

**Joe Lombardo**  
*Governor*

**STATE OF NEVADA**

**Melissa Mackedon**  
*Executive Director*



**STATE PUBLIC CHARTER SCHOOL AUTHORITY**

**1749 North Stewart Street Suite 40**  
**Carson City, Nevada 89706-2543**  
**(775) 687-9174 · Fax (775) 687-9113**

**2080 East Flamingo Road Suite 230**  
**Las Vegas, Nevada 89119-5164**  
**(702) 486-8895 · Fax (702) 486-5543**

---

---

**ACTION MEMORANDUM**

---

---

**TO:** SPCSA Authority Board  
**FROM:** Danny Peltier, Management Analyst III, SPCSA  
**SUBJECT:** **Young Women’s Leadership Academy– Charter Amendment Request to temporarily eliminate grade levels**  
**DATE:** July 26, 2024

---

**Summary of Request and Recommendation**

Young Women’s Leadership Academy (YWLA) has submitted an amendment application requesting that the State Public Charter School Authority (SPCSA) grant a Good Cause Exemption and approve the request to temporarily eliminate grades 10<sup>th</sup> and 11<sup>th</sup> for the 2024 – 25 school year.

SPCSA staff has reviewed the application and recommends that the Authority grant the Good Cause Exemption and approve the amendment request. A proposed motion along with conditions can be found on page 4 of this memo.

**Background and Overview of the Amendment**

YWLA is located at 3415 S. Mojave Rd. in Las Vegas, Nevada 89121 in Clark County. YWLA is affiliated with the Young Women Leadership Schools network of all-girls college prep schools all driven by the same mission and vision: to nurture the intellectual curiosity and creativity of young women. Young Women’s Leadership Schools accomplish this by supporting the “whole girl” and seek to maximize the academic achievement, social emotional well-being, and post-secondary success of each student. YWLA began operation in 2022 with Grades 6 and 9. As of the 2023 Validation Day, YWLA had 141 students enrolled in grades 6 – 10.

According to the amendment application, YWLA currently has only 5 students fully registered to attend 10th grade and only 6 students fully registered to attend 11th grade. YWLA previously projected enrollment in each of these grades to be at least 15 scholars for the upcoming 2024 – 25 school year. Moreover, YWLA’s registered enrollment in 10th and 11th grades for the upcoming 2024-25 school year (5 and 6, respectively) is actually less than the final registered enrollment in 9th and 10th grades

from the prior 2023-24 school year (7 and 9, respectively). As such, YWLA is requesting to temporarily eliminate grades 10<sup>th</sup> and 11<sup>th</sup> for the 2024 – 25 school year and refocus its recruitment efforts on grades 6<sup>th</sup> – 9<sup>th</sup> in order to create a more sustainable enrollment projection. The school would then begin by adding 10<sup>th</sup> grade during the 2025 – 26 school year and adding subsequent grades through the 2027 – 28 school year.

Additionally, according to the amendment application, YWLA has developed a plan to involve parents, neighborhood stakeholders, and community members through the difficult process of temporarily eliminating grades 10<sup>th</sup> and 11<sup>th</sup> for the upcoming 2024-25 school year. The school's goal is to ensure that all stakeholders are informed, heard, and supported once the application is approved through the successful transition and post elimination period. Resources will be provided, including information on alternative schooling options, academic support resources, and community services available to assist families during the transition. During the transition process, the school will implement a system for monitoring progress and making continuous improvements based on feedback and evolving needs. Progress reports will be provided to the community, highlighting key achievements, challenges addressed, and next steps. YWLA will assess the effectiveness of the transition, gather feedback on the process, and identify areas for improvement in future initiatives as the school prepares to welcome new scholars to our campus.

Finally, YWLA presented a fiscally conservative budget; however, YWLA noted that as student enrollment is lower than expected, some budgeted expenses decreased as a result; these include EMO/CMO Fees, student supplies, IT fees, etc. According to the amendment application, YWLA will look to apply for grants deemed beneficial to the school to further support the planning and implementation of the charter. Additionally, The Sands Corporation, through its community engagement program Sands Cares, initially provided YWLA a donation for various tenant improvements to the anticipated facility, as well as a donation for the principal salary during the pre-operational year. Sands Cares is also committed to providing donations throughout Years 1-6 for technology, curriculum, furniture, fixtures, and equipment (FF&E). The school's budget also includes charter school startup (CSP) and other grant funds.

The amendment does not contemplate lowering the enrollment cap for the 2024 – 25 school and instead YWLA will work to fill grades 6<sup>th</sup> – 9<sup>th</sup> up to the cap of 135 students.

### **Legal Authority**

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 for RFA eligibility, SPCSA staff reviews the academic, financial and organizational performance of the applicant charter school. YWLA is in its second year of operation and has not been rated financially, or organizationally, however, staff finds no current issues grounded in past performance that raise concerns regarding this amendment. Regarding YWLA's academic performance, the middle school was rated as 2-stars, and received 38.6 points on the SPCSA's Academic Performance Framework, which did not meet standards. The high school was not rated.

SPCSA staff is in support of YWLA’s request to reduce its grade level offerings temporarily for the 2024 – 25 school year. Enrollment projections for 10<sup>th</sup> and 11<sup>th</sup> grades during the upcoming school year would not be enough to have staffing that would meet the needs of those students. Additionally, as noted in the amendment application, YWLA is currently undergoing a leadership change and part of that change will be refocusing efforts on recruitment in the lower grades so the school will be set up to have a more sustainable enrollment in the coming years. SPCSA staff does continue to have concerns regarding the overall enrollment of the school and will continue to monitor this moving forward. However, some of those concerns are lessened in the short term due to the continued financial support of the Sand Corporation. However, while that support is helpful financially, YWLA will still need to be able to build an enrollment base that allows for the school to become viable over the course of its charter term. This plan appears to be a step in achieving that goal, but as stated before, SPCSA staff will continue to closely monitor the school academically, financially, and organizationally.

**Proposed Motion: Grant YWLA’s Good Cause Exemption request and approve YWLA’s request to temporarily eliminate grades 10<sup>th</sup> and 11<sup>th</sup> for the 2024- 25 school year.**

The approved enrollment cap, with elimination of grade levels for YWLA will be:

School Year	2024-25	2025-26	2026-27	2027-28
Grade Levels	6-9	6-10	6-11	6-12
Enrollment Cap	135	150	165	180

**Historical Performance and Demographic Information – YWLA**

**School Total Enrollment and Demographics since 2022**

Year	Enrollment	A	B	C	H	I	M	P	IEP	ELL	FRL
22-23	62	1.6%	40.3%	8.0%	45.1%	0.0%	4.8%	0.0	*	*	70.9%
23-24	141	0.7%	30.4%	6.3%	52.4%	0.0%	8.5%	1.4%	12.0%	19.1%	100.0%

- 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
- \* - Suppressed data due to n-count

**YWLA School Financial Performance – Not Rated**

**YWLA Organizational Performance – Not Rated**

**YWLA Academic Performance**

<b>School Year</b>	<b>NSPF Rating</b>
2022 – 2023 Star Rating	Middle School: 2-stars High School: Not Rated

**YWLA 2022-23 SPCSA Academic Performance Framework Results**

<b>Campus</b>	<b>2022-23 SPCSA Academic Framework Score</b>	<b>2022-23 SPCSA Academic Framework Rating</b>
Middle School	38.6	DOES NOT MEET STANDARD
High School	Not Rated	N/A