

**MINUTES**  
**of the meeting of the**  
**BOARD OF DIRECTORS of SOMERSET ACADEMY OF LAS VEGAS**  
**January 18, 2018**

The Board of Directors of Somerset Academy of Nevada held a public meeting on January 18, 2018, at 6:00 p.m. at 4650 Losee Road North Las Vegas, Nevada 89081.

**1. Call to order and roll call**

Board Chair John Bentham called the meeting to order at 6:06 p.m. with a quorum present. In attendance were Board members Sarah McClellan, Cody Noble, Carrie Boehlecke, Will Harty, Travis Mizer, Gary McClain (at 7:54), and John Bentham.

Also present were Paul Jason from Specialized Financing, Executive Director John Barlow, Principals Reggie Farmer, Sherry Pendleton, Elaine Kelley, and Lee Esplin; Assistant Principal Kate Lackey and Curriculum Director Gayle Jefferson; as well as Academica representatives Trevor Goodsell, Colin Bringhurst, and Kyle McComber.

**2. Public Comments and Discussion**

Ms. Ashley Griffith addressed the Board in opposition to the K-12 leadership model.

Ms. Nicole Yoakum addressed the Board and stated that parents were concerned that one campus was planning to require uniformed logo bottoms and asked if this would be addressed tonight. Member Bentham replied that the item was not on the agenda.

**3. Consent Agenda**

- a. Minutes from the December 12, 2017, Telephonic Board Meeting**
- b. Approval of Maximum Grade-Level Enrollment Targets for the 2018/2019 School Year**
- c. Approval to Apply to Provide Distance Education Courses to Middle School and High School Students; Designate Executive Director Barlow as Signer of the Application; and Direct Academica to Make an Amendment to the Charter to Allow Distance Education**
- d. School Financial Performance**

Member Boehlecke moved to approve items A and D of the consent agenda. Member McClellan seconded the motion, and the Board voted unanimously to approve.

**3b. Approval of Maximum Grade-Level Enrollment Targets for the 2018/2019 School Year**

Mr. Trevor Goodsell addressed the Board and stated that projections were available in the support materials; however, he wanted to update the Board on the projections for next year at Skye Canyon. Mr. Goodsell stated that the numbers had been run conservatively; adding that the applications were exceeding the initial

expectations. Mr. Goodsell stated that the lottery had been open for two weeks and, as a result, they would like to increase K-5 to 100 per grade and 6<sup>th</sup> grade to 120, leaving all other grade levels as projected. Member Mizer asked what percentage of students had applied to other campuses as well, to which Mr. Goodsell stated that a fair amount had also applied at Sky Pointe; however, there were limited openings. Discussion ensued in regards to the possible changes for the 7<sup>th</sup> grade the following school year and if the school would be able to accommodate the changes. Member Bentham stated that he would like to hold a ground breaking ceremony. Assistant Principal Kate Lackey addressed the Board and stated that service had been scheduled and the groundbreaking would take place on February 20, 2018 at 11:00 a.m., and that a formal invitation was being prepared.

**Member Noble moved to approve the maximum grade level enrollment targets for the 2018/2019 school year as presented. Member Harty seconded the motion, and the Board voted unanimously to approve.**

**3c. Approval to Apply to Provide Distance Education Courses to Middle School and High School Students; Designate Executive Director Barlow as Signer of the Application; and Direct Academica to Make an Amendment to the Charter to Allow Distance Education**

Mr. Kyle McOmber addressed the Board and stated that the application for Distance Education Courses would allow the schools to offer students State approved courses for credit recovery, as well as courses that would not otherwise be provided; adding that the classes would be available during and outside of regular school hours. Member McClellan asked for clarification in regards to credit recovery, to which Mr. McOmber replied that students would be able to retrieve credit for courses within the school at any point during the year. Member Mizer asked if there would be any cost to the school for providing the courses, to which Mr. McOmber answered in the affirmative, stating that the cost would be worked out with Academica Florida Virtual. Mr. McOmber stated that this item's objective was not to accept the program, just to submit the application to allow the schools to offer it if they choose.

**Member Bentham moved to approve the submission of the application to provide Distance Education Courses to middle school and high school students; designate Executive Director Barlow as the signer of the application, and direct Academica to make an amendment to the charter to allow Distance Education. Member Boehlecke seconded the motion, and the Board voted unanimously to approve.**

**5. Interview up to three new Board Member Candidates**

Executive Direction John Barlow addressed the Board and stated that there were three candidates selected out of ten to be presented before the Board for an interview and possible nomination.

**Gary McClain:** Member Bentham asked Mr. McClain why he was interested in becoming a Board member. Mr. Gary McClain addressed the Board and stated that he would like to give back to Somerset; adding that there were only three things important to him in his life; his family, his job, and Somerset. Member McClellan asked if Mr. McClain had students who attended the schools, and if he had the time to commit to the Board. Mr. McClain answered in the affirmative; adding that he had two children who were attending the Sky Pointe Campus, and that he understood that there were materials to review before the meeting in order to make informed decisions. Member Mizer asked what experience from his current job would be most beneficial to the Board. Mr. McClain stated that he worked for a Home Owners' Association and worked directly with the board, which resulted in his negotiation, cost analysis, and financial performance of facilities skills. Member Noble stated that those were all skills that could be very useful on the Somerset Board. Member Harty asked what Mr. McClain believed the Board's role should be, to which Mr. McClain replied that it was simply oversight, based on the advice and



recommendations from others. Member Boehlecke asked how Mr. McClain handled conflict, to which Mr. McClain replied that because of his community associations he was mindful of his actions; adding that he did not get worked up easily.

Anthony Maisonet: Mr. Anthony Maisonet addressed the Board and reviewed his qualifications as presented on his resume in the support materials. Member Bentham asked if he had attended any previous board meetings, to which Mr. Maisonet replied in the affirmative; adding that his most recent attendance was when the new principal was hired at Sky Pointe. Member Mizer asked him what experience from his career would be most beneficial to the Board. Mr. Maisonet replied that his critical decision making skills and his experience with budgets and project management would be most beneficial to the Board. Member McClellan asked how he would balance being a Board member and a parent, to which Mr. Maisonet responded that he would look at everything with a different perspective, and that his experience had taught him how to make decisions in spite of how it impacts an individual. Member Harty asked what the Board's role was as it related to the administration and the management company. Mr. Maisonet replied that the Board's purpose was to help children understand the vision and mission of the school; adding that most of the decisions that were made were vital macro decisions. Member Noble asked why Mr. Maisonet wanted to be on the Board, to which he replied that he enjoyed a challenge and that he had a vested interest in the lives of his children and their education; adding that he owed everything to his own education.

Sheree Butler: Ms. Sheree Butler addressed the Board and reviewed her qualifications from her resume as presented in the support materials. Member Bentham asked if she had the time needed to dedicate to the Board. Ms. Butler replied in the affirmative, adding that she had thoroughly discussed the responsibility with her spouse, and that she had a great support system and was prepared to devote the time that was required. Member McClellan asked if she had children who attended the school, and how she would balance being a parent and a Board member. Ms. Butler replied that she had a son who attended the school; adding that her experience with law enforcement had taught her to separate her emotions from her decisions when issues and challenges arose. Member Mizer asked what experience from her current position would be most beneficial to the Board, to which Ms. Butler replied that she could suspend judgment and not make decisions based on her emotions, in addition to her critical thinking skills. Member Boehlecke asked how Ms. Butler dealt with conflict, to which Ms. Butler replied that it was important to understand the conflict in its entirety before taking any action; and when taking action she would want to be fair and consistent.

## **6. Nomination and Election of one new Board Member**

The Board stated that they believed all three candidates would serve the Board well; adding that Mr. McClain had proven that he was dedicated and committed by attending nearly every Board meeting.

**Member Mizer nominated Mr. McClain as a member of the Somerset Board, and the Board voted unanimously to elect Mr. McClain as the newest member of the Board.**

## **7. Approval of Attorney Engagement Agreement with Kolesar & Leatham to Engage their Legal Services with Regard to the Bond Issuance to Acquire the Stephanie and Losee Campuses**

Mr. Colin Bringhurst addressed the Board and stated that outside counsel needed to be retained for the Bond issuance; adding that the bond was outside the scope of the current agreement. Mr. Bringhurst reviewed the contract as presented in the support materials; adding that Kolesar & Leatham had experience with bond issuance and that staff had used their services with two other bond deals. Member Mizer asked the cost of the services, to

which Mr. Bringhurst replied that it was \$400-\$450 per hour; adding that if the bond was not approved no monies would be paid out.

**Member Harty moved to approve the Engagement Agreement with Kolesar & Leatham as presented. Member McClellan seconded the motion, and the Board voted unanimously to approve.**

#### **8. Review and Possible Action Regarding a Bond Underwriter Agreement with D.A. Davidson**

Mr. Trevor Goodsell introduced Mr. Paul Jason as the financial advisor from Special Financing, as well as the underwriter who worked on the previous bond deal. Member Harty asked if the bond deal still made financial sense with increasing interest rates. Mr. Jason addressed the Board and replied in the affirmative, adding that the lease structure allowed for a fixed rate and that prices were at an all-time low for charter schools. Member Harty asked if timing was a factor with increasing rates, to which Mr. Jason replied that the current market was in a rising interest rate environment; however, the climate was very favorable for charter schools. Member Mizer asked if the fees had been bid out to other carriers. Mr. Jason replied that a number of different underwriters had been looked at and, as a result, the Board had selected D.A. Davidson, who would be handling this transaction. Mr. Jason stated that the fees were very competitive at 1.25 percent, and that D.A. Davidson was one of the leading charter school underwriters.

**Member Noble moved to approve the Bond Underwriter Agreement with D.A. Davidson. Member Mizer seconded the motion, and the Board voted unanimously to approve.**

#### **9. Discussion and Possible Approval to Submit a Charter Amendment Request to Purchase the Losee and Stephanie Campuses**

Mr. Goodsell stated that the timeline had shifted because the process of informing the Charter Authority had changed prior to the process of purchasing the Losee and Stephanie Campuses. Mr. Bringhurst stated that the Charter Authority had recently hired outside counsel and revised the requirements for an amendment. Mr. Bringhurst further stated that regulations and statutes now stated that the amended application must be submitted when a school moves to a new facility; adding that though the campuses had been operating at their current locations for several years, they would now be purchased, which was a modification to the property.

Mr. Goodsell stated that the delay increased the possibility of securing a higher interest rate, adding that the amendment had been prepared for approval by the Board before submittal. Mr. Jason stated that on February 15, 2018 the Board would be asked to approve a number of items, one of which would be a resolution authorizing the issuance of the bonds, delegating authority to one Board member to sell the bond within specific parameters in order to get into the market at a most favorable time. Discussion ensued in review of the bond sale as presented in the support materials. Member Bentham asked if there a reason why the Lone Mountain Campus was not being purchased, to which Mr. Goodsell replied that the process to acquire Lone Mountain was in the works, yet would not be obtainable until fall 2018.

**Member Harty moved to approve the submission of a charter amendment requesting to purchase the Losee and Stephanie Campuses. Member McClain seconded the motion, and the Board voted unanimously to approve.**

#### **10. Discussion and Possible Action Regarding the Approval of the Weighted Lottery Policy**



Mr. Bringhurst stated that two years ago when the application to expand Somerset Academy was submitted the SPCSA requested diversification be added to the amendment to more closely match the surrounding CCSD schools and the surrounding community; adding that as part of that amendment there were five things expected of Somerset, and one of them was to put a Weighted Lottery Policy in place. Mr. Bringhurst further stated that previously there was no regulation; however, that had changed, and the Board was now obligated to approve a Weighted Lottery Policy. Mr. Bringhurst stated that Michael Muehle and Kristie Fleisher had researched Weighted Lottery Policies throughout the United States and met with Executive Director Barlow to discuss the findings. The group had agreed upon the numbers presented in the support materials. Member Harty asked if the school was required to carry out a weighted lottery, to which Mr. Bringhurst replied in the affirmative; adding that the policy would be effective beginning in the 2019/2020 school year.

Member Harty asked for clarification as to how free and reduced lunch students would be calculated. Mr. Bringhurst replied that the information would be collected from a form placed in the registration packet. Member McClellan asked how the policy would be facilitated. Mr. Bringhurst explained that each Somerset Campus FRL percentage would be compared to the three nearest CCSD schools; and if the FRL comparison was more than or equal to the Somerset Campus, the Weighted Lottery Policy would apply, giving those qualifying students a weight of 1.25. Member Noble stated that he would like more information that confirmed that the numbers presented in the policy were accurate. Mr. Bringhurst stated that the numbers submitted could be altered at a later date if the Board chose to do so.

Member Bentham asked if there were any systems in place that required parents to fill out the income statement. Executive Director Barlow replied that it was voluntary; however, the schools could explore various campaigns to encourage participation, as there were many benefits to submitting the forms. Discussion ensued regarding collecting FRL data and the other services for students who qualify. Member Noble asked if this policy affected the priorities already in place, to which Mr. Bringhurst replied in the negative, adding that it would not affect them at all. Mr. Bringhurst explained how the priority worked within the lottery.

**Member McClellan moved to approve the Weighted Lottery Policy. Member Boehlecke seconded the motion and, the Board voted to approve with two dissenting votes.**

#### **11. Acknowledgement of Principal Dan Phillip's Resignation (Effective June 30, 2018) and Approval Giving Direction to Executive Director Barlow to Conduct a Search, or Possible Consideration to Move to a K-12 Leadership Structure**

Member Bentham acknowledged the resignation of Dan Phillips, thanking him for his service to the school. Members McClellan and Noble expressed their appreciation and acknowledged Principal Phillip's dedication to the school and the students. Principal Dan Phillips addressed the Board and gave some departing words.

Executive Director Barlow stated that, to clearly understand the dynamics and the challenges that Principal Lee Esplin and his leadership faced at Sky Pointe, a meeting was held to ask a variety of questions to determine the pros and cons of the K-12 leadership structure; adding that the advantages filled a complete page, with only six items as cons. Executive Director Barlow stated that his observation of the Sky Pointe Campus was that the K-12 leadership unified the Sky Pointe team across all grade levels. Member Bentham asked Board members Noble, Harty, and Mizer about their experience with the transition to a K-12 administration at Sky Pointe. Member Mizer replied that the administration had done an excellent job and that it could be attributed to having the right people in the right places; adding that parent concerns had subsided after some time passed. Member Noble stated that his experience with one principal for the K-12 leadership was that it created an overall better environment. Member Harty stated that there was a concern in regards to the transition from elementary to middle and then to

high school; adding that the early indicators were that it had been working and feedback had been positive; however, he believed it was too soon to tell.

Principal Lee Esplin addressed the Board and stated that he and his staff had worked hard this year to build the K-12 structure by putting in more hours than usual; adding that it was also essential to hire a quality team to help put items in place in order to make the transition more seamless. Member Harty asked if administrators were added to the team, to which Principal Esplin replied that an assistant principal was added; however, the budget did not increase.

Member Bentham moved to open the floor to allow the public to comment on this item. Mr. Frank Maglietti, a parent, addressed the Board and stated that he believed an elementary student had different needs than a high school student, and that he was not in favor of the K-12 model. Ms. Jenny Sauter addressed the Board and stated that, as a teacher at Somerset Losee, she appreciated Principal Dan Phillips; adding that she believed that it would be difficult for a K-12 principal to have the necessary time to address issues in a timely fashion. Ms. Tracy Baxter, a parent, addressed the Board and stated that she would like to keep things as they were and hoped for an answer tonight. Executive Director Barlow stated that it was his recommendation to move to the K-12 leadership model based on his past experiences and data collected in regards to 8<sup>th</sup> to 9<sup>th</sup> grade transitions. Discussion ensued in regards to the pros and cons of a K-12 leadership model. Ms. Sara Cross, a counselor from Losee, addressed the Board and stated that she had a concern in regards to the transition and how the students would respond. Ms. Sara Passer addressed the Board and stated that she wanted the Board to keep the students in mind when making this decision.

**Member Mizer moved to approve the K-12 leadership model for the 2018/2019 school year at the Losee Campus. Member Noble seconded the motion, and the Board voted unanimously to approve.**

Discussion ensued in regards to delegating authority to Executive Director Barlow to hire a K-12 Principal. Following a discussion regarding what action the Board could take under this agenda item, the Board made the following motion:

**Member McClellan moved to delegate authority to Executive Director John Barlow to make a decision on who to hire as principal for the Losee K-12 Campus for the 2018/2019 school year. Member Boehlecke seconded the motion, and the Board voted to approve with one abstaining vote.**

Member Bentham asked Executive Director Barlow who his recommendation was. Executive Director Barlow replied that a lot of thought had been given to this item and he believed that Reggie Farmer had the best skills to marry the elementary, middle, and high schools; adding that it was his recommendation to hire Reggie Farmer as the Principal of the K-12 Losee Campus. Executive Director Barlow recommend Elaine Kelly be reassigned to open the Aliante Campus; however, the Board would need to consider this possibility at a future board meeting. The Board decided to hold a special meeting on January 25, 2018.

#### **4. Report on Academic Performance and Executive Director Update**

**This item was tabled.**

#### **12. Member Comment**



Member McClain stated that if there was information known as to how an agenda item was going to play out, as he did not understand why the agenda items were so vague; adding that he had no idea that Principal Farmer was an option for the K-12 Leadership position at the Losee Campus.

Member McClellan stated that she would like to see better communication in regards to agenda items.

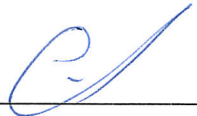
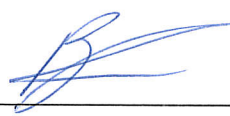
**13. Public Comments and Discussion**

No request for public comment

**14. Adjournment**

The meeting was adjourned at 10:48 p.m.

Approved on: 2-15-18

Secretary of the Board of Directors  
Somerset Academy of Las Vegas