

**MINUTES  
OF THE MEETING OF THE  
BOARD OF DIRECTORS OF SOMERSET ACADEMY OF LAS VEGAS  
OCTOBER 19, 2021**

Board of Directors of Somerset Academy of Las Vegas held a public meeting on October 19, 2021 at 6:00 p.m. at 50 N. Stephanie St., Henderson, NV 89074 and via Zoom webinar.

**1. CALL TO ORDER AND ROLL CALL**

Board Chair John Bentham called the meeting to order at 6:11 p.m. In attendance were Board members John Bentham, Sarah McClellan, LeNora Bredsguard, Travis Mizer, Renee Fairless, and Cody Noble (joined at 6:25 p.m.)

Member Will Harty 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, Marla Devitt and Data Analyst Jessica Barr were also in attendance.

**2. PUBLIC COMMENT**

There was no public comment.

**3. CONSENT AGENDA**

- a. APPROVAL OF MINUTES FROM THE OCTOBER 13, 2021 BOARD MEETING**
- b. ACCEPTANCE OF SCHOOL BASED MENTAL HEALTH PROFESSIONALS PROJECT GRANT FUNDS**
- c. APPROVAL OF POLICY REGARDING THE RIGHTS AND NEEDS OF PERSONS WITH DIVERSE GENDER IDENTITIES OR EXPRESSIONS**
- d. APPROVAL OF THE UNLV MOU WITH SKY POINTE**
- e. APPROVAL OF THE UPDATED SOMERSET ACADEMY SPECIAL EDUCATION MANUAL AND IEP POLICIES AND PROCEDURES MANUAL**

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

**4. ACTION & DISCUSSION ITEMS**

The Somerset principals acknowledged the hard work of all of the teachers during the difficult year. The following teachers were recognized for their amazing results: Ashley Carranza, Kelsea Krenka, Samantha Rossi, DeVita Robinson, Marisa Lindsey, Edward Murray, Julie Frehner, Lisa

Goetz, Emily Rosengren, Elizabeth Hawley, Angela Dobson, Tennille Moore, Lizette Alicea, James English, Jennifer Conner, Lana D'Apriele, Rachel Swanson, Benjamin Quinones, Toni Brown, Lonnieca Carter, Shaun Dimery, Casey Rumpel, Rachel Puaina, Erin Grundy, James Carlson, Michelle Martens, Rebecca Cooke, Terry Lynch, Cass Strachan, and Jennifer Jerrell. Stephanie campus student Caitlyn Gorman was also recognized for her winning t-shirt design.

**a. DATA DISCUSSION WITH JESSICA BARR**

Ms. Jessica Barr addressed the Board and reviewed the data as contained in the support materials. She stated that Star ratings were not issued for the 2020/2021 school year; however, it was likely that Star ratings were going to be issued for the 2021/2022 school year. Following a year impacted by the pandemic there were still areas to celebrate; however, all Somerset campuses would need to act urgently and swiftly to improve proficiency and growth. Ms. Barr provided highlights and areas of focus for each campus.

**Aliante Highlights:**

- Middle school ELA growth overall
- Middle school math growth overall
- 5<sup>th</sup> grade IEP growth
- 3<sup>rd</sup> grade ELA proficiency (first Kinder class)

**Aliante Areas of Focus:**

- Elementary ELA growth/Gap
- Elementary math growth/Gap
- Middle School math Gap
- Consistent EIP/EL growth

Member Fairless asked Principal Manning if the 5<sup>th</sup> grade SPED team was sharing the strategies and ideas used to achieve the growth shown in the data report. Principal Manning addressed the Board and stated that one of the 5<sup>th</sup> grade teachers had assumed the role of data coach. She reviewed the new strategies being implemented at Aliante. They now had a K-8 literacy coach and paid a stipend to the Losee math coach to work with the Aliante teachers to implement the Math 360 curriculum. All 4<sup>th</sup>-8<sup>th</sup> grade classes had math boards. A new SPED teacher, who was highly qualified in math and SPED was hired.

Principal Manning stated that Aliante was working closely with Ms. Barr to monitor the growth and proficiency of the students. The first diagnostic and growth monitoring check was showing growth. PDP was brought in to work with the elementary math teachers. Principal Manning noted that the ELA and math proficiency at Aliante was higher than the closest CCSD elementary schools and the two zoned middles schools.

Member Mizer asked if the Board should be concerned with the Star ratings. Mr. Ryan Reeves addressed the Board and stated that the State Public Charter School Authority (SPCSA) had not indicated that the process of notice of concern or notice of breach would be restarted; however, the SPCSA staff recently had the campuses with notices present to the SPCSA board.

He noted that the campuses had been making progress prior to the pandemic; adding that, if needed, they would advocate for special circumstances.

**Lone Mountain Highlights:**

- 5<sup>th</sup> grade math growth median (73) and 5<sup>th</sup> IEP math growth (64)
- 6<sup>th</sup> grade ELA growth – median 75 and 73% of students hit individual growth targets
- 6<sup>th</sup> math growth (median 70) and 8<sup>th</sup> grade math growth (65)
- 8<sup>th</sup> grade English learner ELA/math growth medians (91/89.5)

**Lone Mountain Areas of Concern:**

- Elementary opportunity gap (ELA/math)
- Middle School math opportunity gap
- Consistent English learner support/growth
- Consistency across Elementary claim performance (ELA)

Member Bentham asked to what the tremendous growth in elementary math could be attributed. Principal Cesar Tiu addressed the Board and replied that they focused on the opportunity gap students by grouping them and targeting their needs specific to math. An enrichment intervention block was also implemented. Member Bentham asked how the focus was implemented during the previous year with 50% on campus. Principal Tiu stated that they had offered before and after school tutoring based on data; adding that each group had a maximum of 3 students.

**Losee Highlights:**

- 5<sup>th</sup> grade math growth median (51.5)
- Middle School ELA growth median (the highest Losee has ever had!)
- Middle school math growth median (the highest Losee has ever had!)
- 9<sup>th</sup> grade English learners (avg. ½ level improvement)

**Losee Areas of Focus:**

- Enhanced differentiation to increase Elementary AGP/gap
- Develop primary to enhance numbers of proficient students as they move up
- Middle School opportunity gap
- Elementary IEP/English learner growth

Member Bentham asked Ms. Barr if the growth in 5<sup>th</sup> grade was unique to Somerset or if it was across all systems. Ms. Barr explained that, because they were the only Elementary grade previously tested, the 5<sup>th</sup> grade was the only Elementary grade able to show growth.

Member Bentham asked Principal Scobell if she had started to develop a plan to help the elementary students or if she would be waiting until winter. Principal Jessica Scobell addressed the Board and reviewed that a strategies were already being implemented at the Losee campus. She stated that she had targeted the development of the leadership team, with an emphasis on the elementary grades. Tier 1 instruction was rigorous to meet the needs of the students. The

math growth could be attributed to the outstanding K-12 math coach; adding that he also works with the Aliante and Lone Mountain campuses. The strategists had been separated to a K-2 and a 3-5 strategist. Over the previous six weeks the strategists and admin team had done over 400 classroom visits.

Principal Scobell stated that Losee also had an EL strategist and a Read by Grade 3 strategist. The strategists were modeling lessons and working with the teachers to develop instruction. A Power Hour had been implemented for all grades, with an emphasis on ELA. The time was spent working with the new writing curriculum, in small group reading with the instructional aides (IAs) and classroom teachers, and with i-Ready. Principal Scobell noted that the Elementary grades had eighteen IAs, three per grade level.

Principal Scobell stated that a large portion of the Losee students did not return to campus during the pandemic year, which impacted the growth of those students. She concluded by stating that over 85% of the staff was fully licensed. The Staff members who were working on sub licenses were in programs that would have them completing their credentials within one year.

#### **North Las Vegas Highlights:**

- 5th grade math growth (median 52)
- Middle School ELA growth overall
- Middle School math growth overall
- Middle School EA IEP growth median 7<sup>th</sup>/8<sup>th</sup> (64/67)

#### **North Las Vegas Areas of Concern:**

- 5th grade ELA growth
- Enhanced differentiation to increase Elementary AGP/gap
- Middle School opportunity gap
- IEP/FRL growth/proficiency

Member Bentham noted that the North Las Vegas campus had been hit with a population that did not return to campus like most campus populations; adding that the campus had also had an increase in behavioral issues. He asked Principal Threton if they had been able to reengage the students. Principal Christina Threton addressed the Board and stated that the administration had been proactive. The counseling department had been phenomenal helping with trauma, with high needs, and with social/emotional regulation. With the recent parent conferences, the relationship between home and school was improving, resulting in a behavioral decrease in the week since the conferences. Principal Threton noted that 2021/2022 was the first year they had offered breakfast while on campus full time.

Principal Threton outlined some of the changes on the campus. Growth monitoring was taking place every month on i-Ready. The students were using their leadership notebooks to track. Extra interventionists were hired, to provide one math and one ELA interventionist per grade level. The paraprofessionals took the Praxis test over the summer in order to be fully certified to provide interventions. Tutoring was taking place for 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> grades. Tier 1

instruction was analyzed and training took place on explicit instruction. Principal Threeton concluded by noting that the SPCSA had recently visited the campus.

**Skye Canyon Highlights:**

- 5<sup>th</sup> grade ELA growth median (71) and math (76)
- 3<sup>rd</sup> grade highest math proficiency in school (greater than 60%)
- Middle School math and ELA growth
- 8<sup>th</sup> science proficiency improved from pre-pandemic

**Skye Canyon Areas of Focus:**

- Continue to enhance K-3 reading proficiency
- Continue to enhance consistency across Elementary ELA claim performance
- Middle School math opportunity gap
- Middle School English learner support/growth

Principal Kate Lackey addressed the Board and attributed the highlight areas for Skye Canyon to the teachers and their dedication to the students. She noted that having the smaller class sizes during the pandemic was beneficial and allowed the campus to provide RTI every single day. Principal Lackey stated that the amplified science program had been in existence for three years and had been very beneficial. She concluded by noting that the teachers had completed data trackers and made action plans on providing support to students at each level of proficiency.

**Sky Pointe Highlights:**

- 5<sup>th</sup> grade math growth median (85)
- Middle School math and ELA growth
- 8<sup>th</sup> science proficiency improved from pre-pandemic
- 11<sup>th</sup> ELA – almost have of Sky Pointe students meeting national college readiness benchmark

**Sky Pointe Areas of Focus:**

- Continue to enhance K-3 reading proficiency
- Continue to enhance Elementary writing performance
- 7<sup>th</sup>/8<sup>th</sup> math opportunity gap
- Middle School IEP growth (ELA)

Principal Lee Esplin addressed the Board and stated that Sky Pointe had implemented a new writing program. K-2 was using a block schedule for math and ELA to provided consistent math, writing, and reading intervention. For middle school IEP students, boost math and boost ELA was provided. All students were using i-Ready, with an emphasis on the at home component. Principal Esplin stated that the high school would be moving to Cert assessment, which was more aligned with the ACT test. The Cert assessment was a timed test. The students would take the assessment three times in 9<sup>th</sup> grade, three times in 10<sup>th</sup> grade and two more times in 11<sup>th</sup> grade before taking the ACT test.

**Stephanie Highlights:**

- 5th ELA growth median (67)
- 6<sup>th</sup> ELA – 72.9% of all students and 68.2% of non-proficient students hit their individual growth targets
- 7<sup>th</sup> math growth and median (61)
- Middle School IEP ELA/math growth medians (72.5/62)

**Stephanie Areas of Focus:**

- Enhanced differentiation to increase elementary math AGP/gap
- Elementary ELA opportunity gap
- Continue to enhance K-3 reading proficiency
- Middle School math opportunity gap

Principal David Fossett addressed the Board and stated that one of the top math teachers, James English, had transitioned to a hybrid role. Mr. English held a math foundation class every morning with some of the middle school low achievers. He would then work as a strategist for other teachers and provided coaching on solid math strategies. Mr. English also worked with 5<sup>th</sup> grade intervention groups. Principal Fossett stated that K-3 reading proficiency was a focus. A literacy specialist provided RTI for tier 3 students, as well as pulling groups during the day. He concluded by noting that the strong teachers were working in intervention roles to meet the gap.

Member Fairless asked the principals about the transiency rate following the pandemic and if there was a difference between the schools with high FRL students and the schools with lower FRL students. Sky Pointe experienced more openings than typical. Aliante, Skye Canyon, and Lone Mountain lost students to families leaving the Las Vegas area. North Las Vegas had typical transiency rates, with approximately ten new students per week. Stephanie enrollment was improving following the lowest quarter in quite a while. The lower enrollment was attributed to the opening of several new schools in the area.

Ms. Marla Devitt addressed the Board and expressed appreciation for the work and support provided by Ms. Barr. She noted that the Florida team was always available to assist and support the schools. Member Bentham thanked Ms. Barr, noting that the data report was important information.

**b. ACADEMIC PROGRESS REPORTS, CAMPUS RECOGNITIONS, AND UPDATES**

Principal Tiu reported on the sports, family activities, and NJHS service projects. He noted that the Lone Mountain Quiz Bowl team won their first meet against Faith Lutheran and that the Las Vegas Quiz Bowl Alliance mentioned Lone Mountain student Wade Winchell as a rising star. Principal Fossett reported on family events and the decorations in the school halls provided by the teachers. He noted that the leadership team had met with all grade levels and departments setting next steps.

Principal Esplin reported on the family activities and sports program at the Sky Pointe campus. He praised Principals Manning, Scobell, and Threton for their presentations to the SPCSA. He stated that the principal group worked well together; adding that the Somerset campuses would exceed pre-pandemic expectations with all of the great things happening on the campuses.

Principal Threton reported on campus activities. She stated that some of the ESSER funding would be used for learning walks; adding that teachers would be learning from great teachers. Principal Manning reports on campus activities. She stated that her campus was working collaboratively with the North Las Vegas campus with teachers learning from great teachers.

Principal Lackey reported on campus activities. She stated that the leadership team had participated in a retreat with great bonding and meaningful training. She also noted that an increase in behavior issues led to some healthy restorative justice conversations. Principal Scobell reported on campus activities, including an i-Ready competition and an Elementary reading competition. She stated that the leadership team had formed a culture committee to provide cultural appreciation throughout the year.

**c. DISCUSSION AND POSSIBLE ACTION REGARDING ENROLLMENT**

Principal Esplin stated that enrollment in 10<sup>th</sup> and 11<sup>th</sup> grade was below the projected enrollment and asked the Board to adjust the maximum enrollment numbers. He explained the difficulties of accepting students with credit deficiencies. Principal Esplin stated that the requested adjustments were 200 students for 11<sup>th</sup> grade and 250 for 10<sup>th</sup> grade.

**MEMBER MIZER TO APPROVE AS PRESENTED. MEMBER NOBLE SECONDED THE MOTION, AND THE BOARD VOTED UNANIMOUSLY TO APPROVE.**

**d. REVIEW AND APPROVAL OF SOMERSET ACADEMIC CALENDAR FOR THE 2022/2023 SCHOOL YEAR**

Principal Esplin reviewed the proposed calendar, noting that it was aligned with the 2021/2022 calendar. The school year would start on a Wednesday, which had proved beneficial during the current year. He reviewed the professional development days. Member Bentham asked how it aligned to the CCSD calendar. Principal Esplin stated that CCSD had not issued a calendar yet.

**MEMBER MCCLELLAN MOVED TO APPROVE THE ACADEMIC CALENDAR FOR THE 2022/2023 SCHOOL YEAR, AS PRESENTED. MEMBER BREDSGUARD SECONDED THE MOTION, AND THE BOARD VOTED UNANIMOUSLY TO APPROVE.**

**e. REVIEW AND DISCUSSION OF SPCSA GOVERNANCE STANDARDS**

Mr. Reeves referred to the support materials and stated that, as part of a recently passed legislation, the SPCSA board was designated to create governing standards and training mechanisms. He stated that the standards contained in the support materials had not been

finalized. Training would be mandatory when the standards were finalized. Member Bentham stated that he had attended the SPCSA meeting with Member Bredsguard and were encouraged to change the Board metrics and how Academica was evaluated. Mr. Reeves reviewed the evaluation process and noted that an action plan was presented to the Board and submitted to the SPCSA following the evaluation.

**f. DISCUSSION AND POSSIBLE ACTION TO APPROVE THE VENDOR FOR LOSEE BLEACHER PURCHASE WITH BOND FUNDS FROM THE FOLLOWING: HANSON SPORTS AND STURDI STEEL**

Mr. Gary McClain addressed the Board and stated that the Board had previously approved the pursuit of the bleacher construction. This was the next step in the process. He reviewed the bids received and recommended the Dant Clayton Alum-a-Stand through Hanson Sports. The cost presented was for the product and did not include installation, which would be bid at a later date. Member Mizer asked if the warranty was provided by the installer or the manufacturer. Mr. McClain stated that the installation typically included a one-year warranty. The Sturdi-Steel product had a five-year warranty. The Alum-a-Stand product had a five-year warranty on the structure and a three-year warranty on the finishes.

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

**g. DISCUSSION AND POSSIBLE ACTION TO APPROVE THE CONTRACTOR FOR LOSEE WEIGHT/LOCKER ROOM WITH BOND FUNDS FROM THE FOLLOWING: MOUNTAIN VISTA DEVELOPMENT, NGC, BUILDERS UNITED, ROCHE, SHF INTERNATIONAL**

Mr. McClain stated that the Board had approved the pursuit of the design and bid process for the Losee weight and locker room. Following a public bid, Nevada General Construction was the low bidder. Member Bentham noted the variance in bids and asked if all companies bid the same specification, to which Mr. McClain replied in the affirmative. He stated that all bidders attended a mandatory meeting on site.

**MEMBER NOBLE MOVED TO APPROVE NGC AS THE CONTRACTOR FOR THE LOSEE WEIGHT AND LOCKER ROOM. MEMBER MCCLELLAN SECONDED THE MOTION.**

## **5. ANNOUNCEMENTS AND NOTIFICATIONS**

Member Bentham recognized Member Noble on the birth of his new son and presented a gift from the Board. Member Bentham recognized Principal Fossett for completing his Doctorate and presented a gift from the Board.

## **6. MEMBER COMMENT**

Member McClellan commented on the behavior issues at the campuses and stated that the Board appreciated the efforts of the administrators and teachers when dealing with the issues. She thanked the Stephanie campus for hosting the meeting and complimented the hallway decorations.



Member McClellan thanked the campuses for providing updates on Facebook. She thanked Member Bentham for all of the work he provided for the 10<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Celebration; adding that it had been a great success and a fun day. Member McClellan concluded by providing a tribute to Lisa Evans, a former Somerset administrator, who had recently lost her battle with cancer. Principal Esplin also provided a tribute to Ms. Evans.

Member Bentham reported on the 10<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Celebration. He stated that, after paying the invoices, Somerset would make a small profit. He thanked Academica for providing a donation, which was partially used to provide food and drinks for 200 faculty members. Member Bentham acknowledged Member Bredsguard's recent promotion to principal.

Member Fairless acknowledged that it was a difficult year with behavior issues and thanked the principals for their efforts.

## **7. PUBLIC COMMENT**

There was no public comment.

## **8. ADJOURN MEETING**

**THE MEETING ADJOURNED AT 8:52 P.M.**

**Approved on: November 30, 2021**

  
LeNora Bredsguard (Dec 1, 2021 21:37 PST)

**Secretary of the Board of Directors**

**Somerset Academy of Las Vegas**