

MINUTES
of the meeting of the
BOARD OF DIRECTORS of SOMERSET ACADEMY OF LAS VEGAS
October 16, 2018

The Board of Directors of Somerset Academy of Nevada held a public meeting on October 16, 2018, at 6:00 p.m. at 6475 Valley Dr., North Las Vegas, NV 89084.

1. Call to order and Roll Call

Board Chair John Bentham called the meeting to order at 6:06 p.m. with a quorum present. In attendance were Board members Carrie Boehlecke, Travis Mizer, Gary McClain, Cody Noble (6:36 p.m.), and John Bentham.

Board members Will Harty and Sarah McClellan were not present at this meeting.

Also present was Executive Director John Barlow, as well as Principals Elaine Kelley, Jenni Martinez, Lee Esplin, Reggie Farmer, Kate Lackey, Sherry Pendleton, and Ruby Norland. Academica representatives Crystal Thiriot and Ryan Reeves were also present.

2. Public Comment and Discussion

Ms. Melanie Smith, an Instructional Coach at the Sky Pointe campus, and Nichole Yoakum, a parent addressed the Board and invited them to the Board to the Somerset Sky Pointe Gala.

Ms. Heather Young addressed the Board to make them aware of a situation between her son and a P.E. teacher at Sky Pointe, stating that she had not received support from Principal Esplin or the Executive Director Barlow in addressing her concerns.

3. Consent Agenda

a. Minutes from the August 11, 2018 Board Meeting and the August 29, 2018 Telephonic Board meeting.

b. School Financial Performance

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

4. Academic Update and Executive Director Report

Executive Director John Barlow addressed the Board and reviewed the happenings during the first month of school. He stated that teams of administrators, instructional coaches, and learning strategists had visited classrooms and then met together to debrief and strategize; adding that they had also worked with Jessica Barr, a data specialist, to understand and interpret the data in order to better drive the instructional decisions at each campus. Executive Director Barlow then highlighted the progress at each campus.

Principal Elaine Kelley addressed the Board and stated that, because most of the students at the Aliante campus were new to the Somerset system, they did not have much student data from last year. Principal Kelley further stated that they had used teacher data to determine areas for improvement and growth; adding that the teachers also had the opportunity to review their data to see where they could make improvements.

Principal Sherry Pendleton addressed the Board and stated that they had reviewed the data and created a visual display, with every student represented, which allowed them to see the growth and proficiency levels. Principal Pendleton stated that they had also used the parent, student and teacher surveys to devise strategies for the school improvement plan.

Principal Reggie Farmer addressed the Board and stated that, using the SBAC and MAP data, they had created math and ELA enrichment classes for students needing support. Member Bentham asked Principal Farmer to elaborate on the integration between the elementary, middle and high schools. Principal Farmer stated that the math and ELA teachers had met together across all grades to determine the needs of the whole school. Member Bentham asked if Principal Farmer was able to visit classrooms, to which Principal Farmer replied that he had only been able to visit 4 classrooms; however, his AP's had been able to visit the classrooms. Member Mizer asked how the student's viewed the enrichment classes. Principal Farmer replied that the classes were smaller allowing for a less stressful environment, and that they ensured that students understood that the enrichment classes were not a punishment but an opportunity to improve.

Principal Jenni Martinez addressed the Board and stated that, after receiving a 2 STAR rating in the elementary school and a 3 STAR rating in the middle school, they had assembled a team to create an emergency intervention curriculum plan. Member Bentham asked how the intervention had been received by the parents and students, to which Principal Martinez replied that the reception had been better than expected due to being able to get the correct message out to the parents. Member Mizer asked why changes weren't implemented sooner. Principal Martinez explained that the data was not received until August and that this was the first time that the data had been segregated by campus. Executive Director Barlow stated that Jessica Barr had helped them understand and analyze the data which allowed them to make the best decisions for the students.

Principal Lee Esplin addressed the Board and stated that Jessica Barr was able to clearly teach and explain how to understand the data, which allowed them to determine the best areas of focus for improvement. Principal Esplin further stated that, using the data, they had worked with the staff to create action steps for their working school performance plan. He also explained the intervention programs each grade level was using to ensure that the students identified through the data focus were receiving extra support. Member Bentham asked Principal Esplin how often, in his second year as a K-12 principal, he was able to visit each classroom. Principal Esplin stated that he had found that he needed to spend at least 20 minutes per class; adding that he been in almost every classroom once and had been in some more than once.

Principal Kate Lackey addressed the Board and stated that, although they didn't have a lot of data at the start of the school year, they had analyzed the data from the first MAP assessments; adding that the projected growth should show 70% proficiency in SBAC ELA and 60% proficiency in SBAC math. Principal Lackey reviewed the training programs used to help the teachers with the curriculum.

Principal Ruby Norland addressed the Board and stated that Jessica Barr had also presented the data information to the Stephanie campus teachers; adding that they had been able to use the data to help

the students set goals. Principal Norland stated that they had identified four strong teachers and met with them to determine what they were doing that could be shared with the other teachers at the campus; adding that, using the information from those teachers, they had created learning videos that they had used during data day training. Principal Norland further stated that teachers used the training to plan small group instruction, instructional practices and create goals.

Executive Director Barlow stated that, with the right tools, they had worked harder than ever before to provide the targeted interventions; adding that on November 2nd they would be holding a system-wide training.

5. Discussion and Possible Action Regarding the Somerset Academy Testing Opt-out Policy

Executive Director Barlow stated, because one student could possibly be the difference between a 3 STAR and a 5 STAR school, it was important to have all students take the assessments; adding that the state monitored the percentage of students taking the assessments and would lower the STAR rating if the number fell below 95%. Executive Director Barlow further stated that, without the assessment data, they would not have a complete picture of the needs of the students.

Member Bentham asked how many students had opted out of testing in the past. Principal Esplin stated that, due to sub-categories in the rating system, one student opting out could have a negative impact on the STAR rating. Member Bentham stated that another concern was that, without the assessment data, they would not have the information to help the students. Member Noble asked if they had parents who had opted out, and if they hit the 95% mark on testing, to which Principal Esplin replied that they had parents who had opted out. Principal Esplin stated that he was not concerned about the overall percentage; however, in the sub-categories, such as ELL, one student opting out could drop the percentage below 95%.

Member Boehlecke asked how the policy would be communicated to families looking to apply to Somerset Academy. Executive Director Barlow stated that it needed to be communicated that, to be part of the Somerset charter system, it was important to be fully invested in the program. Discussion ensued regarding the value of the metrics of a lower participation rate versus students not performing well.

Member McClain moved to approve the Testing Opt-out Policy. Member Boehlecke seconded the motion, and the Board voted unanimously to approve.

6. Review and Approval of Revised Progressive Discipline Policy

Executive Director Barlow stated that the progressive discipline policy needed to be reviewed annually; adding that the discipline committee had met to review the policy and make recommendations for changes or additions. Executive Director Barlow referred the Board to the support materials and the changes to the policy which were highlighted in yellow.

Member Boehlecke asked how weapons were being determined, to which Executive Director Barlow replied that they followed statute and that they verified every possible weapon with Academics' legal department and Tony York, the Academics Director of School Safety. Member Bentham asked how the information would be distributed to students and parents, to which Executive Director Barlow replied

that each campus would ensure that parents were aware of the changes. Member Noble asked if there were offenses which would never result in expulsion. Executive Director Barlow stated that any habitual offense could lead to expulsion through the progressive discipline policy.

Member Noble moved to approve the amended Progressive Discipline Policy. Member Boehlecke seconded the motion, and the Board voted unanimously to approve.

7. Discussion and Possible Action Regarding School Assignments for Board Members

Member Bentham stated that they would like to assign a Board member to each campus which would provide each principal with a liaison for communication with the Board. Executive Barlow stated that an alignment had been created previously and it had provided families with a pathway to address their concerns. Discussion ensued regarding possible alignments.

9. Academica Announcements and Notifications

Ms. Crystal Thiriot addressed the Board and referred the Board to the Academica Yearbook which contained photos and contact information for all current Academica employees, as well as principals, assistant principals and office staff for all Academica managed schools. Ms. Thiriot stated that, looking ahead, they would like to hold a strategic planning meeting at the end of January.

Executive Director Barlow publicly thanked Ms. Thiriot for all of her assistance with the North Las Vegas campus.

Mr. Ryan Reeves addressed the Board and stated that the Charter School Association of Nevada Conference was held recently and former Somerset Board member Scott Hammond was given a Charter Champion award. Mr. Reeves also stated that many charter principals had gathered to present to the State Public Charter School Authority regarding testing which might result in the ACT Aspire test being put on moratorium.

8. Discussion and Possible Action Regarding Somerset North Las Vegas Campus STAR Rating Pursuant to NRS 388A.367

Executive Director Barlow stated that Principal Martinez had already explained the corrective actions taking place; adding that all of the Somerset principals were using the data to mobilize teams to improve the schools. Principal Martinez stated that she appreciated all of the support she had received from the Somerset Academy of Nevada, Somerset Florida, and Academica Nevada.

10. Member Comment

Member Mizer stated that he had asked Academica to provide a financial forecast for two years in the future to ensure that they are able to make any necessary changes to meet teacher salary demands.

Member Bentham stated that he had received comments regarding the uniform vendor failing to meet the needs of the community. Member McClain asked if there was a contract with the uniform vendor. Executive Director Barlow stated that the vendor was the same vendor that had been used by the Stephanie campus as well as Somerset Florida; adding that he felt that most of the complaints were related to growing pains. Discussion ensued regarding the complaints and the vendor responses to the complaints.

Member Bentham stated that Member McClellan had asked him to mention that the Board would like to receive calendars from all of the campuses with activities and events listed; adding that she would also like more updates from the Executive Director's office.

Member Bentham noted that, with the upcoming legislative session, they should be more actively involved in fighting for more funding to ensure the ability to grow; adding that strategies would be discussed in a future Board meeting.

11. Public Comments and Discussion

Rebecca Wagner and Wade Wagner, grandparents of a Somerset student, addressed the Board to express their concern for the safety and well-being of their grandchild and the lack of help they had received in regards to their concerns.

12. Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 8:02 p.m.

Approved on November 29, 2018

Caroline Boehlecke

Caroline Boehlecke (Nov 30, 2018)

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