

Joe Lombardo
Governor

STATE OF NEVADA

Melissa Mackedon
Executive Director



STATE PUBLIC CHARTER SCHOOL AUTHORITY

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BRIEFING MEMORANDUM

TO: SPCSA Board
FROM: Melissa Mackedon
SUBJECT: Executive Director Report
DATE: May 30, 2025

School Highlight

According to the National Center on Safe and Supportive Learning Environments [1], positive school culture and climate are critically related to school success. Research shows that they can improve staff attendance, achievement, and retention. During its site evaluation, Pinecrest Academy of Nevada Springs demonstrated a healthy school culture and climate, which serve as a strength and a foundation for school success. A theme that resonated with all focus groups was the positive school culture and climate, which fostered a sense of community within the school. For example, in the staff focus group, most participants noted the school culture and climate as a strength and served as pillars for success. The leadership reported that all staff will return for the next school year, attributing this to the school's positive collaborative work environment. Many participants in the family focus group shared positive school experiences, describing the campus as a family-like atmosphere. Students in their focus group shared stories that aligned with the healthy nature of their school environment. On the day of the site evaluation, staff members were observed numerous times throughout the day displaying a respectful approach when interacting with colleagues, students, and families. For example, staff greeted families with gestures of kindness and by name. The emphasis on creating a positive school culture and climate can be paramount for the school and all stakeholders as they plan for future school expansion, including the addition of new grades.

Employee Appreciation

May was Employee Appreciation Month for Nevada State Employees. Governor Lombardo recognized two of our employees at an event on May 7, 2025, at the Capitol.

Danny Peltier
Management Analyst III on the Authorizing Team

We would be honored to nominate someone who has been a cornerstone of the SPCSA since, quite literally, before the agency even officially existed—Danny Peltier.

Danny's history with the SPCSA is not just impressive in its length; it's remarkable in its depth. For as long as many of us can remember, Danny has been our go-to resource for historical context—a living archive of institutional knowledge. Whether it's recalling the origins of a policy or offering insight into past decisions, Danny has consistently helped us understand where we've been so we can better navigate where we're going.

But Danny's contributions go far beyond his knowledge. He is always available to support his colleagues, lending a hand or an ear whenever needed. His positivity and dedication are felt by all of us, creating a more connected and effective team. His attitude exemplifies what it means to be a team player, making every challenge a bit more manageable.

Recently, Danny took on the responsibility of supervising the Organizational Performance Framework team—a group small in number but mighty in impact. He has not only embraced this role but has genuinely risen to the occasion. His leadership has empowered the team to maintain its high standards while also cultivating an environment of collaboration and growth.

We are genuinely grateful for Danny's dedication, perspective, and spirit. We thank him for his unwavering commitment to the SPCSA and for being such a valued part of our team.

Karie Sarabia
Administrative Assistant III on the Finance and Operations Team

Karie Sarabia started with the State Public Charter School Authority (SPCSA) as an Administrative Assistant III in July 2023. Although she was new to state government service, she took the bull by the horns and quickly learned about the agency, embracing her role and responsibilities, and even acquired knowledge of the duties of others above and beyond her own. Her ability to coordinate office operations, ensure we have the necessary supplies, and support our teams and constituents in all aspects has been invaluable. She consistently adopts a proactive approach to problem-solving and demonstrates a constant willingness to help wherever needed, which significantly enhances our overall productivity and workplace culture.

Her attention to detail, organizational skills, and ability to juggle multiple tasks simultaneously have made a significant impact, and she has become an exceptionally reliable resource. Recently, these attributes were on full display as she helped manage the unexpected relocation of the

SPCSA from its office to storage and then back to a new office. She came in on the weekend to hang signs throughout the new location, welcoming our staff to their new “home”. She is known as “Dr. Mom” because she provides the care and concern for our mental and physical health similar to a practitioner with a good bedside manner, all while she “moms” our staff with friendly reminders (much friendlier than our own moms would) to help staff adhere to deadlines and procedures.

She exudes a positive, professional, yet relaxed and inviting attitude that makes everyone feel at ease and welcome when they visit or call the SPCSA. Karie is the most deserving person to receive special recognition and appreciation for her outstanding work and commitment to excellence in our agency and for the State of Nevada.

Lastly, our Director of Finance and Operations, Jennifer Bauer, is retiring today, May 30, 2025, after 29 years of state service. Jennifer has played a critical role in establishing policies and procedures at the SPCSA, helping to create what is not only a great place to work but also an efficient and effective state agency. Governor Joe Lombardo has proclaimed May 30, 2025, a day in honor of Jennifer Bauer. A copy of that proclamation can be found in the board materials.

Delinquent PERS Update

Delinquent PERS payments as of 5/1/25. For a complete accounting of payments, please refer to the “Outstanding Charter Contribution Balance” sheet provided by PERS and included in the board materials.

NV Prep

As of . . .	Total Estimated Amount Due
12/31/2023	\$477,305.47
2/12/2024	\$466,966.09
3/31/2002	\$501,862.79
5/1/2024	\$481,609.99
5/31/24	\$353,263.60
6/30/24	\$332,565.80
7/31/2024	\$375,643.40
9/3/2024	\$411,635.51
11/1/2024	\$373,726.56
1/2/2025	\$238,856.91
2/28/2025	\$191,590.18
3/31/2025	\$176,928.63
5/1/2025	\$175,455.90

Additionally, NV Prep received correspondence from PERS on May 27, 2025, stating that “since March 2025 contribution reporting period, and through today’s date, Nevada Prep has submitted deficient payment beneath the threshold amounts required by the repayment plan. PERS therefore considers Nevada Prep in breach of the payment plan. . . .PERS will continue to accept Nevada Prep’s payments in accordance with the now repudiated payment plan and NRS 286.460, but PERS hereby reserves any and all applicable rights to collect the arrearages and interest penalties in any lawful manner at any time. . .” SPCSA staff will work with NV Prep and PERS to determine the implications.

Sage Collegiate

As of . . .	Total Estimated Amount Due
2/28/2025	\$72,527.09
3/31/25	\$73,782.57
5/1/2025	\$71,861.50

Legislative Update

With just a few days remaining in the legislative session, we want to highlight a few key pieces of legislation that will affect charter schools:

- The SPCSA’s bill, [Assembly Bill 39](#), has passed the Senate Floor with a floor amendment that will need to be concurred with on the Assembly side of the House.
- [Assembly Bill 398](#) passed out of the Assembly. Section 8 of the bill provides \$19,314,297 each year of the biennium for charter school teacher and education support professional salary increases.
- [Senate Bill 418](#) is on the Governor’s desk for signature. This bill requires NDE to deduct from the charter schools’ PCFP payments the amount the school is delinquent on PERS payments when the school is 90 days delinquent.
- [Senate Bill 470](#), the SPCSA revolving loan, was heard in the Assembly on May 27, 2025.
- [Senate Bill 468](#), charter school transportation bill, passed out of Senate Finance on May 27, 2025.
- [Senate Bill 500](#) is the education funding bill, which addresses the following for charter schools:
 - Local Funding for Pupils with Disabilities \$24,608,056
 - Base funding for FY26 \$9,416 and FY27 \$9,486
 - Weighted funding for English Learns 0.45, totaling \$27,050,440
 - Weighted funding for at-risk pupils 0.35, totaling \$6,614,302
 - Weighted funding for gifted and talented pupils 0.12, totaling \$1,684,719

New Charter School Applications Received

SPCSA staff is pleased to announce that seven new charter applications are currently being reviewed. During the next few months, these applications will undergo a rigorous evaluation of the written application by internal SPCSA staff and external reviewers who engage in this work throughout the country. We will then have capacity interviews, in which we evaluate the capacity of the proposed team. Of the seven applications being reviewed, one is located in Washoe County, one in Carson City, one in Nye County, and the remaining four are within Clark County. Redacted versions of the application are posted on our website for public input. SPCSA staff looks forward to bringing forward recommendations regarding this application cycle in August.

New Student Representative on the SPCSA Board for the 2025-2026 School Year

The SPCSA received five applicants to serve as the student representative on the SPCSA board. Each member of the leadership team, including the board chair and vice chair, reviewed the applications and ranked their first choice, which received 2 points, and their second choice, which received 1 point. All the applicants were exceptionally impressive, leading to a very close decision. Odalis Ayala from Equipo Academy will serve as our student representative in the coming school year.

Current Events in Public Education

On May 22, 2025, the U.S. Supreme Court issued a 4–4 decision in the case concerning the establishment of the St. Isidore of Seville Catholic Virtual School in Oklahoma. This tie vote leaves the lower court's ruling in place, effectively halting the launch of what would have been the nation's first publicly funded religious charter school. While the decision does not set a national precedent, it reinforces the principle that charter schools remain secular public institutions.

This outcome underscores the importance of maintaining the separation of church and state within our public education system. It ensures that charter schools continue to operate as inclusive, nonsectarian institutions accessible to all students.

For more detailed information, you can read the Associated Press article covering the decision here:

[Supreme Court tie vote dooms taxpayer funded Catholic charter school in Oklahoma](#)

