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**ACTION MEMORANDUM**

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**TO:** SPCSA Authority Board  
**FROM:** Katie Broughton, Director of Authorizing, SPCSA  
Danny Peltier, Management Analyst III, SPCSA  
**SUBJECT:** Nevada Prep Charter School – Charter Amendment Request to Add Grades  
Kindergarten Through Second  
**DATE:** November 3, 2023

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**Summary of Request and Recommendation**

Nevada Prep Charter School (NV Prep) has submitted an amendment application requesting that the State Public Charter School Authority (SPCSA) approve the school's request to add grades K – 2 beginning in the 2024-2025 school year.

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

**Background and Overview of the Amendment**

NV Prep is a charter school in Clark County located at 1780 Betty Ln., Las Vegas, NV 89156. Its mission is to educate every third- through 8th grade scholar to excel in high school, college, and life with a focus on academic achievement and leadership development.

NV Prep, serving grades 3-8, and opened in the fall of 2018. According to the amendment application, NV Prep is requesting to expand its grade level offerings to include kindergarten, 1<sup>st</sup>, and 2<sup>nd</sup> grades beginning in the 2024-25 school year.

According to the amendment application, NV Prep is seeking to make the requested change because the school believes that adding Kindergarten, first and second grade would bring the following benefits:

1. **Comprehensive Educational Continuity:** By including Kindergarten, 1st, and 2nd grades, the school can provide a continuous educational experience for students from their earliest years through to their middle school years. This can facilitate smoother transitions and a consistent school culture.
2. **Early Childhood Development:** Young children in kindergarten, 1st, and 2nd grades are in critical phases of cognitive, social, and emotional development. Having these grades in the same school can allow for a more tailored approach to early childhood education, supporting their growth in a familiar environment.
3. **Alignment of Curriculum and Instruction:** Including these lower grades can help ensure that the school's curriculum and teaching methods are aligned from the earliest stages of education. This alignment can create a more coherent educational experience and better prepare students for higher grades.
4. **Parental Convenience:** Parents with children in multiple grade levels can benefit from having all their children in one school, simplifying drop-offs, pickups, and involvement in school activities.
5. **Community Building:** Expanding the school to include Kindergarten, 1st, and 2nd grades can foster a stronger sense of community among families, as parents and students build connections over a longer span of time.

Additionally, NV Prep expects the addition of the new grades to benefit teacher professional development, sharing and distribution of resources, increase enrollment and stability over time, the ability to start interventions and support services at an earlier age, flexibility in creating class groupings such as “Walk To Read,” and adjusting classroom dynamics as students progress through the grades. NV prep also explained in the application that students transitioning from kindergarten, to 1<sup>st</sup> grade, and then to 2<sup>nd</sup> grade, within the same school can be less stressful than transitioning to entirely new institutions.

NV Prep also notes in their amendment application that they plan to have two classrooms per grade level across the kindergarten through 8<sup>th</sup> grade levels with approximately 20-25 students per class. Additionally, NV Prep will focus recruitment and enrollment efforts on siblings of students already enrolled and the surrounding community within a 2-mile radius.

NV Prep began the 2023-24 school year under a new leadership team who identified adding kindergarten, 1<sup>st</sup>, and 2<sup>nd</sup> grades as a key initiative that will allow the school to be more marketable to students and families. Under the leadership of John Haynal, the school is now managed by an executive director and a director for the elementary school and a director for the middle school. Furthermore, NV Prep has implemented the i-Ready curriculum in both mathematics and reading for the 2023-2024 school year and an RTI (Response to Intervention) block into the school day for both our elementary and middle school students. The school expects the intervention will provide targeted support and facilitate growth.

Finally, according to the amendment application, the expansion in grade levels does not include a request to expand the school’s current enrollment cap. Due to under-enrollment in recent

school years, NV Prep will be able to add grade levels while still maintaining the approved cap. The approved cap can be found on page 4 of the recommendation memo.

### **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 Prep’s elementary and middle schools are currently rated as 3-stars under the Nevada Department of Education’s 2022-23 Nevada School Performance Framework ratings. Additionally, The NV Prep elementary school received 65.3 points, and the middle school received 70.6 points on the 2022-2023 SPCSA Academic Performance Framework. Both the elementary and middle schools were found to Meet Standards on the SPCSA’s Academic Performance Framework. The Authority approved SPCSA staff to conduct additional academic monitoring during the 2022-23 school year due to the 2021-22 SPCSA Academic Performance results of NV Prep’s elementary school and the elementary school saw significant gains year-over-year.

NV Prep earned 90 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 Prep was issued a Notice of Concern under the SPCSA’s Financial Framework for the 2021-22 school year at the Authority’s meeting on May 19, 2023. NV Prep was required to develop and submit a financial improvement plan, and to provide quarterly updates regarding the implementation of the improvement plan. As noted in the SPCSA’s memo from the May 2023 meeting, “While Nevada Prep did not meet performance expectations against the financial framework, the school did benefit from leasing out some available space within the building to pilotED – Cactus Park, another SPCSA sponsored school.” Additionally, under new leadership, NV Prep continues to work toward meeting its goals under its financial improvement plan, and SPCSA staff does not believe the issuance of that notice should adversely affect NV Prep’s amendment request.

SPCSA staff is supportive of the request by NV Prep. While the school has experienced some financial issues in recent years, the addition of Kindergarten, 1<sup>st</sup>, and 2<sup>nd</sup> grades should help in stabilizing the financial position of the school. Additionally, NV Prep saw significant gains in the elementary school’s academic performance during the 2022-23 school year, and staff finds that improvement further supports the school’s request. As noted previously in the memo, recruiting and enrolling students beginning in 3<sup>rd</sup> grade presents challenges due to students not wanting to change schools after their 2<sup>nd</sup> grade year. By adding K – 2 to NV Prep’s grade-level

offerings, staff agree with the school’s assessment that enrolling students beginning in kindergarten will allow for a better continuity of education for students and families. NV Prep also submitted an updated staffing plan, which can be found as part of the amendment application, and SPCSA staff finds the staffing plan to be both reasonable and adequate to support the additional three grade levels. Finally, SPCSA staff would also reiterate that this request does not change the approved enrollment caps for NV Prep through the remainder of the charter term. NV Prep has been below its cap in recent years which is one of the key reasons the new leadership of the school requested grade level additions.

**Proposed Motion: Approve Nevada Prep Charter School’s request to add grades kindergarten through 2<sup>nd</sup> beginning in the 2024-25 school year.**

The approved enrollment cap for NV Prep is as follows, with the addition of K-2 beginning in 2024-25:

School Year	2023-24	2024-25	2025-26
Grade Levels	3-8	K-8	K-8
Enrollment	480	540	540

**School Demographics change since 2018 – NV Prep**

**NV Prep**

Year	Enrollment	A	B	C	H	I	M	P	IEP	ELL	FRL
18-19	113	0.0%	17.6%	9.7%	70.7%	0.0%	0.8%	0.8%	13.2%	18.5%	90.2%
19-20	214	0.4%	13.0%	15.8%	70.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.4%	14.4%	22.4%	>95%
20-21	246	1.2%	15.4%	8.9%	73.1%	0.0%	0.4%	0.8%	10.9%	25.6%	>95%
21-22	215	1.8%	26.9%	6.5%	63.7%	0.0%	0.0%	0.9%	11.1%	28.8%	>95%
22-23	283	2.1%	26.5%	5.3%	64.3%	1.4%	0.0%	0.3%	13.4%	29.3%	>95%
23-24	314	0.3%	21.9%	7.3%	64.3%	1.5%	4.0%	0.3%	12.4%	25.7%	>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

**NV Prep Financial Performance**

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

2021 – 2022	Notice of Concern
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### NV Prep Organizational Performance

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

### NV Prep Academic Performance

School Year	NSPF Rating
2022 – 2023	Elementary: 3 stars Middle: 3 stars
2021 – 2022 Index Scores	Elementary Index Score: 12.2 Middle Index School: 74.4
2020 – 2021 <sup>1</sup>	Elementary: 2 stars Middle: 5 stars
2019 – 2020 <sup>2</sup>	Elementary: 2 stars Middle: 5 stars
2018 – 2019	Elementary: 2 stars Middle: 5 stars

### NV Prep 2021-22 SPCSA Academic Performance Framework Results<sup>3</sup>

Campus	2021-22 SPCSA Academic Framework Score	2021-22 SPCSA Academic Framework Rating
NV Prep ES	19.3	BELOW STANDARD
NV Prep MS	84.6	EXCEEDS STANDARD

### NV Prep 2022-23 SPCSA Academic Performance Framework Results

Campus	2022-23 SPCSA Academic Framework Score	2022-23 SPCSA Academic Framework Rating
NV Prep ES	65.3	MEETS STANDARD
NV Prep MS	70.6	MEETS STANDARD

<sup>1</sup> Due to COVID-19, the Nevada Department of Education (NDE) applied for and was granted a 2020-21 school year waiver from the U.S. 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 new Nevada School Performance Framework (NSPF) school ratings for the 2020-21 school year.

<sup>2</sup> 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

<sup>3</sup> 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>