



NEVADA STATE PUBLIC CHARTER SCHOOL AUTHORITY

Friday, December 8, 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:

Chair Tonia Holmes-Sutton
Member Kurt Thigpen
Member Jackson Olsen
Member Shauntee Rosales

BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT VIRTUALLY:

Vice Chair Cindi Rivera
Member Victor Salcido
Member Lee Farris

BOARD MEMBERS ABSENT:

Member Sandra Kinne
Member Maureen Schafer

AUTHORITY STAFF PRESENT IN-PERSON:

Melissa Mackedon, Executive Director
Katie Broughton, Director of Authorizing

AUTHORITY STAFF PRESENT VIRTUALLY:

Greg Ott, Deputy Attorney General

AUDIENCE IN ATTENDANCE IN-PERSON:

Frank Williams
Trishawn Allison
Jason Guinasso
Andi Morency
Michael O'Dowd
Yolanda Hamilton
Audre Denson
Samantha Morris
Rebecca Baker
Carey Roybal-Benson
Amy Shlessman
Vince Medina
Aaron Ritter
Kristin Serrano
Bryan Rudden
Nathalie Burgess
Jennifer Emling
Milo Jury

AUDIENCE IN ATTENDANCE VIRTUALLY:

Jeremy Christensen
Christiana Posner
Cyndee Whiteman
Steve Popper
Lance Bohne
Shandrea Daniel
Matt Brown
Linda Rolle
Miadora Nelson
Justin Brecht
Melissa Ramirez
Gretchen Larsen

Agenda Item 1 – Call to Order and Roll Call, and Pledge of Allegiance

Tonia Holmes-Sutton, Chair, of the State Public Charter School Authority (SPCSA), called the meeting to order at 9:03am and facilitated the pledge of allegiance.

Agenda Item 2 – Public Comment #1

Written public comment can be found within the supporting materials.

1. Erin Ritter, regarding agenda item #9.
2. Dr. Amy Schlessman, regarding agenda item #9.

Agenda Item 3 – Approval of October 13, 2023 and November 3, 2023 SPCSA Board Meeting Action Minutes

Motion: Member Thigpen made the motion to approve the October 13, 2023 and November 3, 2023 board meeting action minutes. Member Olsen seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

Agenda Item 4 – SPCSA Charter School Governing Body Governance Standards

Member Shauntee Rosales provided comment regarding standard 2: Ensure an Effective and Well-Run Organization, bullet 6: Ensure the school has strong operational plans for facilities, food services, transportation, security, and emergency preparedness.

Agenda Item 5 – SPCSA Executive Director’s Report

- a. Executive Director update: transitioning into the role
- b. Delinquent schools PERS contributions
- c. New Charter Schools Pre-Opening Process
- d. New Charter School Enrollment and Facility update

Melissa Mackedon, Executive Director provided the update.

Agenda Item 6 – Academic Performance Recommendations

- a. **Notices of Concern issued to 2-star schools on November 3, 2023**
 - i. **CIVICA Academy — elementary school** (2-star and Does Not Meet Standard) and middle school (2-star and Does Not Meet Standard)
 - ii. **Nevada Virtual Charter School — middle school** (2-star and Does Not Meet Standard)
 - iii. **Pinecrest Academy of Nevada — Virtual middle school** (2-star and Does Not Meet Standard)

Katie Broughton, Director of Authorizing provided an overview of the SPCSA Academic Performance for CIVICA Academy Elementary and Middle School, Nevada Virtual Charter School Middle School, and Pinecrest Academy of Nevada Virtual Middle School. The schools were issued Notices of Concern at the November 3, 2023, meeting based upon their academic performance. Because of the ongoing impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic and growth data concerns, SPCSA staff recommends the Authority Board rescind these Notices and return the schools to good standing. The SPCSA staff will continue to monitor the academic goals the schools shared with the Board and progress reports will be provided.

Motion: Member Shauntee Rosales made the motion to rescind the Notice of Concern that was issued to CIVICIA Academy Elementary and Middle School, Nevada Virtual Charter Middle School, and Pinecrest Academy of Nevada Virtual Middle School on November 3, 2023, and return the schools to good standing. There was brief discussion between the Authority. Member Thigpen seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

- b. **No Action.** SPCSA staff recommends no action be taken regarding specified underperforming schools currently in good standing.
 - i. **Discovery Charter School — Hillpointe elementary school** (2-star and Does Not Meet Standard) and middle school (2-star and Does Not Meet Standard)

- ii. **Doral Academy of Nevada — Fire Mesa elementary school** (2-star and Does Not Meet Standard)
- iii. **Equipo Academy — middle school** (2-star and Does Not Meet Standard)
- iv. **Learning Bridge Charter School — elementary school** (2-star and Does Not Meet Standard)
- v. **Signature Preparatory Charter School — middle school** (2-star and Does Not Meet Standard)
- vi. **Young Women’s Leadership Academy of Las Vegas — middle school** (2-star and Does Not Meet Standard)

Director Broughton provided the overview of the SPCSA Academic Performance for the above schools and stated that because of the ongoing impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic and growth data concerns, SPCSA staff strongly recommends the Board take no action these schools and programs. SPCSA staff will require each campus and program to include an academic goal that measurably impacts academic performance in their School Performance Plan. Those goals and progress reports will be provided to the SPCSA board. Director Broughton provided additional comments as it relates to the requirements of schools as found in NRS 388A.367.

- c. **No Action.** SPCSA staff recommends no action be taken regarding specified underperforming schools currently under notice.
 - i. **Coral Academy of Science Las Vegas — Nellis Air Force Base elementary school** (2-star and Does Not Meet Standard)
 - ii. **Democracy Prep at the Agassi Campus — elementary school** (2-star and Does Not Meet Standard)
 - iii. **Discovery Charter School — Sandhill elementary school** (2-star and Does Not Meet Standard)
 - iv. **Freedom Classical Academy — elementary school** (2-star and Does Not Meet Standard)
 - v. **Legacy Traditional School — North Valley elementary school** (2-star and Does Not Meet Standard) and Cadence elementary school (2-star and Does Not Meet Standard) and middle school (2-star and Does Not Meet Standard)

Director Broughton provided the overview of the SPCSA Academic Performance for Discovery Charter School — Sandhill elementary school and stated that because of the ongoing impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic, SPCSA staff strongly recommends the Board take no action regarding the above schools. This would mean that they would remain under a Notice of Concern. SPCSA staff will require the schools to include an academic goal that measurably impacts academic performance in their School Performance Plan. Those goals and progress reports will be provided to the SPCSA board. Director Broughton provided additional comments as it relates to the requirements of schools as found in NRS 388A.367.

d. Issuance of Notices of Concern for Academic Performance

- i. **Nevada Rise Academy — elementary school** (1-star and Does Not Meet Standard)

Director Broughton provided an overview of the SPCSA Academic Performance for Nevada Rise Academy — elementary school. Per the Authority action on October 13, 2023, to issue a notice to schools with an NSPF rating of one- or two- stars and an SPCSA Academic Performance Framework rating of Below or Does Not meet Standard, SPCSA staff recommends that the Authority issue a Notice of Concern to Nevada Rise Academy regarding the elementary program. Director Broughton provided additional comments as it relates to the requirements of schools as found in NRS 388A.367. Justin Brecht, Melissa Ramirez, and Gretchen Larsen were virtually present on behalf of the school and provided a presentation. There was further discussion between the Authority and school representatives.

Motion: Member Thigpen made the motion to approve the recommendation of SPCSA staff to issue a Notice of Concern to Nevada Rise Academy—elementary. Member Shauntee Rosales seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

ii. TEACH Las Vegas — elementary school (1-star and Below Standard) and middle school (1-star and Does Not Meet Standard)

Director Broughton provided an overview of the SPCSA Academic Performance TEACH Las Vegas. Per the Authority action on October 13, 2023, to issue a notice to schools with an NSPF rating of one- or two- stars and an SPCSA Academic Performance Framework rating of Below or Does Not meet Standard, SPCSA staff recommends that the Authority issue a Notice of Concern to TEACH Las Vegas regarding the elementary school and middle school programs. Given this recommendation, SPCSA staff also plans to carefully review the school’s performance for the 2023-2024 school year. In addition, the school must include an academic goal that measurably impacts academic performance in their School Performance Plan. Those goals and progress reports will be provided to the SPCSA board. Director Broughton provided additional comments as it relates to the requirements of schools as found in NRS 388A.367.

Agenda Item 7 – TEACH Las Vegas

Executive Director Mackedon provided the update regarding TEACH Las Vegas and their recent transitions that led to an unplanned school closure. Since that time the situation has stabilized.

Frank Williams and Matt Brown provided the response and presentation on behalf of TEACH Las Vegas. There was further conversation between the Authority, SPCSA staff and school representatives.

Motion: Member Olsen made the motion to approve the recommendation of SPCSA staff to issue a Notice of Concern to TEACH Las Vegas—Elementary and TEACH Las Vegas—Middle. Member Shauntee Rosales seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

A 5-minute convenience break was taken.

Agenda Item 8 – Girls Empowerment Middle School (GEMS)

Executive Director Mackedon and Jason Guinasso provided the update regarding the GEMS closure.

Agenda Item 9 – Thrive Point Academy of Nevada Resubmitted New Charter School Application

Danny Peltier, Management Analyst III, provided the staff’s recommendation related to Thrive Point Academy’s resubmitted new charter school application. The resubmission included a number of additional improvements that resulted in many subsections of the application being rated as ‘Meets the Standard’. As a result, SPCSA staff’s recommendation is to approve, with conditions, the Thrive Point Academy of Nevada charter school application as resubmitted. School representatives provided comments. There was further discussion between the Authority and school representatives.

Motion: Member Thigpen made the motion to approve the Thrive Point Academy of Nevada resubmitted application as submitted during the 2023 Application Cycle, with the conditions as permitted by NAC 388A.410 and as outlined below, based on a finding that the applicant has met the requirements contained in NRS 388A.249(3) in that the applicant has demonstrated competence in accordance with the criteria for approval prescribed by the SPCSA that will likely result in a successful opening and operation of the charter school.

1. Enrollment will be capped at 450 students in year two and each remaining year of the charter contract. Once the school is officially approved for the Alternative Performance Framework by the Nevada State Board of Education, the board may apply for an amendment to increase enrollment. If approved, the Thrive Point of Nevada enrollment cap will be:

School Year	2024-25	2025-26	2026-27	2027-28	2028-29	2029-30
Grade Levels	9-12	9-12	9-12	9-12	9-12	9-12
Enrollment Cap	300	450	450	450	450	450

2. SPCSA will defer the issuance of academic Notices until the school is eligible to apply for the Alternative Performance Framework. If Thrive Point Academy of Nevada does not qualify for the Alternative Performance Framework, deferred Notices will be issued.
3. By March 15, 2024, provide a detailed plan, along with policy and procedures for the oversight of
 - a. students with special needs, including a policy detailing how the TPAN model will serve students with severe disabilities.
 - b. students learning English language.
 - c. students who have been emancipated, or homeless and having no family support while in attendance.
 - d. student discipline, including an updated Discipline Policy removing the use of the term “Zero Tolerance” or providing additional context with regard to the meaning of “Zero Tolerance.”
4. By January 15, 2024, provide a detailed chart displaying which staff members, in addition to the school leader, will provide strong levels of support while the school enrollment is capped at 450. Identify who will be responsible for the duties of the following roles until these positions may be hired.
 - a. Workforce Coordinator
 - b. Community Partnership Coordinator
 - c. Social Worker
 - d. Retention Specialist
5. Complete the SPCSA pre-opening process for new charter schools. Pursuant to NAC 288A.410, all conditions set forth above must be met for the school to open for the 2024-2025 school year.

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

Agenda Item 10 – Charter School Contract Renewal Applications.

a. Honors Academy of Literature

Danny Peltier, Management Analyst III, said Honors Academy of Literature (Honors) has submitted an application to renew its charter contract as the current charter contract expires on June 30, 2024. Honors is a brick-and-mortar public charter school that currently serves 217 students in kindergarten through 8th grade in Washoe County. After a thorough review of the historical data and charter renewal application, staff recommends that the Authority approve the charter renewal of Honors for a four-year term, beginning July 1, 2024. Mr. Peltier provided the overview of staff’s recommendation memo. Andi Morency was present on behalf of the school and provided comment.

Motion: Member Olsen made the motion to approve the Honors Academy of Literature Renewal Application for a four-year term beginning July 1, 2024, and the enrollment cap as outlined above in the recommendation memo. In the event of academic, financial, or organizational underperformance the Authority may impose additional oversight. Member Salcido seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

b. Pinecrest Academy of Nevada

Danny Peltier, Management Analyst III, said Pinecrest Academy of Nevada (PAN) has submitted an application to renew its charter contract as the current charter contract expires on June 30, 2024. PAN is a brick-and-mortar public charter school that currently serves 7902 students in kindergarten through 12th grade across seven campuses in Clark County. After a thorough review of the historical data and charter renewal application, staff recommends that the Authority approve the charter renewal of PAN for an eight-year term, beginning July 1, 2024. Mr. Peltier provided the overview of staff’s recommendation memo. Michael O’Dowd was present on behalf of the school and provided comment.

Motion: Member Thigpen made the motion to approve the Pinecrest Academy of Nevada Renewal Application for an eight-year term beginning July 1, 2024, 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. Vice Chair Rivera seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

c. Nevada Virtual Charter School

Danny Peltier, Management Analyst III said Nevada Virtual Charter School (NVCS) has submitted an application to renew its charter contract as the current charter contract expires on June 30, 2024. NVCS is an online public charter school that currently serves 1717 students in 6th – 12th grade statewide. After a thorough review of the historical data and charter renewal application, staff recommends that the Authority approve the charter renewal of NVCS for a five-year term, beginning July 1, 2024. Mr. Peltier provided the overview of staff's recommendation memo. Yolanda Hamilton, Andre Denson, and Samantha Morris were present on behalf of the school and provided comment.

Motion: Member Tamika Shauntee Rosales made the motion to approve the Nevada Virtual Charter School renewal Application for a five-year term beginning July 1, 2024 and the enrollment cap as outlined above in the recommendation memo. In the event of academic, financial or organizational underperformance the Authority may impose additional oversight. Member Farris seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

Agenda Item 14 - 2024 Demographic and Academic Needs Assessment

Executive Director Mackedon provided the updates and historical context related to the 2024 Demographic and Academic Needs Assessment. There was a brief discussion between Executive Director Mackedon and the Authority.

Motion: Member Olsen made the motion to approve the 2024 Demographic and Academic Needs Assessment as presented by staff. Member Thigpen seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

There was a 30-minute break taken.

Agenda Item 11 – Charter Application and Rubric for 2024 Applications

Director Broughton provided the overview of the charter application and rubric for 2024 applications and the statutory authority requirements before going through the overview of revisions. There was brief discussion between the Authority and SPCSA staff. There was a brief discussion between the Authority and SPCSA staff.

Motion: Member Thigpen made the motion to approve the New Charter School Application and Rubric effective for the 2024 application cycle. Member Shauntee Rosales seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

Agenda Item 12 – Four-Year Graduation Rates for the Class of 2022-23

Brandon Gayton, Education Programs Professional, provided the presentation for the graduation rates overview for the class of 2022-23. Dr. Gayton provided the SPCSA highlights as well as the 4-year adjusted cohort graduation rates which included comparisons with the SPCSA vs state trends, Nevada Districts, school changes, SPCSA student group trends, and State Student Groups. Next, he covered the advanced or CCR diploma rates before conclusions.

Agenda Item 13 – 2023-24 School Year Enrollment Data

Dr. Gayton provided the overview presentation regarding the 2023-24 school year enrollment data which included the overview of Annual Nevada Enrollment Data, SPCSA highlights and enrollment trends, enrollment across Nevada, SPCSA student group enrollment trends and those vs. the State Student Group Enrollment. Lastly, he covered enrollment for recently opened SPCSA schools and conclusions.

Agenda Item 15 – Overview of SPCSA Organizational Performance Framework

Michael Dang, Management Analyst IV, provided the presentation regarding the Overview of the SPCSA Organizational Performance Framework and talked through the current progress to date.

Agenda Item 16 – Overview of SPCSA Financial Performance Framework

Michael Dang, Management Analyst IV, provided the presentation regarding the Overview of the SPCSA Financial Performance Framework and talked through the current progress to date.

Agenda Item 17 – SPCSA Growth Management Plan

This item was pushed to the next meeting.

Agenda Item 18 – Long-Range Calendar

Executive Director Mackedon walked through the long-range calendar.

Agenda Item 19 – Public Comment #2

There was no public comment.

Agenda Item 120 – Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 2:56PM.

State Public Charter School Authority

Friday, December 8, 2023 Board Meeting – Las Vegas

Name	Representing	Agenda Item #
Rebekah Baker	Legacy Traditional School	
Colin Brynhurst	Academica	
TRISHAWN ALLISON	TEACH LAS VEGAS	7
Frank Williams	TEACH LAS VEGAS	7
Carey Roybal-Benson	Signature Preps.	
Michael O'Connell	Pinecrest	
Ama Schlessman	Thrive Point	9
Vince Medina	Thrive Point	9
AARON BITTER	THRIVEPOINT	9
Kristin Ferrano	Pinecrest Virtual	6
Bryan Rudden	Pinecrest Virtual	
Nathalie Burgess	Legacy Traditional Schools	6
Jennifer Embling	Legacy Traditional Schools.	6

Name	Representing	Agenda Item #
Milo Tury	Learning Bridge Charter School	6
Timothy Smith	ThrivePoint Nevada	9
Andi Macey	HAL	10
BRUNO ESPEY	CIVICA Academy	6
Yolanda Hamilton	NUCS	10
Jason Guinnesso	THRIVE POINT Academy	9
	GEMS	8
Whitney MShosh	YWZA	6
Hector Gonzalez	Thrive Point Academy	9
Samantha Morris	NUCS	10
Gabriela Escudero	Thrive Point	
Gabe Shirey	Signature Prepday	6
Dr Carey Royal-Benson	Signature Prepday	6