

Joe Lombardo
Governor

STATE OF NEVADA

Rebecca Feiden
Executive Director



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 Authority Board
FROM: Danny Peltier, Management Analyst III
SUBJECT: Nevada Rise – Charter Amendment Request to Reduce Enrollment Cap
DATE: April 14, 2023

Summary of Request and Recommendation

Nevada Rise is requesting that the State Public Charter School Authority (SPCSA) grant a Good Cause Exemption request and approve the school to reduce the enrollment cap for the 2023 – 24 school year from 476 to 374 students and to also reduce its enrollment cap for remainder of its charter term.

SPCSA staff has reviewed the application and recommends that the Authority grant the Good Cause Exemption and approve the amendment request. A proposed motion can be found on page of 4 this memo.

Background and Analysis

Nevada Rise Academy is located at 2525 Emerson Avenue, Las Vegas, Nevada 89121 and serves 466 students in grades K – 5 as of the 2022 Validation Day. According to the amendment application, Nevada Rise Academy opened in 2018 with kindergarten and 1st grade under a slow-growth model. Each school year, one grade level has been added and one grade level, as a new cohort of kindergarten students, enter each year. The 2022-23 school year is the first year having the full grade configuration as planned, kindergarten through 5th grade.

According to the amendment application, NV Rise has experienced a tumultuous first five years of operation. In the amendment application, NV Rise explained that during its second year of operation, the school abruptly transitioned to a distance learning program in compliance with state-mandated COVID-19 protocols. Year three launched under a full

distance education format until March of 2021, at which point a hybrid model of instruction was introduced to complete the school year according to the amendment application. NV Rise noted that all students returned to in-person instruction in the 2021-22 school year, which proved difficult as the natural progression of the slow-growth model was interrupted through the pandemic. Finally, NV Rise noted in the amendment submission that its academic and operations have been reinvented each year due to facility challenges, pandemic protocols, and growth.

The 2021-22 school year was the first year in which NV Rise was rated under the SPCSA Academic Performance Framework, and receive an index score under the Nevada School Performance Framework. According to the amendment application, NV Rise had hoped the data would reflect the hard work of its school community, however the data was insufficient to demonstrate the desired outcomes, reflecting a score equivalent to a 1-star rating. As such, NV Rise is requesting to reduce its enrollment cap. According to the amendment application, NV Rise plans to go from three classrooms per grade level down to two classrooms per grade level, which will allow for more intentional, focused intervention and acceleration. NV Rise also explained in the amendment application that another reason Nevada Rise seeks to reduce enrollment is current limitation within the facility. A key component of NV Rise's model is staffing each grade level teacher with an associate teacher to provide targeted, small group intervention according to the amendment application. NV Rise explained that with the small classroom sizes, small groups are best done in other areas of the building, and according to the application, those currently do not exist. This has left small group instruction in hallways which leads to ineffective instruction according to NV Rise. NV Rise explained that reducing enrollment would open these small classrooms to facilitate more powerful intervention instruction, enrichment opportunities, and comfort for staff and students.

NV Rise also noted the reduction in enrollment will not lead to any students being required to leave the school to meet the reduced cap. According to the amendment application, the reduction in the cap will occur through natural attrition of graduating 5th graders and not backfilling vacancies when students choose to leave the school. Additionally, according to the amendment application, in the event enrollment is slightly higher than the anticipated 364 students, the school will still have the space and staff to accommodate those additional students, and the school will continue its plan to not fill enrollment vacancies.

NV Rise has been in contact with families and the school states those discussions have been positive. According to the amendment application, parents are supportive of the reduction in enrollment because they have felt the school has become overcrowded in the smaller classrooms, less personal with relationships between staff and families, and attention to individuality and personal learning has lessened. Additionally, NV Rise has made clear to families currently enrolled at the school that they will continue to be enrolled if the amendment is approved.

According to the amendment application, NV Rise will evaluate the reduction to see if student outcomes have improved over the course of the next two years. So long as outcomes do improve, the school will move to increase enrollment incrementally, back to current levels, beginning in the 2025-26 school year.

Finally, NV Rise is aware of the financial impacts of the reduction in enrollment and has

planned accordingly. NV Rise submitted a budget that reflected the reduction in enrollment and showed the school will continue to be financially viable at the 364 student cap.

If approved, the enrollment cap for NV Rise’s will be¹:

School Year	2023-24	2024-25	2025-26	2026-27	2027-28
Grade Levels	K-5	K-5	K-5	K-5	K-5
Total Enrollment	364	364	392	420	448

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. When determining whether to approve an amendment request, the sponsor considers the charter school’s compliance with applicable local, state and federal laws and regulations and evidence relating to the academics, finance and organization of the charter school. (See NAC 388A.400(8) and NRS 388A.276).

Analysis and Staff Recommendation

When reviewing an amendment application, SPCSA staff reviews the academic, financial and organizational performance of the applicant charter school. NV Rise has yet to be rated under the Nevada School Performance Framework. Following the two-year gap in new star ratings due to the impacts of COVID-19 and a waiver from the U.S. Department of Education, the 2021 – 2022 NSPS index score for NV Rise was 20.0 and 22.0 under the SPCSA’s Academic Framework score which did not meet the standards. The Authority approved SPCSA staff to conduct additional academic monitoring of NV Rise at its November 18, 2023 board meeting.

Additionally, the school earned 99 points (out of 100) under the SPCSA Organizational Performance Framework for the 2021 – 22 school year as approved by the Authority on December 16, 2022. As such, SPCSA staff finds the school to be ‘Meeting Standards.’ NV Rise has also been found to ‘Meet the Standards’ on the most recent 2022 SPCSA Financial Performance Framework, which was approved at the March 3, 2023 SPCSA board meeting.

Overall, SPCSA staff will still continue to monitor NV Rise with regard to academic performance and is supportive of NV Rise’s plan to reduce enrollment in order to allow the school to refocus its academic efforts to improve outcomes for students. NV Rise provided a compelling case to reduce its enrollment cap due to academic underperformance. SPCSA staff initially was concerned this reduction would impact family’s ability to re-enroll at the school, but as noted previously in the memo, NV Rise will continue to serve all students who currently have a seat and will reduce its enrollment through natural attrition and not backfilling vacancies as they open. Staff also found the facility concerns the school raised to be reasonable and would generally agree those facility concerns have affected the school’s ability to deliver its educational

¹ Charter renewal will be considered by the Authority in the Fall of 2026

model in a successful way. Staff also appreciates that NV Rise has been proactive in communicating the reduction to families and that families are supportive of the school’s decision. NV Rise has held both formal and informal meetings with families to gauge their feedback and found that families appreciated the school’s decision to reduce enrollment to allow for better instructional supports to students and better communication with families.

Proposed Motion:

Grant NV Rise a Good Cause Exemption and approve the request of the school to reduce the enrollment cap for the 2023 – 24 school year from 476 students to 364 and additionally reduce the enrollment cap for the remainder of the charter term as detailed in the recommendation memo.

If approved, the enrollment cap for NV Rise will be:

School Year	2023-24	2024-25	2025-26	2026-27	2027-28
Grade Levels	K-5	K-5	K-5	K-5	K-5
Total Enrollment	364	364	392	420	448

The currently approved enrollment cap for NV Rise is:

School Year	2023-24	2024-25	2025-26	2026-27	2027-28
Grade Levels	K-5	K-5	K-5	K-5	K-5
Total Enrollment	476	504	504	504	504

Historical Performance and Demographic Information – NV Rise

School Total Enrollment and Demographics since 2018

Year	Enrollment	A	B	C	H	I	M	P	IEP	ELL	FRL
18-19	117	0.8%	31.6%	11.9%	43.5%	0.8%	11.1%	0.0%	11.1%	18.8%	88.8%
19-20	228	1.3%	26.3%	8.3%	50.8%	0.8%	9.6%	2.6%	9.2%	21.9%	>95.0%
20-21	330	1.8%	25.4%	9.3%	50.0%	0.6%	10.3%	2.4%	6.0%	15.4%	>95.0%
21-22	369	2.4%	26.0%	6.2%	53.6%	0.5%	10.0%	1.0%	6.7%	11.3%	>95.0%
22-23	466	3.6%	25.7%	5.7%	54.7%	0.4%	8.3%	1.2%	<5%	17.5%	>95.0%

- A – Asian
- B – Black
- C – Caucasian
- H – Hispanic
- I – American Indian/Alaskan Native
- M – Two or more races
- P – Pacific Islander
- IEP – Individualized Education Plan – A student with a disability/special education student
- ELL – English Language Learner
- FRL – A student who qualifies for Free or Reduced-Price Lunch

NV Rise Academy Charter School Financial Performance

Year	Rating
2021 – 2022	Meets the Standard
2020 – 2021	Meets the Standard
2019 – 2020	Meets the Standard

NV Rise Charter School Organizational Performance

Year	Rating
2021 – 2022	Meets the Standard
2020 – 2021	Meets the Standard
2019 – 2020	Meets the Standard

NV Rise Academic Performance

Year	Rating
2021 – 2022 Index Scores	ES: 20.0
2020 - 2021 ²	N/A
2019 – 2020 ³	N/A

NV Rise 2021-22 SPCSA Academic Performance Framework Results⁴

Campus	2021-22 SPCSA Academic Framework Score	2021-22 SPCSA Academic Framework Rating
NV Rise ES	22.0	DOES NOT MEET STANDARD

² Due to COVID-19, the Nevada Department of Education (NDE) applied for and was granted a 2020 – 21 school year waiver from the US 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 Nevada School Performance Framework (NSPF) school ratings for the 2020 – 21 school year.

³ Due 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

⁴ The Nevada Department of Education (NDE) calculated NSPF index scores for the 2021-22 school year but did not calculate corresponding star ratings (shown as N/A). 2021-22 NSPF details and rules can be found at: <http://nevadareportcard.nv.gov/DI/MoreDownload?filename=Nevada%20School%20Performance%20Framework%20Mannual%202021-22%20School%20Year.pdf>