



Addendum to Strong Start Academy Elementary School Charter Application with the
Nevada State Public Charter School Authority

Provided to the SPCSA on: December 15, 2021

This addendum is prepared in response to the November 5, 2021 letter from Executive Director Rebecca Feiden and addresses the concerns outlined in the Strong Start Academy Elementary School Application Report. This document was prepared after multiple consultations with SPCSA staff to obtain a clearer understanding of the concerns and to obtain input on remediation steps.

This document should be considered the “master” starting document to review SSAES responses. The document contains the concern, SSAES response to the concern and references to supporting detailed documentation. Supporting documents include revisions to certain sections of the original application, revisions to charter application Attachments and in some cases supplemental new information provided as supplemental Attachments. This document is a compliment to the original charter application.

I. Meeting the Need

- Meets the Standard

	Concern	Response	Reference
	Parent and Community Involvement		
	Other than the commitments made by the City of Las Vegas, a majority of proposed community partners appear to have shared more generic letters of support that lack specific deliverables and accountability structures. During the capacity interview, the Committee to Form provided some additional details about emerging partnerships, but these are very much developing and not yet finalized.	We have attached two additional letters of support from key partners : CLV Reinvent Schools Las Vegas and Acelero Learning Clark County outlining deliverables for partnership.	See letters as updated Attachment 1

II. Academic Plan:

- Approaches the Standard

	Concern	Response	Reference
	Transformational Change		
1	The written proposal does not describe the key features of the program with consistency and clarity. For example, the proposal establishes the basic premise of individual learning plans, but does not present a detailed plan for implementation (i.e. which staff are responsible for creating the plans, who monitors the plans, who conducts the data analysis following the MAP assessment to determine if goals are met, etc.). Individual learning plans can be a powerful tool but implementing the concept in an effective manner requires strong systems and is typically time consuming. More detail is required to make the finding that this strategy, as well as others such as multi-sensory learning and inquiry-based learning, will be implemented in a coherent and cohesive manner likely to lead to student success.	While we believe and understand personalized learning, project-based learning, and multisensory learning are all effective teaching approaches, in an effort to narrow the focus of SSAES, we have removed them from the application. Instead, we have focused our efforts on describing the distinguishing features that will make SSAES a 5-star school: dual language education, multi-tiered systems of support, which include response to intervention and social-emotional learning. We have presented these key features in a consistent manner throughout the academic plan with the intent of providing clarity and cohesion to our plan.	See Academic Plan, Transformational Change p. 32-58
2	While the applicant team was able to justify each of the instructional methods and curricula chosen in the proposal (project-based learning, multi-tiered systems of support, social emotional learning, and bilingual curriculum), it is not clear how each of these foundational elements will work cohesively together. In particular, the review team was unable to determine that the Committee to Form has clear specific plans for bilingual instruction/dual language immersion. The applicant was able to speak to how teachers	We have updated the mission and the vision of the school to include dual language literacy. We also narrowed the focus of instructional methods to dual language immersion and Multi-tiered systems of support including RTI and SEL. The mission of Strong Start	See Academic Plan, Transformational Change p.32-34, 36, 38-40.

	<p>would be supported, but more information is needed to understand how each of these areas will be executed effectively starting day one.</p>	<p>Academy Elementary School is to provide equitable, high-quality academics as we prepare our bilingual, civic-minded thinkers to maximize their potential in their community and the world.</p> <p>Dual language education is a primary focus of the school. It is a highly effective model of instruction for our targeted demographic. The overall effects of bilingualism can help improve a child's educational development, cognitive functions, social skills, literacy, and emotional skills that have positive effects for many years to come. Further benefits of dual language programs, besides the goal of biliteracy and bilingualism, is to promote a positive attitude towards languages and diverse cultures. Integrating native English speakers with native Spanish speakers provides the opportunity for students to develop an appreciation for and an</p>	
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		<p>understanding of diverse cultures.</p> <p>Additionally, a Multi-Tiered Systems of Support (MTSS) will be implemented for all students to meet both their academic and social emotional needs. This whole-school data-driven framework for improving learning outcomes will be delivered through a continuum of evidence-based practices and systems. RTI is the structure that will be implemented to ensure effective Tier 1 instruction is delivered following the Guiding Principles of Dual Language Education established by the Center for Applied Linguistics.</p> <p>The plan also includes specific staffing for dual language instruction, professional learning opportunities and timeline, and student schedules that provide detail for the delivery of these models.</p>	
3	<p>The application does not provide sufficient data from potential model schools of success for the distinguishing features of the proposed model of Strong Start Academy, and it was confirmed during the capacity interview that</p>	<p>We have added data from schools who successfully implemented dual language programs, MTSS structures, d extended learning</p>	<p>See Academic Plan, Transformational Change P. 57-58</p>

	<p>the application relied on literature reviews of these model schools in building the proposed academic program. More information and data are needed to understand these model schools, their performance and the demographics they serve as it is not clear that they serve similar populations and communities based on the submitted application.</p>	<p>opportunities to accompany the literature reviews. We ensured that the schools served a population similar to the SSAES target population.</p>	
	<p>Curriculum and Instructional Design</p>		
4	<p>The narrative included proposed curriculum for math, reading and social studies. In response to clarifying questions, the committee to form provided additional information, including newly selected curriculum for these subject areas. While this signals that the Committee to Form is working to finalize the curriculum, and information indicates that these new curricula are aligned to Nevada Academic Content Standards, additional information is needed to clarify which curricula will be used and ensure that the academic program aligns with state standards.</p>	<p>New curriculum for both math and reading was selected based on the identification of these resources meeting the highest levels across all domains of coherence, rigor, and usability according to EdReports. In literacy, we have selected Core Knowledge Language Arts (CKLA). This program not only has a strong foundational skills component and is available in Spanish and English, it is also reflective of the target community and is culturally responsive. For math, we selected iReady Classroom Mathematics 2020. We have also noted science, social studies and SEL</p>	<p>See Academic Plan, Curriculum and Instructional Design p. 38-40</p>

		curriculum materials in our application.	
5	<p>Given the key design features (project-based learning, bilingual instruction, and personal learning plans in particular), it is unclear whether the planned professional development activities described will be sufficient to support teachers as they implement the program. The proposal does not make a direct connection between professional development and these core program features, and this concern is compounded by the lack of clarity surrounding a proposed vendor that will assist in professional development. Moreover, the narrative does not discuss an alternative plan if an agreement for these assumed services do not materialize.</p>	<p>SSAES will partner with Dual Language Education of New Mexico (DLENM), which is an educational consulting firm that specializes in dual language education. They work closely with school leadership teams from the planning stages of a new program through implementation of highly effective teaching strategies for literacy and mathematics instruction. They also provide a framework for contextualized learning for access, validation, equity, and success training. This is the professional learning needed to create an environment of differentiated, inclusive, and validating instruction in schools that serve culturally and linguistically diverse (CLD) students, with specific emphasis on English Learners (ELs). Additionally, one</p>	<p>See Academic Plan, Curriculum and Instructional Design p. 36-37, 40-42</p>

		<p>of the school's proposed Board members is the assistant professor of multilingual education for UNLV. He will provide training to our teaching staff on the Dual Language Learner Teacher Competencies. The training will include the Language and Literacy strategies such as processes of first language development, second language acquisition, first language literacy development and cognitive and social benefits of bilingualism and biculturalism. He will focus on developing Dual Language Learner Teacher Competencies. TNTP leadership to design and develop onboarding and induction training, Strong Instruction in Core Subjects, Analyzing Instructional Tasks and Student Work to ensure access to Grade-Appropriate Assignments, and Building and Maintaining Student Engagement in Daily Learning.</p>	
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		<p>Additional professional development will be provided for MTSS, a whole-school data-driven framework for improving learning outcomes that will be delivered through a continuum of evidence-based practices and systems. Under the MTSS umbrella, extended training will also be provided for the implementation of RTI and PBIS. These trainings will be provided by advisory committee members. There will also be training provided for curriculum and program implementation. Each of our curriculum providers will provide training in the Summer of 2022. They will include how to effectively implement the curriculum while meeting the language and content needs of each student. We have also outlined specific structures for teacher support and professional development</p>	
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		sessions.	
	Driving For Results		
6	Some but not all of the proposed performance goals are SMART, and it isn't clear that all proposed goals are rigorous and can lead the school to a four or five-star school once the school is rated under the NSPF and the SPCSA academic performance framework. For example, some of the ELA and math proficiency goals may not lead to a four - or five- star rating given the established baselines from local district averages. There are also not any subgroup goals provided in the application, which raises questions given the proposed communities and student populations that the school aims to serve. More information is needed to ensure that the Committee to Form has a robust plan prior to opening, including at the Board level, for monitoring performance to ensure students are on track to achieve proficiency standards and skills mastery. Plans and data monitoring strategies are underdeveloped.	All performance goals have been revised to ensure they are rigorous and measurable in order to lead the school to a 4 or 5- star status. Additionally, we have added subgroup goals and more detailed information outlining plans to monitor student performance by the Board.	See Academic Plan, Driving For Results p. 78-85
	At Risk Students and Special Populations		
7	Plans to serve students with disabilities rely heavily on collaborative co-teaching, supplemental services, as well as push-in/pullout support; however, only one special education teacher is planned to be on staff in year one to support an estimated 19-20 students, and two will be on staff year two. This may not be sufficient	We have better explained the co-teaching and RTI models in this section to fit within a dual language model. We also addressed the numbers of identified special education students and the willingness	See Academic Plan, At Risk Students and Special Populations p. 100-103

	<p>to support students effectively across three school sites, especially if the special education teacher(s) will also be providing support to students (including pull-out and one-on-one instruction) receiving response to intervention supports and those with 504 Plans. It is not clear that the proposed plan to support and monitor students with IEPs is adequate.</p>	<p>to adjust special education staffing if case loads are increased.</p>	
8	<p>The description of the services and supports provided to English language learners does not mention dual language immersion. While the narrative does mention bilingual education, a description of these services and how they will be implemented in classrooms is fundamental to understanding how English language learners will be supported. Specific services to be provided to students are not adequately described.</p>	<p>A detailed description of the Dual Language Immersion program has been included throughout the plan.</p>	<p>See Academic Plan, At Risk Students and Special Populations p. 103-111</p>
	<p>School Structure: Culture</p>		
9	<p>The application does not include well-defined culture goals or a description of how progress will be monitored. While the application notes that a stakeholder survey will be distributed to the target audience to gather feedback, more information is needed to understand what this will look like, how it will be used for accountability purposes, and any standards within this survey (or other mechanisms) the Committee to Form plans to achieve to maintain a positive school culture.</p>	<p>We have revised the School Structure: Culture section to include specific information regarding each group: students, families, and staff members. We included monitoring three times per year using a survey as well as consistent opportunities for feedback and changes as appropriate. We also included metrics and goals for such as</p>	<p>See Academic Plan, School Structure: Culture p. 112-118</p>

		attendance, and discipline reporting to measure school culture.	
	School Structure: Discipline		
10	While the narrative indicates that, the Executive Director will oversee and report out behavior and discipline trends and there appear to be some benchmarks the application does not include clear, measurable goals for student behavior. Additionally, no information is provided regarding how the benchmarks were established.	We have included a better explanation of the discipline data reporting expectations and created school-wide behavioral SMART goals based on the data.	See Academic Plan, School Structure: Discipline p. 118-123

III. Operations Plan

- Approaches the Standard

	Concern	Response	Reference
	Human Resources		
1	The possible relationship between the proposed school board and TNTP is underdeveloped, lacks specifics, and it is not clear how TNTP would be held accountable for the many responsibilities outlined in the narrative, including recruitment, selection and staffing, teacher onboarding and induction, teacher coaching and support as well as leader coaching and support. During the capacity interview, this was reaffirmed as the Committee to Form and Executive Director were unable to articulate a clear, detailed vision for the work to be completed by TNTP. A draft scope of work was provided, but is rather general, and no	We have attached a scope of work and quote from TNTP outlining deliverables and cost for partnership. In addition, we also outlined in detail the responsibilities of TNTP and how the contract will be managed and overseen by the Executive Director and Board of Directors.	See Operations Plan, Human Resources p. 145-148

	<p>information was provided about how TNTP will be evaluated. More information and evidence is needed to understand the proposed relationship between the Committee to Form and TNTP. Moreover, more details are needed to confirm that the costs of services are realistic and align with the proposed budget and academic program.</p>		
2	<p>During the capacity interview, the applicant team confirmed that there would be a second vendor that would support various human resource functions, including onboarding employees, etc. Without a clear scope of work for TNTP or this firm, it is challenging to understand their clear roles, responsibilities, how they might work together, or be held accountable by the proposed board. Significantly more information is needed to understand this relationship, and how this vendor would work with TNTP, if at all.</p>	<p>We have attached a scope of work and quote from the proposed HR Firm and TNTP outlining deliverables and costs for partnership. In addition, we also outlined in detail the responsibilities of TNTP and the proposed HR Firm and how their contracts and responsibilities will support the school and be different from each other.</p>	<p>See Operations Plan, Human Resources p. 145-152; See uploaded attachment for TNTP and Bambee scope of work and quote.</p>
3	<p>The proposed academic program relies heavily on both TESOL and Bilingual endorsed teachers to effectively support students, but during the capacity interview, both of these teacher groups were said to be difficult to hire. While the applicant was</p>	<p>We have addressed the concern of recruitment of highly specialized teaching staff with specific strategies targeting TESL endorsed and/or Bilingual staff for SSAES.</p>	<p>See Operations Plan, Human Resources p. 145-148;</p>

	able to speak to some general strategies to be used in the hiring process for these individuals, it still appears to present a real challenge given the proposed model and projected student demographic. More specific evidence and information for how these teachers will be hired is needed to ensure that the staffing plan aligns to the proposed programming.		
	Staffing Plan		
4	It is not clear that the proposal includes adequate staffing should the school open across three sites in year one of operations. Key roles such as special education teachers, behavioral specialist, learning strategist and the office manager may be supporting students and staff in multiple buildings. This is concerning and may present significant challenges to staff. Additionally, it may be challenging for the Executive Director to oversee the consistent implementation of such a unique model across three buildings.	We have addressed the concern of opening one school across three incubation sites in Year 1 by adding key strategies of support for students, staff, and families.	See Operations Plan, Staffing Plan p. 145;
	Human Resources		
5	The application does not present a clear, fully detailed process for recruiting and hiring teachers. While some steps in the hiring process such as background checks are mentioned, more information	We have attached a scope of work and quote from the proposed HR Firm and TNTP outlining deliverables and costs for partnership. In addition, we also outlined in detail the responsibilities of TNTP and the proposed HR Firm and how their	See Operations Plan, Human Resources p. 145-152; See uploaded attachment for TNTP and Bambee scope of work and quote.

	<p>is needed to understand how the school will recruit and hire staff that are reflective of the student body, particularly because of the stated involvement by both TNTP and a separate Human Resources firm.</p>	<p>contracts and responsibilities will support the school and be different from each other. Additionally, we have addressed the concern of recruitment of highly specialized teaching staff with specific strategies targeting TESL endorsed and/or Bilingual staff for SSAES.</p>	
	<p>Student Recruitment and Enrollment</p>		
6	<p>It was confirmed during the capacity interview that current student demand to date for the proposed model was approximately 66 students, or about one third of the targeted enrollment for year one. Strategies were discussed about how to fill the seats, including the opportunity to partner with pre-kindergarten programs, but more evidence is needed as a result of outreach to confirm that the school is viable and likely to be filled in year one. The application does not present clear evidence that the school has sufficient demand at this time, particularly from the targeted zip codes mentioned throughout the application.</p>	<p>We addressed the various data and outreach strategies used to determine the need and viability of SSAES in the proposed zip codes.</p>	<p>Operations Plan, Student Recruitment and Enrollment section, p. 160-161. See uploaded attached letter of support from Acelero Learning Clark County.</p>
	<p>Incubation Year</p>		
7	<p>Many of the critical milestones proposed during the fall of 2021 appear to fall to the Executive Director, but it does not appear that this individual will be full-time until January or February 2022. This may inhibit the school from reaching all year zero milestones and goals as</p>	<p>We have updated and revised the Incubation Year Table to reflect updated timelines and outlined duties of staff and board prior to school opening in August 2022.</p>	<p>See revised Attachment 14 for updated Incubation Year Table.</p>

	<p>many tasks listed in this document occur prior to this time. While key objectives are provided, more information is needed to understand how a limited staff will ensure that all tasks are completed in a timely manner, including comprehensive leadership development plans during this time. It is not clear that the proposed staffing for this time will enable the school to successfully start the 2022 – 23 school year.</p>		
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IV. Financial Plan

- **Approaches the Standard**

	Concern	Response	Reference
1	<p>The possible relationship between the proposed school board and TNTP is underdeveloped, and during the capacity interview, this was reaffirmed as the Committee to Form and Executive Director were unable to articulate a clear, detailed vision for the work to be completed by TNTP. A draft scope of work was provided, but is rather general. More information and evidence is needed to understand the proposed relationship between the Committee to Form and TNTP, and additional details are needed to confirm that the costs of services are</p>	<p>TNTP updated cost has been updated in financial workbook. Additionally, more information on their proposed services and scope of work provided on attachment 18. New SOW and quote has been uploaded.</p>	<p>See updated Financial Workbook. See new TNTP SOW and Quote. See updated Attachment 18: Budget Narrative.</p>

	realistic and align with the proposed budget and academic program.		
2	During the capacity interview process, some additional detail was provided about the proposed human resources firm that would be contracted to support the school. While these anticipated costs are incorporated into the budget, insufficient information is provided to justify that their proposed responsibilities are adequately captured in the corresponding line items in the budget. More detail regarding these services and their costs is needed to determine that those line items will not preclude the Committee to Form from implementing their plan.	Human Resource firm cost was updated in financial workbook. SOW and Quote from Bambee HR was provided.	See updated financial workbook, General Operating and Transportation Expenses tab. Cell C74, Management Fees Line Item. See updated Attachment 18.
3	Some additional information is needed to determine if key elements of the proposed academic program and parent engagement are accounted for in the budget, specifically special education services, adult education programming and school events. These were priorities in the narrative, but it is not clear that these have been allocated for in the budget.	Special Education Services has been addressed and more detail was provided in Academic Plan with special attention to the structure of the facilities plan (three sites). Adult education programming was addressed in Academic Plan and more detail was provided on how this plan will be executed at SSAES. School events and parent meetings have been budgeted in updated financial workbook.	See Academic Plan, p 42. See Academic Plan, p 103-104. See financial workbook, General Operating & Transportation Expenses tab, Parent & Staff Meetings Line Item.