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ACTION MEMORANDUM

TO: SPCSA Board
FROM: Jennifer Villanueva, Director of Finance and Operations
Melissa Mackedon, Executive Director
SUBJECT: Transportation Plan: Democracy Prep at the Agassi Campus
DATE: June 23, 2025

Background

Access to safe, reliable, and equitable student transportation remains a significant challenge for many charter schools across Nevada, particularly those serving historically underserved communities. Recognizing the critical role transportation plays in improving access to quality education, the Nevada Legislature has taken deliberate steps to support charter schools in overcoming this barrier.

During the 2023 Legislative Session, the passage of [Assembly Bill 400](#) appropriated \$14 million to the State Public Charter School Authority (SPCSA) for the 2023–2025 biennium to support student transportation efforts at both SPCSA-sponsored and district-sponsored charter schools. Building on that investment, the 2025 Legislature enacted [Senate Bill 468](#), appropriating an additional \$17 million to the SPCSA for the 2025–2027 biennium to further expand and enhance transportation access.

To be eligible for this funding, charter schools are required to submit a Transportation Plan to the SPCSA for review and approval. These plans must demonstrate not only a comprehensive and viable approach to student transportation, but also alignment with statutory and regulatory requirements, including driver and vehicle certifications, cost-effectiveness relative to local district averages, and the school's overall academic, financial, and organizational performance.

Plans must also clearly demonstrate how they will materially improve access to education in the region they serve.

In alignment with NAC 388A.330(4), schools that do not currently have authorization to provide transportation services must also submit a contract amendment request to their sponsor. For SPCSA-sponsored schools, the amendment request is embedded within the Transportation Plan application, and both components will be considered concurrently by the SPCSA Board.

For the 2025–26 school year, applications were due on June 5, 2025, and are being evaluated through a competitive review process. Priority for funding will be given in the following order:

1. Maintenance of existing transportation programs
2. Launch of new transportation services
3. Expansion of currently operating transportation programs

Of the \$17 million appropriated for the biennium, \$8.5 million will be awarded for the 2025–26 school year, with the remaining \$8.5 million allocated for the 2026–27 school year.

Transportation Plan Overview

Democracy Prep at the Agassi Campus (DPAC) is requesting \$513,227 to implement the school's Transportation Plan. Below is an overview of the proposed transportation plan for DPAC as provided in the application.

Democracy Prep at the Agassi Campus (DPAC) serves more than one thousand K-12 students in the heart of Las Vegas's Historic West Side. DPAC believes that school choice can only exist when schools are accessible to families, and transportation to and from school is the largest barrier families cite when they need to unenroll from DPAC to choose a school that is walkable to their home.

DPAC plans to provide a highly cost-effective transportation program by following the model established at Founders Classical Academy and Amplus Academy in 2024-2025 school year.

- 1. Provide "Stacked" bus routes as much as possible, so buses can transport at least 240 students per day, with only three buses.*
- 2. Purchase buses with grant funds but partner with the lowest-cost full service transportation provider to manage the DPAC transportation department.*
- 3. To the greatest extent possible, use DPAC's own buses to also service the school's extracurricular and field trip transportation needs. This shift will save an estimated 50% from DPAC's large annual expense for private coach services.*

DPAC would use transportation funding to purchase the following:

- o School buses*
- o Safety monitors to ride school buses*
- o Monthly transportation services contract that includes driver services, with passenger tracking and communication software*
- o Annual vehicle insurance premiums*

Analysis and Recommendation

DPAC, a Title 1 school, is requesting approval of its transportation plan and funding to implement their proposed program.

SPCSA staff reviewed their 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 the proposed transportation plan will eliminate barriers for low-income and underserved students, reduce the burden on parents and families and improve on-time attendance. 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 plan is financially viable.
5. The average daily enrollment for DPAC during the fourth quarter of the 2024-25 school year was 1,060. DPAC is located within Clark County where the four-year average (per pupil) transportation funding for the 2024-25 school year is \$481. The total proposed funding award for DPAC is \$509,860 which is equal to the average cost per pupil for transportation within Clark County School District.
6. The academic, financial, and organizational performance of the charter school indicates that the transportation plan is in the interest of pupils who will be served by the transportation plan. Specifically, the transportation plan creates safer access for students and families to improve attendance and academic outcomes. It also reinforces a foundational commitment to equity ensuring all students can access the transformative opportunities provided by a high-quality public education.

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

Proposed Motion:

1. Approve the DPAC Transportation Plan, 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.