

**MINUTES
OF THE MEETING OF THE
BOARD OF DIRECTORS OF SOMERSET ACADEMY OF LAS VEGAS
JUNE 26, 2023**

The Board of Directors of Somerset Academy of Las Vegas held a public meeting on June 26, 2023, at 6:00 p.m. at 4650 Losee Road, North Las Vegas, NV 89081.

1. CALL TO ORDER AND ROLL CALL

The meeting was called to order at 6:01 p.m. by Board Chair Travis Mizer. The following Board members were in attendance: Travis Mizer, LeNora Bredsguard, John Bentham, Will Harty, and Renee Fairless.

Board Members Cody Noble and Sarah McClellan were not in attendance.

Also present were the following principals and assistant principals: Lee Esplin, Jessica Scobell, Shannon Manning, Mindi Palomeque, David Fossett, Colundra Owens, and Jill Dayne. Somerset Inc. representatives Bernie Montero and Suzette Ruiz; Intellatek representatives JJ Christian and Luke Campbell; and Academica representatives Gary McClain, Ryan Reeves, Trevor Goodsell, Nathan DeHoyos, Matt Padron, and Marla Devitt attended the meeting.

2. PUBLIC COMMENT

There was no public comment.

3. CONSENT AGENDA

- a. APPROVAL OF MINUTES FROM THE MAY 8, 2023 BOARD MEETING**
- b. APPROVAL OF FEDERAL PROGRAMS UPDATE TO FINANCIAL POLICIES AND PROCEDURES**
- c. APPROVAL OF RENEWING THE VENDED MEAL AGREEMENT WITH BETTER 4 YOU MEALS/REVOLUTION FOODS**
- d. ACCEPTANCE OF ARP HOMELESS II GRANT FUNDING**

MEMBER BENTHAM 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. ACADEMIC PROGRESS REPORTS AND CAMPUS UPDATES BY SOMERSET PRINCIPALS**

The Somerset Academy of Las Vegas principals addressed the Board to provide updates and highlights from their respective campuses. Principal Jessica Scobell stated that the Losee campus had ten current open positions, with four offer letters out and interviews scheduled throughout the week. The increase in funding had allowed the school to recruit solid veteran teachers. She noted that the spring i-Ready data had recently been received and contained some definite highlights, including three grade levels, kindergarten, 5th, and 8th, with high growth and high achievement. Member Bentham asked if the i-Ready data had anything that had been surprising. Principal Scobell stated that it was disappointing that 6th and 7th grade did not have the same pace of growth as 8th

grade. She stated that the administrative team would meet to discuss how to replicate the growth for those grades.

Principal Mindi Palomeque stated that the North Las Vegas campus had one teacher opening and every person in a teaching position was either in a program or on the way to being licensed, except one seeking a degree in psychology. She noted that, through grants, she was able to run the “walk to read” model and the small group math intervention model. An intervention teacher was hired to pull the lowest of the low students up.

Principal David Fossett stated that the Stephanie campus had only three positions to fill, and he was working to fill them with qualified teachers. Member Harty asked if the i-Ready data had been received and reviewed. Principal Fossett stated that it was extremely positive, trending in the 4 stars for elementary and 5 stars for middle. Principal Lee Esplin stated that there were no open positions at the Sky Pointe campus. He stated that the teachers were very happy with the pay raises made possible by the funding increase.

Assistant Principal Colundra Owens stated that the Lone Mountain campus was completely staffed except for two instructional aides. A new Safe School Professional (SSP) had been hired. The rating projection was a 5 star middle school and a high 4 or low 5 star elementary. The campus was excited to see the EL data results from the SBAC testing. She reviewed the upcoming events scheduled for the month of July and noted that the campus would begin the year with a big push for the Leader in Me program.

Assistant Principal Jill Dayne stated that the Skye Canyon campus was predicted to be 5 stars in elementary and middle school. She reviewed the i-Ready data. On the WIDA testing, 20 students were tested, with 55% showing an increase in their scores and one student exiting. Chronic absenteeism was reduced from 10.4% to 7.07% in elementary and from 12.8% to 8.87% in middle school. The GATE program would be full-time next year. Assistant Principal Dayne reviewed upcoming team building and training.

Principal Shannon Manning stated that the Aliante campus did not have any vacancies. The i-Ready data projections were for a 4 star elementary and 5 star middle school. The campus would have a new counselor and a support animal.

b. UPDATE ON END OF COURSE EXAM RESULTS

Principal Scobell stated that the end of course (EOC) exams had been completed. The students at the Losee and Sky Pointe campuses trended well in English, while math was a struggle. All the EOC requirements had been met. Member Harty noted that it was required to give EOC exams and asked if it was require that the students pass the exams, to which Principal Scobell replied in the negative. She noted that the exams had to be given a weight on the students grade.

c. REVIEW AND APPROVAL OF THE FINAL BUDGET FOR THE 2023/2024 SCHOOL YEAR

Mr. Trevor Goodsell addressed the Board to review the 2023/2024 final budget. The change in funding approved in the recent legislative session was detailed. The base funding was increased from \$7,293 to \$8,966, ELL funding was increased from \$1,669 to \$4,000, GATE increased from \$862 to \$1,075, and at-risk funding increased from \$247 to \$3,138. He noted that the SPED discretionary

unit was still not known. It had been stated by several sources that charter schools should receive equal to the district amount; however, he had not received confirmation in writing. As a precaution, the budget was calculated using \$3,000 instead of the state average of \$3,800.

Mr. Goodsell reviewed the changes resulting from the increased funding including significant raises for teachers and staff with starting salaries aligned with the district. The budget included the absorption of the PERS and insurance increase. Additionally, the retention bonuses were increased. Due to inflation, the summer budgets for supplies and facility maintenance had also seen an increase. Member Harty asked about the difference between version one and version two of the budget. Mr. Goodsell stated that version two had the purchase of the Lone Mountain adjacent land. The contingency in version one was 3.1 and it was 2.9 in version two. The Board deferred budget approval until after discussing the monetary agenda items.

THIS ITEM WAS CONTINUED TO THE END OF THE MEETING.

d. REVIEW AND APPROVAL OF RETENTION BONUSES

Mr. Ryan Reeves addressed the Board and stated that Member Harty had expressed a desire to allocate some surplus funds to Somerset staff. The twelve years of good fiscal policy, discussed with Academics staff by Member Harty, as Board treasurer, were noted. These years of good fiscal policy had led to sufficient days cash on hand to ensure that an increase would not be needed during the 2023/2024 school year. The surplus had also been built to be at or near \$2.5 million. The proposed retention bonuses were noted to be significantly higher than typical. Mr. Reeves noted that some Board members had suggested paying the retention bonus in two portions, with 75% in September and the remaining 25% in December.

Member Mizer asked if the retention bonus increase would be sustainable going forward. Mr. Reeves replied in the negative, noting that the system currently had 170 days cash on hand, which would shrink with the pay increases and vary from year to year. Discussion ensued regarding the correct way to communicate the information that the retention amount was not sustainable. Member Bredsguard asked the principals if there was a particular time of year with a significant loss of staff. Principal Scobell stated that if a teacher stayed until January they did tend to leave before the end of the year. Member Fairless noted that the retention bonus was for the staff members who returned from the previous year. The principals stated that a letter could be crafted to state that the Board requested and was able to provide a one-time larger retention bonus. Member Fairless stated that the letter should include a mention that system principals had exercised fiscal responsibility to aid in the ability to provide a larger retention bonus.

MEMBER HARTY MOVED TO APPROVE THE RETENTION BONUSES AS PRESENTED, WITH 75% PAID IN SEPTEMBER AND THE OTHER 25% PAID IN DECEMBER. MEMBER BENTHAM SECONDED THE MOTION, AND THE BOARD VOTED UNANIMOUSLY TO APPROVE.

e. REVIEW AND APPROVAL PRINCIPAL RAISES

Mr. Reeves stated that principals typically waited until October for the star rating results before they were evaluated and received their raises. The proposal before the Board was to give the principals a 12% raise now and an additional raise after the star rating results were received and the principals received their evaluations. Principal Esplin stated that the Somerset principals were

usually evaluated during the summer. Member Harty asked how the 12% compared to the district. Mr. Reeves stated that the district amount was not known. Member Bredsguard stated that the district administrators were told that they would receive a cost of living adjustment and that the PERS that was taken away would be given back.

Several principals expressed concerns regarding the comparatively smaller raise proposed for principals in contrast to the higher raise anticipated for many assistant principals. They noted the necessity of offering more substantial raises to assistant principals to remain competitive with the school district. Member Mizer explained that the evaluation process would center on growth, demographics, and Star ratings of the various campuses. Member Harty recognized the significant impact administrators had on campuses and their deserving of competitive pay; however, he also pointed out that the proposed increase was the largest ever given. Discussion ensued regarding the difficulty of comparing growth and data among campuses with different enrollment and demographics.

MEMBER BENTHAM MOVED TO GIVE A 12% RAISE ON JULY 1, 2023, WITH AN ADDITIONAL AMOUNT, UP TO 8%, TIED TO PERFORMANCE AS DETERMINED BY THE EVALUATION COMMITTEE. MEMBER BREDSGUARD SECONDED THE MOTION, AND THE BOARD VOTED UNANIMOUSLY TO APPROVE.

f. REVIEW AND APPROVAL OF THE ACADEMICA NEVADA CONTRACT

Mr. Reeves acknowledged the 12-year partnership with Somerset Academy and the significant student growth at Somerset Academy. Academica had maintained a per-pupil fee of \$450 but now requested a 10% increase to \$495 per pupil due to rising labor and software costs. This increase was being proposed to all Academica boards. Mr. Reeves assured the board that, despite the increase, the fee would shrink as a percentage of the school's budget, allowing more funds for teacher salaries and classroom resources. He noted that Academica had grown its employee base and invested in advanced software. As part of the fee, they would provide access to Cognia software at no additional charge, offering valuable components like artificial intelligence and student mental health support. Academica was committed to ensuring Somerset Academy paid no more than other schools they served. The fee increase request was made to all schools, and the contract's execution depended on approval from all schools in Nevada

Member Mizer asked if Academica was asking for an increase nationally, to which Mr. Reeves replied in the negative. He clarified that Academica Florida schools paid separately for Cognia, with a proposed service fee of 5% and anticipated additional fees to come. Member Bentham asked if Academica had an in-house publicist. Mr. Reeves stated that the internal public relations manager had recently left; however, Academica had hired a person for that position. Member Bentham noted that the contract did not explicitly mention lobbyists and lobbying efforts. Mr. Reeves explained that Academica remained committed to lobbying, incurring expenses in the six figures, alongside additional expenses for political activities in the same range. Member Bentham noted that it was important to continue lobbying efforts for charter schools.

MEMBER FAIRLESS MOVED TO ACCEPT THE 10% INCREASE IN THE ACADEMICA FEE FOR THE NEXT TWO YEARS. MEMBER BENTHAM SECONDED THE MOTION, AND THE BOARD VOTED TO APPROVE WITH A VOTE OF FIVE TO ONE, WITH MEMBER MIZER VOTING IN OPPOSITION.

g. REVIEW AND APPROVAL OF THE INTELLATEK CONTRACT

Mr. JJ Christian, with Intellatek, addressed the Board and expressed gratitude for the 11-year partnership and proposed raising their fees by 50 cents per student per month, increasing from \$42 to \$48 per student per year. He highlighted the significant growth in the services provided by Intellatek, from providing only a few computers to now supporting various IT-related aspects like Chromebooks, phones, cameras, and infinite campus support. Member Mizer inquired about Intellatek's current contract status, and Mr. Christian confirmed that they were under a 12-month contract that automatically renewed annually. Member Fairless inquired about additional fees in the contract. Mr. Christian referred to the rates contained in the contract. Member Harty asked whether installation fees had increased, and Mr. Christian stated they would be raised by 10%.

Member Mizer asked if it was bid out every year or automatically renewed. Mr. Goodsell explained that the service had not been bid for several years in Nevada, but Intellatek recently bid for services in Colorado and was significantly under the next lowest bidder. Member Mizer expressed the preference for requesting bids instead of automatic renewals. Member Harty agreed but suggested approving the contract this year and requesting multiple bids before the contract's expiration next year.

MEMBER BENTHAM MOVED TO APPROVE THE INTELLATEK CONTRACT AS PRESENTED WITH THE CAVEAT THAT WE INITIATE A REQUEST FOR BIDS IN THE SPRING. MEMBER HARTY SECONDED THE MOTION, AND THE BOARD VOTED UNANIMOUSLY TO APPROVE.

h. DISCUSSION AND APPROVAL OF VENDOR FOR ADDITIONAL PLAYGROUND STRUCTURE FOR THE STEPHANIE CAMPUS

Mr. Nathan DeHoyos addressed the Board and stated that the Stephanie campus wanted to add a playground structure on the south side of the property. The campus had raised a total of \$58,845, with \$32,348 from Apex funds, \$9,497 from other SGF funds, and \$17,000 from a PTO contribution. Park Pro Playgrounds, which offered the shortest lead time and the ability to install the system without digging up the asphalt, was the preferred choice for selection. Member Fairless noted that the bid expired on June 22nd and asked if Park Pro Playgrounds would honor the bid, to which Mr. DeHoyos replied in the affirmative. Member Bentham stated that the contract stipulated that payment be made through AvidPay with a 5% processing fee. Mr. Goodsell stated that the payment could be made with a check to avoid a processing fee.

MEMBER FAIRLESS VOTED TO ACCEPT THE BID AND THE PURCHASE ORDER FROM PARK PRO PLAYGROUNDS FOR THE SOMERSET STEPHANIE CAMPUS. MEMBER HARTY SECONDED THE MOTION, AND THE BOARD VOTED UNANIMOUSLY TO APPROVE.

i. DISCUSSION AND APPROVAL OF VENDOR TO REPLACE THE RESTROOM PARTITIONS FOR THE LOSEE MIDDLE AND HIGH SCHOOLS

Mr. DeHoyos stated that the metal partitions currently in the Losee restrooms had been frequently damaged resulting in many repairs. While discussing with Principal Scobell they decided to look at a different product. The bids received were for a partitions made with phenolic, which was a more durable product. Mr. DeHoyos recommended selecting Henri Specialties, for \$71,573.00, as the vendor. The Henri Specialties bid included a twenty-five year warranty on the product and a two

year warranty on craftsmanship and installation. Principal Scobell noted that the product was also graffiti proof.

MEMBER BENTHAM MOVED TO APPROVE HENRI SPECIALTIES AS THE VENDOR, AS PRESENTED. MEMBER FAIRLESS SECONDED THE MOTION, AND THE BOARD VOTED UNANIMOUSLY TO APPROVE.

j. DISCUSSION AND APPROVAL OF VENDOR FOR EXTERIOR PAINT FOR THE LOSEE CAMPUS

Mr. DeHoyos stated that he had received two quotes for painting the entire campus, one for \$249,000 and one for \$289,000. The Board was being asked to approve a vendor for painting the accents, the pop-outs, the trash enclosures, and the handrails on the building, rather than the entire campus. The recommended vendor for this task was identified as CertaPro Painters, and the cost would amount to \$39,980.00. The paint bid came with a lifetime warranty estimated to be approximately ten years. Mr. Gary McClain addressed the Board and stated that the cost to paint the entire campus had already been included in the budget. He suggested that the Board could approve the cost to paint the entire campus while including a not-to-exceed clause in the motion. Member Mizer asked if the entire campus needed to be painted. In response, Principal Scobell explained that the paint was fading, particularly in the pop-out areas. Member Fairless asked if the custodial staff could perform the painting, and Principal Scobell responded by stating that the custodians were currently occupied with painting numerous interior areas.

MEMBER HARTY MOVED TO APPROVE UP TO \$290,000 FOR PAINTING AT LOSEE, WITH ACADEMICA DELEGATED THE AUTHORITY TO SELECT THE FINAL VENDOR. MEMBER BENTHAM SECONDED THE MOTION, AND THE BOARD VOTED UNANIMOUSLY TO APPROVE.

k. DISCUSSION AND APPROVAL OF VENDOR FOR FENCE HEIGHT EXTENSION AND PRIVACY SLATS FOR THE SKYE CANYON CAMPUS

Mr. DeHoyos stated that the Skye Canyon campus had been having issues with balls going over the fence and rolling down Shaumber Road and taking a left on Grand Teton. After several consultations, three proposals were received for extending the height of the fence from six feet to ten feet. The recommended vendor was identified as All Star Fence. The bid received would involve the replacement of the existing fencing with ten-foot fencing. The project was planned to be funded using SGF funds.

MEMBER BENTHAM MOVED TO ACCEPT THE ALL STAR FENCE QUOTE AS PRESENTED FOR \$23,000. MEMBER BREDSGUARD SECONDED THE MOTION, AND THE BOARD VOTED UNANIMOUSLY TO APPROVE.

l. REVIEW AND APPROVAL OF A REVISION TO THE SOMERSET ACADEMY BOARD OF DIRECTORS BYLAWS

Mr. Reeves stated that adding an emeritus status in the bylaws had been previously approved by the Board; however, the eligibility was found to be restrictive, and the issue of registration priority for an emeritus member was not addressed. The revision presented aimed to clarify the emeritus status and indicated that an emeritus member would be considered a former Board member who had served for more than one term and had been an officer for at least one year. The revision further stated that an emeritus member could attend a Board meeting upon invitation of the Board chair or a

majority of the Board to provide support. Additionally, the revision pointed out that emeritus members were to be regarded as Board members for the purpose of the registration policy.

MEMBER BENTHAM MOVED TO APPROVE AS PRESENTED. MEMBER FAIRLESS SECONDED THE MOTION, AND THE BOARD VOTED UNANIMOUSLY TO APPROVE.

m. DISCUSSION AND POSSIBLE ACTION REGARDING THE PURCHASE OF PROPERTY ADJACENT TO THE LONE MOUNTAIN CAMPUS

Mr. Reeves stated that the Board was being asked to designate authority to a Board member to negotiate the purchase of property adjacent to the Lone Mountain campus. Mr. Goodsell stated that the purchase would not have an adverse effect on the days cash on hand. Member Fairless asked about the possible use of the land. Mr. Reeves stated that the property could be used for a stand-alone gymnasium and parking. Member Mizer asked if the purchase would hinder the development of the Sky Pointe property, to which Mr. Goodsell replied in the negative. Member Bentham stated that it was the only piece of land available adjacent to the campus.

MEMBER HARTY MOVED TO APPROVE THE DELEGATION OF THE POTENTIAL NEGOTIATION FOR THE PURCHASE OF THE LAND ADJACENT TO THE LONE MOUNTAIN CAMPUS TO JOHN BENTHAM AND ACADEMICA. MEMBER FAIRLESS SECONDED THE MOTION, AND THE BOARD VOTED UNANIMOUSLY APPROVE.

c. REVIEW AND APPROVAL OF THE FINAL BUDGET FOR THE 2023/2024 SCHOOL YEAR (CONTINUED)

MEMBER BENTHAM MOVED TO APPROVE FINAL BUDGET VERSION 2 AS PRESENTED. MEMBER BREDSGUARD SECONDED THE MOTION, AND THE BOARD VOTED UNANIMOUSLY TO APPROVE.

5. ANNOUNCEMENTS AND NOTIFICATIONS

Mr. Reeves stated that a letter had been received from the SPCSA regarding the single audit, which had been delayed. He noted that delay was caused, in part, by the increase in federal funding and the change in auditing firms. The single audit was expected to be completed in five to seven business days. Member Bentham asked if Academica had been in communication with SPCSA regarding the delay and expected completion date, to which Mr. Reeves replied in the affirmative. Member Harty asked if the same auditing firm would be recommended for the 22/23 school year audit. Mr. Reeves replied in the affirmative and explained that the delay was not caused by Rubin Brown.

6. MEMBER COMMENT

Member Harty expressed appreciation for the conversations held during the meeting regarding difficult decisions. Appreciation for the conversations was also expressed by Member Bredsguard, who looked forward to more discussions with the principals concerning the evaluation process. Member Mizer noted that salary discussions were awkward and expressed appreciation for the principals. Member Bentham stated that he looked forward to helping to create an evaluation process and thanked the principals for the work. Member Fairless expressed appreciation for the comradery of the system principals, and she also extended thanks to Academica for the presentations provided during the meeting. Mr. Reeves announced that, with the 40th pick in the second round of the NBA draft, Maxwell Lewis, a

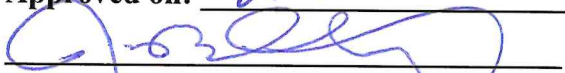
Losee alumni, was selected. Principal Esplin introduced the system executive office staff: Renee Kohley the office/NSLP manager and Tiffany Lewis the grant manager.

7. PUBLIC COMMENT

There was no public comment.

8. ADJOURN MEETING

THE MEETING ADJOURNED AT 7:15 P.M.

Approved on: 8.21.23


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