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Governor
STEVE CANAVERO, Ph.D.
Superintendent of Public Instruction

STATE OF NEVADA



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GUIDANCE MEMORANDUM #17-13

TO: Governing Board of Clark County School District

COPY: Pat Skorkowsky, Superintendent, Clark County School District

FROM: Steve Canavero, Ph.D., Superintendent of Public Instruction

SUBJECT: Review of Response from Clark County School District on Guidance Memorandum #16-07

Thank you for submitting a response to Guidance Memorandum #16-07. (Please see Appendices A and B.) The Nevada Department of Education (NDE) is responsible for ensuring that all sponsors of charter schools effectively oversee school improvement efforts of the schools in their sponsorship portfolio and continuously monitor school performance and determine additional actions under NRS 388A.223(1)(f)-(h). This presents an opportunity for coordination and collaboration between NDE and Clark County School District (CCSD) in order to significantly improve student outcomes within charter schools sponsored under CCSD's authority and identified among the state's lowest performing schools.

This letter aims to facilitate strategic collaboration between NDE and CCSD to strengthen the sponsorship practices of CCSD for the shared purpose of significantly improving student outcomes in a timely fashion at 100 Academy Elementary School, 100 Academy Middle School, Delta Charter Middle School, Delta Charter High School, Innovations Elementary School, Innovations High School, and Odyssey Charter High School. (Any references below to seven schools in Memorandum #16-07 refer to the aforementioned schools. Andre Agassi College Preparatory Academy Middle School has already taken action, so this school is not discussed in this memorandum.) We discuss our findings and guidance from the review process in the following sections:

- 1) **Summary of Findings**
- 2) **Additional Evidence Requested**
- 3) **NDE Guidance to Ensure Sponsor Obligations are Fulfilled**
- 4) **Overview of CCSD's Response**

- A. *Sponsor Support*
- B. *Summary of Response to NDE*
- C. *Summary of Evidence Provided*

5) Appendices

- A. *Guidance Memorandum #16-07 - Appendix A*
- B. *CCSD Response to NDE – Appendix B*
- C. *Overview of data – Appendix C*

SBAC data and graduation rates are provided for each of the schools identified in the guidance memorandum for the past five years, if available.

1. SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

The Nevada Department of Education is seeking a clear, rigorous plan for improving the outcomes at the CCSD Rising Star charter schools, as well as increasing the level of state and local support with accountability and aligned incentives and consequences for improvement.

Partner with CCSD to improve sponsorship practices.

Pursuant to NRS 388A.223 each Nevada charter school sponsor must have practices in place to both review charter applications and monitor and hold them accountable. While CCSD has taken the proactive step to put a moratorium on soliciting new charter applications, it has not demonstrated strong oversight of its existing portfolio.

The Nevada Department of Education is committed to taking a more active role in supporting and monitoring improvements to CCSD’s authorizing practices and schools. This includes a requirement for CCSD to receive training from an organization like the National Association of Charter School Authorizers, which would provide for the development and maintenance of strong sponsorship practices.

Partner to improve outcomes at CCSD Rising Star Charter School Sites.

In accordance with NRS 385A.650, it is the Nevada Department of Education’s responsibility to work with the District to ensure that an appropriate school improvement plan is in place to rapidly improve student performance. Based on its submission, CCSD has identified its sponsorship obligations through its guidance policies for the charter schools sponsored through the district. However, it is unclear what the specific remediation plans are, as outlined by the school’s governing body, for the seven charter schools identified in Guidance Memorandum #16-07. Moreover, CCSD did not clearly articulate any additional support it will specifically provide to the governing bodies of these charter schools to implement or improve their plans, including its next steps as the sponsor of the charter schools and timeline for execution. The steps and timeline should include a plan for consequences, should any of these charter schools continue to underperform.

2. ADDITIONAL EVIDENCE REQUESTED

The Department requests additional evidence to better understand the specific sponsor-led school support provided to the Rising Star charter schools identified in Guidance Memorandum #16-07: 100 Academy Elementary School, 100 Academy Middle School, Delta Charter Middle School,

Delta Charter High School, Innovations Elementary School, Innovations High School, and Odyssey Charter High School.

NDE is aware that CCSD has provided documents to meet the NRS reporting requirements outlined in NRS 385A.650. To help NDE better understand CCSD's processes and operations when working with the charter schools designated Rising Stars, please provide the following to the Department by June 16, 2017:

1. Last three formal reviews by CCSD of the Boards of the Charter Schools, including but not limited to decisions to renew contracts or negotiations;
2. Legal contracts including any amendments and/or performance contracts, if any;
3. Letters of Intent to Revoke or Reconstitution of Board, if any; and
4. Any support CCSD provides in the application and monitoring process to the Boards of the Charter Schools when these Rising Star charter schools are eligible for competitive grant funds, such as the Title I 1003(a) school improvement grant.

3. NDE GUIDANCE TO ENSURE SPONSOR OBLIGATIONS ARE FULFILLED

While these schools have not received three annual ratings established as the lowest rating possible, they are headed in a trajectory that puts them at risk for termination or restart of the charter contract (NRS 388A.300 (1)). Pursuant to NRS 388A.330 (1), a charter sponsor may reconstitute the governing board of a charter school or terminate a charter school's contract if the student achievement and school performance of an elementary school, middle school, or junior high school is rated in the lowest 5 percent of elementary schools, middle schools, or junior high schools; the charter sponsor may also revoke a charter school's contract if a high school has a graduation rate of less than 60 percent.

To help the NDE better understand the sponsorship oversight CCSD provides to the seven schools identified in Guidance Memorandum #16-07, and to ensure the district fulfills its obligations as a sponsor of charter schools, NDE recommends the following actions must be taken by June 16, 2017, for the seven schools due to the consistent underperformance of CCSD's sponsored charter schools:

Please clearly identify and provide measurable annual performance goals, performance indicators, and timelines for school improvement that have been or are being incorporated into the charter contract or agreement (NRS 388A.273 (3)). In addition, submit to the NDE the Strategic Plans for each charter school identified in Guidance Memo #16-07. These Strategic Plans should detail how CCSD will maintain oversight and provide technical assistance to the charter schools that are sponsored by CCSD in the areas of academic, fiscal, and organizational performance (NRS 388A.223(2)(f)). This may include how CCSD will collaborate with the Boards of the charter schools to ensure that effective leadership is in place to ensure improved student achievement outcomes. Furthermore, please explain the process and timeline stating how and when CCSD determines whether the charter contract of each of the seven schools identified in Guidance Memorandum #16-07 merits renewal or whether the renewal should be denied or whether the charter contract should be terminated or restarted (NRS 388A.223 (1)(f)). The district should prescribe consequences for failure to meet specified performance targets. In addition, the district should work with the Governing Board of each charter

school to provide training on best practices in charter school oversight. This must be done in collaboration with a national partner recognized for high-quality authorizing, such as the National Association of Charter School Authorizers.

In alignment with Guidance Memorandum #17-04, CCSD may elect to enter into a Student Performance Compact with each of the Rising Star charter schools it sponsors. These compacts will be considered addendums to the existing charter contract without an extension of the contract term. The Student Performance Compacts serve to address how the sponsor will hold the school accountable and appropriate consequences. The Student Performance Compact establishes targets for improving student achievement over a three year period and includes the creation of a school performance plan that identifies a non-profit partnership, local government partnership, new charter operator partnership, or some other strategy that would demonstrate a high likelihood of rapidly improving student achievement. The charter school will have these new annual targets to meet that are aligned to the dates and strategies outlined in the Student Performance Compact. If the charter school does not hit these annual measurable targets, the charter school will receive the consequences noted in the Performance Compact. Voluntary agreement to accept Student Performance Compacts for its Charter Schools would demonstrate a strong commitment to student improvement. This demonstrated commitment could be used in support of a school's application for future competitive grants, such as Title IV Part B and Title I 1003(a).

4. OVERVIEW OF CCSD'S RESPONSE

A. Sponsor Support

- Monthly Problem-solving Meeting with each school between school leadership and district Office of Charter Schools and Assessment, Accountability, Research and School Improvement Office
- Meetings to discuss high-stakes assessment data
- Offered professional development opportunities
- Audited each school's academic performance, finances, and organizational compliance

B. Summary of Response to NDE

CCSD sent a response letter sharing broadly how it monitors the charter schools on a monthly basis and provides assistance to promote achievement, as prescribed by the NDE, in addition to managing school contracts according to NRS 338A.300. The response does not detail specific actions taken for each charter school identified in Guidance Memo #16-07. Evidence provided to NDE consisted primarily of district guidance, policies, and performance measures from NRS. Please see Appendix B for a copy of CCSD's response to NDE.

C. Summary of Evidence Provided

- 2-page response highlighting the support provided (please see Appendix B)
- CCSD Office of Charter Schools Reporting Manual 2016-2017
- CCSD Financial Performance Framework Workbook

- CCSD Charter School Sponsorship Guide
- Problem-solving meeting notes for October and November for each listed school

Please accept this letter as a formal inquiry into whether the seven charter schools identified in Guidance Memo #16-07 will enter into a Student Performance Compact that will be incorporated into their charter contract. Also, this letter is a formal request for CCSD to keep NDE apprised of their actions in these matters. If you need support or have questions about this guidance, please reach out to Seng Keo, Director of the Office of Student and School Supports, via email (skeo@doe.nv.gov) or by phone (775-687-9145).

Thank you for your attention to this matter, and the Department looks forward to working in collaboration with CCSD to ensure that 100 Academy Elementary School, 100 Academy Middle School, Delta Charter Middle School, Delta Charter High School, Innovations Elementary School, Innovations High School, and Odyssey Charter High School become high quality schools for Nevada students and their families.

Warmest regards,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Steve Canavero". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Steve" being more prominent than the last name "Canavero".

Steve Canavero, Ph.D.
Superintendent of Public Instruction

5. APPENDICES

APPENDIX A – PAGE 1

BRIAN SANDOVAL
Governor
STEVE CANAVERO, Ph.D.
Superintendent of Public Instruction

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December 19, 2016

GUIDANCE MEMORANDUM #16-07

TO: Governing Board of Clark County School District

FROM: Steve Canavero, Ph.D.
Superintendent of Public Instruction

SUBJECT: Charter School Sponsor Letter

On October 14, 2016 the Nevada Department of Education released a list of the State's lowest performing schools. These schools were identified for one of two reasons: 1) Elementary or Middle School in the bottom 5% in pupil achievement and school performance or 2) High School with a graduation rate of less than 60%. This list, previously known as the Underperforming Schools list, now called the *Rising Star Schools List*, fulfills the State Board's annual responsibility to release a report on the State's current state of student achievement.

Based on the *Rising Stars* report, below is a list of charter schools sponsored under your authority that have been identified as one of the state's lowest performing schools. It is the Nevada Department of Education's responsibility to ensure that all sponsors of those identified schools are exercising their authority to oversee school improvement as part of their general obligations to monitor performance and determine if accountability actions are appropriate under NRS 388A.223(1)(e)-(h). For all District-run, non-charter schools, the State may implement either one of its State-led intervention protocols, *Turnaround Designation* or *The Nevada Achievement School District* or work in partnership with the local District on other intervention options. **As for public charter schools, it is the responsibility of that school's charter sponsor to monitor school performance on an ongoing basis and determine additional actions under NRS 388A.223(1)(f)-(h). Evidence of material or persistent failure to carry out the powers and duties of a sponsor prescribed by NRS 388A.223(3) constitutes grounds for revocation of the entity's authority to sponsor charter schools.**

APPENDIX A – PAGE 2

As a sponsor of public charter schools, you have the following schools identified as *Rising Star Schools* in 2016:

School Name	2015 Status	2016 Status
100 Academy Elementary School	Priority School	Bottom 5% Elementary/Middle Schools
100 Academy Middle School	-	Bottom 5% Elementary/Middle Schools
Andre Agassi College Preparatory Academy Middle School*	-	Bottom 5% Elementary/Middle Schools
Delta Charter Middle School	-	Bottom 5% Elementary/Middle Schools
Delta Charter High School	Priority School	Below 60% Graduation Rate
Innovations Elementary School	-	Bottom 5% Elementary/Middle Schools
Innovations High School	Priority School	Below 60% Graduation Rate
Odyssey Charter High School	Priority School	Below 60% Graduation Rate

Please accept this letter as a formal inquiry into your actions on school accountability that are either in place or planned for all public charter schools under your sponsorship authority that are noted above. Response to this inquiry shall be submitted to the Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction no later than January 15, 2017.

Your responses should include any past or current accountability actions taken with these schools that are available to you through your sponsorship authority and shall align to NRS 388A.300 et seq. Please provide artifacts to support those actions, as available. It is the opinion of this office that there are four pathways available:

1. Revocation or termination of charter contract and students are re-assigned throughout the host district.
2. The school enters receivership with a third-party entity to manage remediation planning and transfer of authority.
3. The charter school chooses to seek a transformation partner and opt in to be considered by the NV Achievement School District.
4. For schools that have been identified for the first time, development of a remediation plan with clear student achievement targets that lead the school to removal from the *Rising Star* designation in a specific period of years and prescribe consequences for failure to meet the specified targets.

Should you or your staff require consultation on how to move forward with either response to this inquiry or activation of a school remediation strategy, you may work directly with Seng-Dao Keo (skeo@doc.nv.gov) under the direction of the Superintendent of Public Instruction.

Thank you in advance for your attention to and cooperation with this matter.



APPENDIX B – PAGE 1

Student Services Division, Office of Charter Schools

4601 West Bonanza Road • Las Vegas, NV 89107 • (702) 799-1038 • FAX (702) 765-9834



CLARK COUNTY
SCHOOL DISTRICT

BOARD OF SCHOOL TRUSTEES

Deanna L. Wright, President
Dr. Linda E. Young, Vice President
Carolyn Edwards, Clerk
Lela Brooks, Member
Kevin L. Child, Member
Erin E. Cranor, Member
Chris Garvey, Member

Pat Skorkowsky, Superintendent

January 15, 2017

Seng-Dao Yang Keo, Ed.L.D.
Director, Office of Student and School Supports
700 E. Fifth Street
Carson City, NV 89701

Dear Ms. Yang Keo:

According to Guidance Memorandum #16-07, the Nevada Department of Education (NDE) released a list of the lowest performing schools in Nevada. This list, known as the "Rising Star list" includes the eight charter schools sponsored by the Clark County School District (CCSD) as listed below.

- 100 Academy Elementary School
- 100 Academy Middle School
- Andre Agassi College Preparatory Academy Middle School
- Delta Charter Middle School
- Delta Charter High School
- Innovations Elementary School
- Innovations High School
- Odyssey Charter High School

As the sponsor of the listed charter schools, the Clark County School District monitors the charter schools under its purview on a monthly basis. Monitoring information, as proscribed by the NDE for underperforming schools is attached.

Regarding the Rising Stars Schools publication, the CCSD Office of Charter Schools requests to collaborate and receive further guidance with the development and implementation of plans from the NDE. The CCSD continues to monitor performance on an ongoing basis and provide guidance, as attached: *CCSD Charter School Sponsorship Guide (pg.6, Performance Framework Rating Metric)*, *the CCSD Charter School Financial Performance Framework Workbook*, and *the CCSD Office of Charter Schools Reporting Requirements Manual*. These artifacts and methods are actions related to charter school sponsorship and accountability. CCSD personnel has met with its sponsored charter schools regarding their underperformance, provided assistance, and implemented measures to promote achievement, which is reported to the NDE on a monthly basis. CCSD has communicated the requirements regarding the need for clear student achievement targets to each of its sponsored schools. Charter school contracts will be managed as per the Nevada Revised Statutes (NRS) 388A.300. The CCSD will be working collaboratively with the NDE and its sponsored charter schools.

The CCSD has conducted the following:

- Met with the leadership of each school regarding their high stakes assessment results.
- Monitored and assisted schools, as requested, when they amended their required school performance plans.

Main Office: 5100 WEST SAHARA AVENUE • LAS VEGAS, NEVADA 89146 • TELEPHONE (702) 799-CCSD

APPENDIX B – PAGE 2

Seng-Dao Yang Keo, Ed.L.D.
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January 15, 2017

- Offered assistance and professional development opportunities to support efforts to improve student achievement.
- Met with the charter school leadership on a monthly basis to discuss new initiatives and areas of concern.
- Audited each charter school's academic performance, finances, and organizational compliance with federal, state, and local laws and regulations.
 - If a school was found to be non-compliant or deficient in any of the areas then a notice was issued and a corrective response was requested.
- Schools previously rated as underperforming on statewide assessments were monitored on a monthly basis for progress by the CCSD Assessment, Accountability, Research, and School Improvement (AARSI) Office.
- Periodic visits from NDE teams were conducted and collaborative debriefing sessions took place at the underperforming schools.

The Clark County School District looks forward to collaborating with the NDE regarding further guidance and support, per the NRS and Nevada Administrative Code.

If you have any questions please feel free to contact my office.

Sincerely,



Daniel J. Tafoya
Director, Office of Charter Schools

Enclosures

c: Steve Canavero
Pat Skorkowsky
Kim Wooden
Billie Rayford
Carlos Morales

APPENDIX C

SBAC Data and Grad Rate

District	School	Subject	Grade	2011-12	2012-13	2013-14	2014-15	2015-16
Clark	100 Academy ES	Math	3rd	33%	49%	49%	49%	26%
Clark	100 Academy ES	Math	4th	56%	49%	49%	49%	18%
Clark	100 Academy ES	Math	5th	42%	32%	32%	32%	5%
Clark	100 Academy ES	Math	6th	59%	17%	16%	-	7%
Clark	100 Academy ES	Math	7th	57%	28%	35%	-	3%
Clark	100 Academy ES	Math	8th	30%	2%	8%	-	0%
Clark	100 Academy ES	Reading	3rd	41%	36%	36%	36%	29%
Clark	100 Academy ES	Reading	4th	62%	47%	47%	47%	28%
Clark	100 Academy ES	Reading	5th	37%	51%	51%	51%	23%
Clark	100 Academy ES	Reading	6th	45%	42%	41%	-	18%
Clark	100 Academy ES	Reading	7th	44%	40%	58%	-	14%
Clark	100 Academy ES	Reading	8th	30%	32%	53%	-	26%
Clark	Agassi Preparatory	Math	6th	65%	39%	41%	No data available	11%
Clark	Agassi Preparatory	Math	7th	64%	45%	42%	No data available	10%
Clark	Agassi Preparatory	Math	8th	74%	31%	42%	No data available	2%
Clark	Agassi Preparatory	Reading	6th	45%	46%	41%	No data available	23%
Clark	Agassi Preparatory	Reading	7th	53%	43%	-	No data available	20%
Clark	Agassi Preparatory	Reading	8th	41%	37%	52%	No data available	33%
Clark	Delta Academy	Math	7th	No data available	-	No data available	No data available	-
Clark	Delta Academy	Math	8th	No data available	0%	No data available	No data available	6%
Clark	Delta Academy	Reading	7th	No data available	-	No data available	No data available	-
Clark	Delta Academy	Reading	8th	No data available	17%	No data available	No data available	18%
Clark	Innovation ES	Math	3rd	42%	45%	45%	45%	26%
Clark	Innovation ES	Math	4th	42%	53%	52%	53%	23%
Clark	Innovation ES	Math	5th	42%	28%	28%	28%	12%
Clark	Innovation ES	Reading	3rd	32%	33%	33%	33%	28%
Clark	Innovation ES	Reading	4th	32%	41%	41%	41%	29%
Clark	Innovation ES	Reading	5th	50%	25%	25%	25%	47%
Clark	Delta HS			6%	-	16%	17%	19%
Clark	Innovations HS			30%	52%	74%	52%	53%
Clark	Odyssey HS			-	52%	52%	59%	62%