



STATE PUBLIC CHARTER SCHOOL AUTHORITY

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ACTION MEMORANDUM

TO: SPCSA Board
FROM: Mike Dang, Manager, Financial and Organizational Performance
Mark Modrcin, Director of Authorizing
SUBJECT: **Young Women’s Leadership Academy**
1. Grant the Requested Good Cause exemption,
2. Approve a temporary location to start the 2022 – 2023 school year
DATE: July 29, 2022

Summary of Request and Recommendation

Young Women’s Leadership Academy (“YWLA”) is a charter school which was conditionally approved by the SPCSA board in the November 5, 2021 SPCSA board meeting. According to the amendment application before this board, YWLA wants to temporarily locate at the Boys and Girls Club located at 920 Cottage Grove Las Vegas, NV 89119. This will enable the school “to continue focusing on the educational excellence and development of the students currently registered in grades 6 and 9 while permitting additional marketing efforts to promote YWLA’s unique educational program to additional prospective students both in the targeted communities and targeted grade levels.” The YWLA Governing Board has voted on the proposed amendment prior to submission. The YWLA Board is now seeking SPCSA board approval to:

1. Grant its Good Cause exemption request to hear this matter, and
2. Temporarily locate at the Boys and Girls Club located on the UNLV Campus at 920 Cottage Grove Avenue on the UNLV campus.

Once the previously approved facility at 3415 S. Mojave Rd. Las Vegas, NV 89121 has been appropriately permitted, and the school is in possession of at least a Temporary Certificate of Occupancy (TCO), YWLA will relocate to that permanent facility. The amendment request notes that this is likely to occur at the end of August.

After a thorough review of the amendment application, SPCSA staff recommends that the Authority grant YWLA a Good Cause Exemption and approve the amendment request to temporarily locate at the 920 Cottage Grove Avenue location for the start of the 2022-2023 school year.

Background and Analysis

YWLA's charter application was approved by the SPCSA board on November 5, 2021. The term of the original Charter Contract began on July 1, 2022, and is scheduled to expire on June 30, 2028. The school's opening year grade configuration is 6th and 9th Grades after which the school will grow until it serves students in grades 6th through 12. At the SPCSA Board meeting last month, the SPCSA Board approved YWLA's request to reduce its year one enrollment target from 150 to 110 students.

YWLA is now seeking approval for the temporary use of the Boys and Girls Club facility located at 920 Cottage Grove Avenue, Las Vegas, NV 89119. The school is currently approved to operate at the Palabra Viva Las Vegas at 3415 South Mojave Road, Las Vegas, NV 89121 for the first two years of the charter contract. YWLA is now seeking approval for the temporary operate out of the Boys and Girls Club facility located at 920 Cottage Grove Avenue, Las Vegas, NV 89119 for the beginning of the 2022 – 2023 school year. This temporary location is where the Girls Empowerment Middle School (GEMS, formerly known as GALS) was temporarily located until it moved to its permanent location. This proposed temporary facility is located 3.1 driving miles West, Southwest of the previously approved location for the remainder of the 2022 – 23 school year.

This temporary use for YWLA is requested due to permitting and construction delays at its approved location. Based on the timeline provided in the amendment, the school anticipates moving into their permanent facility shortly after the TCO is issued.

History

According to the amendment application, the first YWLA school opened in East Harlem in 1996 as “The Young Women’s Leadership School.” The school has grown into a national network of excellent all-girls college prep schools all driven by the same mission and vision: to nurture the intellectual curiosity and creativity of young women. Young Women’s Leadership Schools accomplish this by supporting the ‘whole girl’ and seek to maximize the academic achievement, social emotional well-being, and post-secondary success of each student.

YWLA believes that once the school is fully operational, word of mouth networking amongst students and families, social media marketing, and other grassroots, community events promoting the unique educational opportunities afforded at YWLA will contribute to increased student enrollment to achieve the school’s anticipated growth at full capacity in 2025-2026.

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.

In this case, SPCSA staff find that relocating in a temporary facility, constitutes a material change to the charter contract, necessitating consideration and possible approval by the Authority.

Applicant Eligibility

When reviewing an amendment application for RFA eligibility, SPCSA staff reviews the academic, financial and organizational performance of the applicant charter school. Academically, the first Nevada School Performance Framework (NSPF) Report Card for YWLA is expected at the conclusion of its upcoming first school year, ending June 2023. A table summarizing the academic performance of YWLA is expected to be provided after the school's first year of instruction ending June 2023².

While YWLA has yet to begin its first year of operation as a SPCSA charter school, the school has been cooperative with SPCSA staff regarding any financial and organizational performance matters. In light of the above findings, SPCSA staff finds that YWLA's amendment request is eligible to be approved.

Summary and Recommendation

Staff noted above the reasons for YWLA's request to temporarily locate at the Boys and Girls Club in the event YWLA does not receive its proper Certificate of Occupancy at its South Mojave location in time for the first day of school. The reasons are primarily due to permitting and construction delays. SPCSA staff was first notified of these delays in early July.

SPCSA staff recommends the SPCSA board approve the request of YWLA to temporarily locate at the Boys and Girls Club for the start of the upcoming school year until it can move into its South Mojave location, subject to the condition(s) stated in the Proposed Motion. SPCSA staff is scheduled to conduct a walkthrough of the Boys and Girls Club facility on August 9th. Once appropriate permitting has been completed and YWLA has at least a TCO for the previously approved permanent facility, SPCSA staff will work with the school to ensure that the SPCSA Pre-Opening process has been completed, including a walkthrough of the permanent facility, prior to the school relocating later this fall.

Proposed Motion:

Grant YWLA a Good Cause Exemption Request and approve YWLA's amendment request to temporarily locate at the Boys and Girls Club at 920 Cottage Grove Avenue, subject to the condition that the school show evidence that it has met the facility requirements of NRS 388A.360 and that SPCSA staff has completed a walkthrough of the temporary Cottage Grove facility, prior to the start of the school year.

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.

² Due to COVID-19, the Nevada Department of Education (NDE) applied for and was granted a 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) for both the 2019 – 20 and 2020 – 21 school years. 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. For the 2020 – 2021 school year, Nevada statewide assessments were administered, but the NDE did not calculate new NSPF school ratings for the 2020 – 21 school year.

SPCSA's charter school contract with YWLA has enrollment caps (amended and approved in the June 27, 2022 SPCSA Board Meeting to the figures shown below) as follows for the remainder of the charter term:

School Year	2022-23	2023-24	2024-25	2025-26	2026-27	2027-28
Grade Levels	6, 9	6-7, 9-10	6-11	6-12	6-12	6-12
Total Enrollment	110	300	450	540	570	600

Historical Performance and Demographic Information

1. Academic ratings information expected after students complete first year of school (SYE 23).
2. School Total Enrollment and Demographics expected after year one statistics available (SYE 23).