



Vision

Empowering students to explore global learning opportunities to promote and enrich their communities and the communities we serve.

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Purpose

Somerset Academy, Inc. promotes a transformational culture that maximizes student achievement and the development of accountable, global learners in a safe and enriching environment that fosters high-quality education.

Meeting of the Board of Directors December 17, 2024

Board of Directors

Todd German (Board Chair / Treasurer) *(Present)*
Ana Mendez (Vice-Chair / Secretary) *(Present)*
David Concepcion *(Present)*
Matthew Cox *(Absent)*
Taylor Smith *(Present)*

Non-Voting Officers

Bernie Montero, President *(Present)*
Suzette Ruiz, Vice-President *(Present)*

Board Counsel

Charles Gibson, Esq.
Eleni Noble Zarbalas, Esq. *(Present)*

In an effort to allow greater public participation and to best accommodate stakeholders, this meeting was held via communications media technology with physical access sites at each of the individual school campuses throughout Dade, Broward, Palm Beach, St. Lucie, Duval and Monroe Counties.

Minutes

1. Opening Exercises

- a. Called to Order at 11:00am
- b. Established a Quorum

2. Public Comment

- Charkivia Hutchinson, Somerset Academy City Arts Academy – Expressed concerned with her daughter’s grades and IEP; requests the Board review the grading policy. Board Chair German encourages Ms. Hutchinson to go to the Grievance Committee to discuss her concerns.

3. **Consent Agenda** *(All items listed with letter designations are considered routine and were enacted by one motion.)*

- a. **APPROVED:** The Board approved the Minutes from the November 12, 2024 & December 10, 2024 Board of Directors Meetings.
- b. **APPROVED:** The Board approved the Board Resolutions for Out of Field, ESOL and/or Gifted Waiver Assignments or Endorsements for the 2024-2025 school year; further authorizing the Board Chair and/or Vice-Chair authority to review and make necessary changes and execute for submission (including any necessary additions).
- c. **APPROVED:** The Board approved to authorize the individual Principals (as the board designee) to sign all state and federal grant forms as they relate to their school.
- d. **APPROVED:** The Board approved the Tech Bond Declaration/Disposition items for Somerset Academy East Prep.

Motion to approve the consent agenda by Ana Mendez; second by Taylor Smith; motion passed unanimously

4. **Action & Discussion Items**

- a. Comments by the Board Chair *(Todd German)*
 - i. Lynn Teck from the Charter School Alliance announces the new Florida Charter School Teacher of the Year program in partnership with the Dept. of Education. Congratulations to the very first Florida Charter School Teacher of the Year, Ms. Sheeren Reid from Somerset Academy North Lauderdale with Principal McGhee. This will help charter schools to be included in the regular Teacher of the Year program in the future.
 - ii. Congratulations to all of the schools who made the US News School Ranking.
 - iii. Purchase of Jacksonville property adjacent to Somerset Academy Eagle; closing tentatively in February.
 - iv. Canyons earned more than \$1,000,000.00 on AP/AICE/DE funding in a school year.
 - v. Somerset Academy Wellington OIG Investigation
 - vi. Honoring Somerset Academy Davie and Principal Dina Miller with a US flag that was flown over the Capital.
- b. Executive Report by the President & Vice-President *(Bernie Montero & Suzette Ruiz)*
 - i. Cognia update
- c. ESP Report
 - i. Legislative & Facilities *(Julio Robaina)*
 - 1. Legislative update
 - 2. Facilities
 - a. Avenir in Palm Beach County – part of the CMO grant; construction began; K-5 in a new community in North PBC.
 - b. Somerset Arts – possible purchase from the existing church; this transaction will be coming to the Board in the future.

- c. Somerset Prep – close to having an commitment/agreement with the JCC to announce long term plans; still actively looking for additional plans for both or either Somerset or Ben Gamla.
 - d. Somerset Key – in mediation; received a counter back; feel confident that we will come to an arrangement.
 - e. Somerset Continental – finalizing the agreement with Metro Life
 - f. Archdiocese – actively working on the renewal agreements for all sites.
 - 3. Legislative at the federal level – new administration has announced changes; federal dollars will come from federal block grants giving schools the flexibility to use the funds for what works best at their school;
 - ii. Colegia update by Manny Pon
- d. Financial Report
 - i. **APPROVED:** The Board approved for Somerset Academy Oaks to purchase new computers for approximately \$100,000.
Motion to approve by Ana Mendez; second by Taylor Smith; motion passed unanimously
 - ii. Discussed Somerset Academy Arizona – they recently requested a \$100k loan from Somerset Academy, Inc. to purchase artificial turf; Academica (Miami – Ana or Alina) does not work on these finances; Ana feels that we need to be able to review their financials if we are going to be asked for financial report from Florida; discussed them moving with the project if they have the funds.
- e. School Updates
 - i. Academic/Data Reports
 - 1. Somerset Academy Eagle (*Tunji Williams*)
 - 2. Somerset Academy Wellington High School (*Elizabeth Sauri*)
 - 3. Others, if necessary
 - a. Somerset Academy Oaks (*Idalia Suarez*)
 - i. **APPROVED:** The Board approved to request to change the name of Somerset Academy Oaks during the contract renewal process to: Somerset Oaks Leadership & Innovation (*aka SoLI*).
Motion to approve by Ana Mendez; second by Taylor Smith; motion passed unanimously
- f. Other Items by Board Members, Staff, or ESP
 - i. Facilities Report by Rolando Llanes

5. Announcements & Notifications

- a. Next Board Meeting: January 14th in St. Lucie – anyone who wants to attend in person, you are encouraged to do so; a group will be going up on the Brightline and then taking a bus from there.
- b. Math Bowl: Saturday, February 22nd at Somerset Academy Pompano

6. Adjourned Meeting at 12:04pm

The minutes were adopted by the Board of Directors at a meeting held on January 14, 2025.