

**MINUTES
OF THE MEETING OF THE
BOARD OF DIRECTORS OF SOMERSET ACADEMY OF LAS VEGAS
JULY 21, 2025**

The Board of Directors of Somerset Academy of Las Vegas held a public meeting on July 21, 2025, at 4:00 p.m. via Zoom.

1. CALL TO ORDER AND ROLL CALL

The meeting was called to order at 12:07 p.m. by Board Chair John Bentham. The following Board members were in attendance: John Bentham, LeNora Bredsguard, Matt Hurley, and Matt Morris.

Board Members Travis Mizer, Sarah McClellan, and Renee Fairless were not in attendance.

Also present were the following principals: Jessica Scobell, Lee Esplin, Cesar Tiu, Kate Lackey, Mindi Palomeque, Shannon Manning, and David Fossett. Tiffany Lewis, the Somerset State and Federal Programs director and Academica representatives Gary McClain, Ryan Reeves, Paul Ballou, Marla Devitt, and Dena Thompson were also in attendance.

2. PUBLIC COMMENT

Ms. Dena Thompson read the public comment access instructions, as required under Open Meeting Law for virtual meetings.

There was no public comment.

3. CONSENT AGENDA

- a. APPROVAL OF MINUTES FROM THE MAY 19, 2025 BOARD MEETING AND THE MAY 21, 2025 SPECIAL BOARD MEETING**
- b. APPROVAL OF THE REVISED STUDENT/PARENT HANDBOOKS**
- c. ACCEPTANCE OF GRANT FUNDS FROM THE FOLLOWING:**
 - **EXN SPECIAL EDUCATION (IDEA, PART B)**
 - **McKINNEY -VENTO**
 - **SPECIAL EDUCATION (IDEA, PART B)**
 - **STATE CTE ALLOCATION**
 - **TITLE I, PART A**
 - **TITLE III IMMIGRANT**
 - **TITLE IV, PART A**

MEMBER BREDSGUARD MOVED TO APPROVE THE CONSENT AGENDA AS STATED. MEMBER MORRIS SECONDED THE MOTION AND THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.

4. ACTION & DISCUSSION ITEMS

a. DISCUSSION AND POSSIBLE ACTION TO APPROVE SUBMISSION OF A LETTER OF INTENT TO THE STATE PUBLIC CHARTER SCHOOL AUTHORITY FOR RENEWAL OF SOMERSET ACADEMY'S CHARTER SCHOOL CONTRACT

Mr. Gary McClain reported that Somerset Academy's charter would be up for renewal in summer 2026, with the process beginning by submitting a letter of intent, starting a year-long review. The SPCSA would determine the renewal term based on the school's performance and would likely provide an answer by January. Member Bentham inquired whether the renewal letter should request a specific term length. Mr. McClain clarified that the term length was determined by the SPCSA based on the school's performance and success, rather than being requested by the school.

MEMBER MORRIS MOVED TO APPROVE THE SUBMISSION OF THE LETTER OF INTENT TO THE STATE PUBLIC CHARTER SCHOOL AUTHORITY FOR RENEWAL OF SOMERSET ACADEMY'S CHARTER SCHOOL CONTRACT. MEMBER BREDSGUARD SECONDED THE MOTION AND THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.

b. DISCUSSION AND POSSIBLE ACTION REGARDING THE ADDITION OF A PRE-K PROGRAM AT THE STEPHANIE CAMPUS

Principal David Fossett presented a proposal to add a Pre-K program at the Stephanie campus. He reported that Somerset representatives toured Mater Academy's Pre-K program about six months ago at the invitation of the SPCSA, which indicated that additional funding would be available. Although Somerset expressed interest, the SPCSA moved quickly with the application process and approved Somerset's participation approximately two weeks ago.

Principal Fossett stated that a classroom had been designated for the program, which would serve 20 children beginning October 1st, allowing time for preparation. Despite the delayed start, the school would receive the full grant amount of \$8,200 per student. The classroom was near bathrooms and kindergarten rooms but would eventually require its own bathroom at an estimated cost of \$70,000, potentially funded through a future competitive grant. He noted that while funding was grant-based rather than part of the operating budget, Mater Academy's similar program had consistently been renewed for about ten years.

Principal Fossett explained that families must meet income requirements and children must be potty-trained, with verification from a physician. Accepted students would automatically roll up to kindergarten the following year.

Member Morris expressed support, noting the clear need for Pre-K programs given the failure of recent universal Pre-K legislation in Carson City. Board members discussed possible expansion if demand increased. Principal Mindi Palomeque stated that the North Las Vegas campus had been approved for 60 Pre-K seats but lacked space, noting that those funds could be redirected to campuses with capacity.

MEMBER MORRIS MOVED TO APPROVE THE ADDITION OF A PRE-K PROGRAM AT THE STEPHANIE CAMPUS. MEMBER HURLEY SECONDED THE MOTION AND THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.

c. ACCEPTANCE OF NEVADA READY STATE PRE-K GRANT FUNDING

Mr. McClain stated that, following approval of the Pre-K program, the Board could now accept the Nevada Ready State Pre-K grant funding in the amount of \$162,540.

MEMBER BREDSGUARD MOVED TO ACCEPT THE NEVADA READY STATE PRE-K GRANT FUNDING. MEMBER HURLEY SECONDED THE MOTION AND THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY

d. REVIEW AND APPROVAL OF THE EMO EVALUATION FOR ACADEMICA NEVADA

Mr. McClain reviewed the EMO evaluation for Academica Nevada, which received high overall ratings, with approximately 98% of responses in the top two categories, exceeding the 95% goal. Areas for improvement included facility services, accounting services, and teacher recruitment/licensure. Mr. McClain reported that staffing changes had impacted facility services, but a new hire would now support the six northern campuses. Accounting concerns in accounts payable and payroll stemmed from a new payroll system implemented 18 months ago, while recruitment challenges were due to staffing turnover and lengthy fingerprinting processes, which should improve with electronic fingerprinting and new personnel.

Mr. Ryan Reeves added that the EMO evaluation was an annual requirement of the SPCSA and their contract, and that Academica had addressed past survey feedback through staffing and service adjustments. The survey, once limited to principals, now included board members, registrars, and office managers. Chair Bentham emphasized the evaluation's importance during SPCSA reviews.

MEMBER HURLEY MOVED TO APPROVE THE EMO EVALUATION FOR ACADEMICA NEVADA AS PRESENTED. MEMBER BREDSGUARD SECONDED THE MOTION AND THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.

5. MEMBER COMMENT

Member Bentham noted that this would be the last meeting before the start of the school year and wished everyone well with the opening of school.

Mr. McClain announced that a telephonic meeting would be required between August 11-15 to approve the allocation of teacher raises from legislative funding. After discussion of scheduling challenges during the back-to-school period, it was decided to schedule the meeting for 4:30 p.m. on either Wednesday or Thursday of that week.

Mr. McClain also provided an update on construction at the Sky Point campus, noting that despite some weather delays, the building was closed in, and they were still aiming for completion by August 1st before students return.

6. PUBLIC COMMENT

There was no public comment.

7. ADJOURN MEETING

THE MEETING ADJOURNED AT 12: 34 P.M.

Approved on: August 13, 2025

Travis Mizer
Travis Mizer (Aug 13, 2025 20:29:44 PDT)

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