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ACTION MEMORANDUM

TO: SPCSA Authority Board
FROM: Danny Peltier, Management Analyst III, SPCSA
SUBJECT: Mater Academy of Northern Nevada – Charter Amendment Request to

- Add Distance Education options for students,
- Expand to a new K-12 campus opening in the 2025-26 school year, and
- Modify the grade configuration at the existing MANN Campus

DATE: January 26, 2024

Summary of Request and Recommendation

Mater Academy of Northern Nevada (MANN) has submitted an amendment application requesting that the State Public Charter School Authority (SPCSA) grant a Good Cause Exemption and approve the school (1) add Distance Education options, (2) expand to a new K-12 campus opening in the 2025-26 school year, and (3) eliminate grades 6-8 at MANN’s existing Boys & Girls Club location at 2680 E. 9th St. whereas those students will attend the new K-12 campus beginning in the 2025-26 school year.

SPCSA staff has reviewed the application and recommends that the Authority grant the Good Cause Exemption and approve the amendment request with conditions. A proposed motion can be found on pages 7 and 8 this memo.

Background and Overview of the Amendment

MANN is a K – 8 public charter school located at 2680 E. Ninth St., Reno, Nevada 89512 in Washoe County. The school first opened in August of 2017, serving 169 students in grades K – 5. As of the 2023 Validation Day, MANN had 490 students enrolled in grades K – 8.

According to the amendment application MANN is seeking three changes to its charter contract. Those changes are:

1. Add Distance Education options for students,
2. Expand to a new K-12 campus opening in the 2025-26 school year, and
3. Eliminate grades 6-8 at MANN’s existing Boys & Girls Club location at 2680 E. Ninth St. so those students can attend the new K-12 campus.

Adding Distance Education Options for Students

Similar to other schools that contract with Academica, MANN is seeking to add distance education courses for students who are in need of credit retrieval, recovery, remediation, academic enrichment, or wish to take an elective course that they may not otherwise have the opportunity to attend at MANN's existing physical campus. According to the amendment application, MANN would like to create a new program of Distance Education for its current middle school (and prospective middle and high school) students to better serve each student's unique educational needs. Additionally, MANN has already received approval to offer Distance Education by the Nevada Department of Education, and the approval can be found as an attachment to this amendment.

Expand to a new K-12 campus opening in the 2025-26 school year

According to the amendment application, MANN's proposed Golden Valley campus will be located at (what is currently identified as) 0 North Hills Blvd., Reno, NV 89506 and serve communities in the following target zip codes: 89431, 89433, 89502, 89503, 89506, 89508, 89509, and 89512. MANN notes in their amendment application that nearly three quarter (70.0%) of all students attending the traditional public schools served by the Washoe County School District in the eight target zip codes attend schools that received a 1- or 2-star NSPF rating for the 2022-23 school year and had a NSPF index score below 50 for the 2021-22 school year. This percentage of underserved students in the target zip codes is significantly higher than the percentage of underserved students attending schools throughout the State of Nevada (42.0%) or even Washoe County (44.6%), generally.

Additionally, according to the amendment application, Mater Academy currently operates four campuses in Nevada (three campuses in Southern Nevada and the MANN campus located in Reno, Nevada) and 19 campuses in Florida. As a system, Mater Academy serves Title I students, English Language Learners (ELLs), free or reduced-price lunch eligible populations (FRL), students with Individualized Education Plans (IEPs), and Gifted and Talented students. Mater Academy desires to partner with families in these identified communities of disadvantaged and underserved students in order to provide instruction commensurate with students' readiness and ability levels in elementary, middle, and high school and have students working on grade level by the end of third grade.

Consistent with the 2024 SPCSA Demographic and Academics Needs Assessment, and as evidenced by the existing MANN campus, the school explains that they seek to support student populations such as: economically disadvantaged students who are eligible for free or reduced-price lunch (FRL), English Language Learners (ELL), and students with Disabilities (those with an Individual Education Plan, or IEP) who have historically underperformed on the 3rd-8th grade assessments in Math and English Language Arts (ELA).

MANN proposes opening the new campus with grades K – 8 and growing to grades K – 12 in subsequent years. The proposed enrollment, and caps, for the new campus are as follow:

School Year	2025-26	2026-27	2027-28	2028-29	2029-30¹
Grade Levels	K – 8	K – 9	K – 10	K – 11	<i>K – 12</i>
Total Enrollment	767	943	1145	1314	<i>1460</i>

As part of the opening of the new campus, MANN plans on transitioning students in grades 5 – 7 from the existing campus to the new campus beginning in 2025-26. Details regarding the changes to grade configuration, and student transition, can be found below.

As previously noted, MANN is a replication of schools in both Florida and Las Vegas. Over MANN’s charter term, the school has offered grades K – 8. This expansion contemplates adding a high school program which MANN has not previously offered. According to the amendment application, MANN will replicate high school programs that have seen success, specifically at the Mater Academy of Las Vegas East Campus program. Additionally, MANN administrators will have access to Professional Development and mentorships with Administrators from the Las Vegas school. MANN noted in the application that it will strive to prepare students for success in post-secondary education and in the workforce by providing a rigorous curriculum. All high school students will be enrolled in the Core Enrollment Expectations along with other diploma requirements. Each 9th grade student will have an approved four-year academic plan. The academic plan must set forth the specific educational goals that the student intends to achieve before graduation from high school. The plan may include, without limitation, enrollment in dual credit, Career and Technical Education, Advanced Placement (AP), and Pre-AP courses. The full course catalog can be found as Attachment 09 in the charter amendment application.

According to the amendment application, MANN has identified potential community partners to assist in the new campus expansion and provide students with additional resources as part of enrollment. MANN noted that the school has partnerships with the following organizations: Boys & Girls Club of Truckee Meadows, Latin American Chamber of Business, Big Brothers Big Sisters of Northern Nevada, 21st Century through the Boys and Girls Club, Slopes for Sanity, Educational Partnership with the Reno Police Department, and Hazel Health / Hazel Heart programs. MANN explained in the amendment application that this community involvement will be key to success in implementing the mission and vision of MANN and are extremely important, as they will help provide students with a vast educational experience both in and out of the classroom.

Regarding student recruitment and enrollment, MANN identified a number of strategies in the amendment application to identify and enroll students in the identified zip codes. According to the amendment application, a large majority of MANN’s target population (e.g., single-parent families, low socio-economic households, second language families, etc.) can be considered a “harder to reach” community and thus requires a more robust engagement process than may be required of other charter schools. In order to reach these families, MANN markets via multiple modes so that all families are adequately informed of their educational options. MANN understands its target community and knows

¹ MANN’s current charter contract term ends June 30, 2028, and enrollment in subsequent years contingent on charter renewal

that it can require grassroots recruitment campaigns to ensure they are aware of the choice program, as well as their eligibility to apply for enrollment. This marketing campaign includes the school website; social media such as Facebook, flyers, direct mailers, advertisements in varying English and Spanish media; building relationships with community groups; and door-to-door approaches. MANN also posts flyers in local public facilities, such as the post office, community centers, and other locations of public access. The goal is to reach parents and legal guardians by using various means of information delivery. Additionally, if approved, MANN plans on holding in-person events for interested students and families in event spaces and businesses, in the zip codes identified in the amendment application.

Looking at the proposed site and facility, MANN explained in the amendment application that the new campus would be located in Golden Valley, which is just north of the Reno area. According to the amendment application, the school plans to enter into a lease-purchase agreement with Turner Impact Capital for the development, acquisition, and construction of this new proposed facility at the N. Hills Blvd, and Turner Impact Capital organization will be the sole owner of the proposed facility while MANN will lease space from the organization. The site plan for MANN's newly proposed Golden Valley K-12 campus indicates that the facility will be constructed on a lot with a net area of 10.62 acres, approximately 462,607 square feet. According to the amendment application, the conceptual floor plan for MANN's proposed Golden Valley campus reflects that the initial Phase 1 of the facility to be constructed will encompass approximately 59,000 square feet of air-conditioned space. Phase 2 of the proposed facility will encompass an additional 13,000 square feet of air-conditioned space while the final Phase 3 of the facility will encompass approximately 26,000 square feet of additional air-conditioned space. Thus, the total proposed area of air-conditioned space at build out of the Golden Valley K-12 campus will be 97,902 square feet. In general, the construction of the proposed facility for MANN's Golden Valley campus anticipates that the facility will be built in multiple phases as the school grows year over year. Phase 1 will include various hard and soft costs such as expenses for architectural and engineering design work, site work, permit and plan check fees, development fees, and securing water rights. MANN currently estimates that construction could be substantially completed by early July 2025. Turner Impact Capital will fund 100% of the project costs. Turner Impact Capital traditionally has provided a purchase option between years 3-5 in the lease. MANN provided a cost breakdown of Phase 1 of the project in the amendment application, which can be found on page 150-151 of the amendment application, and as attachment 25. MANN projects Phase 1's total cost to be around \$27,114,133.

According to the amendment application, MANN's Governing Board will utilize administrative support from Academica Nevada to help coordinate the recruitment for a new campus principal. Once hired, the new MANN campus principal will be responsible for recruiting, hiring, and developing teachers. The Principal will use multiple means by which to identify qualified staff including attending recruitment fairs, posting on job sites, etc. Additionally, according to the amendment application, MANN will provide training in Cultural Integration Instructional Methods, curriculum, blended learning, content mastery, standards, classroom management, and leadership development. A member of the administrative team at the new school campus will oversee, coordinate, assist, and monitor the staff development process. This person will work with Mater Academy, Inc. to develop an onsite professional development plan based on identified needs. In general, MANN expects the addition of an expanded K-12 campus will not affect or alter the current staff performance evaluations or retention strategies and MANN Golden Valley will retain high-performing teachers, administrators, and staff by applying the performance-based compensation framework.

Eliminate grades 6-8 at MANN's existing Boys & Girls Club location at 2680 E. Ninth St. so those students can attend the new K-12 campus

Finally, MANN proposes to eliminate grades 6 – 8 at the Boys and Girls Club campus and move those students to the new Golden Valley campus beginning in the 2025-26 school year. This transition will not change the enrollment cap for the Boys and Girls Club campus, as MANN proposes adding an additional class in each of the K – 5 grades so as to maintain the current cap of 480 students. According to the school, for those students who currently live closer to the Boys and Girls Club campus but will have to transition to the new Golden Valley campus, MANN, via the Boys and Girls Club, will offer transportation from the Boys and Girls Club campus to the new Golden Valley campus in order to minimize the impact on students and families.

Legal Authority and Requirements Related to Amendment Requests

Pursuant to [NRS 388A.276](#) and [NAC 388A.400\(8\)](#), 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.

Analysis and Staff Recommendation

When reviewing an amendment application, SPCSA staff reviews the academic, financial and organizational performance of the applicant charter school. In the case of MANN, SPCSA staff finds the school to be meeting academic, financial and organizational performance expectations. Both the elementary school and middle school were rated as 3-stars under the 2022-23 NSPF, and each has shown consistent improvement year-over-year. Additionally, MANN was also found to meet the standards on the 2022-2023 SPCSA Academic Performance Framework.

MANN earned 97 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, and staff does not note any Organizational issues on the 2022 – 23 Organizational Performance Framework. As such, SPCSA staff finds the school to be 'Meeting Standards.' MANN has also been found to 'Meet the Standards' on the most recent 2022 SPCSA Financial Performance Framework and preliminary results under the 2023 SPCSA Financial Performance Framework appear to signal that the school is in a sound financial position.

SPCSA staff is supportive of the requests for amendment MANN has proposed. With regard to the addition of Distance Education for students, this addition has been implemented across multiple Academics-contracted schools and has proven successful for students who either are in need of credit recovery or are interested in a class the schools does not otherwise provide. Consistent with the SPCSA's prior approvals for such requests, staff recommends adding a condition that will require the school to submit a 2024-25 year-end report of the student performance against the performance expectation outlined in the amendment application, or that 90% of students enrolled

in blended distance education classes successfully passed their courses and a student enrollment summary or course log that notes the number of students enrolling in supplemental distance education courses for the 2024-25 school year.

SPCSA staff is also in support of the proposed expansion. MANN has historically met, or exceeded, district and SPCSA averages for enrollment of student populations such as ELL, FRL, and Special Education, and has achieved adequate results academically over the course of its charter term. While the school struggled during its initial opening year, MANN has shown great progress in both its elementary and middle school. For example, under the 2021-2022 SPCSA Academic Performance framework, MANN scored 74.4 points at the elementary school and 66.3 points at the middle school. For the 2022-23 school year, MANN increased its elementary score with 78.0 points, and increased its middle school score with 71.2 points.

Additionally, the SPCSA staff conducted a site evaluation of the Boys and Girls Club MANN campus on November 7, 2023. SPCSA staff found numerous strengths during its evaluation of the school in November. SPCSA staff identified that “MANN is clearly committed to providing equitable access to a diverse and innovative education for all. 100% of the students attending MANN qualify for free and reduced lunch. Other diverse learning groups include the school’s EL students, consisting of 212 students or 43% of the population, and students with Special Needs, 80 students or 16.3% of the students, in attendance at MANN. See the chart provided below for comparison to the state of Nevada and to the SPCSA².” SPCSA staff noted that “evidence gathered during focus groups indicated MANN is implementing the material terms of their educational program as stated in the charter. Students with an Individualized Education Plan (IEP) received individualized instruction. Members of the school leadership team reported that teachers, parents, the case manager, SPED teacher meet to review IEP goals and to create new goals to best support each learner. MANN provides parents with a copy of IEP and monthly progress monitoring reports. Students learning the English language are evaluated and students were observed participating in small group instruction. The EL teacher provided training for strategies to implement within classrooms to advance the use of the English language³.” These findings, in addition to results on the most recent NSPF and SPCSA Academic Performance Framework, show MANN is clearly equipped to expand its offerings to additional students in Washoe County, specifically students residing in the 89431, 89433, 89502, 89503, 89506, 89508, 89509, and 89512 zip codes.

Regarding the facility plans MANN presented as part of the charter amendment, SPCSA staff find the plans to be both adequate and reasonable. MANN contract with Academica as an Education Management Organization, and Academica has shown success in assisting existing schools with campus expansions. SPCSA staff sees no reason this successful track record would not continue with regard to MANN. The financial assumptions provided as part of the amendment application, in addition to the overall financial health of the school, leads the SPCSA staff to support the proposed expansion.

MANN has yet to fully begin student recruitment and enrollment for the proposed expansion but

² [November 7, 2023 SPCSA Site Evaluation Report](#)

³ [November 7, 2023 SPCSA Site Evaluation Report](#)

did provide a reasonable, and thorough, plan in the event this amendment is approved. As previously noted, MANN will transition middle school students from the Boys and Girls Club campus to the new Golden Valley Campus, which equates to about 235 students based on 2023 Validation Day data. That built in student base, along with the fact that charter school expansion in Washoe County has been limited in the previous three years, leads staff to believe the school will be able to meet its enrollment projections in Year 1 and beyond. Additionally, MANN has provided SPCSA staff with an update after the initial amendment was submitted, that upon approval, the school will begin a series of in-person recruitment events in the targeted zip codes which will coincide with the planned marketing outreach.

SPCSA staff is recommending a condition be added as part of the approval, which will require MANN to provide updated and signed Memorandum of Understandings (MOUs) with potential partners referenced in the charter amendment application. While SPCSA staff is not concerned with MANN's ability to partner with the various entities referenced in the charter amendment application, SPCSA staff does believe the school should provide signed MOUs with clear and deliverable outcomes to ensure the school continues its outreach to proposed partners in, and around, the targeted zip codes.

Finally, regarding the expansion, SPCSA staff solicited input from the Washoe County School District. The WCSD's input can be found as a supporting document for this amendment item. While WCSD did have some concern regarding this expansion, SPCSA staff does not see a significant enough concern to change its recommendation for approval.

SPCSA staff is also supportive of MANN's plan to alter the grade configuration at the existing Boys and Girls Club Campus. SPCSA staff find the plan to transition the middle school to the Golden Valley Campus to be reasonable, especially considering the option for transportation of students who may live closer to the Boys and Girls Club Campus as discussed previously in this memo. Ensuring these students are not adversely impacted by this transition was a concern of the SPCSA and providing transportation for these students addressed that concern. SPCSA staff would also reiterate that the current enrollment cap for the Boys and Girls Club Campus would not change since MANN will add a class in each grade level to make up for the loss of the middle school.

Overall, and as previously noted, SPCSA staff is supportive of the request by MANN. A proposed motion along with conditions can be found below.

Proposed Motion: Grant the Good Cause Exemption request and approve Mater Academy of Northern Nevada's request to: Add Distance Education Options for Students; Expand to a new K-12 campus opening in the 2025-26 school year; and Eliminate grades 6-8 at MANN's existing Boys & Girls Club location and transition those students transition those students to the new Golden Valley Campus beginning during the 2025-26 school year with the following conditions:

- 1. That MANN provide updated, signed MOUs, for proposed partners referenced in the amendment application no later than December 1, 2024;**

2. That MANN provide SPCSA staff, and the SPCSA Board, quarterly updates regarding enrollment for the Golden Valley Campus through the pre-opening process;
3. That MANN complete the SPCSA pre-opening process for new, and expanding, charter schools
4. For Distance Education MANN will provide
 - a. A 2024-25 year-end report of the student performance against the performance expectation outlined in the amendment application, or that 90% of students enrolled in blended distance education classes successfully passed their courses; and
 - b. A student enrollment summary or course log that notes the number of students enrolling in supplemental distance education courses for the 2024-25 school year.

If approved, the enrollment cap for the MANN campuses will be as follows for the remainder of the charter term:

School Year	2023-24	2024-25	2025-26	2026-27	2027-28	2028-29	2029-30 ⁴
Golden Valley Campus							
Grade Levels	N/A	N/A	K – 8	K – 9	K – 10	K – 11	K – 12
Enrollment	N/A	N/A	767	943	1145	1314	1460
Boys and Girls Club Campus							
Grade Levels	K – 8	K – 8	K – 5	K – 5	K – 5	K – 5	K – 5
Total Enrollment	480	480	480	480	480	480	480
Total Enrollment	480	480	1247	1423	1625	1794	1940

The current, approved, enrollment cap for MANN is:

School Year	2023-24	2024-25	2025-26	2026-27	2027-28	2028-29
Grade Levels	K – 8	K – 8	K – 8	K – 8	K – 8	K – 8
Enrollment	480	480	480	480	480	480

School Demographics change since 2018 – Mater Academy of Northern Nevada

MANN

Year	Enrollment	A	B	C	H	I	M	P	IEP	ELL	FRL
23-24	490	1.6%	4.2%	8.9%	78.9%	3.0%	2.8%	0.2%	16.3%	43.2%	100%
22-23	489	1.4%	4.9%	12.4%	75.4%	3.4%	2.2%	0.0%	15.5%	38.0%	100%

⁴ MANN’s current charter contract term ends June 30, 2028, and enrollment in subsequent years contingent on charter renewal.

21-22	483	1.4%	5.1%	14.6%	72.2%	3.1%	3.3%	0.0%	14.6%	38.0%	100%
20-21	432	1.1%	7.1%	15.5%	68.9%	2.3%	4.3%	0.4%	15.0%	39.1%	100%
19-20	339	0.8%	9.4%	14.4%	68.4%	2.0%	3.8%	0.8%	10.9%	37.4%	100%
18-19	269	0.7%	10.0%	16.3%	66.1%	0.7%	3.3%	2.6%	10.4%	18.5%	81.4%

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

Mater Academy of Northern Nevada Financial Performance

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

Mater Academy of Northern Nevada Organizational Performance

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

Mater Academy of Northern Nevada Academic Performance

School Year	NSPF Rating
2022 – 2023 Star Rating	MANN ES: 3-star MANN MS: 3-star
2021 – 2022 Index Score	MANN ES: 64.0 MANN MS: 55.5
2020 – 2021 ⁵	MANN ES: 3-star MANN MS: 5-star

⁵ 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.

2019 – 2020 ⁶	MANN ES: 3-star MANN MS: 5-star
2018 – 2019	MANN ES: 3-star MANN MS: 5-star
2017 – 2018	MANN ES: 1-star

Mater Academy of Northern NV 2022-23 SPCSA Academic Performance Framework Results

Campus	2022-23 SPCSA Academic Framework Score	2022-23 SPCSA Academic Framework Rating
MANN Elementary	78.0	MEETS STANDARD
MANN Middle	71.2	MEETS STANDARD

Mater Academy of Northern NV 2021-22 SPCSA Academic Performance Framework Results⁷

Campus	2021-22 SPCSA Academic Framework Score	2021-22 SPCSA Academic Framework Rating
MANN Elementary	74.4	MEETS STANDARD
MANN Middle	66.3	MEETS STANDARD

⁶ 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.

⁷ 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 [here](#).