

New Charter School Application Report and Recommendation

August 22, 2025



Pahrump Valley Academy

GENERAL INFORMATION

Proposed School Name	Pahrump Valley Academy (PVA)
Proposed EMO/CMO	None
Proposed Mission and Vision	<p>Mission: Pahrump Valley Academy provides a rigorous, college-preparatory classical education focused on standards mastery, personal growth, and leadership development. Through high expectations, individualized support, and equitable access to high-quality instruction, PVA prepares all students to succeed in high school, college, and career, and empowers them to contribute meaningfully to their communities and the world.</p> <p>Vision: All Pahrump Valley Academy graduates will leave equipped with the knowledge, skills, and character to thrive in high school, succeed in college and careers, and lead lives of purpose and contribution to their communities and the world.</p>
Proposed Grade Configuration	Opening: K-5 Full Scale: K-8
Proposed Opening	August 2026
Proposed Location	Nye County; 89041, 89048, 89060, 89061
Proposed Zip Codes to be Served	89041, 89048, 89060, 89061

PLANNED ENROLLMENT

	2026-27	2027-28	2028-29	2029-30	2030-31	2031-32
K	50	50	50	50	50	50
1	50	50	50	50	50	50
2	50	50	50	50	50	50
3	50	50	50	50	50	50
4	50	50	50	50	50	50
5	25	50	50	50	50	50
6		50	50	50	50	50
7			50	50	50	50
8				50	50	50
9						
10						
11						
12						
Total	275	350	400	450	450	450

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1 OVERVIEW AND RECOMMENDATION

1.1 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The SPCSA conducts a rigorous review of new charter school applications. This process includes the submission to the SPCSA of a written notice of intent to submit a new charter school application 90 days prior to the submission of the new charter school application; the submission to the SPCSA of the actual new charter school application between April 15 and April 30 of each year; the review of the new charter school application by the SPCSA – including the review of the new charter school application by outside reviewers and a capacity interview with the applicant team. The application is rated against the SPCSA’s new charter school application evaluation rubric and, as stated in the evaluation rubric, an applicant must Meet the Standard in all four, or five, if applicable¹, main sections of the application (Meeting the Need, Academic Plan, Operations Plan, Finance Plan, and Addendum, if applicable) by the end of the application and evaluation process to be recommended for authorization. If an application Meets the Standard in all but one section, and Approaches the Standard in the one remaining section, the application and proposed new charter school may be recommended for authorization if the remaining issues are specific and limited and the outstanding deficiencies can be addressed through conditions. In addition, as part of the review process, the SPCSA seeks input from the board of trustees of the school district in which the proposed charter school will be located. The input provided by the school district is posted along with other relevant materials for this application for consideration by the SPCSA board.

Finally, it is important to note that there is also an opportunity for an unsuccessful new charter school applicant to resubmit its charter school application, as well as an opportunity for an unsuccessful applicant to appeal the denial of its application. For more details regarding the SPCSA’s application process, please see Appendix A.

The review committee and SPCSA staff determined one of the four main sections of the application Meet the Standard as outlined in the new charter application evaluation rubric.

Application Section	Rating
Meeting the Need	Meets the Standard
Academic Plan	Approaches the Standard
Operations Plan	Approaches the Standard
Financial Plan	Approaches the Standard

Details regarding the rating for each component of the application can be found in Section 1.3 of this report. Based on these ratings and the findings summarized within the remainder of this report, the SPCSA staff’s recommendation is to deny the Pahrump Valley Academy charter school application.

1.2 PROPOSED MOTION

Proposed motion: *Deny the Pahrump Valley Academy application as submitted during the 2025 Application Cycle based on a finding that the applicant has failed to satisfy the requirements contained in NRS 388A.249(3) in that the applicant has failed to demonstrate competence in accordance with the criteria for approval prescribed by the SPCSA that will likely result in a successful opening and operation of the charter school. Designate Director Mackedon to meet and confer with the applicant.*

¹ Charter Management Organizations applying for sponsorship directly, as well as Committee to Form applicants that propose to contact with a Charter Management Organization (CMO) or Educational Management Organization (EMO) are required to complete the Addendum section of the application and therefore will be rated in five main sections. All other applicants are not required to complete the Addendum section and are only rated on four main sections.

1.3 SUMMARY OF APPLICATION SECTION RATINGS

Rating options for each section are Meets the Standard; Approaches the Standard; Does not Meet the Standard. A detailed description of each rating option can be found in Appendix A.

Application Section	Rating
Meeting the Need	Meets the Standard
Mission and Vision	Meets the Standard
Targeted Plan	Approaches the Standard
Parent and Community Involvement	Meets the Standard
Academic Plan²	Approaches the Standard
Transformational Change	Approaches the Standard
Curriculum and Instructional Design	Approaches the Standard
Promotion and Graduation Requirements	Approaches the Standard
Driving for Results	Approaches the Standard
At-Risk Students and Special Populations	Does Not Meet the Standard
Professional Development	Approaches the Standard
School Culture	Approaches the Standard
Student Discipline	Does Not Meet the Standard
School Calendar and Schedule	Approaches the Standard
Operations Plan	Approaches the Standard
Board Governance	Meets the Standard
Leadership Team	Approaches the Standard
Staffing Plan	Approaches the Standard
Human Resources	Approaches the Standard
Student Recruitment and Enrollment	Meets the Standard
Incubation Year Development	Does Not Meet the Standard
Services	Approaches the Standard
Facilities	Does Not Meet the Standard
Financial Plan	Approaches the Standard

² The Pahrump Valley Academy proposal did not contemplate Distance Education or Dual Credit Partnerships. Therefore, the corresponding sections of the rubric were not scored.

2 MEETING THE NEED

2.1 SECTION RATINGS

Meeting the Need	Meets the Standard
Mission and Vision	Meets the Standard
Targeted Plan	Approaches the Standard
Parent and Community Involvement	Meets the Standard

2.2 SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

Overall, the Meeting the Need section was rated as Meets the Standard. Two of the three subsections were determined to Meet the Standard as articulated in the new charter application evaluation rubric.

The Mission and Vision section was rated as Meets the Standard. The Pahrump Valley Academy proposed narrative describes success for both students and the school through the clear, measurable, and compelling mission statement, explaining the role of the school in meeting the needs of the community and intended student population. During the capacity interview, members of the Committee to Form described student achievement outcomes that aim to improve the long-term quality of life of all PVA students through the school's vision. The vision statement clearly describes the anticipated success for students, extending beyond high school graduation. This forward-looking perspective suggests a commitment to long-term student well-being and career readiness. The Applicant articulates a robust set of academic, social-emotional, organizational, and financial goals for the proposed school.

The Targeted Plan subsection was rated as Approaches the Standard. One critical justification for the proposed school's establishment is the narrative identification that existing schools within its targeted zip codes are predominantly rated at 1- or 2- stars, showing a demand for a high-quality educational alternative. The Applicant presented data on educational disparities, including Nye County statistics showing Hispanic students lag academically and are less likely to enroll in Advanced Placement (AP) courses. National graduation rates provided added detail and data-driven justification to the proposal, demonstrating local academic gaps and broader national trends. Members of the Committee to Form had a limited understanding of the classical education model and were unable to fully describe how the model would foster an inclusive community, increase student engagement, strengthen student achievement, and reinforce differentiation. Members of the Committee to Form stated there had been no intentional planning with successful classical education charter schools, nor any discussion of future mentoring partnerships. While the Applicant identifies several outcomes that the school seeks to realize, it is unclear how, specifically, the proposed school will improve the long-term quality of life of all students served, including students with disabilities, English language learners, economically disadvantaged students, at-risk students, and students above or below grade level. Community discussions were facilitated but the application lacked specific examples illustrating how input from parents, neighborhood members, and the broader community directly influenced the academic design of the school.

The Parent and Community Involvement subsection was rated as Meets the Standard. Members of the Committee to Form actively engaged the community through a variety of formal and informal events, including town halls, open houses, and participation in local festivals, effectively gathering support and feedback. Plans for sustained parental engagement through various organizations and committees are also outlined in the proposal. Some tangible evidence of community demand was provided, with families expressing written support for PVA. Additionally, the Applicant details plans to provide childcare, initially through volunteers and later by classified staff, to remove common barriers to

parental participation of school events, with particular mention to parents of students with disabilities and English Learners (ELs).

For these reasons, as well as those detailed within the rubric criteria below, the review committee and SPCSA staff rated the Meeting the Need section as Approaches the Standard.

2.3 RUBRIC CRITERIA

The tables below provide details regarding each rubric criterion and whether it was determined to Meet the Standard. The criterion for which “No” is selected was either rated as Approaches the Standard or Does Not Meet the Standard as described in the new charter school application evaluation rubric and summarized in Appendix A.

2.3.1 Mission and Vision: Meets the Standard

Criteria	Meets the Standard?
Clear, measurable, and compelling mission statement which explains the role of the school in meeting the needs of the community and intended student population, and which is reflected throughout the application.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
Vision describes success (beyond graduation) for students if the school fulfills its mission.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
Committee to Form/CMO aims to achieve outcomes that they demonstrate will improve the long-term quality of life of all students served, including students with disabilities, English language learners, economically disadvantaged students, at-risk students, and students above or below grade level.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
School’s plan, in alignment with the mission and vision, satisfies at least one statutory purpose: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improving the academic achievement of pupils. • Encouraging the use of effective and innovative methods of teaching. • Providing an accurate measurement of the educational achievement of pupils. • Establishing accountability and transparency of public schools. • Providing a method for public schools to measure achievement based upon the performance of the schools, AND/OR • Creating new professional opportunities for teachers. 	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No

2.3.2 Targeted Plan: Approaches the Standard

Criteria	Meets the Standard?
Demonstrates a thorough understanding of the community and students to be served, including the demographics and educational needs of the intended student population, as well as the current school options within the community.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
The proposed educational model is clearly described and addresses a need(s) related to student outcomes in the identified community that is either shown to exist with data or is in response to demonstrated demand for a particular school model.	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
Clear, comprehensive explanation of how the proposed model meets identified community needs.	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
Demonstrates a commitment to meeting at least one of, and preferably multiple, academic, or demographic needs identified in the SPCAS’s Academic and Demographic Needs Assessment : <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Demographics: Student groups that consistently underperform on the Nevada state assessments in Math and ELA (3rd-8th grade Smarter Balanced and 11th grade ACT) present a demographic need. Such student groups may benefit from the creation of high-quality charter school options so long as those new charter schools have credible plans to meet their needs. Applicants meeting this need will propose a school that includes demonstrated capacity, credible plans, community input, and thorough research and analysis to intentionally enroll and serve the following student groups, each of which has been identified as historically underperforming: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Students qualifying for free or reduced-price lunch (FRL)³; • English Language Learners (ELLs); • Students with disabilities (those with an Individualized Education Program, or IEP); • Students in foster care; • Students experiencing homelessness. 2a. Academic Need: Geographies with Consistently Underperforming Schools: Zip codes with one or more consistently underperforming schools present an academic need. When a significant number of students are enrolled in schools that have a history of not meeting or partially meeting state performance standards, a community may benefit from the 	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No

³ Enrollment rates of students qualifying for free or reduced-price lunch is often used as a proxy measure for students in poverty.

addition of high-quality charter school options so long as those new charter schools have both credible plans to meet the needs of the student population and strong partnerships within the community. Applicants meeting this need will propose a school model that includes demonstrated capacity, credible plans, community input, and thorough research and analysis to intentionally provide access to 3-, 4-, and 5-star schools in zip codes where a significant percentage of students are attending consistently underperforming schools, which are defined as schools that:

- Received a 1- or 2-star NSPF rating in the two most recent NSPF ratings.

2b. Academic Need: Students at Risk of Dropping Out of School: Student groups that graduate from high school at lower rates (i.e. drop out at higher rates) than their peers present an academic need. Nearly one in five Nevada students do not graduate from high school in four years, with certain student groups consistently graduating at lower rates than their peers, including English Language Learners (ELLs), students with disabilities (those with Individualized Education Programs or IEPs), students that are homeless, students in foster care, and students identifying as American Indian/Alaskan Native, Black/African American, or Hispanic/Latino. Such students may benefit from the creation of high-quality charter school options so long as those new charter schools have credible plans to meet their needs.

Pursuant to [NRS 388A.249\(2\)](#), the SPCSA must consider the degree to which the proposed charter school will address the needs identified in the Academic and Demographic Needs Assessment as part of the application review. Additionally, in accordance with [NRS 388A.249\(3\)](#) the SPCSA may only approve an application to form a charter school if, in addition to meeting other requirements, the proposed charter school will address one or more of the needs identified in the Academic and Demographic Needs Assessment.

2.3.3 Parent and Community Involvement: Meets the Standard

Criteria	Meets the Standard?
Demonstrates ties to and/or knowledge of the identified community and explains how the proposed school will build upon community assets.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
Intentional and thoughtful strategies for engaging with community members, families, and parents representative of the community to be served. Illustrates, with examples, that parents, neighborhood, and community members representative of the community to be served helped shape the school proposal.	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
Outlines a thoughtful plan to proactively engage parents, community members, and other neighborhood partners from the time that the school is approved and once the school is operating.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
Describes meaningful opportunities for all parents to contribute to the school community and be active partners, including parents of students with disabilities and English language learners.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
Adheres to state laws regarding parent and family volunteers, ensuring that there are no volunteering requirements as a condition of enrollment.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
Identifies key supporters, partners, or resources that are directly tied to the stated outcomes of the school, including community partners that are located in and/or serve the identified zip codes. Partnerships are evidenced by specific letters of commitment outlining the accountabilities of both parties and clear, measurable, time-specific deliverables from the partner which are clearly relevant to the needs of the identified population, and do not reflect a paid vendor relationship.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No

3 ACADEMIC PLAN

3.1 SECTION RATINGS

Academic Plan ⁴	Approaches the Standard
Transformational Change	Approaches the Standard
Curriculum and Instructional Design	Approaches the Standard
Promotion and Graduation Requirements	Approaches the Standard
Driving for Results	Approaches the Standard
At-Risk Students and Special Populations	Does Not Meet the Standard
Professional Development	Approaches the Standard
School Culture	Approaches the Standard
Student Discipline	Does Not Meet the Standard
School Calendar and Schedule	Approaches the Standard

3.2 SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

Overall, the Academic Plan was rated as Approaches the Standard. Zero of the nine subsections were determined to Meet the Standard as articulated in the new charter application evaluation rubric.

The Transformational Change subsection was rated as Approaches the Standard. The Applicant presents a compelling theory of change and a clear educational strategy that aligns with its mission. The proposed plan aims to establish a 4- or 5-star school and ensure success for historically underserved student groups, aligning with the SPCSA’s strategic goals. During the capacity interview, members of the Committee to Form clarified that participation in the afterschool program is voluntary, and students who do not participate will still receive full academic instruction during the regular school day, thereby addressing initial concerns about potential academic gaps. However, several distinguishing features of the proposed school are not supported by compelling evidence or rationale for the planned model or its effectiveness. The school’s competency-based model, Multi-Tiered System of Supports (MTSS), core instruction using the Savvas curriculum, and designated intervention blocks lack clear explanation of how these components will be integrated into a coherent and cohesive instructional approach that supports the school’s proposed mission and vision.

The Curriculum and Instructional Design subsection was rated as Approaches the Standard. The Applicant identifies curricula for all core academic subjects and demonstrates their alignment with Nevada Academic Content Standards (NVACS). The Applicant proposes instructional strategies embedded within classical education such as explicit instruction, graphic organizers, Socratic Seminar, components of the Leader in Me framework, a K-8 portfolio process, and project-based learning, however there is some concern that some of these specific elements are not aligned to the classical education model. Additionally, there remains a lack of clear explanation for how these varied pedagogical approaches will work together cohesively to address specific student needs.

The Promotion and Graduation Requirements subsection was rated as Approaches the Standard. The Applicant outlines clear and comprehensive requirements for student promotion and graduation. A broad multi-tiered proposed policy was provided, covering K-8 grade levels. The proposed policy includes academic, social-emotional, and behavioral criteria, along with a Multi-Tiered System of Supports (MTSS), progress monitoring, and decision-making processes. The Applicant provides some broad protocols for early warning signs, parent notification, interventions, and a decision-making process for retention. The application and subsequent clarifying and capacity interview responses did not

⁴ The Pahrump Valley Academy proposal did not contemplate Distance Education or Dual Credit Partnerships. Therefore, the corresponding sections of the rubric were not scored.

articulate assurances that structures would be in place for student progression and support, including those who are overage for their grade, those performing significantly below grade level, and special populations.

The Driving for Results subsection was rated as Approaches the Standard. The Applicant establishes an assessment system that incorporates various types of assessments, including SBAC, WIDA, NWEA, and STAR. PVA will consider a student to have made one year of growth on SBAC if they maintain the same proficiency level from one grade to the next, indicating the student is keeping pace with increasing difficulty. For more precise measurement, the PVA proposal explains MAP Growth, RIT scores, and Renaissance STAR assessments which will be used as primary tools to track individual student growth against national norms and projected targets. This dual approach demonstrates a commitment to both summative proficiency and formative growth monitoring. While the proposal outlines several ambitious goals, their feasibility remains unclear. Although the Applicant references data cycles and analytics, the plan lacks specific timelines and detailed processes for implementation. There is little information on the frequency and structure of data analysis meetings or how the results will inform instructional decisions. Additionally, the approach to data storage is vaguely described, with limited explanation of how daily or interim mastery data will be collected, managed, and used.

The At-Risk Students and Special Populations subsection was rated as Does Not Meet the Standard. The Applicant outlines a compliant process for identifying, developing, incorporating, and monitoring students who qualify for Section 504 plans and special education services. This includes reviewing existing plans upon enrollment, initiating referrals through MTSS for unidentified students, convening a team to develop individualized plans, coordinating implementation, and monitoring progress through data collection and parent communication. Mentions of annual reviews and triennial evaluations are planned, ensuring family involvement throughout the process. The proposed Executive Director, with prior experience as a school counselor and McKinney-Vento liaison, is proposed to serve as the McKinney-Vento liaison in year one, with a specialist taking over these responsibilities in year two. Several areas were found to require further development. The application sets an overarching goal of reduction in Tier II and Tier III programming, but more specific targets should be identified to clearly measure progress and success. While the Executive Director's experience is commendable, concerns remain about the executive director's capacity to manage daily school operations alongside key responsibilities for special populations, such as enrollment, service access, testing, parent communication, and staff training. Further, the narrative indicates that additional founding team members lack comparable experience in supporting special populations. This raises questions about the collective capacity of the leadership team to comprehensively address the diverse needs of at-risk students and special populations. The application lacks detail on the continuum of services for students with special needs and provides limited information on instructional approaches and implementation for English Learners and students with disabilities. Support for homeless and migrant students is also minimally addressed beyond the liaison role. While the framework for identifying these populations exists, specific plans for instructional delivery and comprehensive support remain underdeveloped.

The Professional Development subsection was rated as Approaches the Standard. While the Applicant provides a high-level overview of planned systems, including coaching cycles and grade-level team meetings, the specifics regarding their cadence, the identity of the coach, and the expectations for execution remain unclear. The application lacks a detailed map of the pre-service development schedule, which is crucial for a new school to ensure all teachers are adequately prepared across all content areas. While the instructional model, curriculum, and student support are broadly outlined, concerns remain about the specificity of professional development for special populations and the feasibility of certain academic goals. Furthermore, clarity is needed regarding precisely who will lead the professional development sessions, particularly considering the proposed hiring timelines for personnel. The alignment of the school schedule with weekly professional development sessions, grade-level team meetings, and individual coaching sessions also requires more explicit detail. Without a clear and detailed plan for ongoing teacher development and support, there is a risk that instructional effectiveness may be affected, potentially influencing student outcomes.

The School Culture subsection was rated as Approaches the Standard. The Applicant presents appropriate and effective strategies aimed at fostering a school climate conducive to fulfilling the school's mission, vision, and academic goals. A concrete plan for establishing social and cultural expectations at the beginning of each year, as well as for students enrolling mid-year, is described. The plan also outlines strategies to promote a positive school culture and establish high expectations for both students, families, and staff. The dress code is age-appropriate, and the Applicant attempts to articulate how the school will ensure that uniform requirements do not create a barrier for economically disadvantaged students by noting that items are readily available at local discount stores. The Committee to Form plans to reinforce school uniform access with private fundraising for those in need but did not supply a contingency plan should private funding fail to lean support. The School Culture subsection also contains areas for improvement. The plan for monitoring progress towards school culture goals is not well-defined, and the goals themselves lack the specificity and measurability needed for effective tracking. Similarly, while strategies to support students' social and emotional needs are mentioned, they are not presented as research-based or age-appropriate in sufficient detail. The absence of a Dean of Students until year two raises questions about who will be primarily responsible for cultivating and maintaining the intended school culture in year one with robust support and attention. Without clearly designated roles with the authority and capacity to drive cultural initiatives from day one, there is a risk that the foundational culture may not be established with the intended fidelity.

The Student Discipline subsection was rated as Does Not Meet the Standard. The Applicant presents policies for student discipline, suspension, and expulsion, including procedures for due process that align with Nevada statutes and regulations. The plan designates staff responsible for implementing the discipline plan, including the maintenance of student records and data. During the capacity interview, members of the Committee to Form explained a cursory plan to ensure special student populations are not disproportionately impacted by discipline policies, including explicit protection of the rights of students with disabilities. Compliance with 504 plans and IEPs were lacking in the written application as well as the capacity interview responses, leaving questions as to how PVA will ensure students in special populations will be included in restorative practice strategies and not be disproportionately impacted by discipline policies. The Applicant outlines general features of the proposed discipline model—such as early intervention, restorative practices, and individualized support—but lacks a cohesive explanation of how these elements will be comprehensively integrated. For example, the proposal includes schoolwide REACH core values, classroom-level and administrative interventions, and Student Success Team (SST) interventions for persistent issues; yet restorative justice was not explicit in the written narrative. Tiered integration and intervention along with protocols for student behavior and designated personnel to monitor and report structured restorative conversations remain absent. Clear, measurable goals for student behavior and plans for monitoring and ongoing maintenance remain undefined.

The School Calendar and Schedule subsection was rated as Approaches the Standard. The Applicant's proposed calendar and schedule generally meet applicable statutory and regulatory requirements for instructional days and minutes. The schedule shows alignment between teacher and student schedules and the implementation of the academic program. As stated in the proposal and echoed during the capacity interview, teachers receive a daily prep period from 1:00 to 2:00 p.m. during the specials block. Coaching sessions can occur during prep periods or walkthroughs, leveraging the extended school day for flexibility. Weekly professional development and professional learning communities PLCs are embedded into the schedule during the preparation timeframe. The daily schedule indicates all grades follow the same schedule for the same number of minutes. However, clarification is needed on how schedules might differ based on grade levels and instructional minutes, particularly for middle school grades regarding individual content teachers versus a single teacher throughout the day. The Committee to Form outlines goals for student attendance and plans for monitoring and intervention to prevent chronic absenteeism. However, the application provides limited information regarding how attendance policies are customized to the school's specific model. The plan for "minimum days" of instruction also requires clarification. These areas suggest that while the basic framework is in place, the nuanced operationalization of the schedule to fully support the unique aspects of the proposed school model lacks clear and cohesive articulation.

For these reasons, as well as those detailed within the rubric criteria below, the review committee and SPCSA staff rated the Academic Plan as Approaches the Standard.

3.3 RUBRIC CRITERIA

The tables below provide details regarding each rubric criterion and whether it was determined to Meet the Standard. The criterion for which “No” is selected was either rated as Approaches the Standard or Does Not Meet the Standard as described in the new charter school application evaluation rubric and summarized in Appendix A.

3.3.1 Transformational Change: Approaches the Standard

Criteria	Meets the Standard?
Compelling, well-articulated theory of change and clear educational strategy aligned to the mission and critical to the school’s success.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
Ambitious, yet achievable plan to further the SPCSA’s strategic goals: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide families with 4- or 5-star school. • Ensure that every SPCSA student succeeds - including those from historically underserved student groups. 	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
Provides a specific description of how the proposal will be implemented to ensure fidelity to the model.	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
Demonstrates that the key features of the proposed school can be implemented together in a coherent and cohesive manner that will drive towards meeting the proposed mission and vision.	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
Distinguishing features of the proposed school are supported by compelling evidence of success in schools implementing similar programs while serving similar student populations or a demonstration of rationale for the feature that is supported by a logic model and plans to study effectiveness.	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No

3.3.2 Curriculum and Instructional Design: Approaches the Standard

Criteria	Meets the Standard?
Describes instructional model and learning environment that align to the proposed mission and vision, academic program, and instructional strategies. Instructional model and learning environment will engage students in ways that are culturally responsive and relevant.	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
Identifies curricula for all core academic subjects and demonstrates that they align to the Nevada Academic Content Standards.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
Includes a logical plan for delivering required courses including arts, computer education and technology, health, and physical education.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
Demonstrates that instructional strategies are well suited to the identified student population and will enable effective differentiation.	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
Demonstrates how the instructional model and curriculum will enable all students, including students with disabilities, English language learners, economically disadvantaged students, at-risk students, and students above or below grade level to build the knowledge base necessary to access rigorous instruction.	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
If the school intends to include a career and technical education program, the application outlines a logical plan that is aligned with the school’s mission, vision, instructional model, and goals for student growth as well as the State’s requirements for career and technical education.	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> N/A

3.3.3 Promotion and Graduation Requirements: Approaches the Standard

Criteria	Meets the Standard?
Describes promotion and retention policies for all grades to be served, demonstrating high expectations for all students.	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
Structures are in place to support students at risk of dropping out, including those who are over age for their grade, those needing to access credit recovery options, and those performing significantly below grade level.	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
If proposing a high school program, clearly articulates high school graduation requirements which align with Nevada Graduation Requirements and will ensure that students graduate college and career ready.	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> N/A

3.3.4 Driving for Results: Approaches the Standard

Criteria	Meets the Standard?
<p>All academic goals and targets are expressed in SMART terms (Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant, and Time-Bound) and demonstrate a commitment to ensuring the success of all students including students with disabilities, English language learners, economically disadvantaged students, at-risk students, and students above or below grade level.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mission-specific academic goals explicitly complement or supplement, but do not replace, the SPCSA's performance standards. All such indicators, measures, and metrics are rigorous, valid, reliable, and objectively verifiable. • Annual performance and growth goals align to the Nevada School Performance Framework and/or the Authority Performance Framework and will put the school on a trajectory to meet SPCSA performance standards. • Quarterly performance targets can be used to develop a plan for monitoring and reporting academic performance gaps and a process for using data to support instruction and inform professional development. 	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
Sound plan for measuring and reporting academic performance and progress of students and monitoring for disparities in academic performance between student groups.	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
Explanation of corrective actions that will be taken if the school fails to meet achievement outcomes at the classroom, cohort, special population and/or school-wide level (throughout the year or at end of year), including the party responsible for implementing these actions.	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
Internal assessment selections will provide sufficiently rich data for evaluation of the education program, are valid and reliable, and are fully align with state assessments, Nevada Academic Content Standards, and the curriculum as presented.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
The assessment plan is sufficiently detailed to demonstrate collection and analysis of individual student, student cohort, special populations, and school level data (interim, annual, year over year), including a clear process for setting and monitoring ambitious academic goals.	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
Logical plan for using assessment data to drive key decisions aimed at improving academic outcomes.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
Organizational and financial goals are aligned to the SPCSA's Performance Frameworks.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No

3.3.5 At-Risk Students and Special Populations: Does Not Meet the Standard

Criteria	Meets the Standard?
At-Risk Students	
Provides a clear and research-based process for identifying at-risk students and their needs, including those with academic and behavioral needs.	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
Outlines the methods according to which the school will remediate academically underperforming students, including the system according to which the school will track progress, facilitate teacher collaboration, and the research supporting the school's remediation strategy.	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
The school's Response to Intervention system differentiates planning for each student according to the significance of their need, providing a continuum of programs, strategies, and supports that corresponds with the needs identified for each student and is supported by research.	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
Presents a reasonable plan and identifies the parties responsible for communicating with parents regarding remediation needs.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
Demonstrates that the school's response to early signs of behavioral and/or social emotional needs will be met with positive interventions and restorative justice practices. The school will utilize differentiated support for each student in collaboration with the students' parents, teachers, and with support, as needed, from other school staff.	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
Special Populations	
Demonstrates the Committee to Form or CMO's track record of success serving a wide range of students with disabilities (mild, moderate, and severe), English language learners, homeless and migrant students, and intellectually gifted students.	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
Clear demonstration and understanding of Nevada and federal laws and regulations governing services for special populations.	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
For students with disabilities ⁵ :	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provides a logical plan to screen all students and to ensure that struggling students are evaluated for special education services early and accurately. • Presents a plan for student evaluation and developing IEPs that contain rigorous goals and instructional plans that are suitable to meet those students' goals. • Presents a monitoring plan that will enable relevant staff to track the progress of all students with IEPs towards the goals articulated in their respective plans. 	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No

⁵ Refer to [NRS 388.417](#) to [388.459](#) and [NAC 388.215](#) to [388.284](#) for statutes and regulations regarding serving students with disabilities.

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Demonstrates that the school will be able to provide all special education and related services needed either by the staff listed on their organization chart or identified external groups with whom they can contract to provide needed services. Specifies full Nevada licensure for all special education teachers/coordinators. • Articulates requirements and processes for monitoring services to students in need and plans to exit students who attain sufficient progress. • Articulates process for monitoring compliance with state and federal laws pertaining to serving students with disabilities. • For middle and high schools, presents a logical and thorough plan for developing and implementing transition plans. 	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
<p>For English language learners⁶</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Processes for identifying English language learners are well-defined, including administration of placement assessments and communications to parents and teachers. • Indicates full Nevada licensure for all English language learners teachers/coordinators. • Describes the specific services that will be provided for students within and outside the classroom, including curriculum and instruction and exposure to co-teaching. • Articulates requirements and processes for monitoring services to students in need and plans to exit students who attain sufficient progress. 	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
<p>For intellectually gifted students, demonstrates that the school will extend their learning offerings such that those students have access to unique, tailored opportunities. The proposed staffing structure demonstrates sufficient staffing and teacher support to implement the plan.</p>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
<p>For homeless/migrant students⁷:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Presents a logical and systematic method according to which the school will identify homeless and/or migrant students. • Clear plan to assess and meet the needs of students and identified as homeless and/or migrant. 	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No

3.3.6 Professional Development: Approaches the Standard

Criteria	Meets the Standard?
Clearly describes professional development that will be offered during the incubation year to effectively support the academic program, including the topics to be covered and any specialized components of the educational model.	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
Provides a summary of professional development opportunities throughout the school year to effectively support the academic program, including topics and structures.	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
Explains teacher coaching plans that will effectively support teacher development, including responsible parties.	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
Demonstrates how professional development will support all teachers in meeting the needs of special populations including students with disabilities and English language learners.	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
Clear identification of the persons or organizations responsible for professional development. If professional development is to be provided by contracted third party, the third party has appropriate expertise.	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
Cost of any third party provided professional development is reflected in the budget.	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No

3.3.7 School Culture: Approaches the Standard

Criteria	Meets the Standard?
Appropriate and effective strategies to support a school climate that will allow for fulfillment of the school's stated mission and vision, as well as the school's stated academic goals.	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
Describes a concrete plan for norming social/cultural expectations at the start of each year as well as for students who enter mid-year.	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
Provides plans to establish a culture of high expectations with students/families and teachers/staff and promote a positive school culture.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
Presents well-defined goals around school culture and plans to monitor progress.	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
Presents research-based and age-appropriate strategies to support students' social and emotional needs.	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
Dress code and/or uniform policy is age-appropriate, and the applicant articulates how the proposed school will ensure that uniform requirements do not create a barrier for economically disadvantaged students.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No

⁶ Refer to [NRS 388.406](#) and [NAC 388.525](#) and [NAC 388.655](#) for statutes and regulations regarding serving English language learners

⁷ Refer to [NAC 392.205 to 392.225](#)

3.3.8 Student Discipline: Does Not Meet the Standard

Criteria	Meets the Standard?
Presents sound policies for student discipline, suspension, and expulsion including procedures for due process which align to Nevada statutes and regulations. ⁸	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
Describes the proactive use of restorative justice practices, including prior to suspensions or expulsions.	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
Clear designation of staff responsible for implementing the discipline plan, including maintenance of student records and data.	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
A plan to ensure that certain student populations are not disproportionately impacted by discipline policies, including protection of the rights of students with disabilities.	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
Goals for student behavior are clear and measurable. There is a plan, and designated personnel, for monitoring and reporting related to behavior goals as well as ongoing maintenance of discipline records.	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No

3.3.9 School Calendar and Schedule: Approaches the Standard

Criteria	Meets the Standard?
Proposed Calendar and schedule meets or exceeds applicable statutory and regulatory requirements: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Minimum of 180 (or equivalent) days of instruction. • 43,200 minutes of classroom instruction/year for grades k-2. • 54,000 minutes of classroom instruction/year for grades 3-6. • 59,400 minutes of classroom instruction /year for grades 7-12. • Minimum of 120 hours of instruction for High School courses. 	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
Calendar and schedule support implementation of the academic program.	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
Alignment between teacher and student schedules.	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
Outlines meaningful goals for student attendance and plans to monitor and intervene to prevent students from becoming chronically absent.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
Presents sound policies for student attendance and truancy including procedures for due process that comply with state laws and are customized to the charter school.	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No

⁸ [NRS 392.4655 to 392.472](#)

4 OPERATIONS PLAN

4.1 SECTION RATINGS

Operations Plan	Approaches the Standard
Board Governance	Meets the Standard
Leadership Team	Approaches the Standard
Staffing Plan	Approaches the Standard
Human Resources	Approaches the Standard
Student Recruitment and Enrollment	Meets the Standard
Incubation Year Development	Does Not Meet the Standard
Services	Approaches the Standard
Facilities	Does Not Meet the Standard

4.2 SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

Overall, the Operations Plan was rated as Approaches the Standard. Two of the eight subsections were determined to Meet the Standard as articulated in the new charter application evaluation rubric.

The Board Governance subsection was rated as Meets the Standard. The proposed governance structure, including the delineation of roles and responsibilities between leadership and the six-member board appears poised to ensure effective governance and meaningful oversight of school performance, operations, and financials. The board has established a structure that enables the body to collect the necessary information to evaluate school performance. The three school-based advisory bodies (Parent Teacher Organization, Parent Steering Committee, and School Community Leadership Council), the Committee to Form envisions governing board members serving on the School Community Leadership Council, co-facilitated by a designated Board member and a school leader, to promote direct connection between community input and board-level decision-making. The Committee to Form clarified that board members will not participate in the PTO or Parent Steering Committee, maintaining a distinction between governance and school operations, though they may observe meetings. The proposed governing board members demonstration of a deep understanding of the educational model, organization's mission, and mission achievement was reinforced during the capacity interview. Similarly, their ownership and commitment to success, ability to work together, and an understanding of the board's role in governing the school were articulated.

The Leadership Team subsection was rated as Approaches the Standard. The organizational chart outlines all positions, delineating board and leadership roles and lines of authority. The Executive Director is to be evaluated using the same comprehensive tool provided for the principal, based on the Danielson Framework, covering five key areas (Academic Achievement, Management and Operations, Staff Relations, Community Relations, and Personal Conduct) with a weighted scoring rubric. This ensures aligned leadership expectations and promotes consistency and accountability across administrative levels. Within the first thirty days of the principal's employment, the Executive Director and principal will collaboratively set measurable goals aligned with schoolwide priorities, reflecting on the student body, staff, families, community, and individual assets. However, crucial aspects for assessing the practical leadership capacity require more specificity. Questions remain as to the qualifications of the proposed leadership team regarding empirical data related to student performance, particularly for students from diverse backgrounds and special populations. This suggests a need for more robust evidence of the direct impact on student outcomes in diverse settings.

The Staffing Plan subsection was rated as Approaches the Standard. The proposed staffing plan generally aligns with the school's model, mission, and budget and reflects an understanding of the anticipated student population. However, gaps remain, especially in the early years, regarding key hires and role clarity. During the capacity interview, the Committee to Form could not provide specific metrics, timelines, or clear priorities for the board and leadership team related to

hiring within the first 45 days of opening. While some training is outlined for the proposed Executive Director and principal during the incubation year, a comprehensive leadership development plan is lacking. Concerns also persist about concentrated workloads the Executive Director and principal roles, with limited indication of how responsibilities will be effectively distributed. Though statutory staffing ratios are met, questions remain about IEP team composition and the broader team's capacity to meet the needs of at-risk and special populations. Finally, the professional development plan lacks sufficient detail to ensure strong teacher support. These gaps suggest the staffing structure is a step in the right direction but requires further refinement to fully demonstrate operational readiness.

The Human Resources subsection was rated as Approaches the Standard. The Applicant articulates recruitment and hiring processes and strategies that are likely to result in the hiring of high-quality teachers, leaders, and staff reflective of the student body. The proposed compensation structure, with a median teacher salary of \$59,511 (even with a 19.25% PERS contribution), is argued to be competitive compared to the Nye County School District (NCS D) salary schedule, which requires several years and additional graduate credits to reach similar levels. However, the proposed compensation structures could benefit from further development. PVA plans to attract teachers by highlighting opportunities for leadership niches, aligning professional roles with personal passions through club leadership (built into the extended school day from 3:00 to 4:00 PM), and fostering a positive professional culture with extended planning time and embedded weekly professional development. Essential recruitment, hiring, and dismissal functions and processes, such as background checks, payroll, benefits, and employee relations, are described, and responsible parties are identified. The school performance management system aims to retain and promote talented staff, allow for restructuring and removal as needed, create leadership development opportunities, and set clear expectations. Greater clarity is needed regarding how the school performance management system will specifically identify and support struggling teachers, as well as outline the steps for improvement.

The Student Recruitment and Enrollment subsection was rated as Meets the Standard. The PVA proposal indicates student recruitment and enrollment materials will be available in multiple languages to meet the needs of all demographic groups. The process for a lottery, if necessary, is outlined by grade level, based on the number of applications received and available seats. The Applicant explains that if a lottery is held, public notice will be given by March 14, with the lottery occurring on the last Saturday of March, and results communicated to families within three business days. The Applicant demonstrates evidence of demand, citing over 100 families expressing interest in PVA, representing 30% of projected enrollment. Until enrollment capacity is reached, students will be enrolled on a first-come, first-served basis.

The Incubation Year Development subsection was rated as Does Not Meet the Standard. The Applicant provided an incubation plan that includes categories, tasks, responsibilities, and a timeline. During the incubation year, the proposed Executive Director and principal will fill key roles with support from the proposed office manager and select Committee to Form members who will transition to the governing board. All have agreed to volunteer their services, as salaries will not be issued until year one. Concerns remain regarding the overall execution and financial viability of the incubation year. It is unclear whether the volunteer efforts of the Executive Director and office manager will be sufficient to support the extensive incubation year goals. Crucially, there is no dedicated budget for the incubation year within the application. While the application mentions potential grant support and monetary commitment, the Applicant did not produce contingency plans if the grant was not received. The incubation year plan identifies some milestones for year zero but appears to have substantial gaps that would undermine a successful launch. These omissions suggest there may be a planning gap, as a successful launch requires significant pre-opening investment in resources, materials, and operational setup.

The Services subsection was rated as Approaches the Standard. The PVA proposal operations plan includes plans for essential non-academic services such as food service, nursing, and school safety. The Committee to Form stated the \$50,490 allocated for food services was derived as a conservative estimate based on projected student enrollment and

typical per-student costs at similar Nevada charter schools, accounting for third-party provider contracts. The Committee to Form stated PVA will solicit bids for a provider, and the budget will be updated once a vendor is selected. Regarding transportation for families in need, PVA is in conversation with Pahrump Valley Public Transportation to align services with the school schedule, with the aim of offering assistance at little or no cost, with future costs incorporated into the budget as needed. The nurse will attend IEP meetings if their expertise is relevant to medical needs, requiring a valid Nevada RN license. Despite the proposed service plan and fiscal cost, the operations plan for services and information technology lacks sufficient staff/contractor capacity to implement the plan, and clear lines of authority are not fully established. The costs of services, while present, are assessed as conservative. The application also lacks articulation of specific metrics and processes for evaluating the effectiveness of these services. This infers that while basic service provisions are considered, the detailed operational management, resource allocation, and performance monitoring for these critical support functions need further development to ensure effective and sustainable delivery.

The Facilities subsection was rated as Does Not Meet the Standard. It remains unclear if the Applicant's facility plans in the short and long term will meet the needs of the projected student population and proposed program. The Applicant plans to coordinate day-to-day facility operations with the intent of hiring a part-time/full-time operations manager. The narrative and the capacity interview indicated facilities were loosely examined, citing pending SPCSA approval to move forward with opening the school to initiate concrete facility discussions. The project timeline for facility submission is 90 days after authorization, with due diligence and negotiations to follow. The Committee to Form is working with a local realtor and has been contacted by construction companies and has identified three potential options. However, there were not many specific details regarding these options that were shared with the review team. The estimated 90 square feet per student was derived based on the instructional model's needs, including small class sizes, classical education, and intervention/enrichment blocks, aligning with conservative planning guidelines. The capacity to manage facility selection, leasing, acquisition, development, renovation, and ongoing management was not sufficiently demonstrated, which could create an additional barrier to the school's ability to open and operate effectively.

For these reasons, as well as those detailed within the rubric criteria below, the review committee and SPCSA staff rated the Operations Plan as Approaches the Standard.

4.3 RUBRIC CRITERIA

The tables below provide details regarding each rubric criterion and whether it was determined to Meet the Standard. The criterion for which “No” is selected was either rated as Approaches the Standard or Does Not Meet the Standard as described in the new charter school application evaluation rubric and summarized in Appendix A.

4.3.1 Board Governance: Meets the Standard

While most criteria were evaluated through both the written application and capacity interview, several criteria, as indicated with “*” were evaluated after the capacity interview.

Criteria	Meets the Standard?
Proposed governance structure is likely to ensure effective governance and meaningful oversight of school performance, operations, and financials.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
The board puts into place a structure that enables it to collect the information it needs to evaluate the performance of the school.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
Provides evidence that the governing body fulfills (or describes reasonable and detailed plans to ensure that the governing body will fulfill) statutory requirements for board membership, including at minimum, one teacher or other person licensed pursuant to chapter 391 of NRS; one teacher or other person licensed pursuant to chapter 391 of NRS or a school administrator; one parent or legal guardian of a pupil enrolled in the charter school who is not a teacher or an administrator at the charter school; and two individuals with knowledge and expertise in one or more of the following areas: accounting, financial services, law, or human resources.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
Demonstrates that the membership of the governing body embodies (or has clear plans to embody prior to the opening of the school) the wide range of relevant knowledge, skills, and commitment needed to oversee a successful charter school, including but	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No

not limited to educational, financial, accounting, legal, and community experience and expertise, as well as special skill sets to reflect school-specific programs, if applicable (e.g., STEM, fine arts, blended learning, alternative programs, etc.).	
Shows that the governing body is or describes specific strategies to ensure that the governing body will be representative of the identified community and describes plans for engaging with the community in order to ensure that community voice is meaningfully incorporated into the governing body's decision-making.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
There are no prohibited familial relationships between charter holder board members, charter holder board members and staff, or charter holder board members and CMO/EMO employees within the third degree of consanguinity or affinity nor any supervisory or business relationships.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> N/A
Proposed conflict of interest policy, ethics policy, and bylaws are reasonable and compliant. Bylaws contemplate a mechanism for removal of governing body members if needed.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
Provides plans for meaningful, appropriate training for board members on a regular basis. Governance training is provided by experienced, third parties and addresses on-boarding for new members, or when the composition of the board changes. Board training costs are reflected in the budget narrative assumptions and the budget calculations.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
Describes a reasonable process for resolving student/parent objections.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
Capacity Interview Criteria:	
The proposed governing board members demonstrate a deep understanding of the educational model, organization's mission, and what mission achievement looks like. *	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
The proposed governing body members demonstrate ownership and a commitment to ensuring the school's success through active engagement in the development of the charter proposal and the capacity interview. *	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
The proposed governing body demonstrates the ability to work together to solve problems. *	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
The proposed governing body members demonstrate that they understand the role of the board in governing the school, including the responsibility for ensuring a high-quality school. *	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
For schools contracting with an EMO or CMO, the governing board demonstrates an understanding of their role in overseeing the EMO/CMO and holding the EMO/CMO accountable for delivering results. *	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> N/A

4.3.2 Leadership Team: Approaches the Standard

While most criteria were evaluated through both the written application and capacity interview, several criteria, as indicated with "*" were evaluated after the capacity interview.

Criteria	Meets the Standard?
The organizational chart clearly indicates all positions, delineating board and leadership roles and lines of authority.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
The qualifications of the Committee to Form/CMO are demonstrable with empirical data related to student performance, including students from diverse backgrounds and experiences, students with disabilities, English language learners, and other special populations.	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
The qualifications of the Committee to Form/CMO include experience with recruitment, hiring, and development of a highly effective staff.	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
If identified, school leader demonstrates a range of experience serving all students (students with disabilities, English language learners, students in need of remediation, and students above or below grade level) including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • leadership role at a high-performing and/or high growth school, • experience establishing a high-performing culture with students and staff, and • responsibility for significant student achievement gains with demographics similar to the proposed school. 	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> N/A
If the school leader is not yet identified, explains the timeframe and the method by which the board will recruit and select a candidate who demonstrates qualifications and competencies aligned with the school's mission and program and has experience working with special populations.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> N/A
Structure of the school leadership team will allow for effective management of the school and staff and demonstrates appropriate assignment of management roles and distribution of responsibilities for instructional leadership, curriculum, personnel, budgeting, financial management, special education and EL programming, legal compliance, state reporting, external relations, and any unique, school-specific staffing needs.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
School leadership team job descriptions or resumes identify qualifications and competencies of the administration that align with the school's mission and program and demonstrate capacity to successfully manage the school.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
Comprehensive plan for coaching, support, and evaluation of school leadership. The board articulates a clear, ambitious, data-driven set of standards and criteria that the school leader must satisfy to keep the school on track to achieve its vision.	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
Capacity Interview Criteria:	
If members of the school leadership team have been identified, they demonstrate deep knowledge of the proposed academic model and an understanding of how the school's mission supports students and families. *	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No

	<input type="checkbox"/> N/A
If members of the school leadership team have been identified, they demonstrate the ability to work together to solve problems. This includes seeing opportunities in challenges and an openness to multiple perspectives and strategies that support the school and its students and families. *	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> N/A
If members of the school leadership team have been identified, they demonstrate understanding of their role and the responsibilities they have to the community. This includes demonstrated evidence of engagement with and responsiveness to students, families, and the community. *	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> N/A
If members of the school leadership team have been identified, they demonstrate that they believe that all students can achieve their full potential. *	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> N/A

4.3.3 Staffing Plan: Approaches the Standard

Criteria	Meets the Standard?
Aligns to the mission, vision, and proposed academic program.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
Matches the proposed budget and is explicitly aligned to both budget narrative assumptions and to budget calculations.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
Demonstrates an understanding of expected student population and aligns to the applicant's commitment to meet the needs of special populations and the community the school intends to serve.	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
Ensures sufficient capacity to enable high-quality teacher support/development, student/family support, effective school operations, and compliance with all applicable policies and procedures.	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
Demonstrates reasonable student-teacher ratios based on the proposed model and statutory student-teacher ratios for special education are met (22:1 for students with severe disabilities).	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No

4.3.4 Human Resources: Approaches the Standard

Criteria	Meets the Standard?
Articulates recruitment and hiring processes and strategies likely to result in the hiring of high-quality teachers, leaders, and staff reflective of the student body.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
Describes a feasible compensation structure and rewards/incentives that are likely to attract and retain high-performing teachers.	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
Essential recruitment, hiring, and dismissal functions and processes, such as background checks, payroll, benefits, and employee relations, are clearly described and responsible parties are identified.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
School performance management system is likely to retain and promote talented staff, allows for re-structuring and removal of staff as needed, creates opportunities for leadership development, and sets clear expectations.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
School performance management system identifies low-performing teacher or leader performance, provides plans, support, and training for improvement, and provides the steps the school leadership will take in instances of persistent low-performance.	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No

4.3.5 Student Recruitment and Enrollment: Meets the Standard

Criteria	Meets the Standard?
Recruitment and enrollment plan for year 1 and subsequent years <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Leverages proactive, grassroots strategies such as door-to-door visits, open houses, and forums, and community conversations over the internet, social media, or other passive tactics which disproportionately benefit more advantaged populations. Includes specific plans to ensure equal access to interested families including families in poverty, students zoned to attend 1- and 2-star schools, students with disabilities, EL students, and other at-risk students as defined in the SPCSA's Academic and Demographic Needs Assessment. Demonstrates an understanding of the identified community. Is likely to allow the school to enroll a representative student population based on surrounding zoned schools or a mission-specific educationally disadvantaged population. 	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
Recruitment and enrollment plan for year 1 and subsequent years includes realistic and appropriate targets, timelines, staff capacity, and monitoring plan to provide confidence that the school will meet its minimum enrollment. <i>Note, the enrollment audit for new schools which determines initial per pupil funding is conducted on or before June 15 of each year⁹.</i>	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No

⁹ [NRS 388A.417](#)

The application and enrollment process adequately addresses and is compliant with Nevada laws and regulations regarding notification to families within a 2-mile radius during the incubation year ¹⁰ , application and enrollment timelines ¹¹ , lotteries ¹² , weighted lotteries ¹³ , enrollment preferences ¹⁴ , and backfilling vacant seats when students withdraw.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
The planned enrollment numbers for years 1 through 6, including annual growth, is reasonable and supported by a clear rationale.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
The recruitment and enrollment plan as well as planned enrollment numbers for year 1 and subsequent years are aligned with the staffing plan and budget, including projected recruitment expenses.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
Demonstrated interest from parents of students in the appropriate grade level to enroll in year 1 and originating in the identified communities or zip codes to be served (approximately 30% of year 1 enrollment). Demand should be demonstrated through meeting sign in sheets or intent to enroll forms that capture, at minimum, parent name, student grade levels, and zip code of residence.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
Proactive and detailed plan for maintaining engagement with parents of prospective students who have already demonstrated interest and converting interest into actual applications for enrollment.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No

4.3.6 Incubation Year Development: Does Not Meet the Standard

While most criteria were evaluated through both the written application and capacity interview, several criteria, as indicated with “*” were evaluated after the capacity interview.

Criteria	Meets the Standard?
Provides key milestones for the planning year, as well as concrete actions and accountability, which will ensure that the school is ready for a successful launch. Incubation year plan: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Includes necessary activities/milestones to ensure that any program-specific components will be ready to begin on the first day of school. Includes necessary activities/milestones to ensure the school will be operationally ready to open. Includes necessary activities/milestones to ensure that the SPCSA Pre-Opening Requirements will be met. <i>Note it is not necessary to duplicate every SPCSA pre-opening requirement into your incubation year plan. Instead, focus on the activities that will ensure success and the major milestones that must be met.</i> Clearly identifies the individuals responsible for leading year 0 initiatives and meeting year 0 milestones. 	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
If a third party (including an CMO/EMO) will implement portions of the Year 0 plan, these actions should align to the contract or additional documentation presented later in the application.	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> N/A
Outlines comprehensive leadership development plans that include training aligned with incubation year goals as well as stated academic goals.	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
Outlines the function of any employees in Year 0, as well as the funding source for associated compensation. The staffing outlined for Year 0 will enable the school to reach its Year 0 milestones and goals.	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
Startup expenses are reflected in the budget narrative assumptions and the budget calculations.	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
Capacity Interview Criteria:	
The Committee to Form demonstrates that they understand the challenges of opening a school and articulate a commitment and understanding of what it will take to ensure a successful launch of the school. *	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
The Committee to Form demonstrates they can work together to solve problems. *	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
The Committee to Form demonstrates they are well versed in the incubation year plan and are committed to following through with the implementation. *	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
The Committee to Form demonstrates that they are actively engaged throughout the application process and plan to maintain active engagement through the incubation year. *	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No

4.3.7 Services: Approaches the Standard

Criteria	Meets the Standard?
Operations plan includes logical plans for all essential and program-specific non-academic services, including, but not limited to transportation, food service, facilities management, nursing, and purchasing processes, and school safety.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No

¹⁰ [NRS 388A.450](#)

¹¹ [NRS 388A.453\(7\)](#)

¹² [NRS 388A.453\(5\)](#)

¹³ [NAC 388A.536](#)

¹⁴ [NRS 388A.456](#)

Articulates a reasonable process and timeline for ensuring school will have information technology infrastructure, equipment, software, and policies to support the school operations and model, including plans for data security and privacy.	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
Operations plan for services and information technology demonstrates sufficient staff/contactor capacity to implement the plan, including clear lines of authority.	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
Costs of services are realistic and align with budget.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
Articulates metrics and processes for evaluating effectiveness of services.	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No

4.3.8 Facilities: Does Not Meet the Standard

Criteria	Meets the Standard?
Facility plans in the short and long-term are reasonable and meet the needs of the projected student population and proposed program.	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
<p>If a facility (including a temporary facility) has been identified:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Evidence that facility will be appropriate for the educational program of the school and adequate for the projected student enrollment. Projected costs associated with the proposed facility, including purchase price, rent, utilities, insurance, and maintenance, as applicable, are reasonable and supported by evidence. A sound plan for construction, renovations, or tenant improvements including sufficient funds and a realistic timeline for completion. A sound plan, which demonstrates an understanding of the local permitting requirements and processes, for ensuring that the facility will have proper permitting to operate as a school. Evidence that the applicant has engaged with local jurisdiction(s) and municipalities, specifically the applicable planning department/division and traffic department/division. Assurance that the proposed facility will comply with applicable building codes, health and safety laws, and with the requirements of the American with Disabilities Act (ADA). Charter schools must demonstrate that a facility has been inspected and meets requirements of any applicable building codes, codes for the prevention of fire, and codes pertaining to safety, health, and sanitation 30 days before the first day of school. 	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> N/A
<p>If a facility (or permanent facility) has not yet been identified:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Description of anticipated facilities needs that will be appropriate for the educational program of the school and adequate for the projected student enrollment. Inclusion of costs associated with the anticipated facilities needs in the budget including renovation, rent, utilities, insurance, and maintenance. Evidence to indicate that facilities-related budget assumptions are realistic based on anticipated location, size, etc. A realistic, timebound plan for selecting and preparing a facility that will meet the programmatic needs and budgetary constraints. A sound plan, which demonstrates an understanding of the local permitting requirements and processes, for ensuring that the facility will have proper permitting to operate as a school. A clear, time bound plan to engage with local jurisdiction(s) and municipalities, specifically the applicable planning department/division and traffic department/division. Assurance that the proposed location will be in compliance with applicable building codes, health and safety laws, and with the requirements of the American with Disabilities Act (ADA). Charter schools must demonstrate that a facility has been inspected and meets requirements of any applicable building codes, codes for the prevention of fire, and codes pertaining to safety, health and sanitation 30 days before the first day of school. 	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> N/A
Demonstrated capacity to manage facility selection, leasing, acquisition, development, renovation, and management, as applicable. If Committee to Form or CMO has identified a facility development partner, Committee to Form or CMO has thorough plans for managing the partner relationship and ensuring that the partner meets expectations.	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
Plans for facility maintenance will ensure that the facility provides a safe and clean learning environment for students.	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No

5 FINANCIAL PLAN

5.1 SECTION RATINGS

Financial Plan	Approaches the Standard
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5.2 SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

The Financial Plan section was rated as Approaches the Standard. This rating reflects concerns regarding the accuracy and conservatism of projections, the allocation of funds for key expenditures, and the overall demonstration of financial viability and control systems. The Applicant states an intention to use a back-office service provider to support overall finances and financial compliance. The costs for this service provider are included in the budget workbook, however, the relationship between the school’s leadership team, board, and back-office service provider remain unclear. The budget indicates a small surplus each year, which incrementally grows, and no years where budgeted expenses exceed revenue. Several critical weaknesses undermine the financial plan. The budget appears to project at maximum enrollment per grade in year one, which may create limitations if actual enrollment falls short, and contingency plans for such scenarios are not clearly articulated. This approach to budgeting, without conservative enrollment projections, introduces significant financial risk.

There remain some additional discrepancies between the budget and the narrative. The proposed financial workbook includes a \$50,490 allocation for food services, based on conservative per-student cost estimates tied to projected enrollment, though no provider has been identified. Uniforms for students in need are expected to be funded through private fundraising, but no specific budget line is designated. Similarly, while the school plans to coordinate low-cost transportation with Pahrump Valley Public Transportation for families in need, no budget line has been allocated. Plans for out-of-state recruiting travel by the Executive Director also lacked corresponding budget allocations. Insurance costs appear low, with flat annual rates for essential types such as employment practices liability insurance, crime, and student accident liability, and limited increases projected beyond a 3% annual inflation adjustment starting in year two. These conservative estimates and omissions suggest that key cost areas may be underfunded, posing a risk of financial strain.

The capacity interview revealed incomplete financial planning. The Committee to Form was unable to clearly explain how specific line items were determined or identify funding sources for incubation year and year one expenses. For example, the Committee to Form stated they would be looking at the budget and adding to it without describing how or where the revenue streams would originate. The financial plan also lacks clear segregation of financial duties, alignment with organizational roles, and detailed controls to ensure proper expense coding and compliance. Projections appear neither fully accurate nor conservative, with insufficient evidence of financial viability or liquidity. Assumptions about facilities do not align with a conservative financial strategy, particularly given the lack of a secured site. These weaknesses raise concerns about the school’s long-term financial stability and operational readiness.

For these reasons, as well as those detailed within the rubric criteria below, the review committee and SPCSA staff rated the Financial Plan as Approaches the Standard.

5.3 RUBRIC CRITERIA

The tables below provide details regarding each rubric criterion and whether it was determined to Meet the Standard. The criterion for which “No” is selected was either rated as Approaches the Standard or Does Not Meet the Standard as described in the new charter school application evaluation rubric and summarized in Appendix A.

5.3.1 Financial Plan: Approaches the Standard

Criteria	Meets the Standard?
The financial manager has the appropriate expertise to provide accurate and timely financial information to decision-makers.	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
The school protects mission-critical expenses when faced with budget cuts and commits to maintaining financial viability. The budget does not appropriate for any fund any amount in excess of the budget resources of that fund (in any single year).	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
There is appropriate segregation of financial duties which align to organizational charts, leadership roles and responsibilities, and vendor responsibilities, as applicable.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
Control systems ensure that only allowable expenses will be made and that all expenses will be coded appropriately.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
Projections are accurate, conservative, and legally compliant. This includes appropriate allocations for required expenditures such as sponsorship fee, Public Employee Retirement System contributions, etc.	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
Budget priorities are consistent with the proposed model, including but not limited to educational program, staffing, and facility, and budget priorities are aligned with the proposed enrollment plan, including any enrollment growth.	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
Sufficient detail and specificity of assumptions for all budget line items to allow for the assessment of fiscal viability.	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
Clear understanding of monthly cash flow that demonstrates viability of the school.	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
Current ratio based on proposed budget of at least 1.1 on a monthly basis is either 1.1 or better or is between 1.0 and 1.1 and trending positive from the immediately prior year.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
The debt-to-asset ratio based on proposed budget is less than 0.9.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
Sufficient cash reserves to cover operations.	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
All funds from external sources that are included in the budget are guaranteed with cash in hand or letter of award and grant terms.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
There is no evidence that the school ever will become insolvent or lack access to the necessary amount of liquidity.	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
Assumptions about facilities in all financial statements correspond to a conservative facility plan and account for possible contingencies.	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No

6 APPLICATION PROCESS DETAILS

6.1 TIMELINE

SPCSA staff offered a five-part training series regarding the New Charter School Application process. Each training was recorded and posted to the SPCSA's website: https://charterschools.nv.gov/OpenASchool/Application_Packet/. Below is a summary of the training that was provided.

- December 16, 2024 – Application Overview and Process
- January 8, 2025 – Application Cover Sheet, Meeting the Need, and Academic Plan
- January 21, 2025 – Operations Plan and Addendum
- February 6, 2025 – Financial Plan
- February 24, 2025 – Clarifying Questions and the Capacity Interview

Below are key dates related to the Pahrump Valley Academy charter school application.

- January 15, 2025 – Pahrump Valley Academy Notice of Intent is received
- April 30, 2025 – Pahrump Valley Academy Application is received
- May 13, 2025 – Memo sent to Nye County School District soliciting input¹⁵
- June 27, 2025 – Clarifying Questions sent to applicant; responses received within 4 business days
- July 8, 2025 – Pahrump Valley Academy Capacity Interview is conducted
- May 13, 2025 – Input provided by Nye County School District
- August 22, 2025 – Recommendation is presented

6.2 CAPACITY INTERVIEW

Based on the independent and collective review of the application, the review committee conducted a capacity interview of the applicant to assess the capacity to execute the application's overall plan. The capacity interview for Pahrump Valley Academy was conducted on July 8, 2025, and lasted approximately 120-minutes. All members of the Committee to Form and proposed initial Governing Board attended the interview. Additionally, two members of the proposed administrative team were in attendance and responded to questions. Questions during the capacity interview focused primarily on these areas:

- Mission and Vision
- Targeted Plan
- Parent and Community Involvement
- At-Risk Students and Special Populations
- Student Discipline
- Board Governance
- Leadership Team
- Incubation Year Development
- Facilities
- Financial Plan

¹⁵ Pursuant to NRS 388A.249, the SPCSA solicited input from the Clark County School District regarding this application. NRS 388A.249(2)(a) requires that "[t]he proposed sponsor of a charter school shall, in reviewing an application to form a charter school...If the proposed sponsor is not the board of trustees of a school district, solicit input from the board of trustees of the school district in which the proposed charter school will be located."

Prior to the capacity interview, the review committee sent the applicant team a list of clarifying questions to provide an additional opportunity for details and information to be presented. These responses were considered by the review team and were used to better inform the capacity interview.

Lastly, the capacity interview included a scenario-based question that probed the Committee to Form's capacity to collectively work together to identify and prioritize steps to take action in support of enrollment efforts, create and implement metrics to ensure the school maximizes enrollment, and direct the leadership team to ensure enrollment targets are met and a successful opening can occur.

APPENDIX A

THE CHARTER SCHOOL APPLICATION “NOTICE OF INTENT”

The charter school application process begins with the submission of a written “notice of intent” to submit a new charter school application. See NAC 388A.260(2). This notice of intent is a brief document, submitted to the SPCSA 90 days prior to the submission of the applicant’s new charter school application, stating, among other things, the name of the proposed charter school, contact information for the applicant, the proposed location of the charter school, and the grade levels and number of students the proposed charter school seeks to serve.

THE SPCSA’S PROPOSED CHARTER SCHOOL APPLICATION WINDOW

In December 2021, Nevada’s Legislative Commission approved proposed regulation R043-21, which amended Nevada Administrative Code 388A.260(1). With this change, the SPCSA moved from two new charter school application windows each year (previously in January and July of each year), to a single annual application window. As a result, new charter school applications now must be submitted to the SPCSA between April 15 and April 30 of each year.

Part of the intent behind the change to NAC 388A.260(1), and the move from two annual application windows to a single application window in April of each year, was to allow sufficient time to ensure that a newly approved charter school opens successfully. That is, upon receipt of a new charter school application in April, the SPCSA’s review process (as described in greater detail below), typically takes four to eight months – meaning that a new charter school application that is received in April will be approved or denied by the SPCSA in August or December. This timeline allows a newly approved charter school nine to 12 months to successfully execute the charter school’s incubation year plan and ensures a successfully opening of the charter school.

Note that NAC 388A.260(1) still contains a “good cause” provision whereby a new charter school applicant may, for “good cause,” request that the SPCSA accept a new charter school application outside the annual April 15 – April 30 window. However, if the SPCSA approves a “good cause” exemption to submit a new charter school application outside of the annual April application window, a notice of intent to submit a new charter school application must still be submitted to the SPCSA 90 days prior to receipt of the actual application. In practice, this means that upon approval of a good cause exemption by the SPCSA, allowing an applicant to submit a new charter school application outside of the typical April application window, an applicant will submit its new charter school application 90 days after approval of the good cause exemption and receipt of the applicant’s notice of intent.

THE REQUIRED CONTENTS OF A NEW CHARTER SCHOOL APPLICATION

NRS 388A.246 and NAC 388A.135-160 detail the requirements related to a new charter school application. Note that these statutes and regulations related to the required contents of a new charter school applications are extensive.¹⁶

¹⁶ Although the following list is not all-inclusive, among the required contents of a new charter school application are the following:

- The name of the proposed charter school;
- The date on which the proposed charter school seeks to open;
- Grade levels and the proposed enrollment that the charter school seeks to serve;
- A summary of the plan for the proposed charter school, including the mission, vision and goals of the proposed charter school;
- Information regarding the indicators, metrics and measures that the proposed charter school will use to evaluate the academic, organizational, and financial performance of the proposed charter school;
- The organization structure of the proposed charter school;
- Information regarding the committee to form and the proposed governance of the charter school;

COMPLETENESS CHECK

After receiving a new charter school application, the SPCSA, pursuant to NRS 388A.249(3)(a)(2) and NAC 388A.260(2) conducts a “completeness check” of the application to ensure that the new charter school application contains all the information required by NRS 388A.246 and NAC 388A.135-160. If a new charter school application does not contain all the information required by Nevada’s charter school statutes and regulations, if practicable, the SPCSA follows up with the applicant to obtain the required information. If not, the applicant is asked to submit a new, complete charter school application during the next application cycle.

WITHDRAWAL OF A NEW CHARTER SCHOOL APPLICATION

NAC 388A.260(3) allows an applicant to withdraw a new charter school application upon written notice to the SPCSA. An applicant may decide to withdraw its application due to significant concerns regarding the completeness of the application, or because it is evident after a cursory review of the new charter school application that the proposed charter school application is not fully developed.

THE SPCSA’S REVIEW OF A NEW CHARTER SCHOOL APPLICATION

Once a new charter school application is deemed complete in accordance with 388A.249(3)(a)(2) and NAC 388A.260(2), the SPCSA begins its substantive review of the new charter school application.

NRS 388A.249(2)(a) requires the SPCSA to conduct a “thorough review” of the new charter school application. This “thorough review” requires that the SPCSA establish a review team to review and evaluate the new charter school application and include in the review team persons with knowledge and expertise regarding the academic, financial, and organizational facets of charter school that are not employed by the SPCSA – these persons are often referred to as “external reviewers.” NRS 388A.249(2)(a) and NAC 388A.260(4).

As part of this “thorough evaluation” the SPCSA is required to conduct an interview with the applicant to elicit clarifying or additional information about the proposed charter school and determine the ability of the applicant to establish a high-quality charter school – this is the “capacity interview” conducted by the SPCSA. NRS 388A.249(2)(b) and NAC 388A.260(4)(b)(2)

-
- Information regarding the proposed administrative head of the proposed charter school;
 - Information regarding how teachers and staff will be recruited and hired;
 - Course and curriculum information, including any dual-credit programs for high school students (if applicable);
 - Information regarding serving students with disabilities, students who are English language learners, an at-risk student;
 - The organization structure of the proposed charter school;
 - Information regarding the committee to form and the proposed governance of the charter school;
 - Information regarding the proposed administrative head of the proposed charter school;
 - Information regarding how teachers and staff will be recruited and hired;
 - The proposed charter school’s calendar;
 - Information regarding any proposed facility for the proposed charter school;
 - Equipment, furniture, and fixtures that the proposed charter school will utilize;
 - Transportation, if applicable;
 - Health and safety requirements;
 - Student records;
 - Extracurricular activities and dress code;
 - Discipline policies;
 - Budget;
 - Enrollment and any lottery process and procedures;
 - Information regarding required insurance

In its review of the charter school application, the SPCSA is required to evaluate the new charter school application based on documented evidence collected through the process of reviewing the application and the information gleaned during the capacity interview. See NRS 388A.249(2)(b) and (e).

The determination regarding whether to grant a new charter school application is to be based on the ability of the applicants to establish a high-quality charter school. NRS 388A.249(2)(b). The SPCSA may approve a new charter school application if:

- The application complies with all charter school laws and regulations;
- The application is complete;
- The applicant has demonstrated competence in accordance with the SPCSA's new charter school application rubric demonstrating that approval of the new charter school application will likely result in a successful opening and operation of the charter school;
- The application meets the criteria contained in the SPCSA's academic and demographic needs assessment; and
- Sufficient input has been received the public. NRS 388A.249(3).

The North Star of the review team's evaluation of the new charter school application is the SPCSA's new charter school application rubric. NRS 388A.249(2)(b). The rubric is broken into four major sections, plus an addendum. Rating options for each section are Meets the Standard; Approaches the Standard; Does not Meet the Standard. These are defined as follows:

- **Meets the Standard:** The response reflects a thorough understanding of key issues. It addresses the topic with specific and accurate information that shows thorough preparation; presents a clear, realistic picture of how the school is expected to operate; and inspires confidence in the applicant's capacity to carry out the plan effectively and result in a 4- or 5-star school.
- **Approaches the Standard:** The response meets the criteria in many respects but lacks detail and/or requires additional information in one or more areas.
- **Does Not Meet the Standard:** The response is undeveloped or incomplete; demonstrates lack of preparation and/or raises serious questions about the coherence of the application and whether it is original work; raises substantial concerns about the viability of the plan or the applicant's ability to carry it out.

Detailed descriptions of each rubric item can be found in the full rubric located on the SPCSA Application website:

http://charterschools.nv.gov/OpenASchool/Application_Packet/

Once the review team reviews and scores the new charter school application, the SPCSA's Executive Director, or his or her designee, forwards his or her recommendation to the SPCSA Board for its consideration. NAC 388A.260(6)

THE SPCSA'S APPROVAL OR DENIAL OF A NEW CHARTER SCHOOL APPLICATION

The SPCSA Board is required to consider a new charter school application at a public meeting held no more than 120 days (or later if agreed to by the applicant) after receipt of the new charter school application. NRS 388A.255(1).

RESUBMISSION AND APPEAL OF A DENIAL OF A NEW CHARTER SCHOOL APPLICATION

If a new charter application is denied, an unsuccessful applicant will be provided with a written notice setting out the deficiencies contained in the new charter school application. If the applicant chooses to do so, the applicant may resubmit the applicant's new charter school application within 30 days after receiving the written notice of deficiencies. NRS 388A.255(2). Given the lengthy and rigorous application process utilized by the SPCSA in regard to charter applications, as well as the limited timeframe specified in NRS 388A.255(2) for an unsuccessful applicant to resubmit their charter application, the SPCSA encourages only those unsuccessful applicants that the SPCSA has found limited or specific areas where the application does not meet standards to resubmit their charter application. Unsuccessful

applicants that the SPCSA has found numerous or significant issues within the application that do not meet standard are encouraged to submit a new charter application during the SPCSA's next application window.

If a new charter school application is denied after resubmission, the unsuccessful applicant may then appeal the denial to the district court in which the proposed charter school was to be located. NRS 388A.255(3).