**Salt Lake School for the Performing Arts (SPA)**

**Business Plan Summary**

**2024-2026**

**(DRAFT)**

**Organization, Mission & Need**

Salt Lake School for the Performing Arts (SPA) is a public, tuition-free charter

high school and stands as a beacon of artistic expression and academic

excellence, fostering the growth and development of young artists in dance,

music, theatre, and media since 2006. SPA’s student body is enriched by

diversity and a commitment to providing arts experiences to underserved

communities.

SPA has recently relocated to 350 South, 400 East, Salt Lake City; the “Oquirrh

School Building”, a beautiful and historic venue in the heart of SLC downtown,

surrounded by arts and higher education institutions.

SPA is the only public high school in the Salt Lake City/County area, primarily focusing on the arts. Its mission and offerings work well within this area,

nationally known for its excellence in the arts.

Over the last four years, SPA was significantly and negatively impacted by

COVID-19 and other shifts in the direction of its Charter Authorizer and partner,

Salt Lake City School District (SLCSD). SPA is transitioning to

becoming independent, with its SLCSD relationship winding down and

terminating on June 30, 2024. 2023/24 is a transition and rebuilding year at SPA,

with strong indications and growing momentum leading to full stabilization and

future success.

SPA receives most of its financial support directly from the State of Utah from

public education funding and federal sources. To maintain and invest in its

unique arts offerings, SPA’s funding needs to be supplemented by other sources.

SPA is organized as a 501(c)(3), facilitating the receipt of charitable donations to

supplement this funding.

**SPA Program Overview**

SPA provides a comprehensive educational experience that integrates artistic

mastery with academic achievement. Our programs encompass dance, music,

theatre, and media, offering students a holistic curriculum that nurtures their

creative passions while equipping them with essential skills for their future

endeavors.

**Key Components**

**Enhanced Training**

SPA has been recognized locally and nationally for artistic excellence through individual and ensemble works and performances. Our musicals, plays, and showcases are a testament to the growth and success of our students, who primarily come from six Utah counties. We aim to enrich our programs with equipment and training resources tailored to each discipline and believe these opportunities are key to cultivating a well-rounded education.

**Expanded Outreach**

At SPA, we stand out for our commitment to artistic excellence and our extraordinary partnerships. We proudly collaborate with Broadway Across America, Repertory Dance Theater, Ririe Woodbury Dance Company, and the Utah Symphony | Utah Opera, offering students personal training beyond the traditional classroom. Opportunities with these and other partners are available to all our students, regardless of their socioeconomic backgrounds.

**Academic Integration**

While we focus on the performing arts, we recognize the importance of academic success as a foundation for future growth. We propose implementing initiatives integrating academic coursework with artistic training, fostering interdisciplinary learning experiences that enhance critical thinking, problem-solving, and communication skills.

**Faculty Development and Support**

Our dedicated faculty members serve as mentors and guides, nurturing the talents of our students. We propose investing in ongoing professional development opportunities for our faculty to ensure they remain at the forefront of their respective fields. Additionally, we aim to support faculty-led initiatives that enrich the student experience through collaborative projects, workshops, and performances.

**Infrastructure Expansion**

With a growing student population, we recognize the need to expand our infrastructure to accommodate the needs of our students. This includes facility expansions, classroom updates, and technological enhancements to support artistic and academic endeavors.

**Utah’s Charter School Industry – SPA’s Potential**

There are 140 charter schools in Utah, accounting for approximately 12% of the

overall public-school enrollment throughout Utah.Over recent years, the State Legislature and Board of Education have increasingly embraced charter schools, with favorable legislation and increased the per student funding.

Charter schools tend to work best with a specialty mission and focus, such as

STEM, Arts, Sports, etc. They fill the gaps within school districts,

complementing standard education offerings and providing extra capacity.

SPA is one of three performing arts-focused charter high schools in Utah. The

others are Davinci Academy in Ogden and Utah Arts Academy in St George.

SPA primarily serves Salt Lake, Davis, Weber, Utah, Tooele, and Summit

counties, containing Utah’s densest counties and school districts.

SLCSD is currently experiencing operational and financial challenges, straining its arts-related curriculum offerings. This includes a lack of investment in

school performing arts facilities and implementation of school closures.

Other school districts have increased their investment in high school facilities

including state-of-the-art theatres, facilities, and programs. Outside of SLCSD,

SPA should continue complementing these district offerings with specialty, high-quality programming. With the appropriate investment, SPA can be the centerpiece for arts-oriented educational offerings to fill the increasing gaps within these districts.

**Arts Partnership Expansion**

During FY 23/24, SPA expanded its partnerships significantly, as described.

As SPA represents the only performing arts-focused high school in Salt Lake City

and County, there’s a significant opportunity to expand its partnership with Salt

Lake County-based theaters and other arts-based groups.

The University of Utah, Salt Lake Community College, and Westminster University also present an opportunity for partnership expansion, given their geographical proximity, complimentary offerings, and focus. SPA has only scratched the surface of establishing national partnerships, with increasing recognition as the center of an arts/education ecosystem in Utah, facilitated by its proximity to Salt Lake City.

**SPA Enrollment – Demographics and Target Market**

SPA currently has 150 students, approximately 50% of its enrollment level before COVID-19. SPA’s goal is to restore its enrollment to 300 by the start of FY 25/26.

SPA draws from Weber to Utah County. SPA is home to a diverse population, including:

74% Caucasian

16% Hispanic

6% Two or more races

Female 49%

Male 51%

Economically Disadvantaged 12%

12% Students with Disabilities

28 % Students with 504 Accommodations

SPA primarily markets to middle schools throughout the counties it serves, with an active social media presence, websites, and shadow days aimed at recruitment.

SPA plans to market to students attending local high schools in the Salt Lake Valley, including its charter schools, to offer performing arts classes to students attending those schools.

SPA plans to expand its offerings with the following:

* Part-time enrollment is available for high school students who have flexibility in their school schedule.
* Selective offerings will be provided to local libraries and their patrons, showcasing SPA courses and offerings.
* Potentially enrolling students participating in the Utah Fits All Scholarship Program.
* Expanded arts curriculum to meet the needs of our stakeholders.
* Arts Integrated academics.

**3-Year Plan**

SPA will have operationally stabilized by the end of FY 23-24, as follows:

* Integration into and utilization of its new building.
* Termination of the SLCSD relationship and establishment of a new authorizer relationship with UCSB, possibly in partnership with higher education.
* Establishment of independent academic offerings and continued evolution of arts partnerships.
* Fundraising as needed to end the fiscal year in a solvent financial position.

An integral part of SPA’s plan is to grow enrollment.

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| School Year | Enrollment |
| 2016-2017 | 296 |
| 2017-2018 | 286 |
| 2018-2019 | 304 |
| 2019-2020 | 288 |
| 2020-2021 | 230 |
| 2021-2022 | 205 |
| 2022-2023 | 164 |
| 2023-2024  Current enrollment  2024-2025 | *150*  *200 anticipated* |
| 2025-2026 | *300 anticipated* |

This will likely be supplemented by students who want to take an elective class or enroll part-time.

FY 23-24 operating deficit is projected at approximately $1MM, before

private fundraising. SPA expects to fundraise $500K in donations, grants, and loans by the end of this fiscal year.

While SPA increases enrollment, it will need private fundraising and grants over the next two years. It will also consider subleasing a portion of its facility to increase its revenues. At 300+ students, SPA becomes self-funding with a moderate investment in arts facilities. Financial projections for FY’s 2024-2026 in development.

**Charter Authorization and the Expanding Role of Higher Education**

SPA is currently authorized by SLCSD, but its charter agreement terminates on June 30, 2024. SLCSD recently issued a letter reaffirming its intent to terminate the agreement. SPA intends to change its authorizer to Utah State Charter School Board (UCSB).

UCSB authorizes over 90% of the charter schools in Utah. The others are authorized by school districts or higher education institutions.

Higher education is relatively new to charter authorization. Utah State and Utah Tech are currently approved as authorizers, with others considering moving in this direction.

As SPA will be establishing a new authorizer relationship for FY 24/25, there’s an opportunity to work with UCSB to evolve and customize authorization practices, possibly through partnering with higher education. This should serve to improve the quality of SPA’s offerings, including concurrent enrollment, while promoting enrollment feeders to the local colleges and universities.

**Timing is of the essence to complete SPA’s change in authorizers by June 30, 2024. As such, SPA is requesting an expedited process to facilitate its approval due to the following reasons:**

○ **Stabilizing SPA as it executes the launch of its 3-Year plan, starting with a significant outreach for students and fundraising support this fiscal year.**

○ **Should SPA’s plan delay or fail, there may be a need to consider an orderly dissolution of SPA, with a particular focus on protecting the students, families and staff associated with SPA.**