



TO: Melissa Mackedon, SPCSA Board Chair
Rebecca Feiden, SPCSA Executive Director
Mark Modricin, SPCSA Director of Authorizing
FROM: John Etzell, Board President, Rooted School Las Vegas
Merrick Murray, Board Vice President
RE: Request to defer opening until 2024-25 school year
DATE: Friday, June 02, 2023

This letter aims to inform the State Public Charter School Authority that after considerable thought, the Board of Rooted School Las Vegas has voted to defer the opening of Rooted School Las Vegas to the 2024-25 school year. This was not the desired outcome, but we think it is the most reasonable decision. We want to ensure that the school has financial viability, established community partnerships, and strong student enrollment numbers.

We have identified three key factors in our decision to defer that we plan to address in the coming few months through a revised deferral plan of action.

1. **Low student enrollment.** We've spent the recent months engaging in significant student recruitment efforts, both online and offline. These efforts include partnering with multiple agencies for online advertising, tabling, door-to-door canvassing, and participation in local community events. Although student enrollment numbers have decreased all across the board in both CCSD and non-CCSD schools, we were able to gain a significant increase in application numbers in recent weeks. While we had increased our enrollment significantly over the last month, we did not see a guaranteed path to meeting our goals or ensuring minimum viability to open our doors in just two short months.

2. **Community Partners.** As a school located in a community heavily influenced by word-of-mouth awareness and local support, forming community partnerships has been a big challenge related to our short opening timeline. Despite canvassing in local neighborhoods, houses, shops, etc., we simply have not had the time and capacity to make numerous touchpoints that would prove to be most impactful with our families. As a school model heavily reliant on local employer partnerships as well, a challenge has been working with employers to partner with a school in this area, as it is further away in location to most tech companies.

3. **Short Timeline.** While we were excited to have our charter approved in November 2022, being approved so close to the start of the planned school year had a far greater impact on enrollment than anticipated. Having our lottery date in May gave us an extremely short timeline to convert applications to enrollments. The late approval of our charter was also a significant factor, as we simply have not had enough time to gain community support and attention, and recognition from local families of our school opening.



Deferring a year allows us to focus more on family outreach and community engagement; solidify additional community partnerships and strengthen existing ones; and finalize our long-term facility.

We appreciate the continued support of the SPCSA as we work to open Rooted School Las Vegas, provide a high quality option in a community where options are limited, and work to fulfill the mission of our school.

John Etzell, Board President Rooted School Las Vegas

Merrick Murray, Board Vice President Rooted School Las Vegas