

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, SPCSA
SUBJECT: **Equipo Academy– Charter Amendment Request to Expand Enrollment in Existing Grade Levels and Facilities**
DATE: June 23, 2023

Summary of Request and Recommendation

Equipo Academy (Equipo) has submitted an amendment application requesting that the State Public Charter School Authority (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. A proposed motion along with a condition can be found on page 3 of this memo.

Background and Overview of the Amendment

Equipo Academy is located at 4131 E Bonanza Rd, Las Vegas, NV 89110 serving grades 6th through 12th. As of the 2022 Validation Day, Equipo had 798 students enrolled. Equipo opened in 2015 and its mission is to empower students to meet high expectations, excel to and through college, and become leaders and change makers for East Las Vegas.

According to the amendment application, Equipo is requesting to increase its current enrollment cap beginning in the 2023-24 school year. In 2022 the school gained access to an additional building that was subleased to the Battle Born Academy charter school for the 2022-2023 school year. Battle Born was recently approved to relocate to a new facility which freed up the space at Equipo Academy. Now that this space has been freed up for Equipo’s use, the school is requesting to increase its enrollment cap so it can fully utilize all of the classroom space at its facility. The new classroom space will be housed in a separate building which is located on property that Equipo leases. The facility’s address is 4201 East Bonanza Road Las Vegas, NV 89110 and is next door to the school’s current facility.

Equipo noted in its application that the school serves a high population of free-and-reduced lunch students along with students who are emergent bilingual. The school has maintained a waitlist while subleasing space to Battle Born Academy and would like to ensure the families of students on that waitlist that they will have an opportunity to join Equipo for the upcoming school year. Additionally, according to the amendment application, families have continually communicated to the school’s leadership and board that they would like to see an increase in available seats at the school now that the additional classrooms would not be occupied by Battle Born Academy.

According to the amendment application, Equipo has seen an increase in applications and waitlists, specifically an increase in applications from students who are credit deficient or who have not been attending school. These students are now showing substantial amounts of unfinished learning from the COVID-19 pandemic. With this increase in seats especially targeting sixth grade, Equipo Academy hopes to begin serving more students from its wait lists with greater needs earlier in their secondary career. According to the amendment application, Equipo Academy’s projected enrollment increases are in line with existing wait lists resulting from existing marketing and recruitment work to serve students within two miles of the school and who are primarily emergent bilingual and free- and reduced-price lunch eligible. Additionally, Equipo noted that the school is currently enrolled at over 105% of its target enrollment and because Equipo backfills in any grade where a space becomes available, all grades are currently fully enrolled with four homerooms of students. According to the amendment application, Equipo proposes to grow at the middle school grades, increasing to five homerooms, thus relieving wait lists starting in sixth grade.

According to the amendment application, Equipo would increase staffing to accommodate the additional students, and the increase in enrollment would allow the school to further reduce its student-teacher ratio and offer more interventions. Additionally, Equipo also noted that as an added safeguard the school has budgeted conservatively based on FY23 funding and made no assumptions regarding current proposals to increase state funding for education. Equipo also noted this request would not change any enrollment or lottery policies the school currently implements.

If approved, the Equipo Academy enrollment cap will be¹:

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

Legal Authority

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

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

performance of the applicant charter school. Academically, Equipo is currently highly rated under the Nevada School Performance Framework (NSPF) Report Card, with the middle school program earning a 5-star rating and the high school program earning a 4-star rating. Equipo's middle school and high school also met standards on the 2021-22 SPCSA's Academic Performance Framework and received 79.1 and 75.7 points respectively.

According to the most recent Organizational Performance Framework, Equipo was found to have met the standard for FY22 and earned 86.30 points (out of 100) which was approved at the December 16, 2022 SPCSA Board meeting. Additionally, Equipo received a Meets Standards rating on SPCSA's Financial Performance Framework for FY22. These results were approved at the Authority's March 3, 2023 meeting.

Equipo is an important option for students and families in Clark County, and as the school explained in their application, they have seen an uptick in their applications and waiting list as students and families search for different options coming out of the pandemic. SPCSA staff notes that as of Validation Day 2022, Equipo had 798 students enrolled, which is near the 10% threshold of its approved cap of 756. Of those 798 students enrolled, Equipo served over 95% FRL, and 24% ELL. SPCSA staff sees this request aligning with the [Academic and Demographic Needs Assessment](#). Specifically, one of the needs the SPCSA has identified is serving students who qualify for free or reduced-price lunch (FRL), English Language Learners (ELLs), Students with Disabilities (those with an Individual Education Program, or IEP), Students in Foster Care, and Students Experiencing Homelessness². As the Academic and Demographic Needs Assessment notes, "These student groups have consistently performed below the state average across various academic measures, including the 3rd-8th grade Smarter Balanced Assessment (in both Math and ELA) and the 11th grade ACT Assessment (in both Math and ELA) when reviewing data from the 2018-19 to 2021-22 school years." Equipo's request aligns with this need the SPCSA has identified.

Additionally, Equipo has consistently shown strong results under the Nevada School Performance Framework and the SPCSA's Academic Performance Framework. As stated previously, the middle school program earned a 5-star rating and the high school program earned a 4-star rating on the most-recent NSPF ratings, and Equipo's middle school and high school also met standards on the 2021-22 SPCSA's Academic Performance Framework and received 79.1 and 75.7 points respectively. Equipo has been a strong partner with other charter schools in Clark County, most recently subleasing classroom space to Battle Born Academy to allow that school to begin operations while still finding a permanent facility. Now that Battle Born Academy has vacated that classroom space, SPCSA staff supports Equipo Academy's increase its enrollment cap now that more classrooms and facility space are available. This request is supported by the school's historical performance record. Additionally, this request does not contemplate changing Equipo's approved enrollment or lottery policies, and the school will use its existing waitlist to fill these additional seats. SPCSA staff is supportive of Equipo's request, and recommends the Authority approve. Finally, SPCSA staff is recommending one condition as part of this approval. The condition will be for Equipo to complete relevant pre-opening requirements that pertain to occupying the additional space at 4201 East Bonanza Road Las Vegas, NV 89110 and SPCSA staff will work with Equipo to identify the specific pre-opening requirements.

Proposed Motion: 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.**

²https://charterschools.nv.gov/uploadedFiles/CharterSchoolsnvgov/content/Families/2023%20Academic%20and%20Demographic%20Needs%20Assessment_FINAL%20To%20Post_1.pdf

If approved, the enrollment cap for Equipo Academy will be³:

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

The current, approved, enrollment cap for Equipo is:

School Year	2023-24	2024-25	2025-26	2026-27
Grade Levels	6-12	6-12	6-12	6-12
Total Enrollment	756	756	756	756

Historical Performance and Demographic Information – Equipo Academy

School Total Enrollment and Demographics since 2017

Year	Enrollment	A	B	C	H	I	M	P	IEP	ELL	FRL
17-18	759	0.5%	1.9%	2.6%	93.9%	0.3%	0.2%	0.2%	6.3%	16.3%	>95%
18-19	753	0.6%	1.0%	2.2%	95.6%	0.1%	0.1%	0.1%	5.0%	23.2%	>95%
19-20	761	0.6%	1.4%	2.1%	95.4%	0.1%	0.1%	0.1%	6.5%	34.6%	>95%
20-21	797	0.6%	1.6%	1.8%	95.4%	0.0%	0.2%	0.1%	5.5%	35.2%	>95%
21-22	832	0.4%	1.0%	1.6%	96.2%	0.0%	0.2%	0.2%	7.8%	30.2%	>95%
22-23	798	0.3%	0.7%	1.1%	97.1%	0.0%	0.6%	0.0	6.1%	23.8%	>95%

- 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

Equipo Academy School Financial Performance

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

Equipo Academy Organizational Performance

³ Charter renewal will be considered by the Authority in the Fall of 2026

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

Equipo Academy Academic Performance

Year	Ratings
2021 ⁴	Middle School: 5-star High School: 4-star
2020 ⁵	Middle School: 5-star High School: 4-star
2019	Middle School: 5-star High School: 4-star
2018	Middle School: 3-star High School: Not Rated

Equipo Academy 2021-22 SPCSA Academic Performance Results⁶

	2021-22 SPCSA Academic Framework Score	2021-22 SPCSA Academic Framework Rating
Middle	79.1	Meets Standard
High School	75.7	Meets Standard

⁴ 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.

⁵ 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.

⁶ 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%20Manual%202021-22%20School%20Year.pdf>