

**MINUTES**  
**of the meeting of the**  
**BOARD OF DIRECTORS of SOMERSET ACADEMY OF LAS VEGAS**  
**February 19, 2019**

The Board of Directors of Somerset Academy of Nevada held a public meeting on February 19, 2019, at 6:00 p.m. at 4650 Losee Road, North Las Vegas, NV 89081.

**1. Call to order and Roll Call**

Board Chair John Bentham called the meeting to order at 6:03 p.m. with a quorum present. In attendance were Board members John Bentham, Sarah McClellan, Travis Mizer, Gary McClain, Carrie Boehlecke, and Cody Noble (joined at 6:28 p.m.).

Board members Will Harty was not present at this meeting.

Also present was Executive Director John Barlow, as well as Principal Lee Esplin, Principal Kate Lackey, Principal Sherry Pendleton, Principal Ruby Norland, Assistant Principal Meagan Hoffman, Assistant Principal Jessica Pinjuv, Assistant Principal Michele Lorig, and Student Advocate Pavielle Banks. Academica representatives Crystal Thiriot, Trevor Goodsell, Gayle Jefferson, and Ryan Reeves were also present.

**2. Public Comment and Discussion**

Jennifer Davis spoke about keeping the calendar close to the CCSD calendar, her concerns with math options for 12<sup>th</sup> grade students, and raising teacher salaries in order to keep quality teachers.

The following members of the public spoke in support appointing Assistant Principal Cesar Tiu to the position of Lone Mountain Principal: Chrissy Stevens, Elizabeth Lytle-Martinez, Devin Davis, Laura Harber, Laura Howard, Kristen DiLorenzo, and Jennifer West.

**3. Consent Agenda**

**a. Minutes from the November 19, 2018 Board Meeting and the February 7, 2019 Telephonic Board meeting.**

**b. Approval of Recommendation from the Finance Committee:**

**1. School Financial Performance (Not for Action)**

**2. Approval of the Lease Agreement with Vector Bank for Losee Technology Update**

**3. Approval of Lone Mountain Fourth Amendment to Lease Agreement**

**Member McClellan moved to approve the consent agenda. Member Boehlecke seconded the motion, and the Board voted unanimously to approve.**

#### **4. Academic Update and Executive Director Report**

Executive Director John Barlow addressed the Board and stated that Ms. Jessica Barr had visited each school to review the current data; adding that each campus would present the actions being taken, based upon the findings from Ms. Barr's analysis, to improve the STAR ratings.

Assistant Principal Meagan Hoffman addressed the Board and stated that Aliante campus was currently trending toward a 2 Star school; adding that, as a year one school, they did not have any prior data. Assistant Principal Hoffman stated that the 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> grade CGP (conditional growth percentile) was in the low twenties, which showed that the curriculum was not being used with fidelity; adding that the 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> grade classes were also low enough to be a concern. Assistant Principal Hoffman outlined focuses for improvement in MAP: they would be using the digital program, MobyMax, for blended learning; they would be sending teachers to Mater Academy to watch the curriculum being used; they have shared the data, which Ms. Barr was able to bring down to each student, with all 3<sup>rd</sup> through 7<sup>th</sup> grade teachers to help them target the students needing extra help; and they have curriculum and standards training planned. Member McClellan asked if they were using the same math curriculum K-5, to which Assistant Principal replied that they were using Go Math; adding that they had also arranged training in March on the curriculum.

Principal Sherry Pendleton addressed the Board and stated that Lone Mountain Middle School was trending toward a 5 Star rating which could be attributed to the change in the math curriculum; adding that they had engaged the teachers in professional development, had maximized in class instructional minutes, and had focused on standards learning. Principal Pendleton further stated that the Lone Mountain Elementary School was trending toward a high 4 Star rating; adding that 3<sup>rd</sup> grade was the area of concern. Principal Pendleton stated that Lone Mountain would be collaborating with the North Las Vegas campus to replicate the best practices used in 3<sup>rd</sup> grade at that campus. Principal Pendleton stated that they would also focus on the opportunity gap by restructuring the Flex Classes to target the instructional needs of students.

Assistant Principal Michele Lorig addressed the Board and stated that Losee Middle School was trending toward a 3 Star; adding that they had been responsive, during the first round of data checks with Ms. Barr, in setting up enrichment programs in ELA and math. Assistant Principal Lorig stated that, in reviewing that second round of data, they would be able to reassess the progress; adding that, with an opportunity for growth in math, they would be working with the Somerset math coordinator, Mr. Richard Villanueva. Assistant Principal Lorig stated that the elementary school was trending toward a 2 Star with a possibility for a 3 Star; adding that, with the elementary school being comprised of many brand new teachers and teachers that, although they were not new to teaching, were new to Somerset Academy and charter schools, they were in the process of building relationships. Assistant Principal Lorig stated that they were implementing cross training across grade levels and making adjustments as needed; adding that they would also be using the Exact Path program, a web based program, which would add a minimum of thirty minutes of intervention per week in the areas needed. Executive Director Barlow stated that Principal Pendleton met with Assistant Principal Lorig to discuss implementing the flex schedule, with the support imbedded for the students, at the Losee campus next year.

Ms. Pavielle Banks, the North Las Vegas Dean, addressed the Board and stated that North Las Vegas was trending to be a 3 Star school in elementary and the middle school was trending toward a 4 Star; adding that they were working to close the opportunity gaps with interventions for students and teachers. Ms. Banks reviewed the action steps at North Las Vegas: monitoring the IReady usage and diagnostic growth by using incentives for teachers; working with each grade level to determine individual median growth percentage; creating action steps with the teachers to support and monitor student

achievement; modeling and planning with the 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> grade teachers to ensure the students are receiving the instruction needed to improve; and using small group instruction to close the opportunity gap. Ms. Banks voiced her support for Assistant Principal Christina Threeton.

Principal Lee Esplin addressed the Board and expressed appreciation for the opportunity to work with Ms. Barr, stating that, with Ms. Barr's ability to help them understand the rating process, the Sky Pointe middle school was trending toward a 5 Star. Principal Esplin stated that, after using the data to identify the students who needed intervention, they adjusted the schedules to provide additional instruction, and were using the advisory period if needed to boost the student's learning. Principal Esplin stated that the elementary school was trending toward a 4 Star, with a 5 Star rating attainable; adding that they had identified the struggling areas to provide support as needed, with, among other things a boot camp, for the students needing a boost in ELA and math. Principal Esplin stated that, although they did not have information on how the high school was trending, the MAP data was significantly high.

Principal Kate Lackey addressed the Board and stated that the Skye Canyon Middle School was trending to a 5 Star school; adding that the teachers would be meeting with Ms. Barr to discuss how to help the bubble students. Principal Lackey stated that the elementary school was trending to be a 5 Star school; adding that they had in depth discussions with Ms. Barr about the bubble students and how to help them improve. Principal Lackey stated that they discussed how to teach to the high achieving students in order to meet their needs; adding that the teachers were developing action plans for each of their students and would meet with administration to review the plans.

Principal Ruby Norland addressed the Board and stated that, although Stephanie Middle School was trending toward a 5 Star, they continued to work hard to identified the bubble students and had created an enrichment course to ensure that they were receiving the help needed to improve. Principal Norland stated that the students had created their own goals, based on their MAP assessment, which would help them internalize the information and give them the motivation to improve. Principal Norland stated that the elementary school was trending toward a 4 Star school; adding that the biggest concern was the 4<sup>th</sup> grade ELA opportunity gaps. During data day they reviewed the plan to improve the previously identified struggling students; adding that they reviewed the individual teachers to identify how to best utilize the instructional coaches to improve consistency among the teachers.

Executive Director Barlow stated that they would be holding a system-wide staff professional development day with the majority of every session built upon the enrollment or rolling out of standards. Executive Director Barlow invited Principal Esplin and Assistant Principal Jessica Pinjuv to review the graduation trajectory for Sky Pointe and Losee.

Assistant Principal Pinjuv addressed the Board and stated that there were currently 71 seniors, which included 3 juniors who had declared for early graduation, with 43 seniors who were on track to graduate with all of their credits to date and their volunteer hours complete. Assistant Principal Pinjuv stated that there were 4 seniors lacking one credit, 2 seniors lacking two credits, and 2 seniors lacking three or more credits; adding that the 2 seniors lacking three or more credits were in the special education program and would be coming back for a fifth year to finish their schooling. Assistant Principal Pinjuv explained the efforts to assist the students lacking credits, including offering online credit retrieval programs; adding that the students that came to Somerset credit deficient were given full schedules in the courses needed to graduate. Assistant Principal Pinjuv stated that, although many students state that they had completed the volunteer hours, only 46 of the 71 students had submitted the paperwork to complete the requirement; adding that 6 seniors had completed 75% or more of their hours and 5 seniors had completed at least 50% of their hours, leaving 14 students needing a lot of hours. Assistant Principal Pinjuv stated that the students had many opportunities to complete their hours. Member McClellan asked

if the special education students not graduating would go against the graduation rate, to which Assistant Principal Pinjuv replied that it would. Member McClellan asked for clarification about the volunteer hour requirement. Executive Director Barlow stated that it was part of the charter that the students would not graduate without the volunteer hours.

Principal Esplin stated that there were 114 seniors at Sky Pointe with 75 on track to graduate, with 7 students lacking one credit, 2 students lacking two credits, and 4 seniors lacking three or more credits; adding that all of the students were in classes, either at the school or online, to be on track to graduate. Principal Esplin stated that, next year, all credit retrieval would be done online to avoid overcrowding classes with students who had previously failed classes. Principal Esplin stated that 78 students had completed and turned in all of their service hours; adding that many students state that, although they had not been turned in, their hours were completed. Principal Esplin stated that they would follow up weekly with the students and the parents.

**5. Discussion and Possible Action to Appoint Christina Threeton as the Principal for the Somerset North Las Vegas Campus**

Executive Director Barlow stated that, during the February 7, 2019 telephonic board meeting, Ms. Threeton had been named interim principal with the recommendation to appoint her as the principal during this meeting; adding that Ms. Threeton had the full support of the staff at the North Las Vegas campus as well as his office. Member Bentham stated that, although Ms. Threeton was attending a retreat with her administrative team, she could be available by phone if any Board member would like to ask her any questions.

Member Noble asked for clarification as to whether the appointment would be immediate or for the 2019/2020 school year. Executive Director Barlow stated that he would recommend that they appoint her immediately. Discussion ensued regarding the time frame for the appointment.

**Member Noble moved to appoint Christina Threeton as the principal at North Las Vegas, effective immediately. Member Mizer seconded the motion, and the Board voted unanimously to approve.**

**6. Interview of Somerset Lone Mountain Principal Candidate Cesar Tiu**

Member Bentham asked Mr. Cesar Tiu how he would address any concerns related to his appointment. Mr. Tiu addressed the Board and stated that he would develop relationships and show them that he could continue the great things that were happening at Somerset Lone Mountain. Mr. Tiu introduced himself and reviewed his background.

Member McClain stated that the new principal would be following in the footsteps of a strong leader who had created a strong brand and asked how he would create his own brand after Principal Pendleton stepped away, to which Mr. Tiu replied that he would continue to uphold the Somerset vision and mission. Member Boehlecke asked how he would handle situations where he would not be able to say yes to a request from a parent or teacher, to which Mr. Tiu replied that he would start by being a good listener, keep the end in mind, and try to make it a win-win situation. Member Boehlecke stated that many of a principal's duties were procedural and budgetary and asked what roles Mr. Tiu had in those items, to which Mr. Tiu reviewed his typical day at the school; adding that he was in charge of the special education budget at Lone Mountain.

Member McClellan stated that Mr. Tiu was a fairly new administrator and asked him to state any perceived weaknesses and what areas he would focus on for improvement. Mr. Tiu stated that the amount of experience he had wasn't as important as the support he would receive; adding that Principal Pendleton had a shared leadership system and he would continue with that system. Member McClellan asked what weaknesses he would work on with Principal Pendleton while she was available to help, to which Mr. Tiu replied that he would work on budgeting. Member Mizer asked how Mr. Tiu would deal with an underperforming teacher or assistant principal. Mr. Tiu stated that he would coach an underperforming person; however, there may be a point when he would have to let a teacher go. Member Mizer asked what the criteria was for a 5 Star school, to which Mr. Tiu replied that it was attendance, student achievement from the state testing scores, climate survey, and opportunity gap.

Member Noble asked if the admin team had discussed the data and made decisions about how to proceed to ensure that the school continued to progress. Mr. Tiu stated that, on the February 13<sup>th</sup> data day, they met with all of the teachers followed by grade level meetings; adding that they developed intervention for the students who showed a need for improvement. Member Noble stated that he had heard a couple concerns about his short time as an administrator and asked how he would answer those concerns, to which Mr. Tiu replied that, although his time in administration was short, he had trained under a strong leader who had a shared leadership style. Member Noble stated that the Board would be asked if Mr. Tiu had enough experience to be a principal and asked for clarification as to whether Mr. Tiu thought experience was an important qualification. Mr. Tiu stated that the type of leadership that he had and the relationships he had built with the teachers, students, and parents would help him as principal. Member Noble asked why he wanted to be the principal, to which Mr. Tiu stated that he had the drive, he was very dedicated to the school, and he would uphold the Somerset vision and mission.

Member Bentham stated that, looking at the scores from the data, there would be some challenges and asked what he would do in the next three to four months to affect change in the students needing intervention. Mr. Tiu stated that he would go to the school improvement plan and explained the goals in the plan; adding that the recommendations from Ms. Barr were in place at Lone Mountain. Member Bentham asked if Mr. Tiu was currently teaching anything in the Doral Leadership Institute and what he had learned while attending. Mr. Tiu stated that he had presented in a small group and shared the four types of teachers. Member Bentham asked how his planning at the upcoming retreat would change if he was appointed as principal for next year, to which Mr. Tiu stated that he would hire people who had strengths to balance his weaknesses.

Executive Director Barlow asked how Mr. Tiu would carry on the collaboration between the Lone Mountain, North Las Vegas, and Losee campuses. Mr. Tiu stated he had already been discussing collaboration with Principal Threton and was excited to include Assistant Principal Lorig in their plans; adding that they had teachers traveling between campuses to help with training. Executive Director Barlow asked what type of person he would look for to fill the vacancy in the admin team if he were appointed, to which Mr. Tiu replied he would hire someone to complement his strengths and balance his weaknesses. Executive Director Barlow stated that, in working with Mr. Tiu, he had found him to be extremely professional and always on point with developing plans to meet the student's needs.

## **7. Discussion and Action to Appoint a Lone Mountain Principal**

Member Mizer expressed concern about a lack of communication to the Board regarding the potential candidates for principal openings; adding that it was the Board's responsibility to ensure that the best candidates were presented in order for them to make the best decision. Executive Director Barlow

stated that there were good candidates within the Somerset system and within the Doral Leadership Institute.

Member Boehlecke stated that, because it was the Board's responsibility to make the right choice, it was important to have the conversations and ask the questions; adding that, through the questions asked during the interview, the Board was able to better understand Mr. Tiu's ability to run a school. Member Noble stated that, although he was supportive of Mr. Tiu, he was concerned about his lack of administrative experience.

**Member Noble moved that Cesar Tiu be appointed as the Lone Mountain principal for the 2019/2020 school year. Member Mizer seconded the motion, and the Board voted unanimously to approve.**

## **12. Review and Approval of Bond Financing Resolution**

Mr. Trevor Goodsell addressed the Board and stated that, with Lone Mountain's option to purchase now open, it was time for another bond. Mr. Paul Jasin addressed the Board and reviewed the bond resolution as contained in the handout; adding that he was asking the Board to approve the resolution within the parameters explained. Member Noble asked how the market compared to the deal that was just completed, to which Mr. Jasin stated that the projected rate was 5.5% compared to 5.3% on the previous transaction. Member Noble asked if a preliminary analysis had been completed to check if there was anything within the Somerset system that would affect the bond rating, to which Mr. Jasin stated that the rating had been affirmed at BB. Member Noble asked if the transaction would be subject to regulatory approval, to which Mr. Goodsell replied that the bond would be through the state of Arizona and the process would be similar to the previous bond

**Member McClellan moved to approve the bond financing resolution, as presented. Member McClain seconded the motion, and the Board voted unanimously to approve.**

## **13. Update and Revision to the Employee Handbook**

Mr. Ryan Reeves addressed the Board and stated that NRS 391.056 stated that the Board should adopt a policy which would require a licensed employee to report to the Board if they were arrested for or convicted of a crime; adding that the document from the support materials would be added to the Employee Handbook. Member McClain asked how the revision would affect sitting staff. Mr. Reeves replied that currently all employees were required to be fingerprinted every three years; adding that an email would be sent to employees informing them of the addition of the policy and asking them to report any past or future events of this nature. Member Noble asked if this was, regardless of whether the Board approved the revision, required by law. Mr. Reeves replied that the statute was written that the obligation was upon the Board to create the policy, then upon the employee to report to the administrative head of the charter school, and then upon the administrative head of the charter school to report to the Department of Education; adding that, by approving the proposed policy, the Board would be fulfilling their requirements.

**Member McClain moved to approve the revision to the employee handbook, as presented. Member Boehlecke seconded the motion, and the Board voted unanimously to approve.**

#### **14. Review and Approval of Affiliation Agreement**

Mr. Reeves stated that, although the it was not yet completed, he had been working with Somerset Academy, Inc. to create an affiliation agreement for Board approval; adding that the Board had requested more specificity and detail regarding the agreement and the plan to ensure that the agreement was effective for both entities. Mr. Reeves reviewed the changes that were proposed after the review of the current agreement; adding that the proposed agreement would contain more opportunities for Somerset Academy of Las Vegas to receive support and assistance from Somerset Academy, Inc.

**This item was tabled**

#### **8. Review and Approval of the Somerset Academy Academic Calendar for the 2019/2020 School Year**

Executive Director Barlow stated that the proposed calendar was closely aligned with the CCSD calendar and reviewed the parent teacher conference date, the data days, and the staff development days; adding that the calendar met the NDE requirements. Discussion ensued regarding the similarities and differences from the CCSD calendar. Member Boehlecke stated that the professional development date in March differs from CCSD and asked if the calendar could be adjusted to match CCSD for that date.

**Member Mizer moved to approve the 2019/2020 school calendar, as presented, with the adjustment to move the professional development day from March 13<sup>th</sup> to March 9<sup>th</sup>. Member Noble seconded the motion, and the Board voted unanimously to approve.**

#### **9. Discussion and Possible Action Regarding Revised Grade-Level Maximum Enrollment for the 2019/2020 School Year**

Ms. Crystal Thiriot addressed the Board and stated that Member Noble had requested a deeper conversation about the enrollment targets and the possibility of adjusting the targets to allow Somerset to grow and retain the students from kindergarten through 12<sup>th</sup> grade; adding that she had met with the principals to discuss options for adjusting the targets. Ms. Thiriot reviewed the targets for the Losee campus which would include adding an extra class for grades K-6. Executive Director Barlow stated that they would have the 6<sup>th</sup> grade function similar to the 5<sup>th</sup> grade instead of as a traditional middle school grade. Member Bentham asked if, with the additional students, the 25:1 student to teacher ratio would be maintained, to which Ms. Thiriot replied in the affirmative. Discussion ensued regarding how the proposal would affect the environment for 6<sup>th</sup> grade, the Star rating, and the budget. Ms. Thiriot reviewed the other revisions as contained in the support material.

**Member McClellan moved to approve the revised grade-level maximum enrollment for the 2019/2020 school year, as presented. Member Boehlecke seconded the motion, and the Board voted unanimously to approve.**

#### **10. Review and Approval of Renewing the Vended Meal Agreement with Three Square**

Ms. Gayle Jefferson addressed the Board and stated that three Somerset campuses participate in the National School Lunch Program (NSLP) with Three Square as the vendor; adding that the vendor agreement needed to be renewed. Executive Director Barlow stated that Three Square was very responsive in resolving any issues. Member Noble asked how long Somerset would have the right to extend, to which

Ms. Jefferson stated that the pricing was locked in for four years. Ms. Jefferson reviewed the FRL numbers from the campuses that were not currently offering NSLP: Aliante was at 18.4%, Lone Mountain was at 25%, Sky Pointe was just under 14%, and Skye Canyon was just under 12%.

**Member Boehlecke moved to approve the renewal of the vended meal agreement with Three Square. Member McClain seconded the motion, and the Board voted unanimously to approve.**

#### **11. Review and Approval of HVAC Service Provider**

Ms. Jefferson reviewed the bids and rubric for the HVAC service. Ms. Jefferson stated that there had been concerns expressed regarding the installation of the HVAC system at the Skye Canyon by No Sweat Mechanical; however, the issues had been addressed and resolved. Discussion ensued regarding the difference in the pricing for the companies.

**Member Noble moved to approve the proposal from No Sweat Mechanical for the HVAC maintenance service. Member Mizer seconded the motion, and the Board voted unanimously to approve.**

#### **15. Academica Announcements and Notifications**

Ms. Thiriot reminded the Board about the Strategic Planning Meeting scheduled for February 23<sup>rd</sup> at 8:00 a.m. in room 300 at the Losee campus.

#### **16. Member Comment**

Member McClellan thanked the staff and administration for providing informational updates.

Member Bentham issued a challenge to have the schools encourage the parents to submit online reviews of the school, with the goal for every school to have 100 reviews by the end of the year.

Member Mizer stated he had a concern regarding 2 Star ratings and offered any assistance the Board could provide to improve the rating.

Member Noble stated that he was impressed that a teacher at the Sky Pointe campus had formed an archery club and worked with the administration to submit and obtain a grant to fund the club.

#### **17. Public Comment and Discussion**

Rhonda Crostic-Maglietti, a parent, spoke about the culture, administration, and communication at the Losee campus.

#### **18. Adjournment**

**The meeting was adjourned at 9:40 p.m.**



Approved on: March 18, 2019



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