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ACTION MEMORANDUM

TO: SPCSA Board
FROM: Mike Dang, Manager of Organizational and Financial Performance
Rebecca Feiden, Executive Director
SUBJECT: Transportation Plan: Mariposa Language and Learning Academy
DATE: August 25, 2023

Background

[Assembly Bill 400 \(2023 Session of the Nevada Legislature\)](#) appropriated \$7 million to the State Public Charter School Authority (SPCSA) for each year of the upcoming biennium (the 2023-24 fiscal year and the 2024-25 fiscal year) to award to charter schools, including SPCSA-sponsored and district-sponsored charter schools, to fund student transportation. To receive funding, a charter school must submit a Transportation Plan to the SPCSA and the SPCSA may approve the Transportation Plan and award funding to the charter school if the plan meets the following criteria:

1. “The transportation plan is comprehensive and likely to be successfully implemented;
2. The transportation plan will materially improve access to education in the region served by the transportation plan;
3. The transportation plan demonstrates that the charter school will be able to comply with statutory and regulatory transportation requirements, including, without limitation, the certification of bus drivers and vehicle safety;
4. The transportation plan is financially viable;
5. The transportation plan would not cost more, on a per pupil basis, than the average cost for transportation for other public schools operating in the school district in which the charter school is located; and

6. The academic, financial and organizational performance of the charter school indicate that the transportation plan is in the interest of pupils who will be served by the transportation plan.”¹

It is important to note that pursuant to NAC 388A.330(4), a charter school is only permitted to provide transportation to pupils if the school has approval to do so from its sponsor. Therefore, charter schools that are not already approved to provide student transportation will be required to submit to their sponsor a contract amendment request in order to implement the Transportation Plan. For those schools sponsored by the SPCSA, the amendment request to provide student transportation was incorporated into the application process, and the SPCSA Board will consider approval of the amendment request in conjunction with the Transportation Plan.

Applications for the 2023-24 school year will be accepted and reviewed on a rolling basis from July 7, 2023 and through September 30, 2023². While the SPCSA hopes to fund all applicants that submit a compliant transportation plan, because there is only \$7 million available in each school year, the SPCSA may prioritize funding Title I charter schools.

Additional details and form associated with the Transportation Plan and Funding Application can be found on the [SPCSA's website](#).

Transportation Plan Overview

Mariposa Language and Learning Academy (Mariposa) is requesting a total of \$63,504 to implement the school's Transportation Plan. Below is an overview of the proposed Transportation Plan for Mariposa, as provided in the application.

“Students will have van pick and drop off from a Mariposa Staff member on all school days based on needs of families as indicated by a needs survey for each family.”

Specifically, Mariposa plans to purchase two vehicles designed for ten passengers or less to provide transportation to students.

Analysis and Recommendation

Mariposa is a Title I School and is requesting approval of its Transportation Plan and funding to implement the Transportation Plan. It is important to note that Mariposa is sponsored by the Washoe County School District and the School District has confirmed that the school is already approved to provide transportation to students.

SPCSA staff has reviewed the Transportation Plan and find that the Plan meets the requirements set forth in Assembly Bill 400.

1. The Transportation Plan is comprehensive and likely to be successfully implemented.

¹ Section 28.5 of Assembly Bill 400 (2023 Session of the Nevada Legislature)

² After September 30, 2023, the SPCSA will determine if there are remaining funds that have not yet been awarded. If funds remain, the SPCSA will re-open the transportation application.

2. The narrative provided by the school explains that “Students and families will have dependable transportation that will improve their access to school. 5% of student absences during the school year are due to families not having access to transportation and unable to get students to school. This transportation plan will improve access and guarantee options for transportation for students and families. Additionally, this transportation plan will improve access to education at Mariposa for those who may live in the outlying areas and don’t have access to personal transportation.” This demonstrates that the Transportation Plan will materially improve access to education in the region.
3. The Transportation Plan includes details regarding how the charter school will ensure compliance with statutory and regulatory transportation requirements.
4. The budget provided within the Transportation Plan demonstrates that the Transportation Plan is financially viable.
5. The average daily enrollment for Mariposa during the fourth quarter of the 2022-23 school year was 162. Mariposa is located in Washoe County where the four-year average (per pupil) in transportation funding for the 2023-24 school year is \$392. The total funding request for Mariposa was \$63,504, which is less than or equal to the average cost, per pupil, for transportation within the Washoe County School District.
6. The academic, financial and organizational performance of the charter school indicate that the transportation plan is in the interest of pupils who will be served by the transportation plan. Specifically, the Transportation Plan indicates that transportation will allow Mariposa to continue their trend of remarkable improvement over the last 5 years, moving from a 1-star school in 2017 to receiving a NSPF score that would have earned a 4-star rating in 2022, were star ratings issued that year. Providing this service will be yet another valuable service to the students that live in the 14 zip codes currently served by Mariposa. Additionally, the school’s past financial and organizational performance demonstrate that the school will be able to operate this transportation plan sustainably.

Therefore, SPCSA staff recommend approval of the Mariposa Transportation Plan, along with funding to implement the plan.

Proposed Motion:

1. Approve the Mariposa Language and Learning Academy Transportation Plan, along with funding to implement the Plan and allow SPCSA staff to work with the school to make budget revisions as long as the total funding does not exceed the average per pupil cost in the local school district.
2. Require the school to provide SPCSA staff with documentation to demonstrate that the school is in compliance with applicable laws and regulations prior to beginning to transport students.