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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: Young Women’s Leadership Academy (YWLA)
DATE: July 28, 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 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

Young Women’s Leadership Academy (YWLA) is requesting a total of \$42,328 to implement the school’s Transportation Plan. Below is an overview of the proposed Transportation Plan for YWLA, as provided in the application.

“YWLA is a unique school model with a unique enrollment challenge. Since YWLA predominantly enrolls students interested in an all-girls education model, our recruitment net is smaller than it is at co-educational schools. To realize our school’s full potential, YWLA needs to increase our enrollment, and we believe that providing transportation will be a critical step toward reaching full enrollment.

Based on enrollment and application data, YWLA believes a strategic bus route with bus stops in the radius between 1 mile and 4 miles from our campus will allow us to remove barriers for existing families and build on current trends to enroll more students from the areas where our students currently live.”

Analysis and Recommendation

YWLA is a Title I School and is requesting approval of its Transportation Plan and funding to implement the Transportation Plan. In addition, because YWLA is not currently approved to provide transportation, the school is also requesting to amend its charter contract to provide

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.

transportation and has submitted a good cause exemption request to have this amendment considered outside of the established amendment windows.

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.
2. The narrative provided by the school explains that “If our proposed transportation plan is approved and funded, YWLA will be able to serve sixty (60) additional young scholars on our campus. The proposed plan would expand our transportation-free accessibility footprint to about twenty (20) square miles removing a significant barrier that could permit thousands more young scholars the opportunity to attend YWLA and further their educational aspirations, even if they do not have a ride to school.” 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. In accordance with the Nevada Department of Education's guidance for significantly expanding schools, YWLA received an enrollment audit during June of 2023 to establish the student count for the purpose of funding through the Pupil Centered Funding Plan. As of the enrollment audit, the student count was 88. YWLA is in Clark County where the four-year average (per pupil) in transportation funding for the 2023-24 school year is \$481. The total funding request for YWLA was \$42,328, which is less than or equal to the average cost, per pupil, for transportation within the Clark 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’s greatest impact will be reducing absenteeism and tardiness of YWLA’s young scholars if they may otherwise have difficulty getting to school.” The school also firmly believes that a transportation system will increase enrollment and allow the school’s arrival and dismissal processes to run more smoothly.

Therefore, SPCSA staff recommend approval of the YWLA Transportation Plan, along with funding to implement the plan. Furthermore, SPCSA staff recommend approval of the good cause exemption and amendment request to enable the school to provide transportation to students.

Proposed Motion:

1. Approve the YWLA 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. Approve the charter contract amendment request for YWLA to allow the school to provide student transportation.

3. 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.

If approved, the enrollment for the remainder of the contract term will remain unchanged:

School Year	2023-24	2024-25	2025-26	2026-27	2027-28
Grade Levels	6-10	6-11	6-12	6-12	6-12
Total Enrollment	300	450	540	570	600