Request for Qualifications (RFQ): High-Performing Charter School Operators Interested in Restart Work in accordance with Nevada Revised Statute 388A.300(1).

Issued By: Nevada State Public Charter School Authority (SPCSA)
Date of Issue: August 1, 2025
Response Due Date: September 15, 2025

I. Purpose

The State Public Charter School Authority (SPCSA), pursuant to Nevada Revised Statute (NRS) 388A.303(b), is seeking qualified charter school operators to assume the operations of charter schools whose charter contracts are subject to termination due to poor academic performance, as outlined in NRS 388A.300(1). This RFQ is issued to identify capable charter school operators with a proven track record in improving academic outcomes, effective school management, and compliance with applicable state and federal laws.

II. Background

Created in 2011, Nevada's State Public Charter School Authority is an executive branch governmental agency, a statewide charter school sponsor, and a Local Education Agency (LEA). The SPCSA authorizes public charter schools across the state and is responsible for overseeing and monitoring them to ensure positive academic outcomes for students and strong stewardship of public dollars.

The vision of the SPCSA is equitable access to diverse, innovative, and high-quality schools for every Nevada student. To learn more about the SPCSA, applicants should review the 2025-2030 Strategic Plan, the Growth Management Plan, and the Demographic and Academic Needs Assessment.

Under NRS 388A, the State Public Charter School Authority is responsible for monitoring the performance of charter schools. Schools that fail to meet academic, operational, or financial benchmarks as outlined in their charter contracts may face termination.

NRS 388A.300(1) requires that the charter contract of a school that receives three 1-star Nevada School Performance Framework (NSPF) ratings in five years shall be terminated, under certain circumstances. The statute allows, if practicable, for the school to be restarted under a new charter contract with a new operator. **This restart will allow a fresh start on the NSPF ratings and the SPCSA Performance Frameworks.** Nevada Administrative Code (NAC) 388A.347(3) requires a charter school that is restarted to enroll the pupils who were enrolled in the charter school before it was restarted before any other eligible pupil is enrolled.

This RFQ is intended to identify nonprofit organizations that can:

1. Ensure continuity of education for affected students.
2. Provide high-quality educational services aligned with state standards.
3. Address the deficiencies that led to the charter contract termination through a restart.

III. Eligibility Requirements

Charter school operators responding to this RFQ must meet the following criteria:

1. **Experience:** Demonstrated success in operating high-performing charter schools in at least two states. The entity must have academic data from at least two states, and five years' worth of data for at least one state. Academic performance must exceed the respective state's ESSA school accountability system (rating system) standards at the majority of campuses.
2. **Capacity:** Adequate resources, personnel, and infrastructure to manage the operational, financial, and academic needs of the charter school(s).
3. **Compliance:** A commitment to adhere to NRS 388A, NAC 388A, and other applicable state and federal regulations.
4. **Community Engagement:** A strategy for engaging with students, families, and communities affected by the transition.

IV. Scope of Work

The selected charter school will be responsible for:

1. Transitioning school operations, including the governing board, school leadership, staff, facilities, and student services.
2. Developing and implementing an academic improvement plan to address performance deficiencies.
3. Managing finances and ensuring fiscal responsibility.
4. Ensuring compliance with NRS 388A, NAC 388A, and other regulatory requirements.
5. Reporting regularly to the SPCSA on progress being made.

V. Submission Requirements

Phase I Due September 15, 2025

Interested charter school operators must submit a complete response, including the following:

1. **Cover Letter:** Statement of interest and summary of qualifications. Specify the minimum student count for successful market entry. What is the appropriate number of students at scale?
2. **Organization Profile:** Overview of charter school operator's structure, mission, and educational performance history. Must provide state ESSA ratings for all campuses going back five years for at least one campus. If a campus does not have five years of data, submit as many years as are available. Submit a letter of good academic standing from each authorizer.
3. **Operational Plan:** Must submit a letter of organizational good standing from all authorizers.

4. **Financial Capacity:** Must submit a letter of financial good standing from all authorizers.

Charter school operators who meet the criteria will be invited by September 30th to submit a Phase II Application. The Phase I Eligibility Checklist is attached to the RFQ.

Phase II Application Due October 31, 2025

1. **Experience:** Evidence of successful academic turnaround efforts, including data on student outcomes. Competitive priority will be given to operators with experience in turnaround operations.
2. **Academic Plan:** Provide a detailed plan to improve academic outcomes and ensure the school meets Nevada School Performance Framework standards within three years.
   a. Articulate the organization's approach to education. Describe the most fundamental features of a school that ensure successful student outcomes in schools with a high concentration of high needs students (academically behind).
   b. Describe the fundamental features of the organization's educational model that will drive outcomes in the school. Key features may include:
      i. Programs (ex., curriculum, professional development, afterschool program, parent program, etc.)
      ii. Principles (ex., no excuses, individualized learning, learn at your own pace)
      iii. Structures (ex., blended learning, small learning communities, small class sizes, etc.)
   c. Describe the mechanisms by which the fundamental features will improve student success.
3. **Operational Plan:** Strategy for assuming school operations and addressing deficiencies.
   a. Articulate a transition plan from closure to restart.
      i. Articulate a strategy for engaging with families and students affected by this transition.
      ii. Articulate a strategy for staffing as it relates to teachers and support staff currently employed at the school.
   b. Provide an organization chart.
   c. Provide details of the fee structure between the applicant and the charter school.
   d. Provide a contract with an existing school as an addendum.
4. **Financial Plan:** Evidence of financial stability and capability to manage the school's operations. Must submit the last three independent audits; federal single audits, if applicable; and all authorizer performance frameworks related to finances as an addendum.
5. **Miscellaneous:** Must submit a point of contact for each authorizer the organization contracts with, including phone number and email address.

VI. Evaluation Criteria

Submissions will be evaluated based on:

1. **Experience and Track Record**: Proven success in operating high-performing schools and/ or in turnaround efforts.
2. **Operational Plan**: Feasibility and comprehensiveness of the proposed transition and improvement plan. Academic outcomes at currently operating schools.
3. **Capacity**: Organizational readiness and resources. Historical results on organizational frameworks.
4. **Community Engagement:** Approach to engaging stakeholders.
5. **Compliance and Financial Stability**: Adherence to legal requirements and financial viability. Historical financial records.
6. **Capacity Interview:** An interview with the applicant, the SPCSA, and/or the external evaluators.
7. **Reference Check with Current Authorizers:** SPCSA staff will contact current authorizers to address any concerns.

Additional consideration will be given to operators who have demonstrated experience turning around a poor-performing school, not just operating successful start-ups.

Entities approved through this process that are not matched with a school in accordance with NRS 388A.300 within two cycles will be authorized to open a new school under NAC 388A.270.

VII. Submission Instructions

Submissions must be sent to:

info@spcsa.nv.gov

VIII. Questions and Clarifications

For inquiries or to request clarification, please contact Melissa Mackedon at mmackeon@spcsa.nv.gov.

IX. Additional Information

The State reserves the right to:

1. Reject any or all submissions.
2. Request additional information from respondents.
3. Amend or withdraw this RFQ at any time.

End of RFQ

Attachment 1 Rubric

Applicant Name_____

SPCSA Team Member Completing Rubric_____

Date of review_____

PHASE I – Eligibility Checklist

Purpose: To determine whether applicants meet the minimum qualifications to advance to Phase II.

A cover letter includes a statement of interest and scale viability.	• Meets Standard • Does Not Meet Standard
Comments:	
The operator has experience in at least two states.	• Meets Standard • Does Not Meet Standard
List all states and the number of years the operator has been in each state:	
The operator has at least five years of experience in at least one state.	• Meets Standard • Does Not Meet Standard
Provides ESSA state data for all campuses for up to five years.	• Meets Standard • Does Not Meet Standard
Comments:	
The majority of campuses exceed state's ESSA performance standards.	• Meets Standard • Does Not Meet Standard
What percentage of campuses meet standard:	
Provides a letter of good standing regarding academics from all authorizers.	• Meets Standard • Does Not Meet Standard
Provides a letter of good standing regarding organization from all authorizers.	• Meets Standard • Does Not Meet Standard
Provides a letter of good standing regarding finances from all authorizers.	• Meets Standard

	• Does Not Meet Standard

Applicants must meet the standard in all categories to be eligible for phase II.

Result:
☐ **Eligible for Phase II**
☐ **Not Eligible**

PHASE II – Detailed Evaluation Rubric

Purpose: To evaluate and score qualified applicants on the depth, feasibility, and strength of their proposed restart operations.

Each domain is scored on a **0–2 point scale**, where:

- **2 = Meets Standard**
- **1 = Approaches Standard**
- **0 = Does Not Meet Standard**

1. **Experience and Track Record (Max: 4 points)**

Criteria	Points
Demonstrated success in academic turnaround efforts. • 2 points if the operator has successfully restarted a charter school.	
Academic outcomes across the current portfolio. • 2 points if the operator has 75% or more of schools exceeding standard on ESSA tools. • 1 point if the operator has 51%-74% or more of schools exceeding standard on the ESSA tools. • 0 point if less than 50% or less of the school exceeds standard on the ESSA tool	

2. **Academic Plan (Max: 10 points)**

Criteria	Points

Clear and research-based educational approach for high-needs students. • 2 points- Provides a well-articulated theory of change, supported by compelling evidence or logic model; instructional model is tailored and culturally responsive to high-needs students and is aligned with the mission and vision. • 1 point -General educational approach is described and partially addresses needs of at-risk students with limited evidence or unclear implementation. • 0 points- Vague approach lacking research base; limited discussion of specific needs of high-needs students or no clear educational approach or plan for serving high-needs students.	
Alignment of education model to outcomes (programs, principles, structures). • 2 points- Programs, principles, and structures are coherently aligned to ambitious academic goals, including SMART goals, graduation/promotion policies, and support systems for struggling students. • 1 point- The educational model is partially aligned to desired outcomes but lacks full coherence or evidence of rigor in goal setting or structures. • 0 Points- Outcomes are broadly stated with unclear links to the proposed educational structures or no alignment between model and student outcomes.	
Mechanisms for improving student outcomes are evidence-based. • 2 points- Includes tiered interventions, progress monitoring, and use of reliable, standards-aligned assessments; response strategies are clearly tied to data and research-based practices. • 1point- General mention of assessments and improvement strategies but lacks detail or evidence base. • 0 points- Limited or inconsistent use of data to inform improvement; few mechanisms for tracking or responding to underperformance or no evidence-based mechanisms described.	
Alignment with Nevada School Performance Framework expectations. • 2 points- Strong alignment between performance goals and NSPF metrics; includes subgroup performance monitoring, and quarterly benchmarks support continuous improvement. • 1 point-NSPF is referenced and partially addressed; alignment is limited or missing subgroup analysis. • 0 points -Minimal or unclear alignment with NSPF indicators; lacks specificity in how performance will be measured or improved or no alignment with NSPF expectations.		

Realistic and ambitious timeline for improvement within 3 years. • 2 points -Presents a detailed, feasible plan with annual benchmarks and a data-informed strategy to achieve significant academic progress by Year 3. • 1 point- Includes a timeline with some measurable goals but may lack full feasibility or ambitious targets. • 0 Points - Timeline is overly ambitious or vague, lacking measurable interim goals or no improvement timeline or unrealistic expectations.	

3. **Operational Plan (Max: 8 points)**

Criteria	Points
Comprehensive transition plan from closure to restart. • 2 points- Provides a robust, step-by-step transition plan detailing governance handoff, school culture renewal, student/family communication, staff reassignment, records transfer, and facility readiness. Includes contingency plans and demonstrates strong capacity to ensure continuity of learning and compliance. • 1 point- Transition plan includes key components (e.g., student transitions, facility use),but lacks full operational or risk mitigation detail. • 0 Points - Basic or general plan that addresses some aspects of restart but omits critical logistics or timelines or no credible or complete plan for transition from school closure to restart.	
Strategy for staffing, including handling of existing staff. • 2 points- Staffing model clearly supports the academic program; includes transparent process for rehiring or replacing existing staff; provides professional development, timelines, and alignment with org chart. Demonstrates legal and operational soundness. • 1 point - Staffing approach supports core functions and mentions existing staff, but lacks detail in selection/onboarding processes or staff evaluation. • 0 points - Staffing discussion is vague; little clarity on how existing staff will be treated or how new staff will be hired or no staffing plan or insufficient explanation of how personnel will be handled.	
Clear organization chart and roles. • 2 points- Detailed org chart aligns with staffing and governance plans; roles and responsibilities are clearly defined for all key functions (instructional leadership, operations, compliance, special education, etc.); reflects adequate leadership capacity.	

• 1 point - Org chart is included with most key roles but may lack full clarity or integration with the governance or staffing plan. • 0 points - Org chart is confusing or incomplete; key responsibilities or reporting lines are missing or no org chart or role clarity provided.	
Contract with existing schools demonstrates operational alignment. • 2 points-Includes a clear, legally viable MOU or contract demonstrating shared understanding with legacy operator/school on data sharing, records access, facilities, student and staff transition supports, and delineated responsibilities. Ensures minimal disruption to students. • 1 point-Some documentation provided (e.g., draft MOU) with general agreement on transition roles but lacks specificity or legal viability. • 0 points - Limited evidence of communication or planning with existing school/operator; unclear operational alignment or no documentation or evidence of coordination with existing school.	

4. **Financial Capacity and Compliance (Max: 6 points)**

Criteria	Points
Demonstrates financial stability through audits and frameworks. • 2 points - Provides clean, unqualified audit reports (if applicable), a sustainable funding model, and a sound financial framework demonstrating multi-year solvency. Evidence of past financial responsibility and clear contingencies for enrollment fluctuations and funding delays. • 1 point- Audits or financial documentation show general stability; funding model is adequate but may lack detailed contingencies or long-term planning. • 0 points- Limited or unclear audit information; framework is minimally developed or contains gaps in forecasting or no financial documentation or history to assess stability; lacks credible financial assumptions.	
Ability to manage school finances responsibly. • 2 points- Financial plan includes detailed and reasonable budget assumptions, responsible cash flow management, internal controls, and evidence of capacity in financial leadership. Clear understanding of public school finance and charter-specific requirements. • 1 point- Budget and financial plans are mostly sound; some detail provided on assumptions and oversight, but internal controls or financial leadership capacity are underdeveloped. • 0 Points- Budget is overly simplistic or not well-supported; lacks sufficient detail on oversight, cash flow, or responsible	

management practices or the financial plan is unrealistic, not credible, or missing major elements necessary for responsible financial management.	
Adherence to state and federal compliance requirements. • 2 points-Demonstrates strong understanding of and commitment to meeting all federal, state, and SPCSA-specific compliance requirements (e.g., ESSA, IDEA, procurement, audits, reporting timelines). Describes systems for ongoing compliance monitoring and corrective actions. • 1 point- Addresses most major compliance requirements and acknowledges responsibility for oversight, but systems may be underdeveloped or lacking detail. • 0 points- Limited discussion of compliance responsibilities or how requirements will be met or no evidence of understanding or commitment to compliance responsibilities.	

5. Community Engagement (Max: 4 points)

Criteria	Points
Plan to engage families during and after the transition. • 2 points -Presents a robust, culturally responsive engagement plan that includes multiple methods (e.g., community forums, surveys, parent liaisons, bilingual outreach) to build trust and ensure continuity during the transition. Describes long-term family engagement structures post-restart. • 1 point-Includes general plan for communication and engagement during transition; outlines some ongoing strategies post-restart but lacks specificity or cultural responsiveness. • 0 points Minimal plan for family engagement; lacks detail, depth, or sustainability or no meaningful family engagement plan included.	
Evidence of stakeholder-informed decision-making. • 2 points -Clear, documented evidence (e.g., meeting summaries, survey results, letters of support) that stakeholder input—especially families, students, and community partners—has shaped key decisions at other campuses. Demonstrates authentic and ongoing engagement. • 1 point -Some evidence of community outreach and feedback is provided; input influenced parts of school design but may not be deeply integrated. • 0 points-Limited or anecdotal evidence of community input; unclear how stakeholder feedback informed decisions or no evidence of community or stakeholder engagement in decision-making.	

6. Capacity & Authorizer Interviews (Max: 10 points)

Criteria	Points
Clarity, coherence, and depth of responses in the interview.	

• 2 points - Team consistently provides well-organized, articulate, and insightful responses; demonstrates deep understanding of the application, charter operation, and educational strategy. • 1 point - Responses are generally clear and coherent; team demonstrates working knowledge of application and operations, with occasional need for clarification. • 0 points - Responses are vague, inconsistent, or lack sufficient depth; team appears underprepared or misaligned in answers.	
Demonstrated readiness and alignment with SPCSA expectations • 2 points- Team demonstrates a high level of preparedness and alignment with SPCSA priorities, including equity, accountability, and innovation. Clearly articulates how the plan will meet state performance and compliance standards. • 1 point- Team shows general readiness and alignment, but may lack clarity on some SPCSA expectations or how they will be addressed. | • 0 points -Readiness is limited or uncertain; unclear how the team will meet SPCSA benchmarks.	
Current authorizers do not identify any significant academic concerns, including concerns related to special populations. • 2 points- Interviews confirm no significant academic performance concerns raised by current or former authorizers, including for students with disabilities, English learners, or other special populations. • 1 point- Authorizers have raised minor concerns, but evidence of strong improvement or context is provided. • 0 points- Moderate to significant academic concerns raised without strong evidence of remediation or plan, especially regarding the performance of special populations.	
Current authorizers do not identify any significant organizational concerns. • 2 points- Interviews confirm no organizational concerns raised by authorizers; leadership and governance structures are described as stable, compliant, and effective. • 1 point- Authorizers have raised minor concerns, but evidence of strong improvement or context is provided • 0 points- Significant organizational weaknesses or compliance issues cited by current authorizers.	
Current authorizers do not identify any significant financial concerns. • 2 points- Authorizers confirm the applicant has managed finances responsibly and maintained financial compliance and stability.	

• 1 point- Authorizers have raised minor concerns, but generally sound practices are evident. • 0 Points- Moderate to significant financial concerns raised by authorizers with limited evidence of corrective action.	

TOTAL POSSIBLE: 42 POINTS

Evaluator Summary:

Overall Strengths:

Overall Concerns:

Recommended for Approval: ☐ Yes ☐ No