Lyon County School District
Board Memo

Date: February 24, 2026

To: Board of School Trustees

From: James Gianotti, Executive Director for Educational Services

Re: The approval of Star Academy and the addition of one certified FTE for 8th grade at Silver Stage Middle School for the 2026-2027 through 2029-2030 school years.

Recommendation

Subject to the approval of Star Academy grant funding, the Board of Trustees approve the implementation of the Star Academy and the addition of 1 Certified FTE for 8th grade at Silver Stage Middle School for the 2026-27 through 2029-2030 school years.

Background Information

In collaboration with Board President Tom Hendrix, Star Academy was explored as a possible school within a school program for the Lyon County School District.

"The Star Academy program approaches student development in a holistic way. While rapidly advancing students academically, the program also imparts social skills such as responsibility, respect, collaboration, and timeliness – setting them up for a lifetime of success in school, the workforce, and as citizens of their communities. Star Academy is all-inclusive, providing materials, technology, furnishings, and ongoing support. Schools supply only the educators and classrooms. Star Academy incorporates robust curricula for science, math, English language arts, and social studies that meet or exceed standardized test knowledge – using a project-based approach widely proven to re-engage even the most disengaged students. Additionally, a research and development lab area acts as a 'flex space' for collaborative projects, both for Academy students and the school community at large. All learning is infused with hands-on and engaging multimedia experiences. Star Academy students explore over 50 career paths as they work through focused modules that align with their academic and job skill objectives. They're exposed to nearly 100 more in the course of their active, hands-on lessons. Star Academy is one of the only all-inclusive intervention programs in the U.S. It includes all student technologies, project equipment, materials, even furnishings. Custom classroom environments make a fresh and invigorating difference the moment students enter. They invite interest and collaboration, a stark difference from the traditional lecture-based classroom that has left them disengaged and falling behind."

After conferring with representatives from Star Academy as well as discussions with members of the Elko County School District, it was determined that Silver Stage Middle School (SSMS) would be a good fit for the program and could be implemented starting in the 2026-2027 School Year.

We have submitted a letter of interest with the state of Nevada in hopes of obtaining the needed funds to start a program at Silver Stage Middle School and are seeking Board approval for this program to be established at SSMS.

The funding obtained would allow the program to be established and run for 3 years, including Professional Development, training and ongoing support from the Star Academy Educational Support Staff (ESS). After the

three years, the Lyon County School District (LCSD) will be responsible for the fiscal support needed, which could be up to $70,000 per year to receive the same supports.

Budget Considerations
$1,000,000 to be paid from grant funding if approved by the State of Nevada.

General fund cost being approximately $120,000/yr (certified teacher salary and benefits) with an additional $70,000/yr beginning year 4 for continued program costs.

Discussed at Previous Meeting
N/A

Attachment(s)
Website Link https://www.staracademyprogram.com/
Letter of Interest to Gov. Lombardo