

# Nevada State Public Charter School Authority: A Report to the Legislative Committee on Education

Kathleen A. Conaboy  
Board Chair

Tom McCormack  
Interim Director

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# SB 212 – 2011 Legislative Session

Sec. 28.5. The State Public Charter School Authority is hereby created. The purpose of the State Public Charter School Authority is to:

1. **Authorize charter schools of high-quality** throughout this State with the goal of expanding the opportunities for pupils in this State, including, without limitation, pupils who are at risk.
2. Provide oversight to the charter schools that it sponsors to **ensure that those charter schools maintain high educational and operational standards**, preserve autonomy and safeguard the interests of pupils and the community.
3. **Serve as a model of the best practices** in sponsoring charter schools and foster a climate in this State in which all charter schools, regardless of sponsor, can flourish.

# Today's Presentation

- Progress in addressing the legislative mandate to promote innovation
- Suggestions to promote the development of high quality charter schools
- Role of the Authority as an agency to protect the quality of education for students enrolled in charter schools

# Authority Board Members

- ◉ Nora Luna
- ◉ Michael Van
- ◉ Marc Abelman
- ◉ Robert McCord
- ◉ Melissa Mackedon
- ◉ Elissa Wahl, vice chair
- ◉ Kathleen Conaboy, chair

# Authority Staff

- Tom McCormack, Interim Director
- Adrienne Lawrence, Finance Director, ASO II
- Angela Blair, Special Education EPP
- Kathy Robson, Title I EPP
- Joan Jurgensen, Assessment and Accountability EPP
- Allyson Kellogg, Title I Management Analyst II
- Traci House, Business Process Analyst II
- Katie Higday, Management Analyst I
- Danny Peltier, Administrative Assistant III

# 2013 Policy Changes

- **AB 205** – Requires a performance framework; provides oversight and review of charter school sponsors by NDE; sets forth the grounds for termination of a charter contract
- **SB 384** – Authorizes B&I to issue bonds to finance the acquisition, construction, improvement, restoration or rehabilitation of property, buildings and facilities for charter schools

# 2013 Policy Changes

- **SB 443** – Requires NDE to adopt regulations re: the authorization, periodic review and re-authorization of sponsors of charter schools
- **SB 471/SB 3** – Transfers the responsibility to administer the Account for Charter Schools from NDE to the Charter School Authority and revises the maximum total amount of a loan that may be made to a charter school.
  - \$750,00 included in the Governor's recommended budget was approved by the Legislature

## 2013 Policy Changes

- ◉ **SB 59** - Clark County School District/Senate Education (bill died) Eliminates a restriction which limits a charter school to using school buildings owned by a school district to times that are not regular school hours.
- ◉ **SB 500** -- Creates the Task Force on K-12 Public Education Funding; the director of the Charter School Authority is a member of the task force.



# National Recognition

January 28, 2014

## New National Rankings Find Nevada Charter School Laws Rank Among Top Third in Nation

- **WASHINGTON, D.C.** – Nevada's charter school laws rank among the top third in the nation in terms of quality, according to an annual state-by-state ranking of charter school law quality released today by the National Alliance for Public Charter Schools. The **report ranked Nevada 13<sup>th</sup> out of 43 states**, including the District of Columbia, that have charter school laws. The state's ranking improved significantly after major legislation was passed in 2013.... Nevada's ranking **moved up nine places from 22<sup>nd</sup> place** in the prior year's report.

# National Recognition

**Sandoval recognized for promoting charter schools in Nevada**

**Tuesday, May 6, 2014**

WASHINGTON — Nevada is home to some of the fastest-growing charter schools in the country, and the state is earning a reputation nationally among advocates for its progress. **Gov. Brian Sandoval was named by the National Alliance for Public Charter Schools as one of several national leaders on the issue, in part because of laws he's signed that make the state more friendly to start a charter school.**

In 2013, Sandoval signed legislation to set up a revolving loan account for start-up charter schools and gave charter schools access to state bonds for funding. Nevada now ranks among the top 15 in the nation for supportive charter school laws, according to the charter school alliance.

Sandoval's award comes as Congress considers legislation to improve the federal charter school program. A bill before the House this week aims to write into law best practices for charter schools, such as allowing students to continue through the same charter school system and giving more weight to low-income or non-English speaking students in lotteries.

1.	Clark	311,029
2.	Washoe	62,424
3.	<b>SPCSA</b>	<b>13,934</b>
4.	Elko	9,841
5.	Lyon	8,059
6.	Carson City	7,545
7.	Douglas	6,121
8.	Nye	5,361
9.	Churchill	3,740
10.	Humboldt	3,501
11.	White Pine	1,407
12.	Lander	1,093
13.	Lincoln	977
14.	Pershing	708
15.	Mineral	501
16.	Storey	416
17.	Eureka	271
18.	Esmeralda	67

# Nevada K - 12 Enrollment by District

**Vision**

A quality public school of choice for every Nevada child.

**Mission**

The SPCSA improves and influences public education in Nevada by sponsoring public charter schools that prepare all students for college and career success and by modeling best practices in charter school sponsorship.

**Beliefs**

**Students first --High expectations – Excellence--Autonomy/Accountability--Transparency--Leadership**

**Goal**

**By 2016,  
increase the  
number of  
SPCSA-  
sponsored  
quality charter  
schools from 4  
to 12 based on  
the  
Authority's  
performance  
framework.**

**Strategies****Measures****Open and sustain quality new schools**

- Define the standard of quality using the performance framework
- Refine the application process to align with new performance framework and contract
- Coordinate and align SPCSA technical assistance with CSAN applicant training
- Collaborate with stakeholders to encourage replication of successful schools
- Provide more intensive oversight and support of schools during the first two years of operation

- % of approved applications
- # of schools meeting quality criteria after 1, 2 & 3 years
- # of replications of quality schools

**Establish performance-based contracts for all schools**

- Advocate for state policy, through statutes and regulations, to facilitate contracts
- Develop contract documents, adoption process and schedule for new and existing schools
- Execute new contracts with the boards of all new and existing schools
- Develop a robust renewal/revocation process consistent with the statute and contract
- Communicate with and provide performance contract technical assistance to boards

- # of schools voluntarily adopting new contracts
- # of school renewals
- # of school closures

**Support strong school governance**

- Define effective school governance
- Develop a board effectiveness rubric
- Assess effectiveness of all boards
- Provide technical assistance to boards
- Report on school performance to all boards

- % of schools with effective boards
- % of boards receiving technical assistance

**Collaborate to improve the environment for Nevada charter schools**

- Develop and advance a charter school policy agenda
- Support NDE in development and oversight of charter school sponsors
- Develop new charter school funding
- Build productive relationships with school districts
- Work with all stakeholders to expand facility options for charter schools
- Collaborate with stakeholder groups to develop a plan to improve the charter school environment

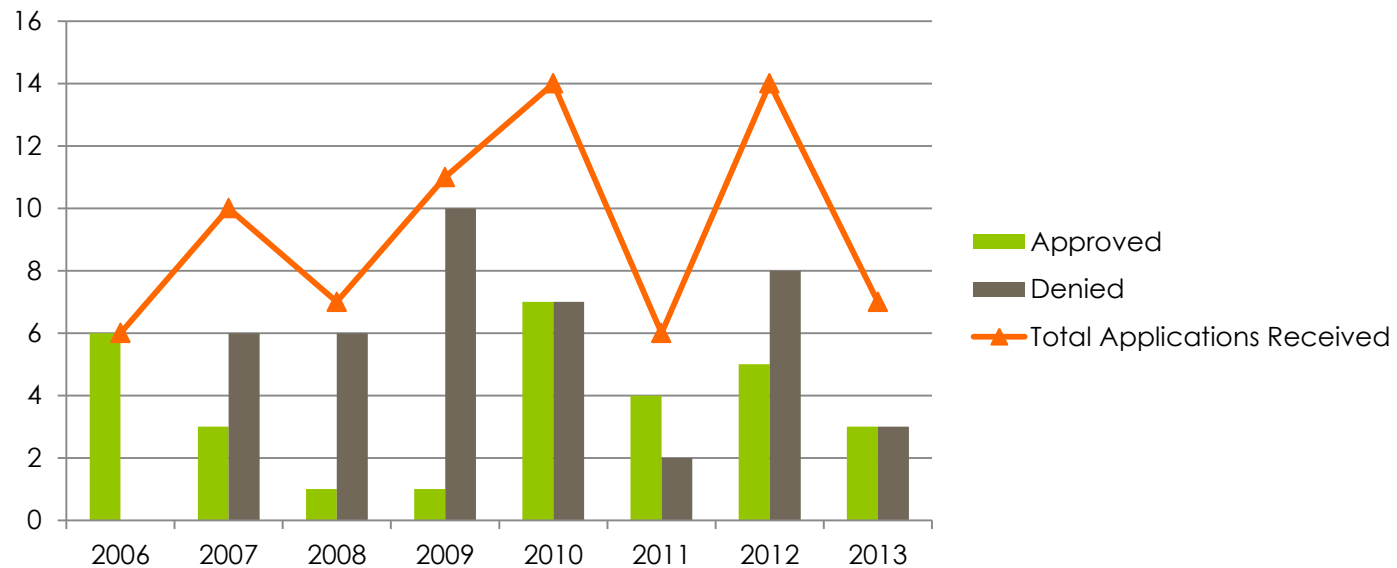
- Alliance rating of NV charter school laws
- # of partners engaged in Charter School Stakeholder group
- New funding sources for charter schools

# Nevada Charter Schools

34 Charter Schools operate in Nevada

- 18 sponsored by the SPCSA
  - 3 are designated as Quality
  - 3 have been sent “Notices of Concern” for academic underperformance
- 8 sponsored by WCSD
- 7 sponsored by CCSD
- 1 sponsored by Carson City S.D.

## 2006-2013 # of Charter School Applications Approved/Denied





# Challenges and Progress to Date

# State Charter Authority School Ratings

## **5 star schools**

- Nevada State High School
- Oasis Academy

## **4 Star Schools**

- Coral Academy LV ES
- Coral Academy LV HS
- Coral Academy LV MS
- Elko Institute MS
- NV Connections Academy MS
- Oasis Academy ES
- Silver Sands MS
- Somerset Academy ES
- Somerset Academy MS

## **3 star schools**

- Discovery School
- Elko Institute ES
- NV Connections Academy ES
- NV Connections Academy HS
- Pinecrest ES
- Pinecrest MS
- Quest Academy HS
- Quest Academy SCH
- Silver Sands ES



# Ratings, continued

## 2 star

- Alpine Charter HS
- Discovery School ES
- Honors Academy ES
- Nevada Virtual Academy ES
- Nevada Virtual Academy HS
- Nevada Virtual Academy MS
- Quest Academy
- Silver State HS

## 1 star

- Beacon Academy HS
- Silver State MS

## 2012-2013 Four Year Adjusted Cohort Graduation Rates by State and District

	Four - Year Adjusted Cohort Graduation Rate
State	70.65 %
Churchill	71.95 %
Clark	71.50 %
Douglas	84.96 %
Elko	70.46 %
Eureka	95.00 %
Humboldt	67.06 %
Lander	71.56 %
Lincoln	76.81 %
Lyon	78.55 %
Mineral	51.52 %
Nye	70.20 %
Carson	75.87 %
Pershing	80.39 %
Storey	87.88 %
Washoe	72.62 %
White Pine	77.59 %
State Public Charter School Authority	46.28 %

# Performance Framework

- Required by NRS 386.527 and NRS 386.528
- Consists of three elements:
  - Academic
  - Financial
  - Organizational
- Requires annual and midterm performance review
- Establishes criteria for charter renewal and termination
- Identifies criteria for “Quality” school designation
- Includes an Intervention Ladder; identifies the notice of concern

# Application and Review Process

- Call for Quality Charter Schools initiated in 2013 cycle
- Application Review Team includes national experts as well as representatives from WCSD, CCSD and Nevada Charter Schools
- Process includes a mandatory interview with members of the Committee to Form the School
- Application Review Team arrives at consensus recommendation for the SPCSA Board's consideration

# Attracting High Performing Charter Operators to Nevada

1. **Specify in statute the process for a charter school application to facilitate replication of an existing successful school**
2. **Provide conditions that would attract high performing Charter Management Organizations to Nevada – Gates Foundation report**
  - Local pool of teaching talent
  - Strong TFA presence and community support for TFA to grow
  - Upfront financing for planning activities 1 – 2 years prior to school opening (~500K per school)
  - Favorable public funding structure
  - Public funding available for facilities, or private developer philanthropically funded to build facilities at no cost to the CMO
  - Sufficient facilities funding provided during startup stage
  - Permanent, non-shared facilities available
  - Friendly authorizer
  - Strong legislative/advocacy backdrop/public commitments for charter expansion activities
  - Demographic fits CMO mission, e.g. high-need demographic in underserved market
  - Market not overly saturated – excess demand for quality seats in market

# LEA Role & Responsibilities

## 1. **Conduit for Federal Funds**

- \$2.29 million allocated to Authority-sponsored schools in 2012 and 2013

## 2. **LEA for Special Education**

- Federal funds, Part B and Early Childhood Part C, flow through the SPCSA office to the SPCSA-sponsored schools. The SPCSA maintains the database for each school's special education expenditures of Federal and State Special Education funds.
- The SPCSA must apply annually for a share of the Special Education 40 set-aside discretionary units that are also available to the other 17 school districts. Due to outdated funding allocation formulas that were developed before charter schools opened in Nevada, the SPCSA's charter schools are not in the allocation formula for the other 3,009 discretionary units that are distributed to the 17 county school districts.
  - The SPCSA was awarded 20 discretionary units for the 2013-14 school year.
- As LEA, the SPCSA:
  - maintains and monitors the Special Education teachers who are on the Special Education Options teacher licensure program;
  - provides technical assistance and training to all of its schools on Special Education issues, concerns, Federal and State law;
  - monitors all IEP files for Federal and State compliance; and
  - collects all information from all schools concerning Federal and State reports for Special Education, compiles the information, and submits to DOE annually.

# Policy Challenges

## **Equitable access per pupil to State tax dollars available for public education**

- Charters do not receive a proportionate share of LSST (Local School Support Taxes).
- The State Public Charter School Authority, as an LEA for certain purposes, cannot generate revenue to provide additional funding for the charter schools.

# Policy Challenges

**Equitable access to all funding sources, including those outside the DSA, eg,**

- Allocation of special education units
- School improvement grants
- Education Technology funds
- Gifted and talented programs
- CTE programs
- Professionals such as counselors, speech pathologists and library media specialists
- Class size reduction
- Striving Readers
- ELL funding for ZOOM schools
- Teach for America
- Jobs for America's Graduates
- LEA Library Books
- Early Childhood (Pre-K)
- Professional Development
- Full Day Kindergarten



# Summary

- Promote innovation through policy and practice
- Promote the development of high quality charter schools
- Protect the quality of education for students enrolled in charter schools

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