

**Agenda Item 4.1**  
**Meeting Minutes – Local School Board Meeting of Somerset Academy, Inc.**  
**dba Brooks Academy of Science and Engineering (BASE)**

**May 4, 2015**  
**6:00 p.m.**

A meeting of the Board of Directors of Somerset Academy, Inc. was held on May 4, 2015, at Brooks Academy of Science and Engineering, 3803 Lyster Road, San Antonio, TX 78235

1. Board Members present: Andrew W. Cameron, Lourdes C. Isla-Marrero, George B. Ozuna, Louis J. Marin

Brooks Academy staff present: Ixchell Gonzalez, Lisa Ortiz, and others  
Academica SouthWest staff present: George Pedraza, Simon G. Salas, and Anita Vela-Johnson, Jenni Colon

The meeting was called to order by Louis Marin at 6:09 p.m. with an established quorum.

2. Public Comment
  - No public comment
3. Presentations, Discussion and Possible Action

**Consent Agenda Items:**

The following items will only be considered individually if requested by a member of the Board to be moved for consideration as an individual item.

None

4. **Individual Agenda Items:**
  - 4.1 Presentation, discussion and possible action regarding charter schools opening within school's designated geographic boundary

Simon Salas noted that in all of the Board packets there were statements of impact letters. He stated that when the finding was made to request an expansion of the charter, we sent out certified letters to every potential affected school, or district, in our region. So, we sent out over 130 letters, certified mail. And, so what is supposed to happen is the individual school, or district reviews what we sent out and determines if they will be impacted, or not. This is the first

time we have gotten one back. They are supposed to go to TEA, but they actually sent it to us. The district is SouthWest ISD and they stated they would be significantly affected. It is just an FYI, there is nothing for us to do.

George Pedraza stated historically TEA provides this as an avenue for schools and school districts to comment, but that is all this is.

Simon Salas noted they do not know if any of the other schools submitted anything to the TEA, it is just that we just happened to know about this one.

The Board asked if there would be a reaction by the State - would they say that they cannot move on with the expansion? Simon stated that state law requires them to send the letters out, and for TEA and the Commissioner to consider any responses based upon expansion.

Mr. Salas stated that at least historically, it hasn't been an issue. The last time it was an issue was 4 years ago when expansions were being granted and AHISD was there to voice their opposition to the expansion of other charters. That was the first time we saw something like that.

This year will be another barometer. School districts are definitely feeling the pinch, so they may be more aggressive. The push this legislative session to push vouchers, in effect channeling money away from school districts, so there may be more opposition moving forward. If the State took issue with this, they would hold a hearing prior to the full board meeting, and we could do something formal.

## 5. Presentation and Discussion Regarding Schools

### 5.1 Presentation and Discussion regarding status of student testing.

Nikki Martinez presented the following:

- State testing was just completed for grades 3-8; math reading, science and social studies
- End of course testing taking place this week (9<sup>th</sup>, 10<sup>th</sup> and 11<sup>th</sup> graders) – Algebra 1 & II, English I & II, Biology, and US History - scores back from the state by May 22

5.2 Presentation and Discussion regarding status of college readiness initiatives noted below:

- Scholarships received by students applying to college
- Colleges that students have applied and been accepted to
- Colleges that have visited the campus to meet with students
- Colleges that have visited the campus to meet with students

Simon Salas stated information provided to the Board notes the scholarships by student, colleges they applied to, or have been accepted to, and the colleges they have been admitted to.

Anita Fernandez presented the following:

- College signing day was on Friday
- Scholarships continue to come in – update to Board is coming
- Senior lecture series was 2 weeks ago

Louis Marin asked what percentage of graduates were committing to continuing their education?

Anita Fernandez stated 3 military, 1 staying workforce, all other 2 or 4 year; about 5% not continuing their education; she is still working on the 1 that is declaring workforce.

Louis Marin asked Ms. Gonzalez to send all of her final information out to the Board as an FYI.

5.3 Presentation and Discussion regarding education initiatives noted below:

- Senior defense will be held June 1<sup>st</sup>-3<sup>rd</sup>

Anita Fernandez stated Senior defense would be held at San Antonio Area Foundation and then at A&M on Base. If the Board would like to participate, they are welcome to attend.

5.4 Presentation and Discussion regarding Brooks Academy as noted below:

- Enrollment is at 1, 316

Simon Salas stated the information was pulled from PEIMS at the end of the month, so it is the most recent information they have available.

Louis Marin as if enrollment was up, or down.

Simon Salas and Anita Johnson stated enrollment was up by 2 at this campus.

5.5 Presentation and Discussion regarding Brooks Estrella as noted below:

- Enrollment is at 221

Ixchell Gonzalez stated enrollment is at 223, and all is well at the campus. Testing going well, teacher appreciation in full swing

5.6 Presentation and Discussion regarding Brooks International Studies Academy as noted below:

- Enrollment is at 150

Susan Herrera stated enrollment is at 150, and all is well at the campus.

- Moral is really high, teacher appreciation is in full swing
- PTO 1<sup>st</sup> grade fundraiser was just completed and cleared over \$8,000
- presentations are coming for Cinco De Mayo
- \$1,000 donation from Guadalupe Zapata for an award she received from TASBO for commitment to Excellence

Louis Marin asked what they were going to do with the funds they raised. Susan Herrera stated they were going to be meeting with the PTO to discuss how it would be used.

6. Presentation and Discussion Regarding Schools by Academica SouthWest

6.1 Presentation and Discussion regarding new student application process and enrollment

Jenni Colon stated this year they tried an on-line application system; to help with running lottery and keeping track of applications at the three campuses; previously it was done manually.

Meetings were held with Simon and Joe Hoffer to make sure all guidelines were being followed and all requirements were being met. Reports were run prior to running the lottery, to look for duplicates,

or any inconsistencies. She worked closely with the Office Manager and the Registrar to make sure all of the data was correct.

The lottery was then actually run by the computer. It took several hours, but the on-line system was very helpful. The lottery was run on April 15. Brooks Academy has 123 students on the wait listed applications – about 18% of total applicants; Brooks Estrella has 8 on the wait listed applicants – about 6% - Brooks International has 3 – and they are for 4<sup>th</sup> grade.

Danny Diaz asked if these were people that were after the lottery - waiting for someone to say no I am not going to attend.

Jenni Colon stated that was correct and that the system can be checked by assigned school administration to see if there any openings. Families can respond by phone, email, etc. It is smart software.

Grades waitlisted the most were 2<sup>nd</sup>, 3<sup>rd</sup>, and 4<sup>th</sup> grades. Kindergarten were almost all accepted; high school and middle school had very few, if any, that were waitlisted.

Simon Salas stated this was an experiment that went well. Doing it manually was too labor intensive. After the lottery, they met and identified areas where they can do better next year. For example, for next year the re-application process will be included.

Danny Diaz asked if any 3<sup>rd</sup> parties were present at the lottery.

Jenni Colon stated no 3<sup>rd</sup> parties were there; however, the date was posted publically. An intern, all of the principals, and Olivia were present. No public showed up, but they were welcome to come. Also, the system tracks all your transactions. It tells you who did what, what day, and what time, so there is no chance of fraud. If you go to schoolmint.com it gives you a really quick overview of what they have to offer and all the different reports you can run.

Overall, 431 applicants were accepted; 99 still in offered status; 3 in pre-offered status and 124 total waitlisted. If someone declines, the system will let you know, and then you can go and offer it to someone else. This company was the most economic by far of all the companies researched. They also had on-line videos for training and support. It is all web based. The data is downloaded monthly by the Registrar's office and the benefactor has to sign a confidently agreement so all bases have been covered.

Lourdes Isla-Barrera asked what happens if a seat isn't available for a sibling of another child who was accepted? What about your Certificate of Use?

Jenni Colon stated a seat would need to be created for the sibling, per the legal team. There are also openings in other grades, so everything is evening out. Extensive measures were taken to ensure all siblings were listed.

Simon Salas stated they would rather be over one, rather than under one. And over the next few months they anticipate some people falling out. Also, they are not near capacity. They are fine.

Louis Marin asked what the capacity for enrollment was at each campus for students.

Simon Salas stated at Estrella it is about 288 students; at Isla it is about 250 and at this campus it is probably 1,500-1,600, but we have to be careful.

## 6.2 Update regarding review of extracurricular activities.

Lucinda Vigil stated they have been compiling data including who participates, gender, teams supported, etc. She is still working on her analysis. She is waiting on information from others.

Simon Salas stated once the spreadsheet is completed, it will be easier to track data moving forward.

Anita Vela-Johnson is working on the sources of funding – the amount of general funds going toward extracurricular activities, and Title 2 monies going toward staff retention.

Louis Marin requested the final report reflect how much money was coming from other sources than the general fund.

## 6.3 Update regarding TEA review of 2013-2014 Audit.

Anita Vela-Johnson stated that the TEA had reviewed the Audit and they sent a letter regarding three areas of the Audit that they had questions about. As an aside, it is important to note the Audit was unqualified.

The TEA's letter addressed:

1. The findings in the Audit regarding the funding for the child nutrition program and the fact there was no oversight of monthly report and there were some discrepancies between what was in the point of sale system and what was reported with the State.

The TEA's letter indicates they concurred with our recommendations but that they were going to send it on to the Food and Nutrition Division at the Department of Agriculture. Ms. Vela-Johns stated that subsequent to us sending you this letter, we received a letter from the Department of Agriculture, and she suggested they make a copy of the letter and include it with the response to the TEA.

2. The second finding had to do with what they considered to be rather large accounts payable amount - \$800,000 for the year ended August 31, 2014, from \$204,000 for the year ended August 31, 2013. An Audit schedule has been prepared. It is important to note they are comparing 2011-2012 AP to 2013-2014 AP, so they are skipping 2 whole years. So, the main reason there was an increase was because of the money for architectural plans and make ready for Vista and the new science building being built. That was \$512,000. They are not really comparing prior year to this year, they are going back two years.

3. The third finding had to do with variance reports. Every year we are given money for special populations like SPED, gifted and talented, and at risk children. We are required to spend a certain percentage specifically for those students and it has to be coded as such in the accounting system. They noted two areas of deficiency - one was SPED and the other was incurred technology allotment. The issue with SPED, was a short fall of \$7,300 due to an increase of SPED funding that came in October, and the reports we were looking at. It was too late to spend the money. With the current technology allotment, we will be able to fund the teachers and expend the money. It will be rolled over to the next fiscal year - same with the SPED money. TEA gives you three years to spend the money, so it shouldn't be an issue.

Ms. Vela-Johnson has prepared a response to TEA reflecting all of this, and it has been provided to the Auditors for their review prior to it being signed off on by Ms. Gonzalez.

4.2 Presentation, discussion and possible action regarding contract for construction of modular building(s) and/or lease/purchase of relocatable buildings.

Simon Salas stated the contract for construction was put on hold due to a letter received about a month ago by the Board that will be discussed during closed session, but it made it necessary to begin looking at re-locatable, or portable buildings.

Over the past week Mr. Salas has been researching major vendors and how to contract with them. There are buildings available. They spoke with three companies IKON, William Scotsman, and Vanguard. We asked IKON to submit proposals for leased buildings with a slightly different specification and they agreed to do that. William Scotsman and Vanguard don't construct these buildings, they have subcontractors that build. These companies just rent. IKON actually constructs their own buildings.

Generally a portable building is a 24 x 64 square foot unit divided into two classrooms – about 750 square feet. We asked them for one-room units that are 24 x 64 square feet, and asked that they be stamped by State inspectors.

William Scotsman has located buildings that are out on lease now, but that are opening up in June, so they will renovate them and have them re-inspected but they are confident they can make it happen.

Vanguard says they will do new construction. Their units will not be refurbished. Both companies have said they can deliver by July 1; however, that is just an estimate so we should add a thirty-day window to that. Based on pricing provided so far, IKON will be way more expensive than the other two companies because they are a higher quality.

There are a couple of critical variables to consider as well. We are looking for Phase 3 power, rather than Phase 1 power which will drive up the cost to \$100,00-\$150,000. Also, items to consider are decking and skirting, and water and electricity connections, but we can absorb some of those costs. So, we still need to work through some of these issues. But yes, portables are available and we can get them in within the next 4-6 months. Something to consider is how this will impact and affect how parents view us. The fact is they are portable buildings. It is better to have some labs, versus no labs.

Also, we came up with a plan to create two labs using our current facilities. We can take two of our classrooms and enlarge them to create two labs. So that is something immediate we can do.

George Ozuna asked if there was an issue with the State by adding portables?



Simon Salas and George Pedraza answered yes, there were issues because initially the plan was to have portables for three years, it affects the infrastructure of this area, and the State wants them in buildings, not portables. With the STEM designation it also increased the seriousness of the situation. The State is working with us, but it will help if we can show we are doing what we can. By creating these labs and bringing in the portables, it isn't a desirable move, but in trying to show good faith to the State it is a good move.

Khalid Sosse: Jose, in charge of facilities, spoke about city approval of the portables. Electrical services and traffic are two main issues. The traffic issue was addressed by explaining that the additional portables would help to lower the occupancy loads in each of the buildings, its not increasing the traffic as they are simply moving people around, not adding more people.

As for the electric, you cannot have more than three single-phase services at one property. So, the portables must be set up as three phase. That is the only way to get more electricity at the property.

Simon Salas stated another issue is they need to make sure they were following procurement standards. Joe Hoffer was consulted and it appears there are several hurdles to overcome, but it is possible.

- 4.3 Presentation, discussion and possible action regarding facilities planning and related financing options for next school year for Brooks Academy of Science and Engineering, Brooks Estrella Academy and Brooks International Studies Academy.

The Board entered into Executive Session at 7:31 p.m.

## 7. Adjournment

Lourdes C. Isla-Barrera moved to adjourn the meeting with a second by Mr. Cameron. AYE: Andrew W. Cameron, George B. Ozuna, Louis J. Marin NAY: None. ABSTAIN: None. Motion carries.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:00 p.m.

**Certification of Meeting Minutes of the Board of Somerset Academy, Inc.  
Dba Brooks Academy of Science and Engineering (BASE)**

The preceding minutes of the Board meeting of Somerset Academy, Inc. dba Brooks Academy of Science and Engineering (BASE) held on May 4, 2015 were approved at a meeting of the Board held on \_\_\_\_\_, at \_\_\_\_\_ a.m./p.m.

The undersigned hereby certifies that he/she is an Officer and/or Director of Somerset Academy, Inc., a not-for-profit corporation organized and existing under the laws of the State of Florida, and doing business in the State of Texas pursuant to a contract with the State Board of Education and the laws of the State of Texas, that the above is a true and correct copy of the meeting minutes of the Board of Directors of said corporation.

Ana C. Diaz, ~~President or Vice Chair~~  
Printed Name

*secretary*

, ~~President or Vice Chair~~  
Signature

*all  
secretary*

Date Signed: 9/28/2015