



NEVADA STATE PUBLIC CHARTER SCHOOL AUTHORITY

Friday, January 27, 2023
9:00AM

The State Public Charter School Authority board meeting was conducted in-person and virtually.

MINUTES OF THE MEETING

BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT IN-PERSON:

Vice Chair Sheila Moulton
Member Lee Farris
Member Jackson Olsen

BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT VIRTUALLY:

Chair Melissa Mackedon
Member Cindi Rivera
Member Kurt Thigpen
Member Maureen Schafer
Member Tonia Holmes-Sutton
Member Shauntee Rosales

AUTHORITY STAFF PRESENT IN-PERSON:

Rebecca Feiden, Executive Director
Mark Modrcin, Director of Authorizing

AUTHORITY STAFF PRESENT VIRTUALLY:

Ryan Herrick, General Counsel
Danny Peltier, Management Analyst II
Marinna Cutler, Director of School Support

AUDIENCE IN ATTENDANCE IN-PERSON:

Jessica LeNeave
Bryan Rudden
Paul Ballou
Julie Carver
Brett Willis
Jose Herrera
Gil Lopez
Tom Nichols
Gabe Shirey
Steve Albrecht

AUDIENCE IN ATTENDANCE VIRTUALLY:

Jai Mallory
Jose Silva
Gia Maraccini
Michael O'Dowd

Agenda Item 1 – Call to Order and Roll Call, and Pledge of Allegiance [00:00:44]

Melissa Mackedon, Board Chair of the State Public Charter School Authority (SPCSA), called the meeting to order and Vice Chair Moulton facilitated the pledge of allegiance.

Agenda Item 2 – Public Comment #1 [00:02:20]

Ryan Herrick, General Counsel, said they did not receive any written public comment prior to the meeting. Vice Chair Moulton facilitated the public comment in the board room.

1. Gil Lopez, regarding National School Choice Week.

Agenda Item 3 – Approval of December 16, 2022 SPCSA Board Meeting Action Minutes. [00:05:12]

Motion: Member Olsen made the motion to approve. Vice Chair Moulton seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

Agenda Item 4 – SPCSA Charter School Governing Body Governance Standards [00:22:01]

Vice Chair Moulton focused on the last two bullets on standard number 1 Focus on Student Growth, Achievement, and Social and Emotional Wellbeing, because they are hearing a lot of reports today. She provided brief comments related thereto.

Agenda Item 5 – Executive Director’s Report [00:08:02]

d. SPCSA Monitoring of Special Education Enrollment Practices

Marinna Cutler, Director of School Support, provided the update related to the SPCSA’s monitoring of Special Education practices. Beginning next week, SPCSA staff will make random unannounced calls to charter schools and will represent themselves as a parent of a child with a disability who is seeking information on admission and enrollment at the school. They plan to document the school’s response and potentially follow up with the school depending on the response. The purpose is to ensure compliance with NRS 388A.453. There was brief discussion regarding the process.

a. Legislative Session Preview [00:16:43]

Mr. Herrick provided the legislative update. He referred to the memo in the supporting materials and outlined the important upcoming dates. The next section lists the upcoming SPCSA Presentations to Legislative Committees. SPCSA staff will provide the SPCSA Board with additional information regarding the date and time of these presentations along with a link and other information once this information is available. The update also includes some information regarding the bill draft requests and bills and a more detailed summary of those is at the end. There is also guidance from the Attorney General’s Office attached for boards and commissions.

b. Executive Order 2023-003: Review of Existing Regulations by Executive Branch Agencies, Departments, Boards and Commissions [00:21:09]

Mr. Herrick said on January 12, 2023 Governor Lombardo issued Executive Order 2023-003, a copy is attached within the supporting materials. He provided a summary of the Order and said they will have more information and an update on this at the March meeting.

c. New Charter School Applicant Training and Guidance [00:24:06]

Rebecca Feiden, Executive Director said that staff has posted a comprehensive guidance document regarding the new school application which is significantly more detailed than previously done. Additionally, they have held three training sessions so far. The meetings are held in-person, live streamed for those who want to participate online and they also put the recordings on the SPCSA website. They have two remaining training sessions scheduled in February. At the March meeting, SPCSA staff will notify the Authority of the Letters of Intent received that are due on January 30th.

Agenda Item 6 – New Schools Updates. [00:29:04]

a. Eagle Charter Schools of Nevada

Mark Modrcin, Director of Authorizing, said Eagle Charter Schools plans to open a K-5 growing to K-8 with a year one enrollment of 540 students, and their identified location is 2025 E. Sahara in Las Vegas. Jose Herrera, Founding Principal, Eagle Charter Schools, reported the school's pre-opening progress and the tasks, charter conditions, facility update, hiring and recent events. The updates can also be found in the school's presentation within the supporting documents. There was further conversation around the staffing at the charter school.

c. Rooted School – Clark County [00:41:27]

Director Modrcin said Rooted School – Clark County plans to open this fall with grades 9-10 with a year one enrollment of 180 students and intend to locate and lease space from Nevada Prep in year one. Jose Silva, Executive Director, Rooted School – Clark County, reported that their lease was signed earlier this week. He noted that they plan to have a presentation next meeting but in the meantime provided a verbal update. On January 14 the school's board had its first meeting since charter approval. As of today, to their knowledge, they have met all charter conditions which were due by the January 15 deadline for opening as described in the pre-opening checklist. Dr. Silva spoke to the school's efforts to date and plans moving forward.

d. Southern Nevada Trades High School [00:46:07]

Director Modrcin said Southern Nevada Trades High School plans to open this fall with grades 9-10 with a total enrollment of 200 and an identified location is 1580 Bledsoe Lane in Las Vegas.

Julie Carver, Executive Director, said they are opening their application on February 1. They have met their unique conditions to date and are in the process of hiring their principal. Brett Willis, Board Chair, reported the updates regarding the facility and community outreach. There was further discussion around the \$700,000 raised.

b. Pinecrest Academy – Springs Campus [00:56:08]

Chair Mackedon directed the Authority to agenda item #8(a) to take action on before Pinecrest Academy provides the update related to their pre-opening.

Agenda Item 8 – Charter School Contract Amendment Applications

a. Pinecrest Academy of Nevada – Springs Campus

Danny Peltier, Management Analyst II, said that Pinecrest Academy is requesting a good cause exemption and a request for an amendment to operate at a temporary facility and to adjust the enrollment cap and grade levels served for the new Springs Campus. The prior location is no longer feasible because they are unable to secure a lease and are now seeking to operate in a temporary facility located at 6151 West Charleston Boulevard in the 89146 zip code for at least the first two years. Additionally, Pinecrest Academy is seeking to reduce its enrollment and grade levels served during the 2023-24 school year from 645 students in grades K-6 to 257 students in grades K-3. For the 2024-25 school year Pinecrest Academy proposes adding the 4th grade and increasing the enrollment to 335 students. They are on track towards meeting their conditions related to the October board approval. Additional information can be found in the memo within the supporting materials. SPCSA Staff is supportive of the good cause exemption request and the amendment requests and recommends approval with conditions which can be found on page five of the memo.

Michael O'Dowd, Principal, said he is virtual but in the board room is Steve Albrecht and Paul Ballou. Mr. O'Dowd reported the updates as it relates to the facility and their decision to find an alternative location. He reported Trinity United Methodist Church is excited to have them and so they can move into that facility temporarily with the Board's approval.

Mr. Albrecht provided the updates as it relates to the pre-opening items. Topics covered included Pinecrest Academy's marketing outreach, hiring, and enrollment applications received to date.

Motion: Vice Chair Moulton made the motion to grant the Good Cause Exemption Request and approve Pinecrest Academy of Las Vegas' request to occupy a temporary facility located at 6151 W. Charleston Blvd., Las Vegas, Nevada 89146 through at least the 2024-2025 school year as presented in the amendment submission with the following conditions:

1. That by February 10, 2023 the school provide:
 - Evidence that it has reached the additional 500 students (per condition #1 of the October 7, 2022 recommendation memo) who reside in the zone of attendance of a 1- or 2-star school within the targeted zip codes at least one month prior to the lottery to select students for the 2023-24 school year;
2. By February 10, 2023, PAN provides a signed attestation by both the lessor and the PAN Board Chair confirming that the proposed temporary facility and organization will not exercise any control over the educational program of the charter school, pursuant to NRS 388A.090. Additionally, the attestation will confirm the school will comply with any statutes, regulations or guidelines related to any public school operating out of a religious facility.
3. That by February 15, 2023 the school provide a fully executed lease for the 6151 W. Charleston Blvd. facility
4. That by October 1, 2024 the school provide a final plan for a permanent facility to be implemented for the 2025-2026 school year
5. That the school complete the SPCSA pre-opening process for new schools and campuses for occupation of the temporary facility located at 6151 W. Charleston Blvd Las Vegas, Nevada, 89146.

Member Shauntee Rosales seconded the motion.

Agenda Item 7 – Focus on Schools: Mater Academy of Northern Nevada [01:15:32]

Director Modrcin said the Authority will hear a presentation from Mater Academy of Northern Nevada regarding the strategies used to Meet Standards on the SPCSA's Academic Performance Framework.

Gia Maraccini, Principal, Mater Academy of Northern Nevada, provided the presentation which can be found in the supporting materials. Ms. Maraccini reported the efforts made by the school since they opened in 2017 to increase their index score. Topics she discussed included the community, academics and social emotional learning and the data and action taken related thereto, and their dedicated staff. There was further discussion between the Authority and Ms. Maraccini regarding the school's restorative justice practices and staff retention.

Agenda Item 9 – SPCSA Annual Review and Overview of SPCSA-Sponsored Public Charter Schools. [01:56:10]

Executive Director Feiden provided the presentation of the overview of the SPCSA, their schools, their strategic plan, and a summary of their progress towards meeting their strategic goals. Alongside today's presentation, is a report on the specific targets within their strategic plan for the 2021-22 school year and their progress towards meeting those targets. There is an additional document attached for this agenda item that goes through the specific numeric targets for each of the goals within the strategic plan. The appendix of the presentation has about 25 slides of additional graphs and data that they created and combined for additional detail. There was further discussion between the Authority and Executive Director Feiden regarding the presentation and steps moving forward.

Agenda Item 10 – Annual Report to Nevada's Department of Education. [02:37:04]

Executive Director Feiden said per statute, each sponsor is required to submit an annual report to the Nevada Department of Education and in compliance with NRS 388A.351, the draft before the Authority and within the supporting materials includes a description of the SPCSA's strategic vision and their progress in achieving that vision. The report also includes information about their schools and there are several specifics they have to report on. It also includes a summary of the Academic, Financial and Organization Performance of their schools with additional details provided in Appendix A. Finally, it lists the amount of Federal funding received by their schools.

Motion: Member Farris moved to approve the Annual Report as presented and ask that it be forwarded to the Nevada Department of Education with the caveat that the Financial Framework results be included in an amendment when they are prepared. Vice Chair Moulton seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

Agenda Item 11 – COVID-19 Plan for Safe Return to In-Person Learning. [02:42:45]

Executive Director Feiden said pursuant to Federal and State guidance, LEAs must keep the COVID-19 Plan for Safe Return to In-Person Learning updated and review it no less than every six months. This document was last reviewed at their July 2022 board meeting and so they are completing the required updated review and revision. An updated version of the plan is within the supporting materials and the changes to the plan are highlighted in grey. She summarized the changes.

Motion: Vice Chair Moulton moved to accept the updated COVID-19 Plan for Safe Return to In-Person Learning as presented. Member Farris seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

Agenda Item 12 – Participation in the National Association of Charter School Authorizers Leadership In Action Cohort. [02:46:45]

Executive Director Feiden said the SPCSA has been invited by the National Association of Charter School Authorizers to participate in their leadership and action cohort along with 15-20 other authorizers nationwide. This cohort will allow representatives from authorizers to work together on reviewing and implementing best practices with a focus on new charter school application strategies. The SPCSA sees this as a great opportunity and is seeking the Authority's approval to participate in this program.

Motion: Member Farris made the motion to approve the Executive Director and/or her designee participate in the NACSA Leadership in Action Cohort beginning in 2023. Member Schafer seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

Agenda Item 13 – Long-Range Calendar. [02:50:04]

Vice Chair Moulton noted that she will not be at the November meeting.

Agenda Item 14 – Public Comment #2 [02:50:50]

There was no public comment.

Agenda Item 15 – Adjournment [02:51:26]

The meeting was adjourned at 11:51AM.