

**MINUTES**  
**of the meeting of the**  
**BOARD OF DIRECTORS of SOMERSET ACADEMY OF LAS VEGAS**  
**June 2, 2020**

Board of Directors of Somerset Academy of Las Vegas held a public meeting on June 2, 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 6:02 p.m. In attendance were Board members John Bentham, Sarah McClellan, Cody Noble, Will Harty, Gary McClain (left at 7:09 p.m.), Travis Mizer, and LeNora Bredsguard.

Also present were Principal Lee Esplin, Principal Cesar Tiu, Principal Christina Threeton, Principal Jessica Scobell, Principal Elaine Kelley, Principal Kate Lackey, Assistant Principal Jill Dayne, Assistant Principal Ebony Gaubault, and Executive Assistant Sandy Smith; as well as Somerset Inc. representative Suzette Ruiz and Academica representatives Crystal Thiriot, Ryan Reeves, Marla Devitt, Marc Clayton, Trevor Goodsell, Kendra Thornton, Gayle Jefferson, and Todd Arellano.

**2. Public Comment**

Susana Harty addressed the Board and spoke about the great teachers at Somerset, especially during the pandemic. She noted that, due to the pandemic, the teacher bonuses had been removed from the budget and called on Somerset families, the Somerset Board, and Academica to find a way to provide bonuses for the teachers.

**3. Student/School Achievement Recognition**

Principal Lee Esplin addressed the Board and stated that Sky Pointe had 100% of the seniors graduate. For graduation each student had a 15-minute time slot to walk across the stage, receive their diploma, and turn their tassel. Mr. Sinquefield, a teacher, was preparing a video of the complete ceremony which would be distributed to the families. Principal Esplin stated that the kindergarten and 8<sup>th</sup> grade classes had held promotion celebrations. He added that many families had expressed appreciation for the effort of the Somerset system to support the students, provide opportunities to learn, and recognize the student achievements.

Principal Jessica Scobell addressed the Board and stated that the Losee graduation had been held at The Speedway, with 91 of the 92 students graduating on time; adding the the remaining student was working through summer school toward graduation. She thanked Member McClellan for joining her at the graduation ceremony. The valedictorian, Blake Trushel, had received a full

music scholarship to SUU. Principal Scobell stated that the 8<sup>th</sup> grade promotion had been held virtually, with 180 of the 205 students attending and receiving recognition. The kindergarten and 5<sup>th</sup> grades had car loop promotion celebrations. Principal Scobell stated that the pandemic had brought the Somerset community closer together and the families were very appreciative of the support received.

Principal Elaine Kelley addressed the Board and stated that Aliante held car loop promotion ceremonies for Kindergarten and 8<sup>th</sup> grade, with students receiving their certificates and gifts from their teachers. The 8<sup>th</sup> grade students also received a t-shirt. The pickup of all belongings went smoothly.

Principal Kate Lackey addressed the Board and stated that a drive through celebration had been held at Skye Canyon and most of the belongings had been returned to students. Principal Lackey stated that the teachers had decided to hold award ceremonies in the fall so that they could personally hand the students their awards.

Principal Cesar Tiu addressed the Board and stated that Lone Mountain held drive through promotions for kindergarten, 5<sup>th</sup> grade, and 8<sup>th</sup> grade. He thanked the instructional aides and PTO for decorating the school with posters for the celebration. Principal Tiu recognized Jackson Bentham for placing 18<sup>th</sup> out of 244 students nationwide in the Ron Clark Academy Global Amazing Shake. The Global Amazing Shake was a competition that placed emphasis on teaching students manners, discipline, respect, and professional conduct. Principal Tiu also recognized Jackson Bentham and Dyson Twitchell for being selected as the 2020 Nation Junior Honor Society Outstanding Achievement Award recipients. Principal Tiu further stated that Lone Mountain had held a successful blood drive to help combat the severe blood shortages during the coronavirus outbreak. He thanked Academica for guiding him through the process and noted that they had maintained social distancing during the drive. Member Bentham encouraged the other campuses to consider holding a blood drive in the fall, noting that at the time of the Lone Mountain blood drive there had only been a one day supply in the valley.

Principal Threton addressed the Board and stated that North Las Vegas held a drive through celebrations for kindergarten, 5<sup>th</sup> grade and 8<sup>th</sup> grade; adding that the families had a great time at the celebrations. Assistant Principal Ebony Gaubault addressed the Board and noted that, during the 8<sup>th</sup> grade celebration, the high school that each student would be attending was announced. Principal Threton stated that the families had expressed appreciation for the hard work and quick turnaround to provide a quality education during the school closure.

Member Bredsguard stated that she had attended the Stephanie campus Zoom advancement for the 8<sup>th</sup> grade. She had been impressed with the student's eloquence while sharing stories about their Somerset journeys. The celebration had also included Mr. Farmer as a special guest. Principal Kelley stated that she had also attended the Zoom celebration which included a great tribute to Mr. Farmer; adding that Mr. Farmer had been really touched by the tribute.

#### **4. Consent Agenda**

- a. Minutes from the April 14, 2020 and May 7, 2020 Board Meetings**
- b. Approval of Recommendations from the Finance Committee:**
  - 1. School Financial Performance (Not for Action)**
  - 2. Approval of Final Budget for the 2020/2021 School Year**
  - 3. Approval of Stipend for Lead Principal**

Member Harty asked to have item 4.b.3 removed for further discussion during the upcoming strategic planning meeting.

**Member McClellan moved to approve the consent agenda as presented with agenda item 4.b.3 removed. Member Noble seconded the motion, and the Board voted unanimously to approve.**

#### **5. Academica Progress Reports and Updates on School Initiatives**

Principal Kelley stated that without official WIDA data she did not have an update. Principal Scobell stated that she had not had the opportunity to prepare the WIDA data for an update. Principal Esplin stated that he had received the WIDA data and noted that, although they did good, there was room for improvement. He stated that he had not received the ACT results but they were expected soon.

Assistant Principal Jill Dayne addressed the Board and stated that Aliante had 24% of the WIDA elementary students exit; adding that growth in middle school had only 1 student out of the three returning show growth. Principal Tiu stated that 67% of the Lone Mountain EL students either met or exceeded the growth on the annual WIDA test. They were able to exit 17% of the EL population from the EL program. Principal Tiu stated that Lone Mountain had enough EL students to count toward the Star rating and they would be using the WIDA data to target the needs of the EL students in the coming school year.

Assistant Principal Gaubault stated that they had twice as many students exit the EL program as any other school in the system with a 15% increase over the 2018/2019 school year. She stated that 86.6% of the students met or exceeded their goals from the prior year. Principal Threton stated that they were excited to see the hard work of the staff payoff.

#### **6. Review and Approval of Vendor for Resurfacing at the North Las Vegas and Sky Pointe Campuses**

Mr. Todd Arellano addressed the Board and reviewed the bids received for the resealing and restriping of the parking lot and playground areas, noting that all three bidding companies had been used by Academica on previous projects. Member McClain stated that Stripe-A-Lot and Affordable did not specify the product that they would be using. He expressed concern with the difference in price between projects for Stripe-A-Lot and stated that if they were selected he would

want better information on the product. Member Mizer asked if the project could be postponed for a year due to budget concerns. Discussion ensued regarding the age of the existing parking lots and the timing of the projects. Mr. Ryan Reeves addressed the Board and acknowledged the desire of the Board to postpone the projects for one year, along with the subsequently scheduled resurfacing projects at other campuses. He stated that Academica would work with Member McClain to inspect the asphalt to ensure that postponing would not cause additional expenses in the future.

**This item was tabled.**

**7. Discussion and Possible Action to Approve a National School Lunch Vendor for Somerset Academy of Las Vegas for the 2020/2021 School Year from the Following: 1) Better 4 You Meals and 2) Fresh Start Meals**

Ms. Kendra Thornton addressed the Board and explained that, with several new campuses joining the program and with Three Square eliminating the vended meal option, a Request for Proposal (RFP) had been issued. She reviewed the RFP process and the recommended vendor as contained in the support materials. Member Bentham asked if breakfast would be served at all campuses, to which Ms. Thornton replied that it would only be served at the North Las Vegas and Losee campuses.

Member McClellan noted that the company was from out of state and asked for clarification on the process of delivering food. Ms. Thornton explained that the company was actively trying to secure a location; however, if they could not secure a location they would secure fridge and freezer space and distribute via a delivery driver. Member Bentham expressed concern, based on a prior experience, that the company might decide against operating in the area. Ms. Thornton replied that the new Nevada Department of Agriculture requirement that the vendor be registered with correct documentation was implemented to prevent such a situation. Member McClellan asked if CCSD had declined to bid, to which Ms. Thornton replied in the affirmative. Member Noble noted that if the highest scored vendor was not selected that the school would not qualify for reimbursement.

Member McClellan asked if the price was the same as previously charged. Ms. Thornton stated that the prices listed were what the vendor would charge Somerset Academy; adding that the school typically charged the students a higher price, which had been \$3.50 for the 2019/2020 school year. Discussion ensued regarding the price that the schools would be charging the students for lunch, with Board members expressing concerns about raising the prices. Mr. Reeves stated that the Board could approve the vendor and request a report on the pricing from each campus.

**Member Noble moved to approve Better 4 You Meals as National School Lunch vendor for Somerset Academy of Las Vegas for the 2020/2021 school year. Member Harty seconded the motion, and the Board voted unanimously to approve.**

**8. Discussion and Approval of Outside Legal Counsel from the Following: 1) Wiley Petersen – Jon Blum; 2) Howard and Howard – Mark Gardberg**

Mr. Reeves explained that, with the firm of Kolsar Leatham recently closing, the Board would need to retain new legal counsel. He reviewed the information on the two firms as contained in the support materials. The rates would be \$300 per hour for Wiley Petersen, Howard and Howard's rates would start at \$310 per hour and would escalate yearly until they reached \$395 per hour. Mr. Reeves stated he would be confident and comfortable working with either firm.

Member Mizer asked if Somerset typically spent a large amount on legal counsel. Mr. Reeves stated that Academica was able to take care of most legal issues which helped keep the cost low; however, outside counsel could step in with, among other things, contract review and SPED issues. Member Noble noted that hourly rate should not be the deciding factor in selecting a firm; adding that if the need to use outside counsel was low the cost difference would be negligible. Member Harty asked if the agreement had a term, to which Mr. Reeves replied in the negative. Member Noble stated that it was important to have a formal engagement letter; however, if the need arose for more experience, a different firm could be engaged.

**Member Noble moved to engage Wiley Petersen to be legal counsel for Somerset Academy and that the engagement terms be adopted. Member Mizer seconded the motion, and the Board voted unanimously to approve.**

**9. Review and Approval of a Revision to the Somerset Academy of Las Vegas Board of Directors Bylaws.**

**This item was tabled.**

**10. Academica Announcements and Notifications**

Ms. Thiriot stated that the strategic planning meeting would most likely be held June 20<sup>th</sup> when the Board members would all be available. Mr. Reeves stated that Academica was monitoring the upcoming special session of the legislature.

**11. Member Comment**

Member McClellan stated that she hoped that plans were being developed for if and when school resumed. Mr. Reeves stated that Academica had assembled a team to prepare information for all of the Academica family of schools, with Principal Scobell and Principal Kelley included in that team. They were looking at many different scenarios for the upcoming school year to ensure that they would be ready when the NDE provided direction. Member McClellan thanked Academica for the support during the transition to distance learning.

Member Mizer stated that the Board should make a better effort to provide representation at the school celebrations. Member Harty stated that Somerset had a \$3.4 million surplus with not too much longer to go in the fiscal year; adding that paying the teachers and administrators should be a top priority.

Member Noble stated he was impressed with how the schools had handled an unusual situation; adding that it was attributable to the great individuals and leaders in the system. Member Bredsguard stated that she also was impressed with how prepared the principals were for transition to distance learning while putting students in the forefront; adding that she appreciated the effort to provide closure to the school year for the students.

Member Bentham stated that he hoped that, once more financial information was received, teacher bonuses could be revisited.

## 12. Public Comment

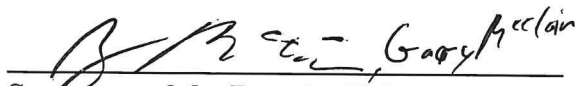
Ms. Suzette Ruiz addressed the Board and congratulated the principals for their hard work and for making the celebrations great. Ms. Marla Devitt thanked everyone for the work at the end of the school year. She also thanked the principals for including the Somerset Florida team in their principal meetings.

Principal Tiu thanked Principal Kelley for all of her hard work as the veteran principal and for supporting him in his first year. Principal Threeton stated that, with the postponement of the resurfacing of the asphalt, she would welcome any information on scouts who might be willing to help repaint the basketball court as a service project. Member Bentham stated he could provide contact information for the Boy Scout Council Office.

## 13. Adjournment

**The meeting was adjourned at 7:35 p.m.**

Approved on: June, 20, 2020

  
Secretary of the Board of Directors  
Doral Academy of Nevada