

MINUTES
of the meeting of the
BOARD OF DIRECTORS of SOMERSET ACADEMY OF LAS VEGAS
April 6, 2021

Board of Directors of Somerset Academy of Las Vegas held a public meeting on April 6, 2021 at 6:00 p.m. at 4491 N. Rainbow Blvd. and via Zoom webinar.

1. Call to Order and Roll Call

Board Chair John Bentham called the meeting to order at 6:08 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 Shannon Manning, Principal Christina Threeton, and Interim Principal Renae Notaro; as well as Somerset Inc. representatives Bernie Montero and Suzette Ruiz. JJ Christian with Intellatek and Academica representatives Marla Devitt, Ryan Reeves, Trevor Goodsell, and Gary McClain were also in attendance.

2. Public Comment

There was no public comment.

3. Consent Agenda

- a. **Minutes from the February 2, 2021 Board Meeting and the March 6, 2021 Strategic planning Meeting**
- b. **Approval of Recommendations from the Finance Committee:**
 1. **School Financial Performance**
 2. **Acceptance of Project Aware Sub Grant Funds for the North Las Vegas Campus**
 3. **Approval of the use of Bond Funds for Seeking Bids for Projects at the Losee Campus**
 4. **Approval of the use of Bond Funds for Seeking Bids for Projects at the Aliante Campus**
 5. **Approval of the use of Bond Funds for Seeking Bids for Projects at the Skye Canyon Campus**

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

4. Academic Progress Reports, Campus Recognition and Updates

Principal Cesar Tiu addressed the Board and stated that Dyson Twitchell, a Lone Mountain student, would be a featured speaker at the NJHS International Induction Ceremony. Principal Tiu and

Member Bentham presented Dyson with a certificate in recognition of the honor. Dyson Twitchell addressed the Board and thanked Somerset Academy for providing so many opportunities to him as a student. Principal Christina Threton addressed the Board and stated that the North Las Vegas campus had recently completed a Kid's Health Challenge and raised \$4268. She recognized Reuben Bellotte, a middle school teacher, who had applied for and received the Amazon Future Engineer grant; and school psychologist, Dana Holtz, who had applied for and received the School Based Mental Health Services Grant, which would benefit several campuses. Principal Threton recognized the Somerset Assistant Principals during Assistant Principal Week, and the paraprofessionals for Paraprofessional Day.

Principal Jessica Scobell addressed the Board and stated that elementary was now full-day, with about 450 students attending. She thanked the assistant principals and instructional assistants for working to ensure that the days went smoothly. Principal Scobell recognized the high school student council for planning a Senior Gala to be held on April 30th with a formal dinner for the senior class students. Principal Shannon Manning addressed the Board and stated that Aliante campus also participated in the Kid's Heart Challenge and had raised \$17, 084. She stated that the North Las Vegas police department had donated egg dye to the students, then visited the campus to see the egg creations. Principal Manning noted that approximately 60 students were participating in tutoring sessions.

Interim Principal Renae Notaro addressed the Board and recognized the Stephanie assistant principals and the campus paraprofessionals. She also recognized Mindy Paul, the Dean of Students, noting that Ms. Paul was leading a marketing and outreach committee to promote the Stephanie campus. Assistant Principal Notaro reviewed the campus highlights, including Nevada Reading Week, College and Career Week, testing, and an upcoming award ceremony. Principal Lee Esplin addressed the Board and recognized the Sky Pointe assistant principals and paraprofessionals. He stated that the students recently completed the ACT tests and noted that 8 students had perfect scores in English, reading, or both. Three students had achieved a composite score of 36. Principal Esplin stated that the student council was planning a prom for the junior and senior students. He noted that, with the exception of 3 students, all students who wanted to be on campus were able to attend in person. Principal Esplin provided a short update for the Skye Canyon campus, noting that Skye Canyon had as many students on campus as possible.

5. Interview of Principal Candidates for the Stephanie Campus:

- a. Darryl Wyatt**
- b. David Fossett**
- c. Meagan Hoffman**

The Board interviewed Darryl Wyatt, David Fossett, and Meagan Hoffman for the position of principal at the Somerset Stephanie campus. The Board asked a series of questions to qualify the applicants for the position. The questions included the following topics:

- The reason for the interest in Somerset/Stephanie campus principal position
- Star rating system and methods/experience to improve ratings
- Honoring the campus accomplishments while pushing for improvements – action plan
- Long range plans
- Experience in conflict resolution

- Philosophy on collaboration and accountability
- Budget and funding
- Previous experience that would benefit campus/system
- Definition of a leader
- Maintaining/building culture and community
- Philosophy on English language learners and chronic absenteeism
- Handling adversity and constructive criticism
- Improvements in response to pandemic
- Meaning of putting kids first

Mr. Darryl Wyatt addressed the Board to introduce himself and reviewed his experience as reflected on his resume. During the question interview session Mr. Wyatt relayed the following:

- He had heard good things about the Somerset system and was interested in a system which allowed for autonomy along with collaboration among leaders. He would like to make a difference in the charter world.
- The Star rating could be useful and meaningful if used correctly. The data should be used to drive instruction.
- He would spend time observing the campus and engaging with the stakeholders to replicate the successful areas.
- He reviewed one instance where he was able to advocate for an assistant principal candidate who had been deemed unready for the position without causing conflict.
- Principals were responsible for collaborating with the teachers for the improvement of the school. Principals and teachers should be held accountable for improvements when provided with training and tools to meet expectations.
- He had experience in setting and following a budget.
- He would spend time learning about the campus and then incorporate his knowledge and experience.
- To improve Star ratings it was important to make data driven decisions. Teachers needed to understand the standards and be provided with training to help identify the targeted students.
- A good leader was a facilitator and provided teachers with the tools to be successful.
- Good strategies and understanding were needed to help English language learners become successful. Utilize a group effort, including social workers, to combat chronic absenteeism
- He appreciated constructive criticism which helped him improve for the sake of the students.
- An improved response to the pandemic would have included better, quicker communication with stakeholders.
- Putting kids first meant ensuring that students were at the forefront of the decision and that decisions were made for the benefit of the students.

Mr. David Fossett addressed the Board to introduce himself and reviewed his experience as reflected on his resume. During the question interview session Mr. Fossett relayed the following:

- He was introduced to benefits of Somerset by Mr. John Barlow and later given the chance to join Somerset by Principal Scobell.

- In order to improve the school ratings he would need to ensure that the teachers were focused on the things that were important for the growth of the students.
- He had developed an action plan which was distributed to the Board. The plan included developing a dual immersion program to increase enrollment interest. He would also like to introduce a middle school CTE pathway. To improve culture and climate he would meet one on one with all teachers during the first four weeks of school.
- Because Somerset had lived up to his expectations he was committed to remaining at the school for a long time and helping to make a great system even better.
- With the understanding that a set curriculum was needed for the school, he would also work with long time teachers to maintain their momentum in student growth.
- In order to hold staff accountable he needed to get to know them and collaborate on education goals. He could be a support as staff members worked towards career goals. He would ensure that the climate and culture fostered growth.
- Under Principal Scobell's leadership he had been given the opportunity to help create the teacher pay budget. He was also tasked with overseeing Title I and grants. In addition, he had received training on budgeting through the Doral Leadership program.
- Through his experience he had learned that good teaching was good teaching no matter what grade. While in Tonapah, although he worked mainly with the high school, he would spend at least one day a month at the elementary campus.
- To build culture and community he would need to find ways to connect with all stakeholders. He provided examples of wearing a Spiderman suit or playing his guitar and singing for all classes during Zoom lessons. He noted the need to stay current in order to give the community the best options for growth.
- He stated that the Somerset system had responded as well as could be expected, and better than most of the State, during the pandemic. Somerset was able to maintain the focus of teaching students.
- Putting kids first meant being willing to do anything needed to help kids. He would need to ensure that the safety and academic growth of students was the school's main focus.

Ms. Fossett concluded his interview time by asking what his relationship with the Board would look like as a principal. Member Bentham stated that each campus had a dedicated Board member, noting that Member Fairless worked the Stephanie campus; however, all Board members were available to assist any campus.

Ms. Meagan Hoffman addressed the Board to introduce herself and asked each Board member to reflect on what had inspired them to be a part of the Somerset family, noting that her reason had been her family and ensuring that her children were able to receive a good education. Ms. Hoffman reviewed her experience as reflected on her resume. During the question interview session Ms. Hoffman relayed the following:

- While the Star system was not perfect, the data could be used to help drive the instruction for each child. Students had the opportunity to be at the Stephanie campus for nine years, during which time they could achieve great growth provided by a qualified staff using data to drive teaching.
- She would take the time to learn what successful programs had been used at the campus. Take the existing successful programs and add programs that had been successful at Lone Mountain

or use aspects of the Lone Mountain programs to tweak the Stephanie programs to benefit the students.

- By working with staff to make decisions and set goals, the expectations would be known to all parties. Once expectations were known the accountability would follow. She would have conversations with teachers to provide feedback from observations and evaluations. As principal she would expect to be held accountable for the data and parent surveys.
- While attending Doral Leadership she had received training in budgets. She had been responsible for the technology update budget and had been involved in grant writing.
- Her previous experiences had helped her develop people skills. She would use the people skills to create partnerships with families. It was important to be innovative and think outside the box, while collaborating with teachers and families.
- She would immerse herself in the exiting culture. She would learn the strengths of the teachers, get to know the students, and get to know the families. As a leader she wanted to foster the educator's ability to soar. Leadership was built around trust and relationships.
- She would ensure that all students were being enriched and meeting growth models. It was important to use data to find the opportunity gap students and help them grow.
- As principal she would need to be available and recognizable to the students and families. She would concentrate on getting to know the students and be transparent following family surveys.
- The Somerset system had realized that each campus was unique. Each campus was able to develop the best plan for their stakeholders to provide an education for students during the pandemic.
- She realized that it was important to put kids first from the moment she walked in the door. Every single minute should be a connection for the students. Any changes should benefit the students, their learning and their social/emotional well-being. Putting kids first created a highly engaged classroom.

Ms. Hoffman concluded his interview time by asking the Board what they were looking for in a principal for the Stephanie campus. Member Bentham stated that they were looking for someone who would put kids first, while maintaining a 5 Star campus. They wanted a principal who would go to the school, learn what was working, and bring new ideas and passion to improve on what was working.

6. Discussion and Possible Action to Appoint a Principal for the Stephanie Campus

Each Board member took a few minutes to voice opinions about the candidate interviews. Member Bredsguard stated that she was impressed with Mr. Fossett's enthusiasm and Ms. Hoffman's knowledge and teaching experience. She noted that Mr. Wyatt was well trained. Member Noble stated that both internal candidates would be great in the future; however, his first choice was Mr. Wyatt. Member Mizer stated that the internal candidates would be good; however he did not think they were ready yet. His choice was Mr. Wyatt. Member McClellan stated that Mr. Wyatt appeared to be great with parents and communities; however, she had concerns about the transition to the Stephanie campus. She preferred the internal candidates.

Member Fairless stated that she thought Ms. Hoffman was the most prepared to step into the position. Her second choice was Mr. Fossett. Member Bentham stated that the candidates from the system were great. Member Harty stated that, although there were three great candidates, he would prefer the two

internal candidates. Discussion ensued regarding the experience, knowledge, and passion of the candidates. Principal Tiu and Principal Scobell provided insight on the candidates from their campuses.

Member Harty moved to appoint Mr. Fossett as the new principal at the Stephanie campus. Member Mizer seconded the motion, and the Board voted unanimously to approve.

Member Bentham thanked Interim Principal for her time leading the campus and thanked the Stephanie staff members for their support.

7. Discussion Regarding Academic Impact on Classroom Ration

This item was tabled.

8. Review and Approval of Initial Budget for the 2021/2022 School Year

Mr. Trevor Goodsell addressed the Board and stated that the true numbers for funding had not yet been received; however, the budget being presented was consistent with the current budget. He noted that the final budget would be presented to the Board following the current legislative session.

Member Harty moved to approve the initial budget, as presented. Member seconded the motion, and the Board voted unanimously to approve.

9. Bond Financing Resolution

Mr. Goodsell stated that the Aliante and Skye Canyon campuses were available to purchase. He asked the Board to the financing resolution. He reviewed the parameters of the financing resolution as contained in the support materials.

Member McClellan moved to approve the bond financing resolution. Member Harty seconded the motion, and the Board voted unanimously to approve.

10. Review and Possible Action to Approve the Janitorial Vendor for the Aliante, Lone Mountain, Losee, North Las Vegas, Skye Canyon, and Stephanie Campuses from the Following: ABM, BGM – Brilliant General Maintenance, Get Clean Work, HES Facilities Services, JaniCrew Janitorial Services, Jani-King of Nevada, Janitorial Services, Marsden West, MasterCorp Commercial Services, and Nellis Building Services

This item was tabled.

11. Review and Possible Action to Approve the Vendor for Seal Coat Projects at the Sky Pointe and North Las Vegas Campus from the Following: Stripe a Lot, J and J, Affordable, and American Pavement

This item was tabled.

12. Presentation of the Fiscal Comparison Report

This item was tabled.

13. Discussion Regarding 2021/2022 Board Meeting Schedule and Strategic Planning Meeting Schedule

This item was tabled.

14. Academics Announcements and Notifications

There were no announcements.

15. Member Comment

Member Bentham thanked everyone who had attended and participated in the meeting.

16. Public Comment

There was no public comment.

17. Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 10:18 p.m.

Approved on: May 18, 2021

LeNora N Bredsguard

LeNora N Bredsguard (May 19, 2021 08:39 PDT)

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