

**MINUTES**  
**of the meeting of the**  
**BOARD OF DIRECTORS of SOMERSET ACADEMY OF LAS VEGAS**  
**June 20, 2014**

The Board of Directors of Somerset Academy of Las Vegas held a public meeting on June 20, 2014 at 7:00 a.m. at 1378 Paseo Verde Parkway, Suite 200, Henderson, Nevada 89012.

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

Board Chair Crystal Thiriot called the meeting to order at 7:12 a.m. Present were Board Members Will Harty, Scott Hammond, Crystal Thiriot, Eric Brady, Amy Malone, and Cody Noble.

Board Member Eric Elison was not present.

Also present was Principal Joy Lea and Academica Nevada Representatives Ryan Reeves and Allison Salmon.

**2. Public Comment.**

No public comment at this time.

**3. Approval of the Minutes of the June 5, 2014 Meeting.**

This item was tabled to the next Board meeting.

**4. Review and Discussion Regarding Parent and Teacher Survey Results, Teacher Retention and Course Offerings.**

Mr. Reeves addressed the Board and advised that at the last Board meeting, a complete packet of all survey results that were completed, as well as course offerings were provided to the Board. Mr. Reeves noted that at that time, it was noticed that information regarding the Sky Pointe accreditation survey was not included, as well as curriculum information for the Stephanie and Aliante / North Las Vegas campuses. Mr. Reeves stated that this information has been provided in the support materials distributed, as well as the Stephanie campus' action plan with regard to the survey results. Mr. Reeves noted the page numbers for each of these additional items, and advised that Principal Lea's action plan had been included in the support materials from the prior Board meeting. Mr. Reeves distributed additional documents provided by Principal Lea, in preparation for this meeting.

Member Thiriot thanked Principal Lea for being present at the meeting and made note of the good things that took place at the Aliante / North Las Vegas campus this past school year. Member Thiriot noted specifically the fun run, new computer lab, the addition of more books and a much safer drop off and pick-up schedule.

Member Thiriot stated that the Board does have some concern with regard to the Aliante / North Las Vegas campus that need to be discussed.

Member Thiriot stated that one concern is with regard to the statute required Health class that was to be completed by all 8<sup>th</sup> graders. Member Thiriot stated that the Board had received an email a few months ago from Ms. Strickland stating her concerns with regard to the Health class and that enough time

had not been set aside to meet the requirements of this class. Member Thiriot asked Principal Lea what her thoughts are on this issue.

Principal Lea stated that the direction given to Ms. Strickland was that from the beginning of the year, the Health class was to be integrated into the Physical Education classes and that the required health elements were to be taught throughout the year. Principal Lea acknowledged that this method did not work and that changes will be made in the future to ensure that these required elements are addressed and taught to the students. Principal Lea went on to explain the changes that will be put in place and that 8<sup>th</sup> graders will have a Health class.

Member Thiriot sought to gain clarification as to the 6<sup>th</sup> grade Computer Literacy class that was offered. Based on the Board's understanding, there was some sort of high school credit that was being given for taking this class, however there are some questions regarding this. Principal Lea explained that there is no high school credit given, rather by taking this class you are fulfilling the computer literacy requirement needed in high school. Principal Lea went on to explain that because there is a limited computer lab, she introduced an online program for the 6<sup>th</sup> graders as to free up the computer lab for computer technology elective class for the 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> graders. Principal Lea advised that she had spoken with administrators at the virtual schools to find out how they solve the issue of ensuring their students are computer proficient and those schools are using the same online computer program. Principal Lea noted that once the 6<sup>th</sup> grade students pass the online class, they are considered computer proficient.

Member Thiriot noted that the online class did not teach anything with regard to specific programs and other items that need to be taught for the students to be proficient and therefore, the 6<sup>th</sup> graders that took that online class are now lacking those required elements to be computer proficient. Member Thiriot further stated that all the other Somerset campuses required a semester class in Computer Literacy.

Principal Lea stated that they are expanding the computer courses and many of these items are included in those class curriculum. Discussion is had with regard to the specific statute requirements for a Computer Literacy class and Principal Lea stated that many of those requirements are not taught in a Computer Literacy class, but rather a computer technology class.

Member Noble stated that he has the same concern with this issue as he does with the Health class, in that the school is representing that the students have learned certain skills that they in fact have not learned. Principal Lea explained her thoughts on what computer literacy is, compared to computer technology. Principal Lea continued by noting that many of the students in computer classes are way above where they should be and are creating programs and building web sites.

Member Thiriot spoke with regard to the teacher survey results. Member Thiriot acknowledged that not everyone is going to be happy all of the time, however, after a thorough review of the survey results, there are trends amongst the teachers as to what the primary issues are. Member Thiriot spoke regarding the communication issues and while she feels that they got better after being addressed earlier in the year, at least from a parent perspective, the staff do not believe it got any better. Based on the surveys, communication and organization appear to be main stumbling blocks.

Principal Lea stated that it was a big challenge this past school year. Principal Lea distributed a chart showing the changes that took place at that school and explained the student and teacher history and how those challenges affected the school overall. Principal Lea went on to explain that she did not have a willing core group of teachers to lead coupled with the fact that many of the teachers hired were first year teachers, making the working relationships strained and at times, difficult to navigate. All of these circumstances required more administrative time for her, lessening her time to be out with the teachers and work closely with them.

Principal Lea noted that based on the parent survey results, there were improvements at the campus.

Member Hammond asked Principal Lea how she planned to move forward and get back out with the teachers and build a working relationship with them. Principal Lea stated that with thirty one of her teachers returning there is now a strong core group to begin building a foundation with. Principal Lea noted for the Board that of the teachers that left, most of them stayed within the organization (going to other Somerset campuses or Doral Academy). Principal Lea explained that she sees the following four areas as places she needs to build from:

1. Expectations;
2. Maintain Traditions;
3. Communication and Transparency; and
4. Comradery and Teamwork.

Principal Lea continued by explaining each of the four areas and her plans to work on building these areas up.

Member Noble pointed out that based on the survey results many of the teachers do not believe their opinion matters and that the administration does not want to consider their ideas. Principal Lea responded by reiterating that communication was a big issue and that this is where the breakdown came from in making sure all the teachers knew that their voices would be considered. Principal Lea stated that she has plans to work on these areas.

(Member Malone excused herself from the meeting at this time.)

Mr. Thiriot noted that some of the survey responses mentioned that teachers were not allowed to give bad grades and that they were required to give a 59% to a student, even if the work was not turned in. Principal Lea explained her thoughts behind this system (stating also that her directive was to give a 50%) in that giving the child a grade of 50% allows students the opportunity and ability to do better and gain a favorable final grade, whereas giving a student a 0% makes it difficult for the students to get their overall grade up.

Members Thiriot and Noble expressed their concern with this system in that kids are being given a grade for not completing / turning in an assignment and that this system is unacceptable. Member Hammond stated that he believes this system is setting our children up to pass standardized testing, however, not to strive to accomplish more. Member Hammond further noted his thought that our schools should be encouraging / expecting parental involvement and that the students should have to turn work in to earn a grade of more than 0%.

(Member Hammond excused himself from the meeting at this time.)

Member Noble spoke with regard to the disciplinary policy at the school and that based on the survey results, many of the teachers feel that they do not have the proper tools to control their classrooms and asked Principal Lea to speak to the discipline policy in place. Principal Lea explained that the school has a progressive discipline policy and that the teachers are expected to control their classes. Principal Lea went on to explain that there is a lot the teachers can do to control their classes, including training. Further discussion is had with regard to the expectations of the teachers and steps that should be taken by the teacher when dealing with a disruptive student including working one-on-one with the student, meet with the parents, positive reinforcements, etc.

Member Noble asked Principal Lea what her feeling is with regard to the culture at the Aliante / North Las Vegas campus versus the other campuses and the overall Somerset Academy culture. Principal Lea stated that she feels that her campus is very different from the other campuses and that they are trying

to develop the culture through the growing pains and that she believes this coming year's culture will be better. Principal Lea stated that this past school year was the most difficult time of her career.

Member Brady noted that once a perception is seeded and teachers are frustrated, it is hard to change people's view without changing the program altogether and asked Principal Lea how she plans to change the perception of those that perceive the administration in a negative light. Principle Lea believes that communication and transparency are the key to changing the negative perceptions. Principal Lea stated that she has enough of a core and has meetings set up over the summer to engage and involve everyone and welcome input from all the teachers.

Member Noble noted that the Board does everything in their power to let the teachers know they are appreciated and that Principal Lea is an extension of the Board in that respect. Member Noble stressed that the goal should be to have teachers waiting in a line to teacher at the Somerset Campuses, just as there are students waiting to get in.

The Board thanked Principal Lea for her time in attending the meeting.

**5. Nomination and Election of Board Offices.**

This item was tabled to the next Board meeting.

**6. Review of Correspondence from Jeffrey Blanck Regarding Rate Increase.**

This item was tabled to the next Board meeting.

**7. Approval of Copier and Print Services.**

Ms. Salmon addressed the board and discussed the lease agreements in place from the last school year and the additional needs for the coming 2014/2015 school year. Member Thiriot sought to confirm that the original lease was with Les Olson and Ms. Salmon confirmed this information. Ms. Salmon went on to explain that AIS has confirmed credit with GE Capital and will be giving the schools \$51,285.73 towards the buyout of the existing contracts with Les Olson at the Losee and Emerson campuses. Ms. Salmon explained that if AIS is the chosen vendor, all the schools will have the same equipment and that as we open additional campuses AIS will allow the additional of equipment for the new campuses.

Member Brady asked how this expense compares to the past. Mr. Reeves advised that these prices are better than at the beginning of the Somerset leases and that the numbers are coming in within budget amounts.

Member Brady Motioned to continue with AIS as the copier and copy service vendor for all the Somerset Academy campuses. Member Noble seconded the Motion. The Board unanimously approved.

**8. Selection of Underwriter.**

This item was tabled to the next Board meeting.

**9. Review and Approval of Lease Agreement for the Rainbow and Wheelbarrow Peak Drive.**

This item was tabled to the next Board meeting.

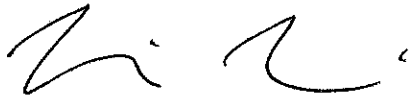
**10. Public Comment.**

No public comment at this time.

**11. Adjournment.**

Member Noble Motioned to adjourn the meeting at 9:25 a.m. Member Brady seconded the Motion. The Board unanimously approved and the meeting adjourned.

Approved on: August 5, 2014



Secretary of the Board of Directors  
Somerset Academy of Las Vegas