

MINUTES
of the meeting of the
BOARD OF DIRECTORS of SOMERSET ACADEMY OF LAS VEGAS
December 17, 2019

The Board of Directors of Somerset Academy of Nevada held a public meeting on December 17, 2019, at 6:00 p.m. at 4650 Losee Road, North Las Vegas, NV 89081

1. Call to order and Roll Call

Board Chair John Bentham called the meeting to order at 6:04 p.m. In attendance were Board members Travis Mizer, John Bentham, Sarah McClellan, LeNora Bredsguard, Will Harty (joined at 6:23 p.m.), and Cody Noble (joined at 6:23 p.m.).

Member Gary McClain was not present at this meeting.

Also present were Principals Ruby Norland, Elaine Kelley, Lee Esplin, Christina Threeton, Cesar Tiu, and Jessica Scobell; as well as Academica representatives Crystal Thiriot and Ryan Reeves.

2. Public Comment and Discussion

Mr. Braydon Bond addressed the Board to introduce his Eagle Scout project, providing Lending Libraries for the elementary campus.

Ms. Becky Felger addressed the Board to express concerns regarding issues with her grandson's 504 program and the lack of consistent communication regarding the issues.

Mr. John Felger addressed the Board to express concerns regarding safety and security at the Losee campus.

3. Student/School Achievement Recognition

Principal Cesar Tiu addressed the Board and introduced the Lone Mountain Quiz Bowl team and coaches who qualified to compete in the State competition in January.

4. Approval of Minutes from the November 21, 2019 Board Meeting

Member Mizer moved to approve the minutes from the November 21, 2019 Board meeting, as presented. Member McClellan seconded the motion, and the Board voted unanimously to approve.

5. Campus Progress Reports from Losee and North Las Vegas

Principal Jessica Scobell addressed the Board and stated that when she became the principal of the Losee campus her vision had been to expand the administration and leadership teams. She outlined the changes with dedicated administrators at the elementary, middle and high school levels; student success

advocates at the elementary and middle school levels; an increased the number of strategists, and transitioning an experienced teacher to the ELL strategist position.

Principal Scobell stated that I-Ready had been implemented and intervention pull-outs had been created with the lowest performing students as well as the bubble students. Middle school students had a dedicated advisory period where they would have time for I-Ready as well as lessons on social and emotional lesson that build on restorative justice. Administrators were having weekly data chats with the teachers and teachers were beginning to have data chats with students.

Principal Scobell stated that the middle school staff had started to stabilize and had an upward trend in data growth. The high school graduation rate for the 2019 was 98.15%, which would help improve the high school Star rating. Three of four planned Academies were being rolled out to students including an AP and Honors Academy, a Marketing Academy, and a Teaching and Training Academy. She concluded by mentioning that the high school girls' volleyball team made it the regional playoffs and the band had secured a \$10,000 donation from Speedway Charities and had earned \$13,000 during their fall fundraiser.

Principal Christina Threton addressed the Board and stated that they had observed at Somerset Stephanie and Mater Mountain Vista and were working on implementing some of the strategies that had been successful for those schools. They have implemented a dedicated Power Hour throughout the day for the elementary students, with instructional assistants going from class to class providing targeted instruction. In the middle school, intervention classes had been implemented, every student had an I-Ready class, and Power Hours were at the end of the day. Principal Threton stated that, in order to provide stability and continuity throughout the years, all of the grades were now using the same program.

Principal Threton reviewed the professional development process including the mentoring program, tracking effectiveness, and classroom walkthroughs. She stated that the administrative team had a goal to be out of the office and in classrooms 90% of the time. Principal Threton stated that 40% of students scored between 70% and 100% at the end of last school year and that 70% scored between 70% and 100% this year on I-Ready. Her weekly newsletter would continue to include the I-Ready data and attendance information. She concluded by stating that the teachers and students were committed to the programs being implemented and were working hard.

Member Mizer asked the principals if they needed any resources or help from the Board. Principal Threton stated that her administration team was assessing their needs and would let the Board know when they identified needs. Principal Scobell stated that her biggest need was continued funding for the ELL strategist.

Principal Elaine Kelley addressed the Board and stated that I-Ready had been implemented at the campus. The data was being tracked on a board in the hallway with contests and incentives for the rankings. The 4th grade schedule would be changed at the semester with a move towards departmentalizing. Each teacher would be partnered with a 5th grade teacher in the same subject. The number of middle school students doubled for the 2019/2020 school year and 8 new middle school teachers were added. Principal Kelley stated that the elementary school had scored 10 out of 10 in WIDA last year and had a goal to maintain that score for the current year.

Principal Kelley stated that, in response to Member Mizer question about campus needs, Aliante had two new administrators, one who replaced an assistant principal who had transferred to a different campus, and one as a dean or student support advocate; adding that one vice-principal would be gone on

maternity leave soon for approximately 4 months. She stated that she would like to be able to maintain the student support advocate position in the budget and would like an additional instructional coach.

Principal Kelley provided an update on the principal cohort, stating that the principals met together at the Losee campus on the second Tuesday every other month and following the Academica principal meeting on the other months. The cohort was also planning a retreat in January do some strategic planning and spend time together.

6. Review and Approval of Acceptance of SB 324 Teacher Supply Grant Funds for the 2019/2020 School Year

Ms. Crystal Thiriot addressed the Board and stated that the Teacher Supply Grant was for \$88,234.71 and would reimburse each teacher up to \$250 for classroom expenses. Member Noble asked if there were any requirements attached to the grant, to which Ms. Thiriot replied that documentation would need to be submitted.

Member McClellan moved to accept the SB 324 grant funds. Member Bredsguard seconded the motion, and the Board voted unanimously to approve.

7. Discussion and Possible Approval of Work-Based Learning Program

Principal Scobell stated that a work-based learning program would benefit students who were in the CTE program and also students who had jobs outside of the school day. The CTE programs would be three years of on campus course work and the fourth year could be identified as an advanced study year with an opportunity to leave campus and do internships in qualified programs. Principal Scobell stated that an additional benefit of the program would be that students would be able to earn high school credit without taking a seat which would allow the campus to lower the student to teacher ratio.

Principal Scobell stated that, if the Board approved the program, the campuses would designate a work-based learning coordinator who would do site visits with the students who were off campus, collect paystubs, and ensure that the students completed the necessary time and skills to earn high school credit. Member Bentham asked if the teacher would earn a stipend, to which Principal Scobell replied that it would be one of the teacher's designated class periods. Member Noble asked if it would require hiring an additional teacher. Principal Scobell replied that it would not be necessary to hire anyone new; adding that it would just be one period per day and one person could initially handle both campuses.

Member Noble asked if there would be any negative consequences. Principal Scobell stated that, with ten years of experience in building CTE programs, she had only seen benefits from the program; adding that transportation was the only limitation she could foresee. Member McClellan asked if there would be a cost to the students. Principal Scobell replied that there would be a lab fee for some CTE courses. Member Bentham asked if the work-based learning program was only available for 11th and 12th grade students, to which Principal Scobell replied in the affirmative.

Member Mizer moved to approve the work-based learning program, as presented. Member McClellan seconded the motion, and the Board voted unanimously to approve.

8. Discussion Regarding Principals and Board Communication

Principal Ruby Norland addressed the Board and stated that at the recent data day they had 1 ½ hours of training on the new online platform Freckle which included how to better use and analyze the reports and make better instructional decisions. They then reviewed the school performance plan and identified school-wide goals. The teachers met as grade levels and identified how they, as a grade level, could help meet the school-wide goals, then as a class and as small groups. Principal Norland stated that Jessica Barr would be at the campus the week after winter break to review data.

Principal Norland stated the NEHS and NJHS had done a toy drive for Fitzgerald Elementary school and were able to sponsor eighteen students. They had delivered the gifts, spent time with the students, and read with them; adding that it had been a great experience for the students.

Principal Cesar Tiu addressed the Board and stated that they had a standards based grading parent information night at the start of the semester that was a great success. They brought back the teacher induction/mentoring program and were able to utilize grant funds to support the new teachers. They added new teams to the campus including a school improvement team for behavior, a school improvement team for academics, and a family engagement and attendance team. Principal Tiu stated that the campus had implemented attendance incentives including a monthly At Ten Dance. They had also target the English Language Learners with a connections program.

Principal Lee Esplin addressed the Board and stated that they had focused on intervention and had trained the new aides at the elementary campus to provide interventions; adding that they had seen a lot of growth. They were using I-Ready in elementary and middle school. The middle school intervention was using a boost program in math and ELA, if a student was struggling they would take a math or ELA class and an additional boost class in the needed subject. Principal Esplin stated that, after reviewing the data from the MAP tests, they may need to make adjustments to the boost classes.

Principal Esplin stated that the Gala would be held on January 18th with performances by the students as well as some outside groups. Some of the high school students with IEPs had attended a transitional summit in Reno where they learned about their IEPs and the role they played in their own learning. The students who had attended would be speaking to the staff in January about the things that they had learned. The Leadership Summit would be held February 8th with the manager for Imagine Dragons as the keynote speaker.

Principal Esplin stated that that a student whose family had fostered and then adopted a child had approached the school about doing a toy drive for Child Haven and was able to team up with the school's Junior Lighthouse in collecting, wrapping, and delivering the toys. The school did a food drive at Thanksgiving and collected two trailers of food. The girl's middle school volleyball team won the championship, the middle school cross country team won in Nevada and at an Arizona meet. The school had an art show and many concerts during December.

Member McClellan stated that she really appreciated the update by the principals during the meeting; adding that sometimes it was hard to sift through all of the email updates. Member Harty stated that, while he appreciated the increase in communication from the principals through email, he still missed having an executive summary. He stated that he relied on Ms. Thiriot to make him aware if something important were happening. Ms. Thiriot stated that she felt like the communication between the Board and the principals had been going well; adding that she would be happy to provide more communication to the Board.

9. Discussion Regarding Campus Advocates Contract

Member Bentham stated that this item had been discussed during the November 21st telephonic Board meeting, at which time Member Noble raised the question of when a contract approval would be a campus decision and when a contract approval would be a Board decision. Mr. Ryan Reeves addressed the Board and reviewed the areas of financial authority for principals. The first area was budget; a principal could not enter any contract outside of what was allocated in the budget. The second area was outlined in the Somerset Financial Policies and Procedures manual section 19, Charter School Purchasing which stated that “the administrator or designee is authorized to enter into and approve payment on contracts obligating charter school funds not to exceed \$25,000 for products, materials, supplies, capital outlay and services that are within current budget appropriations” meaning that the principal could approve a contract for \$25,000 as long as the budgeted amount for the contracted item was at least \$25,000.

Member Noble stated that his interpretation of the principal’s authority was that they were able to approve payments for an approved contract; however, they were not allowed to enter into a contract. Mr. Reeves stated that, although the language needed to be more clear, the intent of the Charter School Purchasing section was to allow the principal to approve a contract for up to \$25,000, so long as the contract was within the Board’s approved budget. Discussion ensued regarding the wording of the section 19 of the Financial Policies and Procedures manual, with Mr. Reeves suggesting he work with Member Noble to assist in revising the manual to better clarify contract approval authority.

Member Harty stated that the contract under discussion was for a fundraising platform and asked if the revenue that was shared with a third party would be subject to cost controls or if it would only be Somerset’s portion that would be subject to cost controls. Mr. Reeves replied that the main fundraising component of the contract would be the sales on OurCampus marketplace with the percentage that belonged to the school then being transferred to the school, which would then be subject to cost controls. Mr. Reeves explained that, although the platform was expected to raise money in an amount exceeding the \$25,000, the school’s financial obligation did not exceed \$25,000; adding that the school’s obligation was for a time and effort commitment, not a financial obligation.

Member Mizer stated that his concern was that the contract had repercussions where the school could be held responsible if there was a breach of the contract. Mr. Reeves agreed that the breach provisions were an area of concern. He stated that he had contacted OurCampus and asked if there was a scenario where the school would owe a significant amount of money. OurCampus explained that most provisions were minor and would not result in a large financial penalty, instead they would result in extending the life of the contract. In the unlikely event that the school refused to comply at all with the contract and removed the machines from the building, then the liability could exceed \$50,000.

Member Mizer asked if there was a length of contract mechanism in the Financial Policies and Procedures. Mr. Reeves stated that, as currently written, the policies and procedures did not include a length of contract provision. Member Harty asked if the \$25,000 provision was for the term of the contract or a per annum amount, to which Mr. Reeves replied that it was an area of ambiguity that would need to be addressed. Discussion ensued regarding revising the Financial Policies and Procedures manual to better clarify authority to exercise contracts, length of contracts and obligations included in contracts. Mr. Reeves stated that he would work with Member Noble on the needed revisions.

10. Review and Approval of the Second Lease Amendment for the Aliante Campus

Mr. Arthur Ziev addressed the Board and stated that the Board had asked if it would be possible to purchase the Aliante and Skye Canyon campuses a year earlier than the original lease option. He stated

that he had worked with Turner Agassi to determine the purchase price for an earlier purchase date. Mr. Ziev stated that Turner Agassi proposed a premium on the purchase price of 110%; however, he proposed an alternate structure with a purchase price of the original purchase price plus the amount of rent that would have been paid during the next twelve months. The lease amendment purchase price would decrease every month after September 2020 by the amount of rent that they would pay if they did not exercise the option to purchase the property. Mr. Ziev used the purchase price for the Skye Canyon as an example, stating that the purchase price for September 1, 2020 would be \$13,982,889, for October 1, 2020 it would be \$13,909,764, and it would continue to decrease until the original purchase option date of September 1, 2021 when the price would be \$13,091,639. Mr. Ziev explained that the investors expected a return on the investment which would be satisfied with the proposed structure.

Mr. Ziev stated that, although Somerset Academy would not be under any obligation to purchase the buildings earlier, they would have the option with the second lease amendments. Mr. Ziev stated that if Somerset exercised the option to buy at the first available date the purchase price would be higher; however, if interest rates were to rise during the additional year, the cost in interest expense could be more than the difference in the purchase price.

Member Harty asked Mr. Ziev to explain why the Aliante campus purchase price was in the \$17,000,000 range and the Skye Canyon campus was in the \$13,000,000 range. Mr. Ziev explained that the Aliante campus was larger and had an additional classroom for each grade in elementary grades as well as a larger multi-purpose room which resulted in a higher cost. Member Harty stated that the purchase price for the Skye Canyon campus was \$13,091,000 if the campus was purchased between September 1, 2021 and August 31, 2022 and increased to \$13,138,000 if the campus was purchased between September 1, 2022 and August 31, 2022 and asked for an explanation. Mr. Ziev stated that the purchase price for September 1, 2021 through August 31, 2022 and the purchase price for September 1, 2022 through August 31, 2023 were the prices set in the original lease. Member Noble asked for clarification as to whether the terms would be the same as the original lease if Somerset did not exercise the option to purchase the property early, to which Mr. Ziev replied in the affirmative.

Member Harty moved to approve the second lease amendment for the Aliante campus, as presented. Member McClellan seconded the motion, and the Board voted unanimously to approve.

11. Review and Approval of the Second Lease Amendment for the Skye Canyon Campus

This item was discussed in conjunction with Item 10.

Member Harty moved to approve the second lease amendment for the Skye Canyon campus, as presented. Member McClellan seconded the motion, and the Board voted unanimously to approve.

Member Bentham asked Mr. Ziev to follow up on the renaming of the street at the Aliante campus to Somerset Way. Mr. Ziev stated he would follow up with the city of North Las Vegas.

12. Academica Announcements and Notifications

Ms. Thiriot stated that Somerset Foundation had received a grant from Speedway Children's Charity for \$2,500 to help with costs for fieldtrips for students who need financial help.

Mr. Reeves provided an update on recent SPCSA meetings. He further stated that Somerset had received approval for the Dual Enrollment program from the SPCSA and the Nevada Department of Education.

Member McClellan asked if the transportation amendment had been approved, to which Mr. Reeves replied in the affirmative.

13. Member Comment

Member Harty stated that he was pleased with the commitment to improve the schools by tracking the data. He acknowledged that current administrative structure appeared to be working; however, he still had concerns with the lack of a single point of contact.

Member Mizer wished everyone a safe holiday.

Member Bentham stated that he had heard that charter school special education teams had more reporting requirements than other schools. He asked Academics to follow up to ensure that the special education departments did not become overwhelmed and ensure that charter schools were treated the same as other schools in their special education reporting requirements. Member Bentham recognized the Somerset Florida representatives and thanked them for their help.

Member McClellan wished everyone a safe holiday and asked the administrators to reach out for help if needed.

Member Bredsguard stated that she was excited to see the collaboration between the administrators and that they were looking at instructional expertise rather than just programs.

Member Noble stated that the Board recognized the efforts of the schools and thanked the staff for their hard work.

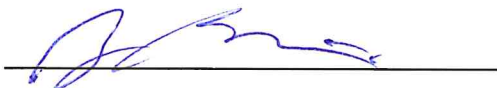
14. Public Comment

Principal Threeton thanked Principal Kelley for all of her work for the principal cohort.

15. Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 8:03 p.m.

Approved on: 2/8/2020



**Secretary of the Board of Directors
Somerset Academy of Las Vegas**