

2017 Fact Sheet about Somerset Academy Charter Schools

- **What is a charter school?**
 - A charter school is a public school of choice that is state-funded but privately operated. Charter schools have the ability to set many of their own policies related to curriculum delivery, parent involvement, and special programs. Charter schools are required to maintain accountability academically, financially, and in all areas of legal and safety compliance.
- **Who is Somerset Academy?**
 - Founded in 1997, Somerset Academy Charter school opened in Miramar, Florida to humble beginnings. Appropriately names Somerset Neighborhood, the school was housed in a two-room schoolhouse and served 50 students from Kindergarten through 5th grade. To meet parental demand, the school expanded in the years to follow but was careful to maintain a nurturing, tight-knit learning environment and multi-age/multi-level classroom philosophy that parents love and children thrive in.

Somerset Academy is a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization that offers high-quality K-12 educational programs in Florida, Nevada, Texas and Washington, D.C. that have, and continue to achieve academic success. Although Somerset Academy schools share a vision, each campus has a unique and enriching educational program that is tailored to the community they serve. This formula, along with the incredible support from parents, has made Somerset Academy a nationally recognized, award-winning family of high quality public charter schools.

In 2009, Somerset Academy became the first network of public charter schools in the nation to earn district accreditation from the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools (SACS-CASI) division of AdvancED for its proven commitment to quality and educational excellence. The US Department of Education has awarded the National Blue Ribbon School award to Somerset Academy Davie in both 2011 and 2017, as well as Somerset Arts Conservatory in 2016. Somerset South Homestead earned the highest gains of any elementary school in the state while serving a predominately minority population in 2011; Somerset Academy Miramar South students scored 100% proficient on the 2017 3rd grade FSA; and the graduation rate at Somerset Academy high schools continues to surpass state and national figures at 90 to 100 percent. Somerset scholars have been accepted to such prestigious universities: UPenn, Yale, Stanford, Juillard, etc. Somerset high school continue to be recognized by US News & World Report earning accolades as amongst the top high schools in the country!

Currently, Somerset Academy is celebrating its 20th year in providing equitable, high-quality education for all students. Serving over 18,000 students from Kindergarten through 12th grade, Somerset employs nearly 800 exemplary staff to serve is 50 educational institutions through the country. Promoting a culture that maximizes student achievement and fosters the development of accountable, 21st

century learners in a safe and enriching environment, Somerset Academy is excited about the prospect of bringing a high-performing charter school to the Parkland community. Fostering a partnership with parents, teachers, students and the community, charter schools build a school culture of high expectations, service and leadership to develop and nurture the whole child in preparation for post-secondary education and beyond.

- **Who can attend a charter school?**
 - Charter Schools are open to all students residing within the county where the school is located, who file a timely application with the school for consideration. Pursuant to state statute, charter schools may target students residing within a reasonable distance of the school, as well as students articulating from one charter to another.
- **Do charter schools charge tuition?**
 - Charter Schools are tuition-free public schools who have a contract to operate with the local school district. Therefore, the school does not charge tuition for attendance in its K-12 educational programs. There are fees associated with before/after care programs, as well as extra-curricular after school programs and activities.
- **How many charter schools does Somerset operate?**
 - Somerset Academy operates a total of 66 charter schools throughout the country, 55 of which are located in Florida; the majority of which are located within the tri-county area of Miami-Dade, Broward and Palm Beach.
- **Are charter schools required to employ certified teachers?**
 - Charter schools are required to employ teachers who hold a current Florida Department of Education Educator's Certificate. During its recruitment process, Somerset seeks to employ highly-committed staff who embrace the mission and vision of the school and wish to nurture a student's educational experience both in and out of the classroom.
- **What will be the name of the school?**
 - Somerset will request the school to be named Somerset Parkland Academy.
- **What educational programs and curriculum will the school offer?**
 - Somerset will meet high standards of student achievement through the delivery of a rigorous and relevant STEM/STEAM based curriculum and emphasis on mastery of benchmarks aligned to the Florida Standards in ELA and Mathematics and literacy standards for science and the Florida NGSSS while providing a strong science foundation. The school will combine the best practices developed by the Somerset network including differentiated instruction and continual enrichment. Somerset Parkland will provide all students with a core curriculum of English/Language Arts (ELA), Mathematics, Social Studies, and Science. Additionally, the program will provide a rich array of specials/electives in fine arts; health; physical education; world languages; and technical curricula, including Project Lead the Way. Project-Lead the Way (PLTW) is the nation's leading K-12 provider of STEM/STEAM programs. PLTW Launch (K-5) and Gateway (6-8) are programs where students learn to be problem solvers and apply critical thinking skills. Programs include pathways for computer science,

engineering, and biomedical science beginning as early as kindergarten. Students at Somerset Parkland will engage in hands-on activities, projects, and problems that are reflective of real-world challenges. Somerset Parkland will empower students from a young age to learn essential, in-demand skills validated by the world's leading companies. This program provides transformative learning experiences with engaging, hands-on classroom environment that empowers students to think critically and development independence in learning from a young age. Starting in kindergarten students are engaged in computer science, engineering, and biomedical sciences encouraging them to become creative, collaborative problem solvers ready to take on any challenge. PLTW taps into K-5 exploratory nature, engages them in learning that feels like play, and encourages them to keep discovering. Developing essential skills such as problem solving, critical & creative thinking and perseverance builds a strong foundation for middle school, high school, and beyond! Additional information on PLTW can be found at www.pltw.org/our-programs. Furthermore, field trips and guest speakers are always encouraged to help students make real-world connections to the knowledge gained through the curriculum.

Students at Somerset will be instructed at their level preparing students to maximize their full potential. Students are encouraged to pursue the most rigorous and challenging academic program they can handle. Programs such as i-Ready are incorporated so students may work in both reading and math at the highest level they can handle. For example, if a 2nd grade student is able to read at a 3rd grade level than he or she will be provided with 3rd grade reading passages. The same would be for Math content. In accordance, students who are struggling will be given additional support and remediation through an intensive program offering additional support, supportive learning strategies, and tutoring. Furthermore, gifted/high achieving programs will be offered for students whom qualify for these exclusive programs that promotes increased rigor, critical thinking, developing independence in learning, and leadership skills.

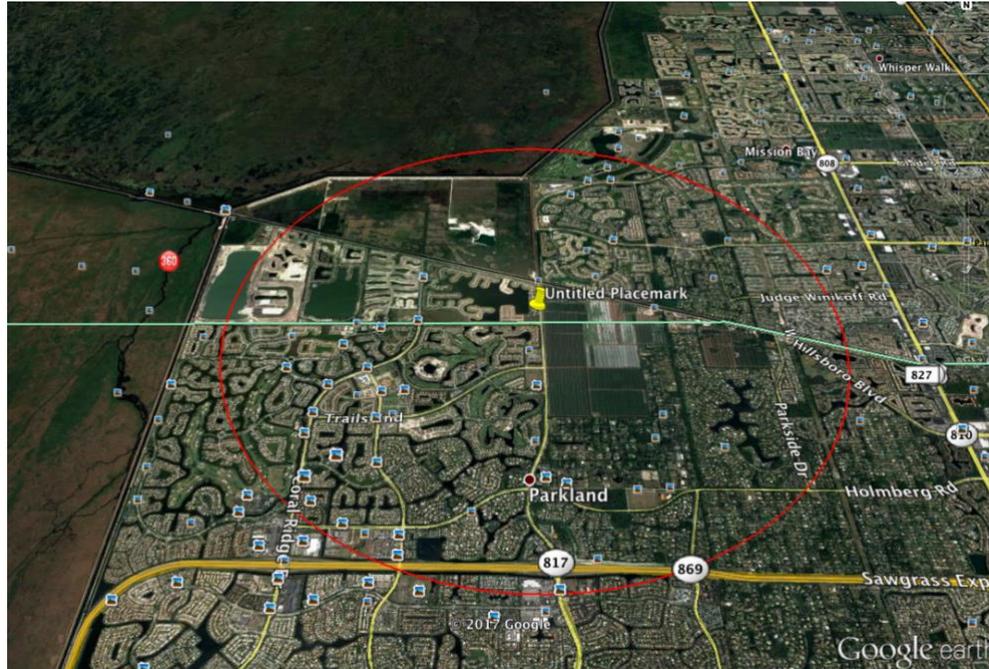
Somerset will be a data-driven school where administrators, teachers, and specialists continually monitor student achievement and data in order to support all students and address individualized learning needs, including students that may need additional support due to deficiencies and students that are high achieving and can be encouraged to take on more difficult work.

- **What is the student-teacher ratio?**
 - The school is required to be compliant with the statutory class size reduction requirements for charter schools schoolwide: Grades K-3: 18:1; Grades 4-8: 22:1; Grades 9-12: 25:1.
- **How does the school support different learning styles and needs?**
 - Somerset's educational philosophy is built on differentiated instruction for all learners. Gone are the days of whole-group instruction delivery for the entire instructional period. Whole group instruction is where content is initially delivered to students, then students break into small groups where individualized

instruction is targeted to enhance as well as advance understanding of instructional benchmarks. In addition, our school provides additional enrichment for students that are above level.

- **What after school programs will be offered?**
 - Somerset will offer a fee-based, school-lead after school program which will provide homework assistance and enrichment activities for the students. Families will have the opportunity to enroll their child in additional enrichment activities, clubs and sports, such as: environmental club, robotics club, coding classes, a variety of athletic activities such as cheerleading, sports and dance, along with student-focused enrichments such as National Honor Society and Student Government.
- **Will the school offer after school tutoring?**
 - Somerset will offer after school tutoring opportunities in preparation for the Florida State Assessments exam.
- **How do I register my child for the charter school?**
 - Students will be admitted to the school regardless of race, gender, religion or ethnic origin and the school's admission procedures will be equitable for all students. Eligible students who submit a timely application during any application period will be considered for enrollment. Somerset will establish and advertise registration/lottery dates. In accordance with state statute, Somerset will schedule the initial registration period as a limited enrollment period, to target the students residing in the neighboring community within a reasonable distance of 2.5 miles from the school. Thereafter, subsequent enrollment periods will be scheduled. During any enrollment period, should the number of applicants meeting the established criteria of the charter school exceed the stated capacity of the school, individual classroom or program, each child will be placed into a random lottery and subject to the racial/ethnic balance provisions described in statute. Each application will be given a number, and all numbers for each classroom/program will be placed in a database. Numbers will be drawn on a random basis and all seats available per grade will be filled based on the rank order of their drawing. The remaining numbers will be used to create the waiting list (the list will be developed based on the rank order in which the remaining assigned lottery numbers are randomly drawn).
- **What is a limited enrollment period?**
 - The limited enrollment period enables Somerset to target students residing within a reasonable distance of where the school will be located. Registration during the limited enrollment period will require families to provide documentation that they live within 2.5 miles of the school. Registration during the limited enrollment period will be open for a minimum period of 30-45 days, which period will be determined by the school closer to the time of registration, to permit the school to

target students residing within a reasonable distance of 2.5 miles from the charter school.



- **What are Somerset's honors, awards and accolades?**
 - Somerset Academy high schools earns accolades as amongst the top high schools in the country as identified by U.S. News & World Report
 - First charter school network to be accredited as a "District" by AdvancED
 - Somerset Academy Miramar South – 2017 FSA – 100% proficiency 3rd Grade; #1 in the State of Florida
 - Somerset Alumna becomes UF's first Latina Student Body President
 - Somerset athletes get accepted into distinguished University football teams
 - Somerset scholars accepted to prestigious universities: UPenn, Yale, Stanford, Julliard, Harvard
 - Somerset Arts Conservatory Alumna Koine Iwasaki wins 2nd place So You Think You Can Dance Season 14 – 2017
 - NBC6 spotlights the Financial Literacy curriculum at Somerset Pines Academy
 - Somerset Alumnus Catches Google's Attention
 - National Blue Ribbon Schools: Somerset Academy Davie – 2011 & 2017, Somerset Academy Arts Conservatory - 2016
 - Somerset Academy Dade – MDCPS Gold STEM Designation 2017
 - Alexandra Prieto, Somerset Academy Miramar Principal – Tax Watch Award of Excellence 2016 and Florida Charter School Alliance Principal of the Year/Charter School Hero Award 2016