

**MINUTES**  
**of the meeting of the**  
**BOARD OF DIRECTORS of SOMERSET ACADEMY OF LAS VEGAS**  
**May 7, 2020**

The Board of Directors of Somerset Academy of Nevada held a public meeting on May 7, 2020, at 6:00 p.m. via Zoom meeting.

**1. Call to order and Roll Call**

Board Chair John Bentham called the meeting to order at 6:01 p.m. In attendance were Board members John Bentham, Sarah McClellan, Cody Noble, Will Harty, Gary McClain, Travis Mizer, and LeNora Bredsguard.

Also present were Principals Lee Esplin, Cesar Tiu, Ruby Norland, Christina Threeton, Jessica Scobell, Elaine Kelley, and Kate Lackey; as well as Academica Representatives Crystal Thiriot, Ryan Reeves, Marla Devitt, Marc Clayton, and Trevor Goodsell.

Member Bentham recognized the dedication and commitment of all of the Somerset teachers during Teacher Appreciation Week.

**2. Public Comment and Discussion**

There was no public comment.

**3. Discussion and Possible Action Regarding Revised Grade-Level Maximum Enrollment for the 2020/2021 School Year**

Mr. Trevor Goodsell addressed the Board and explained that, due to the COVID-19 situation, Nevada was experiencing massive reductions in taxes collected. He referred to the Governor's letter contained in the support materials, which explained the need for budget reductions of anywhere between 6% and 14%, followed by a sample budget with 6%, 10%, and 14% reductions for each department. Mr. Goodsell noted that the Governor had stated not all departments would be treated equally; adding that education would likely see a 9% reduction, with the Department of Education portion at 6%.

Mr. Goodsell referred to page 13 of the support materials with an explanation of the budget for the 2019/2020 school year, then the 2020/2021 school year initial budget, followed by the budget with 6%, 10%, and 14% reductions. Mr. Goodsell stated that Clark County School District had three options for reduced funding: reduce hours for the hourly staff, layoffs, and cuts in salaries. He explained that Somerset had a fourth option, which was to increase the student to teacher ration from 25 to 1 in elementary to 26 to 1 and from 30 to 1 in middle school to 31 to 1. Mr. Goodsell referred back to document on page 13 of the support materials which explained the budget reduction with and without the extra students.

Mr. Ryan Reeves addressed the Board and explained that, if the students were to be added, it would be best to add them now so that desks and curriculum for the extra students could be purchased. He stated that, if the budget reductions were less than predicted, or when the economy returned to normal, the Board could make the decision to return to the existing student to teacher ratios. Member McClellan noted that,

with the need to purchase desks and curriculum, the cost would already be incurred if the Board decided to return to the current ratio. Member McClain stated that the ration increase was the best option. Member Harty stated that, although it was not a decision to be made lightly, it was the best option in the current situation.

Member Bredsguard asked if the high school ratio would also increase, to which Mr. Goodsell replied in the negative, explaining that the high school enrollment was typically lower. Member Bredsguard stated that it might cause a space issue on some campuses and asked how many additional students it would bring to the Stephanie campus. Mr. Goodsell stated that the Stephanie campus would increase from 960 to 996 students, an increase of 36 students.

Member Noble asked if the projections took into account the possibility that not all classes, particularly high school, would be filled to capacity. Mr. Goodsell explained that Somerset averaged 98.5% to 99% daily enrollment. He stated that the projection reflected 100% enrollment; however, the budget would be prepared at 95% enrollment. Member Noble noted that, even with the increased students, Somerset would still have a large reduction in funding. He stated that, although he had never voted in favor of increasing the ratio before, this was a step they needed to take. Member Bentham agreed that, even with this step, there would still be a loss in funding; adding that they would need to explore other options to reduce the loss, such as fees, leases and scrutinizing expenditures. Mr. Goodsell stated that he had been in touch with Turner Agassi to discuss the leases; adding that Academica was committed to working with Somerset to find resolutions to the shortfall. Discussion ensued regarding when actual funding reductions would be known.

Principal Elaine Kelley addressed the Board and stated that the principals had discussed the ratio increase and were in favor, especially when it related to financial resources; adding that they understood that, even with the increase, there would be a funding shortfall. Principal Lee Esplin addressed the Board and agreed with Principal Kelley with the understanding that the system would return to the current ratio when possible. Member Noble noted that his approval of the increase was with the anticipation that, when the situation changed, the Board would reconsider the maximum enrollment at the schools.

**Member Harty moved to improve the grade-level maximum enrollment, as presented. Member Noble seconded the motion, and the Board voted unanimously to approve.**

#### **4. Member Comment**

Member Harty thanked all of the teachers and administrators.

#### **5. Public Comment**

Mr. Reeves noted that the Zoom meeting had been capped at 100 participants; adding that if anyone who had wished to make public comment was unable to join the meeting, the item may need to be added to a future agenda to allow for public comment.

#### **6. Adjournment**

**The meeting was adjourned at 6:28 p.m.**

**Approved on: June 2, 2020**



Gary McClain (Jun 3, 2020 08:33 PDT)

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