



NEVADA STATE PUBLIC CHARTER SCHOOL AUTHORITY

Friday, June 23, 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 Tamika Shauntee Rosales

BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT VIRTUALLY:

Member Tonia Holmes-Sutton
Member Cindi Rivera
Member Jackson Olsen
Member Kurt Thigpen
Member Lee Farris

BOARD MEMBERS ABSENT:

Member Maureen Schafer

AUTHORITY STAFF PRESENT IN-PERSON:

Rebecca Feiden, Executive Director
Marinna Cutler, Director of School Support
Michael Dang, Management Analyst IV
Jennifer King, Administrative Assistant IV

AUTHORITY STAFF PRESENT VIRTUALLY:

Ryan Herrick, General Counsel
Selcuk Ozdemir, Education Programs Supervisor
Danny Peltier, Management Analyst III
Karen Gordon, Education Programs Professional
Denise Shaw, Education Programs Professional
Brettani Thomas, Education Programs Professional

AUDIENCE IN ATTENDANCE IN-PERSON:

Michael O'Dowd
Jose Herrera
Julie Carver
Brett Willis
Ben Salkowe
Paul Ballou
Whitney McIntosh
James Zous

AUDIENCE IN ATTENDANCE VIRTUALLY:

Julia Qi
Jose Silva
Jai Mallory
Mike Taack
Justin Baiardo
Gia Maraccini
Katie Rarick
Nachum Golodner

Agenda Item 1 – Call to Order and Roll Call, and Pledge of Allegiance [00:00:50]

Sheila Moulton, Vice Chair of the State Public Charter School Authority (SPCSA), called the meeting to order at 9:00am and facilitated the pledge of allegiance.

Agenda Item 2 – Public Comment #1 [00:02:53]

There was no public comment.

Agenda Item 3 – Consent Agenda [00:03:51]

- a. **Approval of May 19, 2023 SPCSA Board Meeting Action Minutes. The Authority will review and possibly approve the action minutes from the May 19, 2023 Authority Board meeting.**
- b. **Legacy Traditional Schools – Nevada: Adjustment to Charter Contract. SPCSA staff will provide the Authority with a recommendation to adjust the charter contract for Legacy Traditional Schools - Nevada.**

Motion: Member Shauntee Rosales made the motion to approve the May 19, 2023 Board Meeting Action Minutes and Legacy Traditional Schools – Nevada’s request to adjust the enrollment cap in the Legacy Traditional Schools – Nevada Cadence campus charter contract back to 1450 for the remainder of the contract term. Member Farris seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

Agenda Item 4 – SPCSA Charter School Governing Body Governance Standards [00:04:27]

Vice Chair Moulton provided comment regarding item 5 of the SPCSA Charter School Governing Body Governance Standards: Ensure Strong Leadership and Effective Partnerships and emphasized the first four bullets.

Agenda Item 5 – SPCSA Executive Director’s Report. [00:05:55]

a. New Charter School Applications

Rebecca Feiden, Executive Director, reported that the SPCSA has received 8 applications for new charter schools. Their review teams have conducted their initial review and are now in the process of preparing for the capacity interviews which will begin the week of July 3rd and run through the week of July 17th. Following the capacity interviews, review teams will finalize their evaluations and they will make a recommendation to her as the Executive Director, she will review those recommendations and bring recommendations to the Authority for approval or denial at the August board meeting.

b. Charter School Transportation Funding (Assembly Bill 400) [00:07:06]

With regard to charter school transportation funding, Executive Director Feiden said Assembly Bill 400 allocated seven million dollars in each year of the upcoming biennium for the SPCSA to award to charter schools, including SPCSA-sponsored and district sponsored charter schools, to provide transportation to students. SPCSA staff has been working quickly in coordination with the Governor’s office to determine how to award and administer these funds. According to the legislation, in order to receive transportation funding, charter schools must submit and receive approval from the SPCSA for a transportation plan. The plans must meet several criteria from the legislation that she outlined. They have a working draft of the transportation application and are hoping to release the application in the coming weeks. Their intent is a streamlined process where schools will submit a single application that includes the transportation plan and the funding request, and if necessary, the request to amend their charter contract. Their current thinking is applications will be reviewed on a rolling basis so that they can expedite awards to schools to the extent possible. They hope to bring their first set of applications for the Authority’s review and approval at their July board meeting. There was further discussion between the Authority and Executive Director Feiden.

Agenda Item 6 – New Schools Updates. [00:16:38]

a. Eagle Charter Schools of Nevada

Mark Modrcin, Director of Authorizing, said that as a reminder Eagle plans to open as K-5 growing to K-8, their planned enrollment in year one is 540 students and as reported in the materials for today’s meeting the school

currently has 306 students enrolled. Jose Herrera, Principal, Eagle Charter Schools of Nevada, provided the update on behalf of the school as it relates to their marketing efforts, enrollment audit, student enrollment and recruitment, now at 327 students, and lastly their facilities. They are seeking a good cause exemption to temporarily occupy their facility.

Agenda Item 8(c) – Charter School Contract Amendment Applications – Eagle Charter Schools of Nevada
 Danny Peltier, Management Analyst IV, summarized staff’s recommendation related to the school’s request for a good cause exemption to submit the amendment request, to approve the occupation of a temporary facility until the construction has been completed at its permanent facility. SPCSA staff have reviewed the application and, while staff still has concern, recommends that the authority approve the request, with conditions. There was further discussion between the Authority, school representatives and SPCSA staff.

Motion: Vice Chair Moulton made the motion to grant the Good Cause Exemption request of Eagle Charter Schools of Nevada and approve the request to occupy a temporary facility located at Cambridge Recreation Center, 3930 Cambridge St, Las Vegas, NV 89119 until construction is completed at the 2025 E Sahara Ave. Las Vegas, 89104 site, with the following conditions:

- That by June 30, 2023, Eagle provide SPCSA staff evidence that SPCSA staff can perform the required walkthrough of the temporary facility at least one week prior August 7.
- That by June 30, 2023, Eagle submit a fully executed lease for the Cambridge Recreation Center, and
- That Eagle complete the pre-opening requirements prior to occupying the Cambridge Recreation Center site.

In the event that Eagle is unable to meet the timebound conditions outlined above, Eagle must notify SPCSA staff and obtain an approved school calendar from the Nevada Department of Education with a revised start date in mid- to late-August.

Member Shauntee Rosales seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

The current enrollment cap for Eagle remains unchanged:

School Year	2023-24	2024-25	2025-26	2026-27	2027-28	2028-29
Grade Levels	K-5	K-6	K-7	K-8	K-8	K-8
Enrollment Cap	540	648	756	864	891	918 ¹

Member Farris stepped away from the meeting.

a. Pinecrest Academy – Springs Campus [00:46:31]

Director Modrcin provided the brief update regarding Pinecrest Academy – Springs Campus before turning it over to the school for their updates. The school plans to open at the elementary level and eventually grow to K-12. The year one planned enrollment is approximately 250 students, currently they are at 140 students enrolled. Michael O’Dowd, Principal, Pinecrest Academy – Springs campus, provided the update on behalf of the school as it relates to their enrollment and recruitment efforts, staffing, and facilities.

b. Rooted School – Clark County [01:05:05]

Director Modrcin said that Rooted School – Clark County has submitted a request to defer their opening until the 2024-25 school year and their governing board approved this request. He provided the background as to how they landed here. SPCSA staff does feel deferred opening to the 2024-25 school year is the best option for the viability and success for the school. As a result, they are recommending the Authority take action today to defer the opening

¹ Eagle anticipates enrolling 972 students in Year 8 of the school, during the second charter term should the school be renewed. This figure represents the school’s initial enrollment cap at full-scale and as approved by the Authority on January 22, 2021.

of Rooted School – Clark County. Jose Silva, Executive Director, Rooted Schools, provided the update on behalf of the school. He noted that this was not the outcome they wanted or planned for.

Motion: Member Shauntee Rosales made the motion to approve the request of Rooted School – Clark County to defer the school’s opening to the 2024 – 25 school year, and that the school complete the pre-opening process and fulfill all outstanding, unique conditions attached to the school’s approval from November 2022. Member Olsen seconded. The motion carried unanimously.

c. Southern Nevada Trades High School [01:001:01]

Director Modrcin provided the brief update regarding Southern Nevada Trades High School before turning it over to the school for their updates. Brett Willis, Chair, Southern Nevada Trades High School, provided the update on behalf of the school as it relates to the facilities. Julie Carver, Executive Director, Southern Nevada Trades High School provided the updates as it relates to the staffing, recruitment and enrollment, and financials.

Agenda Item 7 – Girls Empowerment Middle Schools. [01:06:31]

Director Modrcin provided the updated related to Girls Empowerment Middle School (GEMS), regarding their ongoing work stemming from the school’s closure. SPCSA staff has maintained frequent communication with the school over the last several weeks. He turned it over to Mr. Taack, the appointed school administrator through the closure process, to provide updates. Mr. Taack reiterated that they have been working with SPCSA staff as well as receiving support from Academica in terms of helping with their grant reimbursements. They continue to work steadily through their closure plan.

Agenda Item 8 – Charter School Contract Amendment Applications [01:11:08]

a. Equipo Academy

Danny Peltier, Management Analyst IV, said Equipo Academy has submitted an amendment application requesting that the SPCSA grant a Good Cause Exemption and approve the school’s request to amend their current charter to expand enrollment in existing grades and facilities. SPCSA staff has reviewed the application and recommends that the Authority grant the Good Cause Exemption and approve the amendment request. Ben Salkowe, Principal, joined by colleague, James Zous, and provided introduction.

Member Shauntee Rosales made the motion to grant the Good Cause Exemption Request and approve Equipo Academy’s request to increase enrollment beginning in the 2023-24 school year with the following condition:

- That Equipo Academy work with SPCSA staff to identify and complete pre-opening requirements that pertain to the occupation of the 4201 East Bonanza Road facility.

Member Farris seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

The enrollment cap for Equipo Academy²:

School Year	2023-24	2024-25	2025-26	2026-27	2027-28	2028-29
Grade Levels	6-12	6-12	6-12	6-12	6-12	6-12
Enrollment Cap	875	890	905	915	930	940

b. Young Women’s Leadership Academy [01:20:11]

Danny Peltier, Management Analyst IV, said Young Women’s Leadership Academy has submitted an amendment application requesting that the SPCSA grant a Good Cause Exemption and approve the request to expand enrollment into the 8th grade for the 2023-24 school year (one year earlier than previously authorized) and add distance education options. SPCSA staff also notes the addition of 8th grade beginning in 2023-24 will not affect YWLA’s approved enrollment cap. SPCSA staff has reviewed the application and recommends that the Authority grant the Good Cause Exemption and approve the amendment request. Whitney McIntosh, Founding School Leader, joined by colleague Paul Ballou, Academica, provided comment.

² Charter renewal will be considered by the Authority in the Fall of 2026.

Motion: Member Shauntee Rosales made the motion to grant YWLA’s Good Cause Exemption request and:

1. Approve the addition of 8th grade beginning in the 2023-24 school year
2. Approve the implementation of distance education with the following conditions
 - a. Evidence of approval of YWLA’s distance education application from the Nevada Department of Education prior to the start of the 2023-24 school year;
 - b. A year-end report of the student performance against the performance expectation outlined in the amendment application, or that 90% of students enrolled in blended distance education classes will successfully pass their courses;
 - c. A student enrollment summary or course log that notes the number of students enrolling in supplemental distance education courses during the 2023-2024 school year.

Member Thigpen seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

The enrollment cap for YWLA will remain with the addition of 8th grade:

School Year	2023-24	2024-25	2025-26	2026-27	2027-28
Grade Levels	6-10	6-11	6-12	6-12	6-12
Enrollment Cap	300	450	540	570	600

A 12-minute convenience break was taken.

Agenda Item 11 – Report on Site Evaluations [01:45:24]

Selcuk Ozdemir, Education Programs Supervisor, began with the presentation on the update for Site Evaluations for the 2022-23 school year. The presentation can be found in the supporting materials. Karen Gordon, Education Programs Professional, provided the overview and requirements of the site evaluations pursuant to NRS 388A.223. Brettani Thomas, Education Programs Professional, talked through the data from the feedback survey and data trends from the 2022-23 school year in the next part of the presentation. Denise Shaw, Education Programs Professional, provided the strengths and challenges, and what the path moving forward will look like. The team plans to share the 2023-24 schedule with the Authority in the coming months.

Agenda Item 9 – Financial Performance Review and Recommendations for the 2021-22 School Year. [01:44:48]

- a. **2021-22 SPCSA Financial Performance Framework Ratings**
 - i. **Explore Academy**
 - ii. **Mater Academy of Northern Nevada**
 - iii. **CIVICA**
- b. **Issue Notices of Concern**
 - i. **Explore Academy**
 - ii. **CIVICA**

Mike Dang, Manager of Organizational and Financial Performance, reported on the overview of the Financial Performance Ratings. This recommendation pertains to three schools, CIVICA, Explore Academy, and Mater Academy of Northern Nevada. At this time, the SPCSA has received and reviewed 34 of 38 final audits. The remaining school audits are for Doral Academy of Nevada, Doral Academy of Northern Nevada, Pinecrest Academy of Nevada, and Pinecrest Academy of Northern Nevada. Results and recommendations regarding these outstanding audits will be presented at a future meeting. Further analysis regarding SPCSA staff’s review and analysis of the Fiscal Year Ending June 30, 2022 independent financial audits for the three schools, CIVICA, Explore Academy, and Mater Academy of Northern Nevada, can be found in staff’s recommendation memo within the supporting materials.

Mr. Dang reported that recommendation #1 is to adopt the SPCSA Financial Performance Framework results presented for the school listed in Appendix A for fiscal year 2022 for all indicators except enrollment variance,

which was not rated: CIVICA, Explore Academy, and Mater Academy of Northern Nevada. Recommendation #2 is to issue a notice of concern under the Financial Performance Framework to: CIVICA and Explore Academy, and to require each to develop and submit a financial improvement plan and to provide quarterly updates regarding the implementation thereof. Justin Baiardo and Katie Rarick, Explore Academy, and Nachum Golodner, CIVICA, provided comment regarding the proposed update and recommendations.

Motion: Member Shauntee Rosales made the motion to (1) adopt the Financial Performance Framework results presented for the schools listed in Appendix A for CIVICA Career and Collegiate Academy, Explore Academy, and Mater Academy of Northern Nevada, for fiscal year 2022 for all indicators except the Enrollment Variance measure, which was not rated and (2) Issue a Notice of Concern under the Financial Performance Framework to both CIVICA Career and Collegiate Academy and Explore Academy, require each to develop and submit a financial improvement plan, and require each to provide quarterly updates regarding the implementation of the improvement plan. Member Olsen seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

Agenda Item 10 – State Public Charter School Authority Performance Framework Revisions. [02:32:40]

Executive Director Feiden took a moment to talk about the purpose of the Financial Performance Framework and the Organizational Performance Framework before turning it over to Mr. Modrcin to walk through the technical changes.

a. Revisions to the Financial Performance Framework

Director Modrcin said these are technical changes and not major changes. The three changes are as follows: (1) added clarity to the enrollment variance measure; (2) added language for Net Liability Considerations; (3) updated glossary with additional descriptions and technical clarifications. More information about the proposed changes can be found in the presentation in the supporting materials.

b. Revisions to the Organizational Performance Framework

Director Modrcin said these are relatively minor changes. The minor changes are as follows: (1) minor languages updates; (2) self-certification form includes revised language regarding board membership; (3) Appendix B reflects current scorecard. There was further discussion regarding the revisions.

Motion: Member Shauntee Rosales made the motion to approve the technical changes to the financial and organizational performance frameworks, as proposed by staff and incorporated into the presented drafts. Member Thigpen seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

Agenda Item 12 – Project AWARE Grant [02:58:00]

This item was not heard today and will be heard at the July meeting.

Agenda Item 13 – 2023 Legislative Session [02:58:04]

Ryan Herrick, General Counsel, reported that the 2023 legislative session has ended. There is not a bill tracker this month, instead they have posted a guidance memo that will go out to schools in the weekly newsletter and as opposed to listing bills, it's broken down by topic. Also posted is two other separate guidance regarding Open Meeting Law and the change in the kindergarten age (Assembly Bill 65). They are also waiting on the changes to the student discipline and restorative justice requirements bills. Guidance will be issued in the coming months from the Nevada Department of Education. He highlighted the major changes from this session. There was further discussion between the Authority and SPCSA staff related to the legislative update.

Agenda Item 14 – [03:08:48]

Marinna Cutler, Director of School Support, shared the proposed updates to the plan, pursuant to the required 6-month review and revision. She talked through the changes which are highlighted in grey and bring the plan up to date.

Motion: Member Shauntee Rosales made the motion to accept the changes to the COVID-19 Plan for the Safe Return to In-Person Instruction. Member Lee seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

Executive Director Feiden noted that Member Holmes-Sutton was attending a conference but has now joined the meeting.

Agenda Item 15 – SPCSA Board Elections [03:12:42]

Vice Chair Moulton facilitated the SPCSA board elections.

Motion: Member Farris nominated Member Holmes-Sutton as the Chair of the Authority. The nomination carried unanimously.

Motion: Member Holmes-Sutton nominated Member Rivera as the Vice Chair of the Authority. The nomination carried unanimously.

Agenda Item 16 – Long-Range Calendar. [03:22:54]

Executive Director Feiden noted that she expects to add the transportation to the long-range calendar to the July and August meeting. One of the major updates will be the new charter school application recommendations which will come at the August meeting and looking to the fall they will dig into their data. She also noted the Project AWARE item will be heard at the July meeting.

Agenda Item 12 – Public Comment #2. [03:24:28]

Executive Director Feiden provided respects to former Chair of the Authority, Melissa Mackedon; Vice Chair, Sheila Moulton; and Director of Authorizing, Mark Modrcin.

Agenda Item 13 – Adjournment [03:30:00]

The meeting was adjourned at 12:30PM.