to work on student deficiencies and to guide differentiated instruction.

Finally, the renewal application notes that current financial state of the school reflects a positive cash flow annually that provides the administration the ability to devise a strict budget process with spending funds in a very defined way. As the school moves forward in the upcoming charter term, ISMV seeks to maintain the financial security of the operating system and enhance the curriculum to serve its community in the best ways possible.

Decisions to renew a charter school contract or deny a renewal application are made and based upon the Nevada's charter school statutes and regulations related to charter school renewal (see [NRS 388A.285](#)) and the collective record of a school's academic, financial, organizational, findings from the site evaluation process, and all data and information provided by the Department of Education.

Note that no factor may be given more weight than the academic performance of pupils at the charter school, and the academic performance of the charter school is the touchstone of any renewal decision. See [NAC 388A.415\(10\)\(b\)](#).

In making its recommendation to the Authority regarding a renewal application, SPCSA staff considers the past performance of the charter school, including information contained in the application for renewal, any site evaluations, academic achievement of pupils, and any other information that is determined to be relevant to whether the charter contract should be renewed, including financial and organizational performance. See [NAC 388A.415\(9\)](#).

When determining whether to grant an application for renewal of a charter contract, the Authority Board considers the foregoing factors, any other information that the Authority Board determines is relevant to whether the charter contract should be renewed. The Authority Board will consider the “totality of the evidence” presented to it when making a renewal decision. See [NAC 388A.415\(9\)](#). Again, as stated above, no factor is to be given more weight than the academic performance of pupils at the charter school.² See [NAC 388A.415\(10\)\(b\)](#).

At its sole discretion, the Authority Board may renew a charter contract for a term of three (3) to ten (10) years, or, alternatively, deny the renewal application. See [NRS 388A.285\(6\)](#) and [NAC 388A.415\(11\)](#). Note that a variable term length upon renewal was discretion afforded to the Authority under Senate Bill 451 during the 2019 Legislative Session and is now codified in [NRS 388A.285\(6\)](#).

The Authority Board may accept or reject, in whole or part, the recommendation of the Executive Director. See [NAC 388A.415\(10\)\(a\)](#). See [NAC 388A.415\(11\)\(b\) and \(c\)](#).

Alternatively, the Authority Board may deny the renewal application for the purpose of reconstituting the governing body of the charter school pursuant to [NRS 388A.330](#) and assigning the charter contract to a charter management organization or a new governing body which may include, without limitation, the governing body of another charter school or a governing body assembled by the Executive Director; deny the renewal application for the purpose of restarting the charter school and issuing a new charter contract pursuant to [NRS 388A.300](#) to a charter management organization or a new governing body, including, without limitation, the governing body of another charter school, which will inherit any assets of the charter school which remain following dissolution; or deny the renewal of a charter contract for the purpose of closing the charter school. See [NAC 388A.415\(11\)\(d\),\(e\) and \(f\)](#).

Analysis

Academics

ISMV currently operates one campus in Las Vegas. This campus has received NSPF ratings over the course of the charter term which indicate consistent performance over the current charter term that meet academic performance expectations. The ISMV elementary school program earned a 3-star rating according to the 2017 – 2018 and 2018 – 2019 NSPF ratings. As noted in the NSPF guidance document, a 3-star rating identifies an adequate school that has met the state’s standard for performance. The all-students group has met expectations for academic achievement or growth. Subgroups meet expectations for academic achievement or growth with little exception; however, no group is far below standard.

The ISMV middle school program has also exhibited consistent performance over the current charter term, earning at least a 4-star rating under the NSPF each year the school has qualified for a rating. As noted in the NSPF guidance document, a 4-star rating recognizes a commendable school that has performed well for all students and subgroups. A 4-star school demonstrates satisfactory to strong academic performance for all students. Further, the school is successfully promoting academic progress for all student groups as reflected in closing opportunity gaps. The school does not fail to meet expectations for any group on any indicator. As a result of this consistent performance over the current charter term, the Authority has not issued any Notices to ISMV.

As the Authority is aware, NSPF school ratings and accountability for the 2019 – 2020 and 2020 – 2021 school years have been carried over from the 2018 – 2019 reporting year. Star ratings were not calculated for the 2021 – 2022 school year due to lack of data brought on by the COVID-19 pandemic as approved by the U.S. Department of Education³, but the Nevada Department of Education published index scores⁴. The ISMV elementary program earned an index score of 67.7 while the middle school program earned an index score of 81.6. In a typical year when star ratings are issued, these index scores would be equivalent to a four-star rating and a five-star rating, respectively.

² See [NAC 388A.415\(10\)](#). With regard to a second renewal, the Authority is required to place an even greater weight on academic performance than was assigned to it on the first renewal.

³ Page 72 of the NSPF technical guide:

<http://nevadareportcard.nv.gov/DI/MoreDownload?filename=Nevada%20School%20Performance%20Framework%20Manual%202021-22%20School%20Year.pdf>

⁴ According to the NSPF technical guide released by the Nevada Department of Education, star ratings were not calculated for the 2021 – 2022 school year in accordance with flexibility offered in the U.S. Department of Education’s addendum to Nevada’s consolidated state plan due to COVID-19. Star ratings will resume in 2023.

The NSPF results for this current charter term are summarized and provided in the table below:

School Year	NSPF Rating
2021 - 2022 ⁵	- Elementary: 67.7 - Middle: 81.6
2020 – 2021 ⁶	- Elementary: 3 – stars - Middle: 4 – stars
2019 – 2020 ⁷	- Elementary: 3 – stars - Middle: 4 – stars
2018 – 2019	- Elementary: 3 – stars - Middle: 4 – stars
2017 – 2018	- Elementary: 3 – stars

The Authority adopted its own Academic Performance Framework in 2019⁸. Results for ISMV during the 2021 – 2022 can be found below.

Campus	2021-22 SPCSA Academic Framework Score	2021-22 SPCSA Academic Framework Rating
Elementary	73.6	Meets Standard
Middle	83.9	Exceeds Standard

Organizational

The current iteration of the SPCSA’s Organizational Performance Framework was adopted by the Authority in the summer of 2019. The school earned 100 points under the 2020 Organizational Performance Framework as approved by the Authority on November 6, 2020, and earned 100 points under the 2021 Organizational Performance Framework as approved by the Authority on January 28, 2022. SPCSA staff have not noted any substantial organizational performance concerns during the 2022 – 2023 school year.

SPCSA Organizational Framework Findings

2021 – 2022	<i>To be reported in December 2022</i>
2020 – 2021	Meets the Standard (100/100 points)
2019 – 2020	Meets the Standard (100/100 points)
2018 – 2019	No organizational performance concerns identified
2017 – 2018	No organizational performance concerns identified

⁵ According to the NSPF technical guide released by the Nevada Department of Education, star ratings were not calculated for the 2021 – 2022 school year in accordance with flexibility offered in the U.S. Department of Education’s addendum to Nevada’s consolidated state plan due to COVID-19. Star ratings will resume in 2023.

⁶ 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.

⁷Due 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.

⁸ Despite being adopted in 2019, results under the SPCSA Academic performance Framework were not adopted for the 2019 – 2020 and 2020 – 2021 school years due to the COVID-19 pandemic and the lack of NSPF scores. 2021 – 2022 was the first academic year with reported scores.

Financial

In 2018, the Authority requested that the SPCSA Financial Framework be modified so as to be better assess the financial health of sponsored schools. The revised SPCSA Financial Framework was approved on January 18, 2019, with results for FY20 approved by the Authority in January 2021. ISMV met performance standards for FY20 as the school earned a ‘Meets Standard’ rating under six of the seven indicators within the framework. For FY21, ISMV again demonstrated strong performance, earning a ‘Meets Standard’ rating under all seven of the seven reported indicators.

SPCSA Financial Framework Findings

2021 – 2022	<i>To be reported in January 2023</i>
2020 – 2021	Meets the Standard
2019 – 2020	Meets the Standard
2018 – 2019	No financial performance concerns identified
2017 – 2018	No financial performance concerns identified

Recommendation: Renew Imagine Schools at Mountain View for a 6-year term

As described above, ISMV has consistently exhibited at least adequate of academic performance over the charter term, earning at least 3-stars or better for both the elementary and middle school program in every year. The elementary school program has historically met performance expectations according to the NSPF. The middle school program has also consistently met performance expectations under the NSPF over the current charter term, and has usually exhibited slightly stronger performance than the middle school. This level of performance was reaffirmed by the 2021 – 2022 SPCSA Academic Performance Framework ratings as well as the index scores issued by the Nevada Department of Education for the 2021 – 2022 school year.

ISMV has not exhibited any major organizational or financial performance concerns over the course of the current charter term.

Ultimately, because the academic performance of ISMV has been consistently at or above expected performance levels, throughout the current charter term, SPCSA staff recommends that the Authority renew ISMV for a six-year term, beginning July 1, 2023. Stronger performance at or above a four-star rating as measured by the NSPF, particularly with regard to the school’s elementary school program, is needed to warrant a longer charter term. The new term would be subject to the enrollment caps outlined below.

	2023-2024	2024-2025	2025-2026	2026-2027	2027-2028	2028-2029
Enrollment Caps						
ISMV	750	750	750	750	750	750
Grades Served <i>(all campuses)</i>	K-6	K-6	K-6	K-6	K-6	K-6

Proposed Motion

Approve the Imagine Schools at Mountain View Renewal Application for a six-year term beginning July 1, 2023 and the enrollment caps as outlined above in the recommendation memo. In the event of academic, financial or organizational underperformance the Authority may impose additional oversight.

Appendix: School Demographics since 2017⁹

Imagine Schools at Mountain View (ISMV)

Year	Total Enrollment	A	B	C	H	I	M	P	IEP	ELL	FRL
17-18	685	8.6%	18.8%	29.7%	31.2%	0.5%	8.9%	2.0%	7.4%	11.8%	21.1%
18-19	712	7.7%	16.7%	28.9%	32.4%	0.9%	12.0%	1.1%	9.9%	9.9%	29.2%
19-20	715	5.8%	15.9%	29.7%	33.8%	0.4%	13.4%	0.6%	12.3%	11.4%	32.0%
20-21	673	5.4%	15.6%	29.7%	33.5%	0.4%	14.1%	1.0%	15.1%	10.6%	27.4%
21-22	654	5.9%	18.8%	24.9%	35.4%	0.4%	13.1%	1.2%	11.9%	12.2%	36.0%
22-23	679	5.8%	19.5%	26.3%	33.8%	0.2%	12.9%	1.0%	10.3%	11.4%	48.1%

A – Asian

B – Black/African American

C – Caucasian/White

H – Hispanic/Latino

I – American Indian/Alaskan Native

M – Two or More Races

P – Pacific Islander

IEP – Individualized Education Program – A student with a disability/special education student

ELL – English Language Learner

FRL – A student who qualifies for Free or Reduced-Price Lunch

To protect student privacy, rates associated with IEP, ELL, and FRL populations less than 10 students are displayed with an asterisk (*), and extreme values less than 5 or greater than 95 percent are shown as <5 and >95, respectively. N/A indicates the population did not exist.

⁹ Enrollment as of Validation Day each year (October 1).