

MINUTES
of the meeting of the
BOARD OF DIRECTORS of SOMERSET ACADEMY OF LAS VEGAS
February 2, 2021

Board of Directors of Somerset Academy of Las Vegas held a public meeting on February 2, 2021 at 6:00 p.m. at 7038 Sky Pointe Drive, Las Vegas, NV 89131 and via Zoom webinar.

1. Call to Order and Roll Call

Board Chair John Bentham called the meeting to order at 6:09 p.m. In attendance were Board members LeNora Bredsguard, Sarah McClellan, John Bentham, Travis Mizer, Will Harty, Cody Noble, and Renee Fairless.

Also present were Principal Lee Esplin, Principal Cesar Tiu, Principal Jessica Scobell, Principal Elaine Kelley, Principal Kate Lackey, Principal Christina Threton, Interim Principal Renae Notaro and Assistant Principal Geri Wagner. Academica representatives Marla Devitt, Ryan Reeves, and Gary McClain were also in attendance.

2. Public Comment

There was no public comment.

3. Review and Approval of Suspension of Officer Term Limits for One Year

Member Bentham stated that it was proposed that, because of COVID, the Board approve the suspension of officer term limits for one year.

Member Fairless moved to suspend term limits for this year. Member Bredsguard seconded the motion, and the Board voted to approve with a vote of six to one, with Member Harty voting in opposition.

4. Re-Election of Board Members John Bentham, Sarah McClellan, and Travis Mizer

Member Noble moved to re-elect John Bentham, Sarah McClellan, and Travis Mizer to the Somerset Academy of Las Vegas Board of Directors. Member Harty seconded the motion, and the Board voted unanimously to approve.

5. Annual Election of Board Officers

Member Bentham stated that the Board would need to elect the officer positions for the Board of Directors. He noted that the current officers were Member Bentham serving as the Board Chair, Member McClellan serving as the Board Vice-Chair, Member Mizer serving as the Board Treasurer, and Member Bredsguard serving as the Board Secretary. With the approval of the suspension of officer term limits, all current officers were eligible to be re-elected to their current positions.

Member Noble nominated the currently sitting Chair, Vice-Chair, Secretary, and Treasurer to be elected to their current office. Member McClellan seconded the nomination, and the Board voted unanimously to approve.

6. Consent Agenda

- a. Minutes from the November 18, 2020 Board Meeting and the November 27, 2020 Emergency Board Meeting**
- b. Approval of Recommendations from the Finance Committee:**
 - 1. School Financial Performance**
 - 2. Acceptance of CSP Grant Funds for Aliante and Sky Canyon**
 - 3. Approval of the Grade-Level Maximum Enrollment for the 2021/2022 School Year**

Member Harty stated that item 6.b.3 would be pulled for discussion by the Board.

Member Harty moved to approve the consent agenda presented, with the exception of b.3. Member Noble seconded the motion, and the Board voted unanimously to approve.

Member Harty stated that he had recommended that the enrollment item be discussed by the Board instead of the Finance Committee. Mr. Ryan Reeves addressed the Board and stated that the enrollment discussion was a more difficult discussion this year due to pandemic related budget concerns. When the Board approved the increase from 25 to 26 students it was with the understanding that it would be changed back to 25 in the future. Mr. Reeves stated that, with the shortfall in State revenues, the per student funding was uncertain; adding that it was recommended that Somerset maintain the current student to teacher ratio for the 2021/2022 school year. Member McClellan asked for clarification on the grades with the extra student. Mr. Reeves explained that the increase varied from campus to campus; adding that the enrollment numbers had been discussed with each principal in preparation for the upcoming lottery.

Principal Kate Lackey addressed the Board and stated that, because it was important to provide raises for the faculty, she would support maintaining the current enrollment numbers. Members Harty stated that it was important to provide raises to the teachers; however, tying salaries to school enrollment could incentivize increased class sizes. Discussion ensued regarding the budget surplus, days cash on hand, and the uncertainty of per student funding. Principal Lee Esplin addressed the Board and stated that if budgets were cut it would also affect the programs the campuses were able to offer; adding that his main concern was providing learning and opportunities for the students.

Member Bredsguard asked if Somerset had increased class size before and if the Board would discuss decreasing the class size for the next school year. Member McClellan noted that it had increased

before at some campuses and in some grades; however, it had reverted back the following year. Member Harty noted that the Board was being asked to approve the proposed class size for the 2021/2022 school year, which would maintain the previously approved increase for the 2020/2021 school year. Further discussion ensued regarding the budget and surplus. The Board requested a discussion regarding classroom size be included in the upcoming strategic planning meeting.

Member Mizer moved to maintain the higher enrollment for the coming year. Member McClellan seconded the motion, and the Board voted unanimously to approve.

7. Academics Progress Reports, Campus Recognition and Updates

Principal Christina Threeton addressed the Board and reviewed the mid-year projections as contained in the handout. The elementary school was predicted to be double the previous year and was trending to a 3 Star school. The middle school was trending to a strong 4 Star school. She noted that the staff and administration continued to work hard and were moving the opportunity gaps. Principal Threeton stated that North Las Vegas had switched from an a.m./p.m. schedule to 8:00 to 12:30. Instructional minutes had increased by 450 per week. Member Bentham asked if the Saturday school that had been implemented last year had been a factor in the increase. Principal Threeton replied that only two sessions of Saturday school were held before the shutdown. She explained that, with the current schedule, the teachers had one full day when the students were in specials. The full day allowed time for administrators to meet with teachers and analyze the data.

Member McClellan asked about the distance education learners schedule. Principal Threeton stated that all students were in class from 8:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. with teachers teaching in person and online at the same time. Member Noble asked about the data difference between online and in person students. Principal Threeton replied that she did not currently have data that differentiated between online and in person; however, they would pull that data after the MAP testing was complete. Member McClellan asked if students were taking assessments at home or at school. Principal Threeton explained that online students took assessments online and in person students took assessments in person; adding that the reliability scores were really good for the campus.

Assistant Principal Geri Wagner addressed the Board and recognized student Alexandra LeVanway. The president of CSN had presented Ms. LeVanway with a special certificate for making the presidential list and achieving straight A's while taking an extraordinary amount of credits. Assistant Principal Wagner also recognized the following dual enrollment students who had achieved straight A's: Nevaeh Holland, Caleb LeMaster, Ian Macapagal, Savannah Martin, Delisha Patel, Alize Petculescu, Alexa Pullarkat, Alyanna Rubiales, Amalie Smith, Elizabeth Tohme, Madison Voss, Galena White, Patrick Loeung. Assistant Principal Wagner stated that the dual credit program had over 60 applicants. She noted that an ACT boot camp would be held to prepare the students to take the test. Criminal Justice would be added to the CTE program. Assistant Principal Wagner announced that graduation was scheduled for May 24th at 10:00 a.m. at the Centennial Hills Amphitheater. Member Noble noted that he had two students at the high school who had recently returned to in person school; adding that they love school.

Principal Esplin stated that Sky Pointe now had K-12 back on campus. He had met with Rebecca Feiden, from the Charter Authority, and was able to obtain waivers for Skye Canyon, Sky Pointe and Losee to increase to 45% in person. To ensure that the seniors met the graduation milestones, they would be returning to four days per week. Other sub-populations would also be returning as room permitted. Principal Esplin noted that the MAP testing was recently completed. The 5th grade testing showed very strong growth. Member Bentham asked about outreach for incoming 9th grade students. Principal Esplin explained that, although it was more challenging this year, they were working with the feeder schools to encourage enrollment at Sky Pointe. Member Mizer asked if teachers were taking the opportunity to be vaccinated, to which Principal Esplin replied that the teachers were provided the information and many had received the vaccinations.

Principal Shannon Manning addressed the Board and stated that in her first month she had been able to meet with every teacher and staff member one on one. They had discussed culture and concerns as they got to know each other. Principal Manning stated that 4th and 5th grades were brought on campus for in person learning on January 25th. There were four in person cohorts and three virtual cohorts. The 4th and 5th grades were departmentalized with about 15 students per class. Middle school students would return to campus on February 16th. Prior to the return to campus the classes were departmentalized with smaller class sizes.

Principal Manning stated that she had met with Ms. Jessica Barr three times to review the data. 4th grade, 5th grade, and special education were areas of concern. She noted that they were exploring adding more i-Ready intervention, implementing a Saturday school, and Monday through Thursday after school tutoring hours. Principal Manning stated that a new 4th grade teacher was hired and Jacquelyn Johnson had taken on the role of curriculum coach. Ms. Johnson was pulling data, targeting interventions and working with the teachers. Principal Manning had coordinated with Principal Scobell to have Losee AP students visit the Aliante campus to strengthen the feeder line to Losee. She further stated that an honors track would be introduced for the 2021/2022 school year.

Principal Lackey stated that, with the return of middle school students, Skye Canyon had K-8 on campus. Working in cooperation with Principal Esplin a waiver had been received from Ms. Feiden, with the Charter Authority, to receive a waiver to increase to 45%. The waiver would allow an additional 100 students to return to in person learning. Member Noble asked if that would include all of the students who requested in person learning. Principal Lackey stated that some students would still request virtual students; however, more families were comfortable returning to campus.

Principal Lackey stated that the counseling department continued to work hard supporting the students, as well as the teachers. The counseling department activities included a peace week with activities every day. A random acts of kindness week would take place in February. Principal Lackey stated that the MAP testing had been completed and the scores showed growth at the campus. She noted that the kindergarten and 1st grades had less growth; however, the data was more authentic and provided a better picture of the students. The Read by Grade 3 numbers were lower this year, indicating that the reading needs of the students were being met. She further stated that 100% of faculty and staff indicated an intention to return next year.

Principal Lackey stated that, with the recently awarded CSP grant funds, a math interventionist would be hired. Member Travis asked if the CSP grant was just for the Skye Canyon campus. Member McClellan asked if all of the campuses had applied for the CSP grant. Principal Lackey explained that the grant was for new charter schools. Member McClellan asked if the funds were earmarked for certain items, to which Principal Lackey replied in the affirmative. Principal Lackey stated that the funds would be used for salaries, curriculum, and technology. With the previous CSP funds that had been received fourteen Chromebook carts, with thirty Chromebooks each, were purchased. With the current funds an additional nine carts would be purchased. Member Noble asked how long a school was considered new and eligible for the funds. Mr. Reeves stated that the grant was typically available for years zero, one, and two.

Interim Principal Renae Notaro addressed the Board and stated that all students K-8 who requested were able to be on campus for in person learning. The a.m. cohort had 297 students in person and 203 students online. The p.m. cohort had 282 students in person and 181 online. Member Noble asked if the school was able to accommodate all the students who had requested in person learning. Interim Principal replied that if they reached the maximum they would request a waiver. Member Harty asked if the maximum allowed was overall or a count of students on the campus at any one time. Principal Esplin clarified that maximum percentage was based on the students on the campus at any given time.

Interim Principal Notaro stated that the i-Ready testing was complete and the Map testing would be complete by the end of the week. Based on the preliminary i-Ready data the students were doing much better in reading. 54% of students were at or above grade level in reading, an 11% increase over the fall assessment. 42% of the students were at or above grade-level in math, a 10% increase of the fall assessment. 50% of the 8th grade students were meeting their typical growth goal for the year. Interim Principal Notaro outlined the discussions and plans developed during the recent data day. She noted that chronic absenteeism was a concern, with students logging and then not participating in the learning. She stated that reading tutoring groups, funded by the Henderson grant, had started on January 11th; adding that a math tutoring group would start soon.

Interim Principal Notaro stated that students would compete in the system-wide Battle of the Books. She recognized Kallysta Hayduke, a student who had been featured on the Fox 5 News. Ms. Hayduke was working with Robbie's Hope Foundation, an organization which supported teens who were struggling with thoughts of suicide, anxiety, and depression. Interim Principal Notaro concluded by noting that Ms. Mindy Paul had been selected as the Dean for the campus.

Principal Jessica Scobell addressed the Board and stated that the 7th grade ELA teacher, Mr. Lippitt was excited to announce that seven Losee 7th grade students had medaled at the Springs Preserve sponsored Scholastic Arts Writing Competition. The three gold medal winners were Jayden Andregg in Humor, Kaylie Cossman in Poetry, and Mireya Trevino in Short Story. The four silver medal winners were Braunsen Ahlo in Humor, Jayden Andregg in Poetry, Kaylie Cossman in Critical Essay, and Emily Holt in Poetry. Principal Scobell noted that Losee had more medalists than any other school in the county. She stated that Mr. Lippitt had worked with the students, who were all virtual at the time of the competition, to review and revise their work. Principal Scobell stated that graduation would be held on Thursday, May 27th at 5:00 p.m. at the Craig Ranch Amphitheater. The venue would allow the students to be celebrated while maintaining socially distance protocols.

Principal Scobell stated that Losee had K-8 on campus. The level of interest in returning to in person was not as high as most other Somerset campuses, with 30-40% of each grade level choosing to return. The a.m. cohort would be in person and the p.m. cohort would be virtual. She stated that the 9th and 12th grade students would return to campus on February 16th. Principal Scobell stated that Losee recently held an AP night. Two AP classes were added for the 2020/2021 school year. For the 2021/2022 school year AP European History would be added, and potentially AP Environmental Science. That would bring the total to 12 AP classes in the high school.

Principal Scobell stated that the i-Ready assessments in elementary were almost complete. The MAP testing in elementary, and all testing in middle and high school were complete. The data was being compiled in preparation for meeting with Ms. Barr. Principal Scobell noted that the 4th grade had been departmentalized mid-year last year. It could be stated, with 100% certainty, that 4th grade had seen more growth than any other grade since the change. She concluded by stated that the campus still had a garden and had partnered with a local co-op to sell the garden items online. Member Bentham asked about outreach to the feeder school 8th grade students. Principal Scobell stated that Principals Manning and Threton had been contacted regarding the AP classes. The AP Coordinator would be scheduling an AP night for the North Las Vegas and Aliante students. Principal Scobell added that more outreach would be done in the spring.

Principal Cesar Tiu addressed the Board and stated that 98% of the students had completed the i-Ready reading and math diagnostics. He noted that the average time on task for the students was between 56-58 minutes. The i-Ready academic team had developed an incentive system for the students who met their i-Ready usage expectations. The admin team had met with Ms. Barr to review the i-Ready and MAP data. She provided a student target spreadsheet along with a video to assist the teachers in using the spreadsheet and targeting the students.

Principal Tiu noted that Lone Mountain would compete with Aliante and Stephanie in a virtual Battle of the Books. One of the 5th grade teachers had an entry in the National School Choice Week photo contests. The campus also participated in the National School Choice Week official dance. Principal Tiu stated that the Lone Mountain annual leadership conference was scheduled for May 5th. The campus participated in the Great Kindness Challenge and was ow a certified kindness school. Principal Tiu stated that before the winter break the K-5 students were on campus two days per week. After the break they moved to 4 days per week. The 6th grade had started the previous week, with 7th grade next week, and 8th grade on February 22nd. Principal Tiu concluded by thanking Member Bentham for the Speedway Charity donation.

8. Review and Possible Action to Submit a Waiver Request to SPCSA/Governor to Increase In-Person Capacity

Mr. Reeves stated that the current capacity set by the State Public Charter School Authority (SPCSA) was 40% of student enrollment on campus at any given time. As a charter school, Somerset was under the SPCSA authority and the Governor expected that any requests for waivers would be brought through the Charter Authority. Member Noble stated that Somerset was working with two sets of limitations, one from the Governor and one from the Charter Authority. He asked if the Charter Authority

had the ability to waive the Governor's 50% capacity limitation. Mr. Reeves replied that the school could approach the Governor through the Charter Authority. Mr. Reeves explained that the Charter Authority had started with a 25% enrollment capacity, which was increased to 40%. The Charter Authority would revisit the limit during the February 22nd board meeting. He noted that the Charter Authority had responded with a waiver within 24 hours of the request for two Somerset campuses. Mr. Reeves stated that Somerset should use their voice in upcoming meetings between the Authority and school leaders to press for increased enrollment.

Member Bentham asked if it would be beneficial for the Board to vote on increasing capacity. Mr. Reeves stated that the voice of the Board had been made clear to the Charter Authority, noting that Somerset was the largest charter school in the State of Nevada and had set an example throughout the pandemic. Member Noble stated that with different limitations Somerset would have more possible structures to bring students back to campus, and asked what the Board could do to address easing the Governor's 50% capacity limit. Member Fairless stated that the SPCSA had been excellent with waivers as long as the schools had a plan in place; adding that the Authority preferred a graduated plan with the school showing success at a limit before allowing a higher percentage. She noted that Mater Academy East campus had a 55% limit. Member Fairless stated that the most effective way to increase capacity limits would be to show success at the current levels and gradually increase. She also acknowledged that some directives were conflicting among agencies. Discussion ensued regarding the possibility of requesting a waiver on the Governor's limit to increase the in person options. Mr. Reeves noted that the Governor's Pause was set to expire soon and a new directive should be issued which might have an increased capacity for schools.

9. Review and Approval of Somerset Academy Academic Calendar for the 2021/2022 School Year

Principal Esplin reviewed the calendar, including the professional development days, the parent teacher conference, and the data half days. He noted that the calendar included no school for Friday, November 12th due to Veterans day falling on a Thursday. He further noted that the winter break and last day of school were scheduled to facilitate an easy transition if snow days were needed.

Member McClellan moved to approve the 2021/2022 school year calendar, as presented. Member Harty seconded the motion, and the Board voted unanimously to approve.

10. Approval of the Restorative Justice Policy

Principal Esplin stated that the policy was created by a committee consisting of assistant principals, lead by Assistant Principal Nicole Jones, working in conjunction with Mr. Michael Muehle from Academica. The committee reviewed restorative justice plans from other systems and then adjusted the progressive discipline program to align with restorative justice. When a mistake was made by a student a plan would be built and presented during a meeting with the parents, creating a paper trail if further discipline was needed. Principal Esplin noted that one significant change was the addition of a report of education neglect for truancy: adding that a letter from CPS often reopened the communication with

families. Member Noble asked if the letter would help in cases of chronic absenteeism, to which Principal Esplin replied in the affirmative. Member Mizer asked how the policy was disseminated and if there was training planned. Principal Esplin stated that each campus would be doing training to ensure that the teachers understood the restorative justice plan and procedure. Principal Scobell stated that restorative justice training had been included during the 2020 spring professional development day at the Losee campus; adding that the teachers were trained in restorative circles and restorative practices.

Member Harty moved to approve the Restorative Justice Policy, as presented. Member Bredsguard seconded the motion, and the Board voted unanimously to approve.

11. Review and Approval of Principal Search Parameters for Stephanie Campus for 2021/2022 School Year

Mr. McClain stated that a committee could be formed consisting of Somerset administrators and Somerset Inc. administrators to interview candidates after a three-week period to seek candidates. The committee would bring back two candidates to the Board. Following discussion regarding the number of candidates to be presented to the Board the decision was made to bring back two or more.

Member Noble moved to have the principal search committee bring forth two or more candidates to the Board. Member Bredsguard seconded the motion, and the Board voted unanimously to approve.

Member Noble stated that if the committee did not find qualified candidates they should extend the search.

12. Discussion and Possible Action to Approve the District Membership Agreement with Somerset Academy Inc.

This item was tabled.

13. Discussion Regarding Board Meeting Schedule and Strategic Planning Meeting Schedule

Mr. McClain stated that the tentative Board meeting schedule for the remainder of the school year had meetings on April 6th and June 1st. Member McClellan noted that June 1st was the week after the end of school when families traveled and asked if the meeting could be changed. Member Bentham suggested changing the date to May 18th, which would be before finals.

Member Bentham stated that a strategic planning meeting should be held within the next sixty days. Principal Threton stated that the principals were already planning for the 2021/2022 school year. When directives are given during the strategic planning meeting, the principals sometime had to move backwards. She requested that future strategic planning meetings be held in January or February. Following discussion regarding available dates the decision was made to schedule the meeting for March 6th.

14. Academics Announcements and Notifications

Mr. Reeves stated that legislative session had started. Academics would keep the Board informed about any relevant bills. Mr. McClain thanked Sky Pointe for hosting the meeting.

15. Member Comment

Member McClellan thanked all involved with getting students back on campus and asked the principals to continue to disperse information about vaccinations to all those who teachers and staff who desired to be vaccinated.

Member Bentham echoed Member McClellan's comment regarding vaccines. He noted that sports had been canceled for the remainder of the year and asked the principals to look into an intramural sports program. Member Bentham stated that he had received messages from several parents about difficulty navigating Infinite Campus.

Member Harty stated that he would also like to see an intramural sports program. He thanked the principals for working to return the students to in person learning.

Member Bredsguard concurred with all the previous comments.

Member Mizer stated that he was happy to hear the reports of teachers returning, noting that teacher retention was an important part of creating stability for the students.

Member Fairless thanked all the principals, noting that it had been a tough but successful year.

16. Public Comment and Discussion

There was not public comment.

17. Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 8:57 p.m.

Approved on: March 6, 2021

LeNora Bredsguard
LeNora Bredsguard (Mar 9, 2021 13:09 PST)

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