



STATE PUBLIC CHARTER SCHOOL AUTHORITY

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Summary of Request and Recommendation

In August 2024, the pilotED Foundation announced it would sunset operations effective December 31, 2024. This development placed pilotED Cactus Park Elementary (Cactus Park) in a precarious position, as its charter contract requires ongoing affiliation with a Charter Management Organization (CMO) or Education Management Organization (EMO) for support.

Following this announcement, Cactus Park inquired with SPCSA staff about amending its charter contract to operate independently, without EMO or CMO support. SPCSA staff advised against this approach due to the school's academic, organizational, and financial challenges.

At the December 2024 SPCSA Board meeting, the Board granted Cactus Park a grace period to correct this breach of contract, extending the deadline for corrective action to the April 18, 2025, SPCSA Board meeting.

To address the issue, the Cactus Park governing board initiated a Request for Proposals (RFP) process to identify a new EMO or CMO. After a thorough review, the board selected the Mater Academy network as its preferred partner and voted to proceed with an acquisition by Mater. Both parties have voluntarily agreed to this arrangement and are actively working with SPCSA staff to finalize the Acquisition Agreement. This agreement will govern the terms of the transition, including the transfer of assets and liabilities, vendor and employee contracts, and facility leases.

Mater Academy of Nevada is a brick-and-mortar public charter school network with strong academic, financial, and organizational performance. SPCSA staff is confident in Mater's ability to support and operate Cactus Park effectively. Mater currently serves approximately 4,708 students across three Clark County campuses, spanning kindergarten through 12th grade. Most Mater campuses have consistently received 3- and 4-star ratings and demonstrated strong academic outcomes. Mater serves a student population that is approximately 95 percent Free and Reduced-Price Lunch (FRL) and 36 percent English Learner. While the network received a financial Notice of Concern for Fiscal Year 2023, SPCSA staff is recommending that the notice be lifted at the April 18, 2025, board meeting.

Upon acquisition, Cactus Park will undergo a full transition. The existing governing board will dissolve, and the school will be rebranded under the Mater Academy name. It will receive the full benefit of Mater's curriculum, financial infrastructure, and organizational supports.

Pending SPCSA Board approval, pilotED Cactus Park and Mater Academy will continue working with Authority staff to finalize the Acquisition Agreement, formalize the transition terms, and implement the agreed-upon timeline and deliverables.

Staff Recommendation:

SPCSA staff recommends approval of the acquisition of pilotED Cactus Park Elementary by the Mater Academy network. The SPCSA has a duty to ensure that all sponsored schools maintain high academic and operational standards while preserving autonomy.¹ Further, charter schools must obtain SPCSA approval for any material changes to their charter contracts.² Given the strong performance history of the Mater network, SPCSA staff believe this acquisition will honor the autonomous decision and mutual partnership of both schools, while ensuring that students currently enrolled at Cactus Park continue to receive a high-quality education throughout the transition to the Mater network.

Proposed Motion

Move to approve the acquisition of pilotED Cactus Park Elementary by the Mater Academy network; Authorize pilotED Cactus Park to advertise as a Mater Academy school upon formal approval of the Acquisition Agreement by the governing boards of both pilotED Cactus Park and Mater Academy.

Pursuant to the Acquisition Agreement, move to approve the following transition timeline:

- Termination of the pilotED Cactus Park charter contract effective June 30, 2025;
- Commencement of operations under Mater Academy beginning July 1, 2025, through an amendment to Mater's current charter contract to include this acquisition.

Finally, move to authorize SPCSA staff to collaborate with pilotED Cactus Park and Mater Academy to finalize and execute the Acquisition Agreement.

¹ NRS 388A.150

² NAC 388A.320, NAC 388A.335