

MINUTES
of the meeting of the
BOARD OF DIRECTORS of SOMERSET ACADEMY OF LAS VEGAS
February 27, 2015

The Board of Directors of Somerset Academy of Las Vegas held a public telephonic meeting on February 27, 2015 at 8:00 a.m. at 1378 Paseo Verde Parkway, Suite 200, Las Vegas, Nevada 89012.

1. Call to order, roll call.

Board Chairperson Cody Noble called the meeting to order at 8:00 a.m. Present were Board Members Cody Noble, Will Harty, Amy Malone, and Eric Brady.

Board Members Scott Hammond and Eric Elison were not present for the meeting.

Also present were Principal Gayle Jefferson, Principal John Barlow, Principal Reggie Farmer, Principal Francine Mayfield, and Academica Nevada Representatives Ryan Reeves and Bob Howell.

2. Public Comment.

No member of the public requested to comment at this time.

3. Review and Possible Action Regarding Executive Director / Facilitator Job Description.

Mr. Reeves noted the copy of the job description provided to the Board and noted that this was compiled based on suggestions and comments from the Principals and added that the document provided the original description provided and the revised job description, for comparison purposes. Mr. Reeves added that some of the Principals are on the line and that the Board can ask them any questions regarding these proposed changes.

Discussion was had regarding which portion of the document were the proposed changes made by the Principals. Member Noble asked if any of the Principals would like to offer comments. Principal Barlow stated that the Principals met and reviewed the initial job description provided and came to a consensus regarding each of the items/tasks/responsibilities and feel this is the most comprehensive document they could provide to gain clarity of what this person would do. Member Noble asked how the original list was used in coming up with the list from the Principals. Principal Barlow stated that they used the initial list as the starting point and made edits and revisions to that list. Principal Barlow added that Principal Mayfield then took it and made the edits and provided a copy to Academica for review.

Principal Jefferson stated that if the two lists are compared, you will see a lot of similarities between the two and be able to see the edits that were made. Member Noble noted that he wishes it was provided in red line to see the changes easily. Principal Barlow further added that those items deleted were things that the Principals felt were not needed. Member Noble thanked the Principals for taking care of this.

Principal Jefferson stated the one thing they do not want this to be is a supervisory role, that this would be more of a facilitator role. Principal Jefferson noted that they also spoke regarding the salary for this position and think it would stay in line with that salary of the other Principals, because this position does not have a distinction above the Principals. Principal Barlow noted that although this was mentioned, it was not necessarily unanimously supported. Member Noble stated that this issue has not really been brought before the Board yet.

Member Malone stated that she did not have any issues with any of the revisions. Member Noble noted that at the last Board meeting, it was mentioned that Member Hammond was going to talk with someone else to get further input and asked if anyone knows if that happened or not. Mr. Reeves stated that Member Hammond had seen and spoken with Mr. Gavin several times, while in legislative session, as Member Hammond is the co-majority leader and Mr. Gavin has had involvement in this year's legislative session. Mr. Reeves noted that while Mr. Gavin has continued to stress the importance of this position, he is not aware of whether Mr. Gavin has given specifics as to a job description, nor would that be the proper role of an authorizer. Member Noble stated that he asked because Member Hammond seemed like he really wanted to get input on this job description and that the job description presented has no input from Member Hammond.

Member Harty stated that he got a text from Member Hammond noting that Mr. Gavin thinks the title should be Executive Director. Member Harty stated that he thinks Member Hammond wants to be able to weigh in on this position's title and job description. Member Noble noted that he wished Member Hammond would have weighed in, knowing that this meeting is happening, and wants to have all the information available. Mr. Howell stated that he talked with Member Hammond and he is aware of the Principals input and was okay with the job description presented. Mr. Howell noted that based on his conversation with Member Hammond, it did not appear that Member Hammond had anything additional to add.

Member Malone stated that she thinks the important thing is to have someone the Principals can work well with. Member Malone suggested moving forward with the list provided. Member Noble agreed and added that he has not heard anything negative about the list; however, a few things might need to be discussed before the committee moves forward with finding candidates. Member Noble stated that one of those things would be what qualifications this individual should have for this position or would it be open to anyone. Member Harty noted that he does not think he has ever seen a job description in the private sector that did not include some type of information about what is being looked for (years of experience, certifications, etc.) and added that establishing those parameters might go a long way to the Board firming up what this position will be.

Member Noble stated that if this position is going to be a resource for the Principals, this person might need to know a little bit about Administration and be qualified to serve in this role. Member Noble noted that he does not know what those qualifications might be. Member Harty asked if there is a list of qualifications needed to become a Principal at Somerset (number of years' experience, master's degree, etc.). Mr. Reeves stated that to be a Principal within the Somerset system, one has to be a licensed Administrator; however, the law for charter schools was designed to allow for more broad experience to come in to charter schools and allows for people with MBA's or educators with five years of experience to be considered for a charter school administration. Mr. Reeves stated that the position could be limited to licensed administrators or broader to anyone qualified to be a Charter School Administrator. Member Harty added that it could say preferred qualifications of X, Y and Z, but not exclude anyone who does not fit into that box. Member Harty stated that this would firm up the job description, but does not exclude someone that might also be qualified.

Mr. Reeves stated that he is looking for four things from the Board to take to the search committee:

1. Job Description
2. Job Title
3. Qualifications
4. Whether the job opening will only be posted to the Somerset organization or to those outside of the organization as well.

Mr. Reeves added that salary can simply be addressed as being commensurate with experience.

Member Noble agreed that qualifications should be listed as preferred but not required. Member Noble asked for input. Member Brady thinks it is better to have the flexibility. Member Noble asked who will come up with the list of qualifications, even if they are not requirements. Mr. Reeves stated that he will draft this and then pass it on to the committee. Member Noble asked if there needs to be another Board meeting to approve the final language. Mr. Reeves stated that so long as general parameters are set, delegation of final approval will be enough to approve the final wording. Mr. Reeves stated that Board direction is all that is needed to get this started.

Member Noble stated that without sounding rude, he thinks that too much is being made out of the title for this position. Member Noble stated that with the list of responsibilities and with a title of Administrative Facilitator, he does not know what this means. Member Noble stated that the title is not so much for the Somerset organization, but rather for those outside the organization. Member Noble asked for any other thoughts on the title of this position. Member Malone agreed that the title is not what is important, it is the job responsibilities that matter. Member Noble asked the Principals their thoughts on the job title. Principal Barlow stated that because there is a lot in common with that Florida schools, he thinks it would be a wise move to keep it consistent with that Florida position title, which is Executive Director. Member Noble asked why the job description has the position title as Administrative Facilitator. Principal Mayfield stated that she agrees that it is what is in the job description that matters. Principal Mayfield added that the Principals like the flexibility and that is why many of them are with Somerset. Principal Mayfield further added that they are looking for someone that will work side-by-side with the Principals as opposed to being a director of what they are doing. Principal Mayfield stated that if having the word director in their title allows them to work better with people outside of the organization, this might not be an issue at all, as the most important part is that the job description itself speaks to facilitating and assisting the Principals, side-by-side, rather than directing the Principals.

Member Noble asked the Principals if using the wording the Principals provided for the job description, without any changes and changing the title to Executive Director is something the Principals will be comfortable with. Principal Farmer added that a lot of time is being spent on the title when it is really about their role and how they are supporting and facilitating what is already being done.

Mr. Howell stated that looking for someone to fill this position could get out-of-hand unless you limit it to someone within the Somerset system. Mr. Howell added that the Principals would probably agree that they are looking for someone they know within the system and having someone from the outside could make for a difficult situation. Member Noble asked why it would be a difficult situation. Mr. Howell stated that he thinks it is because someone would be brought in that does not know the Somerset culture, or how the school started and that the best candidates will be from within the Somerset system. Member Noble agreed that the best candidates will be from within the Somerset system, however, he does not think that it should be limited to that only. Member Howell stated that it is a waste of time going outside the system and added that this is his opinion. Member Malone stated that she kind of agrees about looking only within the Somerset system because it allows for promotion from within and that this is an important element.

Member Malone added that if a suitable candidate can be found within the system, then she kind of agrees that they should stay within the system. Member Harty stated that while he agrees they will find the strongest candidates from within, for the same reason as leaving the qualifications open, he would like to leave this portion open as well. Member Harty added that for all they know, they could find a great candidate from outside the Somerset system that may not get the Executive Director position but maybe could fill another position. Member Harty added that it would be nice to open it up to see who is interested in being part of the Somerset system. Principal Mayfield stated that, in her experience, when positions were opened to everyone and only those from within were hired, it became apparent to those outside that they would not get the job and that this could create a bad reputation for Somerset.

Principal Mayfield added that if the Executive Director was hired from within and Principals are hired from outside the system, Somerset would be more true to what their intentions are. Principal Mayfield noted that this

also plays in to part of the Executive Director job description of having a systematic way of hiring and interviewing Principals so that they come in with the types of qualifications that Somerset wants. Principal Mayfield reiterated not posting the position outside the system when the intention is really to hire from within. Member Harty noted that one of the qualifications could be familiarity with Somerset culture and expectations, as this makes it clear as to what is being looked for without limiting it to within the system only. Member Noble agreed with Member Harty. Mr. Howell stated that he likes that option as well.

Member Noble stated that as Somerset grows, because of the great work of the Principals, Somerset is becoming more and more known. Member Noble added that he thinks it is short sighted to think that good talent, equal to that of the current Administrators, could not be found from outside the system as well. Member Noble agreed that through this process, the next candidate for Principal could be found and does not see the purpose to limit it. Member Malone agreed to something being included in the list of preferred qualifications.

Vice Principal Rodriguez stated that everyone has valid points as to the person that will fill this position and added that they need to think about the time that will be spent making sure this person visits the Florida schools, if someone from outside the system is hired. Vice Principal Rodriguez also added that they would have to make sure this person knows all there is to know about Somerset, regarding culture, procedures, standards, etc. Member Malone stated that she sees where Member Noble and Member Harty are coming from, but feels that for this position it is important to have someone from inside the system. Member Noble asked what the harm is to opening it up and if it is a matter of being afraid of finding a great candidate and Member Malone said not at all.

Additional discussion was had regarding the reasons not to open this up to those outside the system. Vice Principal Rodriguez stated that it is important for this person to have a strong connection with each of the Principals and added that it has been seen in the past that the culture of Somerset has been changed with the hiring of certain Principals. Vice Principal Rodriguez noted that Somerset is a family and that the parents she has spoken with recently love that part of Somerset, which goes back to the Principals working as a team. Vice Principal Rodriguez stated that a current Principal stepping into that position would already have all the knowledge and knows what does and does not work for the vision of Somerset. Vice Principal Rodriguez noted other areas that are so important for this person to know and understand.

Mr. Howell stated that the middle ground could be, as suggested before, adding something to the qualifications about being familiar with Somerset.

Member Noble asked if anything else needs to be discussed regarding this item. Mr. Reeves stated that it will need to be decided who the designated Board member will be authorized to approve the final job description. Discussion was had regarding whether salary will be discussed now. Member Brady suggested putting a range so candidates have some idea. Member Noble stated that he does not disagree with the salary saying commensurate with experience. Member Malone said that any range should be in line with that Principal salary. The Board agreed to discuss this item later.

Due to technical difficulties, the remainder of the meeting was not recorded. These minutes were completed using notes taken from this portion of the meeting.

Member Harty Motioned to approve the title for the new Somerset Academy position as Executive Director. Member Malone seconded the Motion and the Board unanimously approved.

Member Noble Motioned to approve the job description as presented. Member Harty seconded the Motion and the Board unanimously approved.

Member Harty Motioned to the qualifications to include Preference of Administrator Experience and Knowledge of Somerset Academy. Member Malone seconded the Motion and the Board unanimously approved.

The Board agreed that the final qualifications will be sent to the Board for final approval along with the written job description.

4. Bond Discussion and Possible Action Regarding Somerset Sky Pointe Phase III Construction.

Discussion was had regarding the lease agreement presented in the support materials.

Member Noble Motioned to approve the purchase of property at the Sky Pointe campus with the design received from the contractors for phase III. Member Malone seconded the Motion and the Board unanimously approved.


5. Public Comments and Discussion.

No member of the public requested to comment at this time.

6. Adjournment.

Member Malone Motioned to adjourn the meeting at 8:52 a.m. Member Harty seconded the Motion and the Board unanimously approved. The Meeting was adjourned.

Approved on: April 13, 2015

Vice Chair 
Secretary of the Board of Directors
Somerset Academy of Las Vegas