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ACTION MEMORANDUM

TO: SPCSA Authority Board
FROM: Danny Peltier, Management Analyst III
SUBJECT: **Oasis Academy – Charter Amendment Request to Enter into an Agreement with an Educational Management Organization**
DATE: July 26, 2024

Summary of Request and Recommendation

Oasis Academy (Oasis) is requesting that the State Public Charter School Authority (SPCSA) grant a Good Cause Exemption request and approve the school enter into an Education Management Organization agreement with Academica Nevada.

SPCSA staff has reviewed the application and recommends that the Authority grant the Good Cause Exemption and approve the amendment request. A proposed motion can be found on page of 3 this memo.

Background and Analysis

Oasis is located at 920 W Williams Ave, Fallon, NV 89406 and serves 770 students in grades K – 12 as of the 2023 Validation Day. According to the amendment application, Oasis is seeking approval from the SPCSA to enter into a contractual relationship with Academica Nevada as its Education Management Organization (EMO). This proposed relationship is intended to streamline the Oasis organizational structure by providing comprehensive and cost-effective back-office services and support to allow school leaders to focus on the mission and vision school.

Furthermore, according to the amendment application, Oasis anticipates the EMO's comprehensive back-office services and support will streamline the school's organizational structure and increase cost-effectiveness by decreasing vendor costs which will lead to potential future savings. Additionally, Oasis noted in the amendment

application, that its board acknowledges that Academica Nevada is the largest education service organization in Nevada, providing professional services and related support to numerous public charter schools. The board received a presentation from Academica Nevada at Oasis' April 10, 2024 board meeting and took the opportunity to question Academica Nevada leadership. At the Oasis May 29, 2024 meeting, the Board had a subsequent opportunity to ask additional questions about what a transition would look like to Academica Nevada supporting the school.

The Oasis board voted unanimously to engage Academica Nevada and, pending this amendment approval by the SPCSA, expects to enter into a contract with Academica Nevada as its educational service provider. As a component of the transition, the school expects a reduction in existing school financial team member salary / contracted hours as Academica Nevada team members assist with these functions. Oasis also explained that the governing board will be self-governing and independent from Academica Nevada, and no member of the governing board is employed by the EMO or related to any owner or manager of them. Academica Nevada will not manage the day-to-day operations of the school, but rather will provide "back office" support and independent accountability for the board. Academica Nevada will carry out the defined responsibilities found in the proposed EMO contract and will provide expertise in the areas of business, law, facilities, quality assurance, strategic planning, and governmental compliance. An "arm's length" performance-based relationship will exist between the governing board and Academica Nevada, and the Board will annually evaluate them to determine continuation and renewal of services based on their performance. Moreover, Oasis governing board felt that Academica Nevada's fee were reasonable. The school's board explained in the amendment application that other educational management organizations charge as much as 15% of a school's revenue. Academica Nevada charges a flat annual fee per student enrolled, rather than a percentage like most other management organizations.

Legal Authority and Requirements Related to Amendment Requests

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. (See NAC 388A.400(8) and NRS 388A.276).

Analysis and Staff Recommendation

When reviewing an amendment application, SPCSA staff reviews the academic, financial, and organizational performance of the applicant charter school. Oasis has consistently performed at, or above, standards on all SPCSA framework metrics. As of the 2022-23 NSPF ratings, Oasis's middle, and high schools were rated as 5-stars and the elementary school was rated as 4-stars. The Oasis elementary school received 75.8 points on the 2022-23 SPCSA Academic Performance Framework and was rated as Meets Standard, the middle school received 85.9 points and was rated as Exceeds

Standard, and the high school received 89.6 points and was rated as Exceeds Standard.

Oasis earned 98 points (out of 100) under the SPCSA Organizational Performance Framework for the 2022 – 23 school year as approved by the Authority on March 1, 2024. As such, SPCSA staff finds the school to be ‘Meeting Standards.’ Oasis has also been found to ‘Meet the Standards’ on the most recent 2023 SPCSA Financial Performance Framework, which was approved at the June 21, 2024 SPCSA board meeting.

SPCSA staff is supportive of Oasis’s request enter into an agreement with Academica Nevada to provide organizational support to the charter school. Academica Nevada has shown it can be successful in providing support to a wide variety of schools in both Northern and Southern Nevada. SPCSA staff reviewed the fee structure and finds the proposed 5% fee to be reasonable and will work with the school’s 2024-25 budget.

SPCSA staff also notes the amendment application contained an evaluation tool the board of Oasis was able to review and approve which will be used for the annual EMO evaluation that is required of all schools who have entered into an agreement with an EMO.

Finally, SPCSA staff also notes this request does not affect the school approved enrollment cap nor will it change anything with regard to the academic mission, vision, and model of Oasis. SPCSA recommends the Authority approve Oasis’s amendment request.

Proposed Motion:

Grant Oasis Academy a Good Cause Exemption and approve the request of Oasis to enter into an Educational Management Organization agreement with Academica Nevada.

The approved enrollment cap for Oasis Academy is:

School Year	2024-25	2025-26	2026-27	2027-28	2028-29	2029-30	2030-31	2031-32
Grade Levels	K-12	K-12	K-12	K-12	K-12	K-12	K-12	K-12
Enrollment	825	850	875	875	875	875	875	875

Historical Performance and Demographic Information – Oasis Academy

School Total Enrollment and Demographics since 2017

Year	Enrollment	A	B	C	H	I	M	P	IEP	ELL	FRL
17-18	572	3.4%	1.5%	75.0%	11.7%	4.1%	3.4%	0.5%	9.7%	<5.0%	14.1%
18-19	612	3.7%	1.4%	72.8%	13.8%	3.7%	3.7%	0.4%	9.8%	<5.0%	19.9%
19-20	639	3.2%	1.2%	70.2%	16.4%	3.2%	5.0%	0.4%	10.0%	<5.0%	22.6%
20-21	694	2.5%	1.7%	68.1%	18.7%	3.1%	5.3%	0.2%	11.6%	<5.0%	26.9%

21-22	714	2.2%	2.3%	65.6%	20.0%	2.2%	7.1%	0.2%	11.7%	<5.0%	28.4%
22-23	735	2.3%	1.2%	66.1%	20.0%	1.6%	8.5%	0.1%	11.0%	<5.0%	32.7%
23-24	770	2.0%	0.7%	67.7%	18.1%	1.8%	9.3%	0.0%	13/3%	<5.0%	31.1%

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

Oasis Academy Charter School Financial Performance

Year	Rating
2022 – 2023	Meets the Standard
2021 – 2022	Meets the Standard
2020 – 2021	Meets the Standard
2019 – 2020	Meets the Standard

Oasis Academy Charter School Organizational Performance

Year	Rating
2022 – 2023	Meets the Standard
2021 – 2022	Meets the Standard
2020 – 2021	Meets the Standard
2019 – 2020	Meets the Standard

Oasis Academy Academic Performance

School Year	NSPF Rating
2022 – 2023	- Elementary: 4 – stars - Middle: 5 – stars - High: 5 – stars
2021 - 2022 ¹	- Elementary: 75.0 - Middle: 81.6 - High: 95.0

¹ According to the NSPF technical guide released by the Nevada Department of Education, star ratings were not calculated for the 2021 – 2022 school year in accordance with flexibility offered in the U.S. Department of Education’s addendum to Nevada’s consolidated state plan due to COVID-19. Star ratings will resume in 2023

2020 – 2021 ²	- Elementary: 5 – stars - Middle: 5 – stars - High: 5 – stars
2019 – 2020 ³	- Elementary: 5 – stars - Middle: 5 – stars - High: 5 – stars
2018 – 2019	- Elementary: 5 – stars - Middle: 5 – stars - High: 5 – stars
2017 – 2018	- Elementary: 3 – stars - Middle: 5 – stars - High: 5 – stars

Oasis 2021-22 SPCSA Academic Performance Framework Results

Campus	2022-23 SPCSA Academic Framework Score	2022-23 SPCSA Academic Framework Rating
Oasis ES	75.8	MEETS STANDARD
Oasis MS	85.9	EXCEEDS STANDARD
Oasis HS	89.6	EXCEEDS STANDARD

Oasis 2021-22 SPCSA Academic Performance Framework Results⁴

Campus	2021-22 SPCSA Academic Framework Score	2021-22 SPCSA Academic Framework Rating
Oasis ES	79.0	MEETS STANDARD
Oasis MS	82.9	EXCEEDS STANDARD
Oasis HS	92.0	EXCEEDS STANDARD

² 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.

³ 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.

⁴ 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 at: <http://nevadareportcard.nv.gov/DI/MoreDownload?filename=Nevada%20School%20Performance%20Framework%20Manual%202021-22%20School%20Year.pdf>