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**STATE OF NEVADA**

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**STATE PUBLIC CHARTER SCHOOL AUTHORITY**

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**ACTION MEMORANDUM**

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**TO:** SPCSA Board  
**FROM:** Mike Dang, Manager of Organizational and Financial Performance  
Melissa Mackedon, Executive Director  
**SUBJECT:** Transportation Plan: TEACH Las Vegas  
**DATE:** March 1, 2024

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**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.”<sup>1</sup>

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, 2023<sup>2</sup>. 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**

TEACH Las Vegas Charter School (TEACH) is requesting a total of \$188,552 to implement the school’s Transportation Plan. Below is an overview of the proposed Transportation Plan for the school, as provided in the application.

“Since launch we have continued to grow and the need for safe and equitable transportation has grown too. Our goal is to provide equitable support to families and students. We believe providing safe transportation is a critical step toward achieving this goal.

Based on enrollment data, we believe a strategic bus route with bus stops in our highest density enrollment areas would provide the best service to families. We have built a strong community around TEACH and value this community greatly. Not only do these bus stops best support current families, they also help us enroll more students from a concentrated geographic area closer to our campus.

TEACH is pursuing school transportation because we believe it is critical to our school’s mission and commitment to equity. With a per-route budget of \$66,000 (prorated for mid-year start) for the 2023-2024 school year, TEACH can provide transportation access to approximately around 120-150 scholars each day. Each bus will run a morning and

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<sup>1</sup> Section 28.5 of Assembly Bill 400 (2023 Session of the Nevada Legislature)

<sup>2</sup> 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.

afternoon route. We are open to adding new transportation services in the future as our enrollment and allowable budget allocation allows. TEACH also plans to purchase two used buses for these routes.

Based on our Q1 ADE for 2023-2024, we are eligible to apply for \$188,552 in SPCSA transportation funding. We are currently applying for the full amount. This funding will support TEACH's mission to keep students safe and support families by providing an equitable and efficient option for transportation.

## **Analysis and Recommendation**

TEACH is a Title I School and is requesting approval of its Transportation Plan and funding to implement the Transportation Plan.

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 the transportation plan is approved and funded, TEACH will be able to serve a more significant geographical area. The proposed plan would expand our equitable recruitment footprint to include more of the Las Vegas area." 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 the school as of Feb 1, 2024 has declined from Q4 of last year and is currently 233. TEACH is located in Clark County where the four-year average (per pupil) in transportation funding for the 2023-24 school year is \$481 per pupil. The total funding request for the school was \$188,552, which is less than or equal to the average cost, per pupil, for transportation within the Clark County School District; **however, we are recommending approval of \$112,073.**
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 help in the following ways:
  - Academically, transportation's greatest impact will be reducing absenteeism and tardiness. For the 21-22 school year, TEACH had a chronic absenteeism rate of 40.9%. We believe providing transportation will reduce this figure drastically.
  - Financially, being under-enrolled is devastating for schools. Financially, having a wider recruitment net will allow us the opportunity to enroll more students.
  - Operationally, providing student transportation will allow the school's arrival and dismissal processes to run more smoothly. TEACH has faced pushback from

neighbors about the backup in the traffic line at arrival and dismissal. This means the efficiency of the traffic system is critical.

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

**Proposed Motion:**

1. Approve the TEACH Transportation Plan **for the amount of \$112,073**, 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.