

MINUTES
of the meeting of the
BOARD OF DIRECTORS of SOMERSET ACADEMY OF LAS VEGAS
June 4, 2019

The Board of Directors of Somerset Academy of Nevada held a public meeting on June 4, 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 6:05 p.m. with a quorum present. In attendance were Board members Will Harty, Gary McClain, Carrie Boehlecke, John Bentham, Sarah McClellan, Cody Noble and Travis Mizer (arrived at 6:07 p.m.).

Also present were Executive Director John Barlow, Principal Sherry Pendleton, Principal Ruby Norland, Principal Elaine Kelley, Principal Lee Esplin, Principal Kate Lackey, and Interim Principal Michele Lorig. Academica representatives Ryan Reeves, Trevor Goodsell, and Crystal Thiriot were also in attendance.

2. Public Comment and Discussion

Sarah Teravest, an assistant principal at the Losee campus, and Angie Markle, a Losee parent, spoke in support of Interim Principal Michele Lorig. Mel Miyashiro, a former teacher, expressed concerns with the 2018/2019 leadership at the Losee campus.

3. Student/School Achievement Recognition

- **Lone Mountain Battle of Books**
- **Sky Pointe Boys Volleyball, Student Bryce Granger**
- **Aliante Kids Heart Challenge – Coach Harvey**
- **Stephanie NJHS Pennies for Patients Fundraiser**
- **Losee Girls Bowling, Track & Field, HS Cross County, MS Student Council, HS Student Council, MS Band, HS Band**

The above listed students and groups, as well as the Sky Pointe girls middle school lacrosse team and boys middle school soccer team, were recognized for their achievements.

4. Election of Board Member Will Harty

Move to re-elect Board Member Will Harty for another term. The board voted unanimously to approve.

5. Annual Election of Board Officers

Member McClellan nominated John Bentham as Board Chair. The Board voted unanimously to elect John Bentham as Board Chair.

Member Harty nominated Sarah McClellan as Board Vice Chair. The Board voted unanimously to elect Sarah McClellan as Board Vice Chair.

Member Harty nominated Gary McClain as Board Secretary. The Board voted unanimously to elect Gary McClain as Board Secretary.

Member Harty nominated Travis Mizer as Board Treasurer. The Board voted unanimously to elect Travis Mizer as Board Treasurer.

6. Consent Agenda

- a. Minutes from the April 29, 2019 Board Meeting**
- b. Approval of Revised Somerset Wellness Policy**
- c. Approval of Revised Meal Charge Policy**
- d. Approval of Revised Somerset Academy Procurement/Plan Child Nutrition**
- e. Acceptance of Fiscal Year 2019 Turnaround Additional Funds**
- f. Approval of Recommendations from the Finance Committee:**
 - 1. School Financial Performance**
 - 2. Approval of the Final Budget for the 2019/2020 School Year**

Member Bentham stated that 6f, approval of recommendations from the Finance Committee would be pulled from the consent agenda. Member Harty stated that only the items under 6f had been discussed by the Finance Committee. Executive Director Barlow addressed the Board and explained the revisions in the Somerset Wellness Policy, the Meal Charge Policy, and the Somerset Academy Procurement/Plan Child Nutrition. Ms. Crystal Thiriot addressed the Board and stated that additional Turnaround grant funds had been awarded to the Sky Pointe campus. Member Mizer asked if the participating principals were satisfied with the service provided by the lunch vendor, Three Square. Executive Director Barlow explained that only two vendors were approved by the NDA and a bidding process was used for the selection.

Member McClellan moved to approve items 6a through 6e on the consent agenda. Member McClain seconded the motion, and the Board voted unanimously to approve.

Mr. Trevor Goodsell addressed the Board and stated that at the recently completed legislative session the DSA State funding had increased to \$6,067 and that the local funding was anticipated to increase to \$1,100 for a total funding increase of 4.46%. Mr. Goodsell reviewed the financial news from the session as contained in the handout; adding that the proposed budget contained an increase of 4.5% for salaries and a .75% increase in PERS, for a total increase of 5.25%. Mr. Goodsell reviewed the changes in the proposed budget with the changes in the DSA funding.

Member Harty asked for clarification concerning SB 545. Mr. Goodsell stated that SB 545 would lead to future weighted funding for at risk students. Member Harty asked if the weighted funding could

lead to a drop in funding at some campuses. Mr. Goodsell stated that, although the details and implementation of SB 545 would not be finalized for a couple of years, the funding should not decrease. Member Harty asked about the days cash on hand. Mr. Goodsell stated that he anticipated that Somerset Academy should easily meet the State's standard of 60 days; adding that currently they were above 80.

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

7. Academic Update and Executive Director Report

- **State Public Charter School Authority Audits**
- **AdvancED Engagement Review Report**
- **Principal Summative Evaluations**
- **NSLP Update**
- **Student Data – Growth Report by Jessica Barr**

Executive Director Barlow stated that Losee had 67 out of 70 seniors graduate, with one who would most likely finish and receive his diploma, which would result in a 97.1% graduation rate. He further stated that Sky Pointe had 108 out of 112 seniors graduate, with three who would make the credits sufficient to graduate during the summer, which would result in a 99.1% graduation rate.

Executive Director Barlow reviewed the State Public Charter School Authority audits, the AdvancED Engagement Review report, the principal summative evaluations, and the NSLP update as contained in the support materials. He further stated that the three NSLP campuses had help contribute 224,211 meals to food insecure individuals throughout the southern Nevada area. Executive Director Barlow stated that, through the efforts of Sandy Smith, Lauren Kohut-Rost and the staff at Losee, the Losee campus qualified to receive over \$640,000 in Title I funds for the 2019/2020 school year. He stated that Somerset was awarded over 425,000 in Title II funds for the teacher training programs.

Ms. Jessica Barr addressed the Board and stated that she had worked with the schools since October; adding that it had been a privilege to work with the Somerset administrators and teachers. She stated that every person had received in-depth training on NSPF, the framework and accountability system that determined the STAR ratings. Ms. Barr reviewed the accomplishments achieved throughout the year:

- they had learned how to use MAP as a guiding measure towards improvement and sustainable practices
- they had explored best practices to identify strengths and areas of opportunity by school, grade, and teacher that would result in increased ratings for all of the campuses
- they had ensured that every single Somerset student who was not responding to instruction was identified and intervened with
- they had ensured that every student who was thriving under Somerset instruction was highlighted and those best practices were replicated
- they had established a new sense of data culture where numbers were a tool, not something to be feared

Ms. Barr reviewed the benchmark ranges on the STAR rating scale, with 65 being the middle, meaning more students were growing than not growing. 50-64 would be considered quality instruction, meaning more students were showing gains and growth than were not. 40-50 would be considered a 311 area, where just as many students were falling flat as making gains. Below 40 would be considered a 911 area, where more students were trending backwards than forwards. She stated that each campus had grade levels that were excelling and each campus had grade levels that need extra support.

Ms. Barr stated that, at the Aliante campus, 55% of teachers delivered quality reading instruction, with 62% for math. The Lone Mountain campus had all grade levels above the 311 and 911 levels, with 80% of teachers delivered effective or highly effective instruction in reading and math. The Losee campus had built sustainability that had been lacking and were able to maintain from where they were in winter; adding that circumstances impact data. The Losee campus had 59% of teachers delivering effective or highly effective instruction in reading and 44% in math. The North Las Vegas campus has shown increases and boosts with upwards trends and should have an increase in the STAR rating. 49% of teachers delivered effective or highly effective instruction in reading with 59% in math.

Ms. Barr stated that Skye Canyon, as a first year school, had done a lot of work. Member McClellan asked how the growth was calculated, to which Ms. Barr replied that the data followed the students from their previous school. Ms. Barr stated that the Skye Canyon data in the handout was incorrect. The gains made at the Sky Pointe campus were astounding, with 72% of teachers delivering effective or highly effective instruction in reading and 76% in math. The Stephanie campus had built out websites and had amazing data days, with 8th grade ELA having the highest growth median of 74. Stephanie had 72% effective or highly effective instruction in math and 84% in reading.

Member Boehlecke asked if Ms. Barr could give an example of the growth. Ms. Barr stated that the start point was enveloped into the bar because it was a measure of growth from the beginning to the end of the year. She further stated that she could come back after STAR ratings were received to show the comparison from before to after; adding that, as an example, Sky Pointe middle school math numbers were in the twenties last year and were now at 66, 77, and 68. Ms. Barr stated that all Somerset campuses were on an upwards trend; adding that every Somerset teacher and administrator had worked to be better. Member McClellan thanked Ms. Barr for all of her hard work.

8. Interview of Somerset Losee Principal Candidates Michele Lorig and Jessica Scobell

Executive Director Barlow stated that six of the Somerset principals participated in interviewing and rating the seven candidates for the Losee principal position; adding that Jessica Scobell and Michele Lorig were the top two candidates. The Board interviewed Jessica Scobell and Michele Lorig for the position of principal at the Somerset Losee campus. Resumes for both candidates were contained in the support materials. The Board asked a series of questions to qualify the applicant for the position. The question included the following topics:

- Vision for behavior management
- Vision for growth in the immediate future and further in the future
- Process of mentoring and, if necessary, dismissing an underperforming teacher
- Difference between CCSD and Somerset expectations and responsibilities

- Bringing stability through necessary changes
- Enhancing high school programs to help build a strong elementary population
- Building a quality school with less funding than CCSD
- Building a positive culture among all stakeholders
- Value of STAR rating system for student growth and teacher/administrative evaluations

Ms. Jessica Scobell addressed the Board to introduce herself and reviewed her experience as reflected on her resume; adding that she was excited about the possibility of sharing her knowledge as a leader to help grow other leaders. She stated that she liked the idea that she could affect change from kindergarten through 12th grade and follow the growth of students over the years. Ms. Scobell reviewed the action plan that she had developed and distributed to the Board members.

During the question interview session Ms. Scobell relayed the following:

- Addressing little issues, by enacting a strict tardy policy and utilizing methods such as positive behavior intervention, could help prevent bigger issues.
- Introducing project based learning in 4th and 5th grades, then expanding to launch Project Lead the Way in middle school. Continuing with Project Lead the Way in high school would help develop a career technical education program, noting that a successful student was an engaged student.
- Adhering to the philosophy that as long as a person was willing to learn and had the desire to be kind to kids, all other aspects could be taught. A principal should spend time in every classroom to observe and provide guidance. When a teacher can no longer be a part of Somerset Losee, the conversation does not have to be adversarial.
- Experience in a CCSD turnaround school provided knowledge in making decisions which would help in the transition to a charter school. Excited for the collaboration between principals that was evident during the interview process.
- Continuity and consistency during changes would develop the trust and comfort needed for change, noting that students were aware when they were treated differently than other students.
- Expanding advanced placement opportunities and developing a strong CTE program would build a desire to remain in Somerset. Developing strong extra-curricular activities was an important part of developing the climate and culture necessary to retain students from elementary through high school.
- Received cross-training in budgets and grants while an assistant principal at Western and Arbor View high schools. Investing in teachers and teacher training develops strong teachers who would want to remain with Somerset.
- Developing relationships with all stakeholders would assist in creating a positive culture. Finding avenues to showcase student achievements, inviting other grade levels, as well as parents, to acknowledge the achievements.
- It is essential to have access to fair and consistent data when evaluating teachers and leaders. The STAR rating could be a valuable tool in the elementary levels; however, that system does not work as well at the high school level and should be supplemented with interim assessments.

Dr. Michele Lorig addressed the Board and reviewed her experience as reflected on her resume. She highlighted her accomplishments in the Somerset system including her time as an assistant principal at Somerset Losee with Principal Farmer and Executive Director Barlow, which lead her to be named as the interim principal.

During the question interview session Dr. Lorig relayed the following:

- The instructional and cultural sides of education were equally important. It would be important to provide all stakeholders with clear and coherent communication regarding the expectations.
- The work for the future had already started with the interviewing and hiring of new teachers along with streamlining the handbooks. The collaboration with the Somerset principals and specifically the North Las Vegas and Lone Mountain campuses would be key in developing a long term strategy to improve the quality of the education provided.
- Teachers should be provided with training and support; however, if the teacher failed to provide the students with a quality education they did not belong at Somerset. Having honest, transparent conversations would lead to a commitment to improve or a parting of ways.
- The job as principal at Somerset did not end at the end of a school day, noting that parents, teachers, and staff deserve a timely response to questions or concerns. In the district, roles were more compartmentalized than at Somerset.
- Being transparent about expectation helps others understand changes being implemented. Letting people know they were appreciated and respected leads to a commitment to the campus and a willingness to change and grow.
- Expansion of the CTE program, the sports program, and the music programs would bring excitement in elementary and middle school students to stay with Somerset through the high school years.
- Doing more with less was difficult but attainable, noting that Title I funds would be very beneficial to the campus. The addition of Somerset's Big Give was a great first step in helping the schools offer competitive activities.
- Providing family engagement activities would help build parental support in the upper levels of the school. The students and families would remain at the school if they were confident that the teachers and administration were invested in them.
- Although the STAR rating system was not a perfect system, data needed to be measured. The STAR system, or data, was needed to evaluate teachers and administrators; however, other factors, such as student and teacher retention, should be included.

9. Discussion and Action to Appoint a Losee Principal

Each Board member took several minutes to voice opinions about each of the candidates and then weighed in on his or her final vote.

Member Noble was impressed with both candidates; adding that a strong high school was important for the Somerset system. Ms. Scobell would bring a depth of knowledge in high school and Ms. Lorig had a great love for and willingness to serve the Losee students. His vote went to Ms. Scobell.

Member McClain stated that a strong high school was important; adding that the decision was about what was best for the school. He stated that the school needed a fresh start whether from someone new or from the person already working on a fresh start. His vote went to Ms. Scobell.

Member Boehlecke stated that Ms. Scobell would bring a depth of knowledge; however, Dr. Lorig would bring a breadth of knowledge for the whole K-12 campus. She stated that Dr. Lorig had already made positive changes at the campus. Her vote went to Dr. Lorig.

Member Bentham stated that Dr. Lorig would bring a track record with the changes that were in progress; adding that Ms. Scobell would bring enthusiasm and change. His vote went to Dr. Lorig.

Member McClellan stated that both candidates would benefit the campus and the system. Her vote went to Ms. Scobell.

Member Mizer stated that he was impressed with Ms. Scobell's action plan; adding that he had always been impressed with Dr. Lorig's strong data background. His vote went to Dr. Lorig.

Member Harty concurred that both candidates would be an asset to the system. His vote went to Ms. Scobell.

Member McClain moved to appoint Jessica Scobell as the principal for the Somerset Losee campus. Member McClellan seconded the motion, and the Board voted to approve four votes to three.

10. Acknowledgement of Carrie Boehlecke's Resignation from the Board of Directors and Discussion and Possible Action Regarding a New Board Member Search.

Member Bentham thanked Member Boehlecke for her contribution to the Somerset Board of Directors and acknowledged her resignation. Member Boehlecke stated that it had been a great experience serving on the Somerset Board and thanked the Board for the opportunity.

11. Recognition of Retirement of John Barlow and Sherry Pendleton

Member Bentham thanked Principal Pendleton for her service to Somerset Academy, noting that she had been with the system since 2011. Member Bentham stated that Principal Pendleton had helped provide a great foundation for the Somerset schools and had been instrumental in his decision to enroll his children in the Lone Mountain campus. Principal Pendleton stated that she was honored to have been a part of the Somerset system and thanked the Board for their dedication to the schools.

Member Bentham thanked Executive Director Barlow for his service to Somerset Academy, noting that he had provided valuable counsel and insight while he facilitated the growth of the Somerset system. Executive Director Barlow stated that it had been a privilege working with people who were committed to values and principals; adding that his career could not have ended any better.

12. Academica Announcements and Notifications

Ms. Thiriot thanked the Board for a fabulous year and reminded them about the upcoming National Charter School Conference.

13. Member Comment

Member Harty stated that the Board, the teachers, and the administrators needed to be accountable; adding that a decision regarding the administrative structure needed to be made. He further stated that the Board needed to review the vision of each campus with the respective campus administrators; adding that the administrative pay structure should be analyzed to ensure that Somerset was in a position to retain good administrators.

Member McClellan thanked Executive Director Barlow and his team for the effort they put into the Title I designation; adding that she appreciated all that Executive Director Barlow had done for Somerset.

Member Bentham gave a brief update on Somerset's Big Give.

Member McClain thanked Executive Director Barlow and Member Boehlecke; adding that Member Boehlecke's administrative knowledge had been valuable to the Board.

Member Noble stated that he had visited with some of the principals and would be visiting with the rest soon; adding that he appreciated all of their service and dedication.

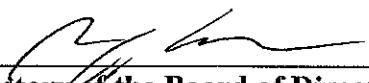
14. Public Comment and Discussion

Losee parents Stephanie Salinas-Byrd, Betty Mello, as well as Leonard Castellanos, a Losee teacher, spoke to their disappointment that Interim Principal Michele Lorig was not selected as the Losee Principal. Reed Warner spoke about the difficulty of facing another change in administration. Losee Assistant Principal Sarah Teravest stated that she would continue to support the teachers and students at the Losee campus; however, she was frustrated that, although they encourage leadership training within the system, the Board selected a principal from outside of the system.

15. Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 10:09 p.m.

Approved on: 8-8-2019



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