

MINUTES
of the meeting of the
BOARD OF DIRECTORS of SOMERSET ACADEMY OF LAS VEGAS
February 18, 2020

The Board of Directors of Somerset Academy of Nevada held a public strategic planning meeting on February 18, 2020, at 6:00 p.m. at 8151 N. Shaumber Road, Las Vegas, NV 89131

1. Call to order and Roll Call

Board Chair John Bentham called the meeting to order at 6:06 p.m. In attendance were Board members Will Harty, LeNora Bredsguard, Sarah McClellan, John Bentham, Travis Mizer, and Cody Noble.

Member Gary McClain was present.

Also present was Principals Lee Esplin, Cesar Tiu, Ruby Norland, Christina Threton, Jessica Scobell, Elaine Kelley, and Kate Lackey; as well as Somerset Academy Inc. representatives Bernie Montero and Marla Devitt. Academica Representatives Crystal Thiriot and Ryan Reeves were also in attendance.

Member Bentham asked for a moment of silence in honor of Alex Bush and the Bush family.

Member Bentham expressed appreciation to the Losee administration for their support of the Bush family and the Losee students. He also thanked all of the campus principals and the Somerset family for their support of the Bush family and the Losee students, emphasizing that Somerset Academy was “7 campuses one family”.

2. Public Comment and Discussion

Public comment was made by Ms. Stephanie Salinas-Byrd and Jamie Lehr regarding safety concerns at the Losee campus.

3. Student/School Achievement Recognition

Principal Jessica Scobell addressed the Board and thanked Somerset principals, safe school professionals, and Board for their support of the Losee students and staff. She stated that two high school bowlers, a boy and a girl, finish second in state individuals, the boys and girls bowling teams reached the state semi-finals, the high school girls basketball team will play in the state playoffs.

Principal Kate Lackey addressed the Board and stated the Skye Canyon middle school students won five of six bowling matches, the middle school boys basketball reached the semi-finals, and the 3-5th grade girls are also in the semi-finals.

Principal Christine Threton addressed the Board and stated that the 3-5th grade girls’ basketball team was undefeated and had reached the semi-finals. The school celebrated the 300 students who met

their typical growth in iReady diagnostic. There were 46 students who received a 4 on ELA and a 4 on math, they were awarded with quad squad jackets.

Principal Lee Esplin addressed the Board and stated that the middle school JV boys' basketball team beat the number one seed to advance in the playoffs and would be playing the Lone Mountain team.

Principal Ruby Norland addressed the Board and stated that the Stephanie NJHS held a Pennies for Patients fundraiser and raised about \$6000.

Principal Cesar Tiu addressed the Board and stated that middle school boys would be supporting the Losee family during the playoff game against the Sky Pointe team by wearing yellow socks during the game. He presented a wildcat you would be competing in the National Quiz Bowl competition in April.

Principal Lackey stated that a 7 Campuses One Family shirt had been designed and would soon be available for purchase at all campuses with the proceeds to be donated to the Bush family. Principal Elaine Kelly addressed the Board and stated that most of the campuses would be wearing yellow shirts for spirit day in honor of the Losee campus.

4. Consent Agenda

- a. Minutes from the February 8, 2020 Strategic Planning Meeting**
- b. Approval of Recommendation from the Finance Committee:**
 - 1. School Financial Performance (Not for Action)**
 - 2. Approval of Grade-Level Maximum Enrollment for the 2020/2021 School Year**

Member Mizer moved to approve the consent agenda as presented. Member McClellan seconded the motion, and the Board voted unanimously to approve.

5. Campus Progress Reports

Principal Lackey reviewed the MAP assessment results and stated that there were more decreases than increases. She outlined the strategies to improve student growth, including concentrating on the bubble and target students, teachers completed action plans and followed up on their fall action plans, administrators were meeting one on one with each teacher, and plans were made to regroup instructionally and ensure that curriculum was used with integrity. Principal Lackey stated that she hoped to add a dean or student support advocate to her administration team in the 2020/2021 school year.

Principal Esplin stated that the mid-year data showed the middle school trending towards a 5 Star and the elementary trending towards a 4 Star school. He outlined the strategies for the 311 and 911 students, including rewriting individual plans, rewriting lesson plans, small group instruction, boost groups, and enrichment classes.

Principal Norland stated that they had reviewed their data and made adjustments. She stated that 5th grade had been departmentalized with the teachers assigned according to their strengths. One teacher was assigned as an intervention and extension teacher with a full time instructional aide. She works with small groups of bubble and gap students. The leadership team each work with a teacher in their area of expertise. Principal Norland stated that 7th grade was another area of focus. The 7th grade math teacher had just resigned; however, the instructional coach would work closely with the replacement teacher and

with the ELA teacher to ensure that curriculum was being used with fidelity. She stated that the test results showed that some students did not put authentic effort into the testing. As a result, they have made plans to adjust the testing environment for the SBAC tests to ensure better efforts from the students. Additional changes had been made in the elementary grades to provide intervention and extension time.

Member Mizer asked if the teachers and parents had been receptive of the change to a departmentalized 5th grade. Principal Norland stated that the teachers were provided with a mini PD the week before the change. Once the routine had been established they enjoyed the change. There had been some kickback from parents who expressed concern with the change happening mid-year. After a week of the new schedule a meet and greet had been held. She stated that most of the feedback had been positive. Member Noble asked if the loss of the 7th grade school math teacher was going to cause difficulties. Principal Norland stated that it would have an effect; however, once a replacement was found the math department would work closely to help with the training.

Principal Tiu stated that, in response to the preliminary data, a school improvement plan had been implemented. The 3rd grade focus area was in the percentile ranking correlated with proficiency estimates. The students were grouped in two areas; push to proficiency and double push to proficiency. A part-time interventionist had been hired to work with identified students. Principal Tiu stated that they were targeting the 4th and 5th grade gap students and the students projected to drop in proficiency. The interventionist was working with them on testing strategies, MAP testing, SBAC practice items, and motivating the students. Principal Tiu further explained that the middle school bubble students were being placed in foundation classes. Assistant Principal Threton met with the middle school students and explained the need to own their data. Discussion ensued regarding progress monitoring.

6. Review and Approval of Somerset Academy Academic Calendar for the 2020/2021 School Year

Ms. Crystal Thiriot addressed the Board to review the proposed academic calendar. Member Mizer noted that the calendar listed the Thanksgiving break as November 23rd through the 26th and asked if that was correct, to which Ms. Thiriot replied that the 27th should be included in the days off. Ms. Thiriot explained that the calendar was similar to the current year calendar; however, it differed from the CCSD calendar by taking a full week at Thanksgiving and two weeks at Christmas. The CCSD calendar would have three days at Thanksgiving and would not go back until Wednesday, January 6th after the Christmas break. Member McClellan expressed concern that the differences from the CCSD calendar would affect attendance. Principal Esplin stated that it was the principals' belief that less students would miss January 4th and 5th than the Monday and Tuesday of Thanksgiving week.

Ms. Thiriot pointed out that the proposed calendar would have Somerset finishing the school year three days before CCSD, with May 21st as the last day of school. Discussion ensued regarding the best proposal to minimize absenteeism. Mr. Ryan Reeves addressed the Board and stated that the school days at the end of Christmas break would maximize instruction time before testing.

Member Mizer moved to approve the calendar as presented with the correction of November 27th as a day off. Member Noble seconded the motion, and the Board voted to approve with a vote of 5 to 1, with Member McClellan voting in opposition.

7. Discussion and Possible Action Regarding the Formation of an Evaluation Committee

Mr. Reeves stated that the executive director had performed the evaluations for the last two years and that prior to that the evaluations had been completed by the Board of Directors. By forming an evaluation subcommittee, the committee could determine the process of the evaluations, complete the evaluations, and then present the evaluations to the Board as a consent agenda item. He suggested that the committee include the two educators on the Board and a representative of Somerset Inc. Discussion ensued regarding subcommittees and open meeting law.

Mr. Bernie Montero addressed the Board and reviewed the principal evaluation process for the Somerset Florida campuses. The principals completed a self-evaluation which was then reviewed by Ms. Suzi Ruiz, the VP of Somerset. After collaboration between the principals, Ms. Ruiz, and Mr. Montero, the evaluations were presented to the Board.

Member Mizer stated that, because each campus was different, a fair metric would need to be used. Principal Kelley stated that, under the direction of the executive director, the principals had used Frontline, an evaluation program; adding that they still had access to that program for the current year. She outlined the components the principals had discussed at their strategic planning meeting including: the school performance plan, MAP and iReady (if used at the campus) data, the parent and teacher surveys, and the school climate. She stated that, in previous years, the principals had uploaded evidence and summarized the different components which were then reviewed by the executive director. After collaboration between the principals and the executive director a rubric was used with a rating scale.

Member Noble stated that the evaluation process would need an accountability component to ensure that the principals were meeting the goals set at the strategic planning meeting. Principal Kelley stated that the campus administrators had structures in place to use for inadequate performance of licensed teachers. Discussion ensued regarding criteria for an accountability process, including support, directives and consequences. Member Bentham stated that the evaluation committee could determine an evaluation process that would include the needed components, including accountability, which would be presented to the Board. He suggested that the committee be composed of the two educators on the Board and the Board Chair, with a representative from Somerset Inc.

Member McClellan moved to create a Somerset principal evaluation subcommittee to consist of the educator member of the Board of Directors, the Chair of the Board of Directors, and a representative of Somerset Inc. to initially be Mr. Bernie Montero, the president of Somerset Inc. Member Noble seconded the motion and the Board voted unanimously to approve.

8. Discussion and Possible Action Regarding Revisions to the Somerset Financial Policies and Procedures Manual

This item was tabled.

9. Discussion Regarding Hazel Health Memorandum of Understanding

Mr. Reeves stated that Hazel Health was a telehealth program that provided health care using an iPad to communicate with a physician assistant or a doctor. The PA or doctor would be able to provide

certain over the counter medication, to be dispensed by the school nurse or FASA. If needed they could provide referrals to physicians outside of the school or, in an emergency situation, call ahead to a medical facility with the relevant information. Hazel Health was set up to bill Medicaid and was working towards being able to bill private insurance companies. Mr. Reeves explained that one of the purposes for providing the service was to keep students with minor ailments in school to improve absenteeism.

Member McClellan asked if the service would only be provided for students with Medicaid and who would be billed for the services. Mr. Reeves explained that, for now, the company was only set up to bill Medicaid. By offering the service at sites with a high Medicaid population they would be able collect enough from Medicaid to cover their costs and therefore be able to offer the service to every student. Mr. Reeves explained that often in a Title I school the school nurse was the primary health care provider for the students, with medical symptoms presenting during school hours. Member Bentham asked if it was an opt in program, to which Mr. Reeves replied in the affirmative.

Member Bentham expressed concern about the liability for Somerset. Mr. Reeves explained that, because Hazel Health would be the provider, the agreement would be between the parents, students and Hazel Health. Principal Scobell stated that, although it would be a great opportunity for the students who would not otherwise have access to health care, she was concerned at the added burden for the school FASAs. Member Bredsguard asked if the company would provide funds to hire an additional FASA, to which Mr. Reeves replied in the negative. Principal Threton stated that, with the success of the program at the Mater Academy campuses, she would be willing to try it on the North Las Vegas campus. She agreed with Principal Scobell concerns about the additional burden on school personnel; however, the potential to help the students and reduce chronic absenteeism was appealing. Member McClellan expressed concern about the FASA distributing medication, to which Principal Threton replied that the FASA already distributed medication with parental and doctor approval.

Member Noble stated that he was concerned that, although it had been explained that the intent was to bill only Medicaid, the contract stated that they could bill the patient. He also expressed concern that the school would be required to provide information concerning attendance of the students. His final concern was that Hazel Health would have 48 hours to contact the parent with information regarding treatment. Mr. Reeves acknowledged that the Board had concerns; adding that it was a free service and the Board was not obligated to use it. Member Bentham noted that there was a need at the Title I campuses and assigned Member Noble to vet the contract so that the Board could discuss it at a future Board meeting.

10. Academics Announcements and Notifications

Ms. Thiriot stated that the end of year party would be May 23rd. She asked the Board members to complete the poll for the retreat so that a date could be determined.

11. Member Comment

Member McClellan asked for graduation dates and locations. Principal Esplin stated that Sky Pointe graduation would be held at the Thomas and Mack Center on May 29th. Principal Scobell stated that Losee graduation would be Canyon Ridge auditorium on Wednesday, May 27th. Member Bentham asked Ms. Thiriot to send the information to the Board.

Member Bentham expressed appreciation for the care and concern that Principal Scobell and her staff had shown to their community.

Member Noble stated that he was pleased with the support from the whole Somerset family and thanked all of the leaders for their continued support and leadership.

12. Public Comment

Principal Threeton noted that the Board had offered support for upcoming Saturday school and that she had sent them a list of needs.

13. Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 8:10 p.m.

Approved on: April 14, 2020

Gary McClain

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

Signature: 
Gary McClain (Apr 19, 2020)

Email: gary.mcclain@somersetnv.org