

**MINUTES  
OF THE MEETING OF THE  
BOARD OF DIRECTORS OF SOMERSET ACADEMY OF LAS VEGAS  
FEBRUARY 22, 2022**

Board of Directors of Somerset Academy of Las Vegas held a public meeting on February 22, 2022 at 6:00 p.m. at 6630 Surrey St., Las Vegas, NV 89119 and via Zoom webinar.

**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, LeNora Bredsguard, Travis Mizer, Cody Noble, Will Harty, and Renee Fairless.

Member Sarah McClellan was not in attendance.

Also present were Principal Lee Esplin, Principal Cesar Tiu, Principal Jessica Scobell, Principal Shannon Manning, Principal Christina Threeton, Principal Kate Lackey, and Principal David Fossett; as well as Somerset Inc. representatives Bernie Montero and Suzette Ruiz. Academica representatives Gary McClain, Ryan Reeves, Trevor Goodsell and Marla Devitt were also in attendance.

**2. PUBLIC COMMENT**

Prior to public comment Member Bentham reviewed the principal selection process, which had been in place for several principal selections. A cohort was formed of licensed administrators from Somerset Las Vegas and Somerset Florida, with the addition of an educator member of the Board. The cohort conducted pre-interviews of the applicants to select the candidates to be interviewed by the Board.

Public comment was made by Sara Miranda, Tashie Shows, and Gwen Neff regarding the principal search. A Petition asking the Board to interview Assistant Principal DeAnda was submitted to the Board. Written public comment was received from Becky Prusse, Dana Holtz, Tammy Clark, and Garland Dotson. The written public comments were distributed to the Board members and are attached to the minutes.

**3. CONSENT AGENDA**

- a. APPROVAL OF MINUTES FROM THE JANUARY 11, 2022 BOARD MEETING**
- b. APPROVAL OF GRADE-LEVEL MAXIMUM ENROLLMENT FOR THE 2022/2023 SCHOOL YEAR**
- c. APPROVAL OF TEMPORARY PRICE INCREASE AMENDMENT TO THE VENDED MEAL AGREEMENT FOR THE NATIONAL SCHOOL LUNCH PROGRAM**

**MEMBER MIZER MOVED TO APPROVE THE CONSENT AGENDA, AS PRESENTED. MEMBER FAIRLESS SECONDED THE MOTION, AND THE BOARD VOTED UNANIMOUSLY TO APPROVE.**

#### 4. ACTION & DISCUSSION ITEMS

##### a. INTERVIEW OF PRINCIPAL CANDIDATES FOR THE NORTH LAS VEGAS CAMPUS

The Board interviewed Brynn Dessormeau and Mindi Palomeque for the position of principal at the Somerset North Las Vegas campus. The Board asked a series of questions to qualify the applicants for the position. The questions included the following topics: experience with Title I and EL students, experience with data, teacher retention, teachers moving to leadership positions while remaining in the classroom, experience with demographics of North Las Vegas campus, addressing underperformance without disrupting current progress, stepping into a high pressure situation, culture and climate, leadership of campus, and most important goal.

##### 1. BRYNN DESSORMEAU

**Ms. Brynn Dessormeau** addressed the Board to introduce herself and reviewed her experience as reflected on her resume. During the question interview session Ms. Dessormeau relayed the following.

- Currently at a school with 80% EL population. Ensure that the EL learners have the strategies they need in the core classes. With most of the population coming to the Mater school below grade level, she outlined the strategies used to bring the students up to grade level including: double dosing, extra instruction, using a push in model to teach in the classroom, and power hour supports for EL learners.
- Following recent mid-year check they diagnosed the areas for improvement. They use the previously mentioned strategies along with i-Ready to ensure that the students had a foundation for growth.
- She would meet with current staff to assess teaching needs. She would review the data to determine where the needs were not being met. Hands on interviewing was a vital part of finding the best teachers.
- She would implement making grade level chairs or leads. Give teachers an opportunities to coach and go to conferences. She would encourage teachers to share innovative ideas during professional development.
- As an administrator it was important to become the epicenter for the students, During the pandemic they ensured that the families still had a community. She would listen to the community to understand their needs. By being visible on campus and at events the stakeholders would know she was available and approachable.
- By using the data and diagnostic she would be able to find the shining spots and make the necessary tweaks to improve the campus. When the community understood her commitment they would be willing to work together for the students.
- She was part of a school administration that was able to grow from a 1 Star school to a 3 Star school in one year. The administration implemented a plan, worked with teachers to buy into the plan, visited classrooms, and worked together as a community to achieve the growth.
- She could create the culture and climate by providing support to the stakeholders. She would be available and transparent. She would be the face of the school.

- She was currently the K-5 assistant principal at a Title I school. She worked with the teachers and leaders to review data and make needed changes. Her current leadership team implemented cross training so she was familiar with all aspects of leadership.
- Her goal on day one would be to educate students and make them better than the day before, every day.

## **2. MINDI PALOMEQUE**

**Ms. Mindi Palomeque** addressed the Board to introduce herself and reviewed her experience as reflected on her resume. During the question interview session Ms. Palomeque relayed the following:

- She was familiar with Title I schools. The way to close achievement gaps was through tier one instruction and ensuring that all students had exposure to the curriculum.
- The principal's job was to review the data and create a plan to move students up. The data was used to determine what was or was not working for each teacher, then make the alignments needed to improve.
- It was easy to attract good teachers if the teachers were given the tools for success. She also provided teachers with support and love.
- It was important to create leadership teams and let the leaders know they were valued. She would encourage teachers to share best practices with other teachers and be involved with professional development.
- She would meet the stakeholders. Let them know that she could be trusted to make the best choices for the students and community.
- She would take what was working at the school and make the necessary tweaks. She would ensure that the plan was in the best interest of the students.
- She has been at underachieving schools and been able to help them grow. The growth was achieved through tier one instruction, small group instruction, and working with the subpopulations.
- Creating a climate and culture involved supporting teachers in all aspects. Doing the little things to show the teachers they were supported.
- Fiscal responsibility was one of her strengths.
- Her number one goal would be to talk to parents, then dig into the data and get working.

### **b. DISCUSSION AND POSSIBLE ACTION TO APPOINT A PRINCIPAL FOR THE NORTH LAS VEGAS CAMPUS**

Member Bentham again reviewed the process used to narrow the applicants to the candidates presented to the Board to be interviewed. Principal Lee Esplin addressed the Board and stated that position was posted through Academica. One candidate dropped before being interviewed by the committee. During the interview process, the applicants were asked to review data from a fictitious school and create a plan for the school, which allowed the committee to assess the candidates' leadership skills. Each candidate was asked six questions during the interview process. He noted that committee members did not score or provide feedback for the candidates from their respective campus or system.

Each Board member took a few minutes to voice opinions about the candidate interviews. Member Fairless expressed concern with Ms. Palomeque's response to questions about Title I students. Both candidates were strong with good experience. Ms. Dessormeau had experience in a turnaround school. She would lean to Ms. Dessormeau. Member Mizer noted that both candidates had vast experience. Ms. Dessormeau struggled to articulate her answers to direct questions. He expressed concern with Ms. Palomeque's commitment; however, she answered that question well and he liked her experience. He leaned to Ms. Palomeque. Member Bredsguard also noted that both candidates had vast experience. Ms. Dessormeau had experience with similar demographics. Ms. Palomeque had experience at multiple campuses; adding that Ms. Palomeque spoke about the students. She leaned to Ms. Palomeque.

Member Harty like Ms. Dessormeau's experience at a Title I school. He liked Ms. Palomeque's pattern of success. He could support either candidate. Member Noble stated that he had been impressed with Ms. Dessormeau when she interviewed before; however, she had a difficult time answer questions directly. Ms. Palomeque answered directly and had experience. He would lean to Ms. Palomeque. Member Bentham stated that he liked that Ms. Dessormeau was from a Mater school. He liked Ms. Palomeque's poise. He would lean to Ms. Palomeque. Member Fairless asked if Principal Manning could let Ms. Palomeque leave mid-year to begin the transition, to which Principal Manning replied in the affirmative.

**MEMBER MIZER MOVED TO APPOINT MINDI PALOMEQUE AS THE NORTH LAS VEGAS PRINCIPAL AND DELEGATE THE CONTRACT TO JOHN BENTHAM, AS BOARD CHAIR, TO HANDLE. MEMBER BREDSGUARD SECONDED THE MOTION, AND THE BOARD VOTED UNANIMOUSLY TO APPROVE.**

**c. DISCUSSION AND POSSIBLE ACTION TO DETERMINE DATE FOR SOMERSET ACADEMY BOARD OF DIRECTORS ANNUAL BOARD**

Member Bentham stated that the suggested dates were in the week of March 21<sup>st</sup> and March 28<sup>th</sup>. Mr. Gary McClain addressed the Board and stated the Board bylaws state that the annual meeting should be held in January or February; however, due to the recent vigorous schedule the annual meeting had not been held. Member Bentham suggested Monday, March 21<sup>st</sup>, which was agreed upon by the other Board members.

**5. ANNOUNCEMENTS AND NOTIFICATIONS**

Principal Scobell congratulated the Losee girls and boys high school basketball teams for their success in playoff games. The campus would be holding a black culture celebration. Principal Lackey stated that the Skye Canyon campus would be holding an academic night which would include an art show. Principal Esplin stated that the Sky Pointe campus would also be holding an academic night. Principal Tiu stated that the NEHS and NJHS induction was on Thursday. Students had participated in the National mathlete competition. The campus would be hold a State geography bee and State science bee. Principal Manning stated that the campus would be holding an academic night and NJSH induction ceremony. They had kindness circles in 5<sup>th</sup> grade. The 5<sup>th</sup> grade teachers had a wax museum on March 23<sup>rd</sup>.

**6. MEMBER COMMENT**

Member Bredsguard thanked the principal search committee and the community members in attendance. Member Bentham echoed the thanks to the committee and community.

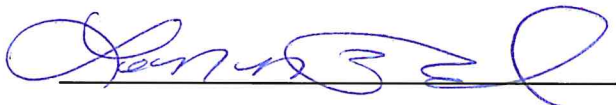
**7. PUBLIC COMMENT**

Public comment was made by Azia Milford, Gwen Neff, Lorraine DeAnda, and Lizz Esparza regarding the principal selection.

**8. ADJOURN MEETING**

**THE MEETING ADJOURNED AT 8:26 P.M.**

Approved on: 3/21/2022

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Lizz Esparza", is written over a horizontal line.

**Secretary of the Board of Directors**

**Somerset Academy of Las Vegas**