

MINUTES
OF THE MEETING OF THE
BOARD OF DIRECTORS OF SOMERSET ACADEMY OF LAS VEGAS
AUGUST 21, 2023

The Board of Directors of Somerset Academy of Las Vegas held a public meeting on August 21, 2023, at 6:00 p.m. at 50 N. Stephanie St., Henderson, NV 89074.

1. CALL TO ORDER AND ROLL CALL

The meeting was called to order at 6:02 p.m. by Board Secretary John Bentham. The following Board members were in attendance: LeNora Bredsguard (joined at 6:05 p.m.), John Bentham, Will Harty (joined at 6:08 p.m.), Cody Noble, Sarah McClellan, and Renee Fairless.

Board Member Travis Mizer was not in attendance.

Also present were the following principals and assistant principals: Lee Esplin, Jessica Scobell, Shannon Manning, Mindi Palomeque, Cesar Tiu, David Fossett, Emeri Rodriguez, and Jill Dayne. Somerset Inc. representative Suzette Ruiz; and Academica representatives Gary McClain, Trevor Goodsell, Bob Howell, and Marla Devitt attended the meeting.

2. PUBLIC COMMENT

There was no public comment.

3. CONSENT AGENDA

- a. **APPROVAL OF MINUTES FROM THE JUNE 16, 2023 AND JULY 21, 2023 BOARD MEETINGS**
- b. **APPROVAL OF SUBMISSION OF THE RENEWAL OF THE DISTANCE EDUCATION APPLICATION TO NDE**
- c. **APPROVAL OF UPDATED FOSTER CARE POLICY**
- d. **APPROVAL OF UPDATED MCKINNEY-VENTO POLICY**
- e. **APPROVAL OF UPDATED EL POLICY**
- f. **APPROVAL OF UPDATED SOMERSET DISCIPLINE POLICY**
- g. **ACCEPTANCE OF GRANT FUNDS AWARDED TO SOMERSET ACADEMY OF LAS VEGAS FROM THE FOLLOWING:**
 - **CTE ALLOCATION**
 - **MCKINNEY-VENTO**
 - **SPED**
 - **SPED EXCEPTIONAL NEEDS**
 - **SPED ESY**
 - **TITLE I**

- **TITLE II**
- **TITLE III**
- **TITLE IVA**

MEMBER FAIRLESS MOVED TO APPROVE THE CONSENT AGENDA, AS PRESENTED. MEMBER McCLELLAN SECONDED THE MOTION, AND THE BOARD VOTED UNANIMOUSLY TO APPROVE.

4. ACTION & DISCUSSION ITEMS

a. ACADEMIC PROGRESS REPORTS AND CAMPUS UPDATES BY SOMERSET PRINCIPALS

The Somerset Academy of Las Vegas principals and assistant principals addressed the Board to provide updates and highlights from their respective campuses. Principal Jessica Scobell provided updates for the Losee campus including: the implementation of a new "smart pass policy" to monitor restroom usage by students; the hiring of new teachers with experience; improvement in proficiency in the elementary schools while needing improvement in middle schools, the launch of a dual enrollment program for high school students, with 17 students attending college courses for credit; and improved AP scores with 7 students receiving the highest score of 5.

Principal Cesar Tiu provided an update Lone Mountain campus. He stated it had been a positive start to the school year with various activities such as a well-attended annual back-to-school event and a successful family barbecue. Principal Tiu highlighted the introduction of four new curriculums and the need for teacher support in managing data. They reported significant progress in elementary education, achieving 49.5 out of 55 possible growth points, the highest since the pandemic. They also received full points for WIDA. Principal Tiu stated that 61.9% of students met their ELA growth targets, while only 31% of 5th grade students hit their growth targets in math. He praised the middle school SPED teachers for the improvement in math and ELA. Principal Tiu mentioned plans for intervention and enrichment blocks, grouping students by domains, and the hiring of two interventionists to support students in math and ELA

Principal Mindi Palomeque reported on the recent developments at the North Las Vegas campus. They began the year fully staffed but had a 2nd-grade teacher who became overwhelmed and resigned. An instructional assistant, who had been a teacher, stepped in to take over the class. The school was now implementing "Leader in Me" for the first 10 minutes of each day. They were also a Project AWARE school with State Public Charter School Authority (SPCSA), intending to shift to 3 days of "Leader in Me" and 2 days of classroom circles after a few months to focus on social-emotional learning. Principal Palomeque mentioned using the PLC Plus book and planning data-driven Professional Learning Communities (PLC). A licensed teacher had been hired to work with Tier 3 students. There had been some changes within the school, including relocating teachers with strong data to testing grades, with the hope of achieving positive outcomes.

Principal David Fossett reported on the energetic start to the school year at the Stephanie campus. They were implementing "Leader in Me" every day in elementary school, which had a positive impact. In middle school, they were taking it slower, with "Leader in Me" lessons happening weekly. He noted that the middle school achieved high proficiency scores in ELA, leading to the creation of additional accelerated sections for eighth-grade students. Jessica Spalding, the middle school

assistant principal, and Kearsten Horvath, the instructional coach, had worked hard to make improvements and tweaks in middle school operations, including changes in the TI program. They also organized a well-received middle school orientation, which drew strong family attendance, exceeding expectations. Overall, the school year had started energetically and positively.

Principal Shannon Manning reported on the smooth start to the school year at the Aliante campus. The campus was using CKLA, which was new for this year. Teachers had responded positively to CKLA, appreciating the rigor it offered. The School Improvement Plan (SIP) goals focused on AGP and MGP, which were also goals in the previous year. The campus was also emphasizing the implementation of "Leader in Me," with Wildly Important Goals (WIGs) centered around school growth. They had introduced "Leader in Me" specials for grades K through 5 and conducted weekly sessions for the middle school. The aim was to foster leadership development throughout the campus.

Principal Lee Esplin of the Sky Pointe campus reported on the school's successful start to the year. They began the year with an exciting team-building event, taking staff to Mount Charleston for a day of bonding and getting to know one another, which set a positive tone for the year. The test data was positive, especially in AP exams where some teachers achieved a 97% pass rate with many students earning the highest score of 5. The focus for the upcoming year would continue to be on growth, with a plan to invest in Tier 1 interventions to improve proficiency and prevent students from needing additional interventions. In middle school, they implemented a new incentive program where social studies teachers would track attendance and work completion. Students with no absences, tardies, or missing work would receive incentives at the semester and end of the year. Principal Esplin stated that the campus was in the process of developing an arts program similar to one in Florida, with plans to start small and expand. The ultimate goal was to have an arts program like Las Vegas Academy (LVA) in the northwest.

Skye Canyon Assistant Principal Jill Dayne introduced Annette Megown as the new dean and restorative justice coordinator. The school had a successful start to the year with completed projects such as the staircase enclosure to help facilitate a full-time GATE program serving grades K-5. An increase to the fence height using APEX funds, and a tech refresh. Assistant Principal Dayne stated that teachers were really grateful for the significant raises, noting that the campus was also able to add an assistant custodian. The school was finishing up mapping K-5, starting i-Ready, and implementing a new progress monitoring program called Fast Bridge.

Assistant Principal Emeri Rodriguez mentioned after-school programs like the Vegas Golden Knights chess club, drama club, and choir. National Honor Society inductions were planned for junior and elementary students. Year-end field trips were organized for 6th, 7th, and 8th graders with specific requirements. The school's goal was to include all students in these activities. Assistant Principal Rodriguez noted the challenge of maximizing their campus space. The board was requested to consider moving forward with the construction of a building that had been delayed due to inflation and construction issues, as architectural plans were already complete. The aim was to provide more space for school improvements and activities. Member Bentham asked if Fast Bridge was in addition to i-Ready. Assistant Principal Dayne stated that it was a progress monitoring system for math, which would work in conjunction with i-Ready and teacher assessments.

b. REVIEW AND APPROVAL OF ORGANIZATIONAL PERFORMANCE FRAMEWORK SELF-CERTIFICATION

Mr. Gary McClain addressed the Board and stated that the organizational performance framework was required to be submitted to the State. He noted that the self-certification did not raise any concerns.

MEMBER HARTY MOVED TO APPROVE THE ORGANIZATIONAL PERFORMANCE FRAMEWORK AS PRESENTED. MEMBER McCLELLAN SECONDED THE MOTION, AND THE BOARD VOTED UNANIMOUSLY TO APPROVE.

c. DISCUSSION REGARDING AT-RISK FUNDING CHANGES

Mr. Trevor Goodsell addressed the Board to highlight a significant change in the funding model that would impact Nevada schools. Previously, an at-risk student was determined by qualification for free or reduced lunch, proficiency, and graduation. The definition had been modified during the last legislative session. The Nevada Department of Education (NDE) used seventy-five factors, known as the grad score, within the Infinite Campus counseling tool to determine eligibility. Mr. Goodsell noted that the original purpose of the grad score was to assist counselors in monitoring students with low scores who were at risk of not advancing to the next grade. While some of the factors, such as gender, race, and birth country, may be useful for tracking students, there were concerns about their legality as a funding criterion.

Mr. Goodsell stated that Academics had contacted legislators' offices to address these concerns. This change had a significant budgetary impact, resulting in an approximately \$7 million difference for Somerset Academy. Mr. Goodsell stated he had been working with the principals to adjust the budgets. Member Fairless asked if it had been determined if the change was regulatory or legislative, to which Mr. Goodsell replied that it was regulatory. Mr. Goodsell stated that Academics had proposed that the first measurement should be Medicaid, with about 15% of the students in Nevada qualified for Medicaid. That would leave a percentage available for graduation and other at-risk measures. He noted that it would be a time-consuming process. He further stated Mr. Ryan Reeves would be meeting with the governor's office. Member Fairless stated that she had also been contacting state officials to discuss the at-risk funding. She also recognized the hard work Mr. Goodsell was providing for the system.

d. DISCUSSION REGARDING THE ANNUAL SURPLUS SPENDING POLICY

This item was tabled.

e. REVIEW AND APPROVAL OF THE SKY POINTE MASTER PLAN AND PHASE ONE DESIGN

Mr. McClain stated that the first step in developing the Sky Pointe property was obtaining approval from NDOT for the right of way. The proposal was to secure this NDOT approval quickly due to the anticipated lengthy state approval process. Mr. McClain noted that the property's proximity to US 95 made it a part of a larger plan. As part of the initial phase, there was a preliminary design for a classroom addition. The maximum budget allocated for this phase was \$130,000. Member Bentham asked if it was possible to speed up the NDOT approval. Mr. McClain stated that he would look for any opportunities once the architect started the process. Principal Esplin stated that, with the

long process ahead, it was important to start the process. He noted that it would help the high school to maintain students when the theater was completed. Member Harty asked for clarification on what the Board was being asked to approve. Mr. McClain stated that the approval was to proceed with the architect design phase, including the off-site roadway improvements on Sky Pointe Drive. Anything beyond the design and right of way would be brought before the Board for approval.

MEMBER MCCLELLAN MOVED TO APPROVE THE SKY POINTE MASTER PLAN AND PHASE ONE DESIGN, AS PRESENTED. MEMBER HARTY SECONDED THE MOTION, AND THE BOARD VOTED UNANIMOUSLY TO APPROVE.

f. DISCUSSION AND POSSIBLE ACTION REGARDING IMPROVEMENTS TO THE PROPERTY ADJACENT TO LONE MOUNTAIN

Mr. McClain stated that the Lone Mountain property purchase was under contract, with an expected closing within twenty days. Member Bentham noted that Board could move forward with discussing the next phase for the property. Member Harty suggested the creation of a subcommittee.

MEMBER HARTY MOVED TO CREATE A SUBCOMMITTEE TO LOOK INTO THE NEXT PHASE. MEMBER MCCLELLAN SECONDED THE MOTION, AND THE BOARD VOTED UNANIMOUSLY TO APPROVE.

5. ANNOUNCEMENTS AND NOTIFICATIONS

Mr. McClain noted that Mr. Bernie Montero and Mr. Ryan Reeves typically attended the Board meeting; however, they could not attend this meeting. Ms. Suzette Ruiz addressed that Board and stated that she looked forward to continuing to work with the Nevada schools. Ms. Marla Devitt noted that she and Mr. Montero had enjoyed visiting the campuses on the first day of school.

Principal Esplin recognized the efforts of the evaluation committee.

6. MEMBER COMMENT

The Board members thanked the principals for their hard work for the students and staff. Member McClellan asked for more information on the Skye Canyon proposed addition.

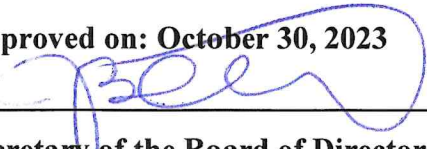
7. PUBLIC COMMENT

There was no public comment.

8. ADJOURN MEETING

THE MEETING ADJOURNED AT 6:51 P.M.

Approved on: **October 30, 2023**



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