

**Minutes**  
**Arkansas Virtual Academy**  
**SBE Follow-up Meeting**  
**May 18, 2011**

**Board Members Present**

Jerry Jones  
John Riggs  
Susan Allerheiligen  
Angela Driskill  
Lepaine Sharp-McHenry  
Kevin Smith  
Robbie Wills

**Staff Present**

Cheli Stafford

**Media Present**

None

**Others Present**

Karen Ghidotti

**Board Members Not Present**

**Call to Order**

Board Chair, Jerry Jones, called the Board meeting to order at 4:04 p.m. Mr. Jones then asked for a roll call and declared a quorum.

**Meeting update:**

With the agenda being a follow-up discussion on recent activities related to preparation for the June SBE meeting, Mr. Jones asked if there was a comprehensive presentation together and ready for Board review.

Karen Ghidotti, Southern Region VP, stated that she and Head of School, Scott Sides, have been in contact many times over the past few weeks and have discussed the needs and progress of the preparation at length. She added that the enrollment and waitlist information related to demographics, current school district and state testing results have all been prepped for review. Ms. Ghidotti further confirmed that Board members have been receiving documents via email for their review and stated that these will be filed with the proposal. Members agreed. Mr. Jones reiterated the desire to review the complete packet when polished and ready in one email transmission. He also asked for a cover document or letter declaring the purpose of the proposal which is being brought before the SBE.

SBE requires proposals to be in hand three weeks prior to the scheduled state board meeting. The Board has asked Mr. Sides to finalize all materials and send by Friday, May 20<sup>th</sup> for their review. The packet should be submitted to the SBE by Monday, May 23<sup>rd</sup>.

Discussion moved to the contents of the packet. Senator Riggs said it is vital that ARVA's statistics show how ARVA is educating kids better. ARVA's numbers need to be expressed in

absolute truth. Senator Riggs further stated that after discussions with members of the SBE, he believes ARVA should present the cohort numbers as a whole in addition to the individual gains over three years. Senator Smith joined the conversation and said that ARVA needs to present information which is more “apples to apples”, such as, low-income to low-income, not affluent to low-income. He mentioned that Charity Smith at the ADE might be brought in to review the documentation to provide input. Ms. Ghidotti discussed how past comparisons were done involving test scores and stated that she would meet with Mr. Sides about these previous results.

Discussion moved toward other information that can make ARVA’s case. Senator Riggs stated that he was trying to arrange a meeting with Dr. Tom Kimbrell in order to discover what his reservations might be and try to answer them prior to the state board meeting. He brought up the ARVA Fast Facts sheet and said there is good information on it to help explain the school’s position. Riggs made the Board aware that ARVA would definitely receive an FOI on the waitlist details once the SBE packet is opened. He specifically stated that ARVA should be prepared to provide information regarding what district students on the waitlist are coming from, their ethnicity, etc.

Some discussion occurred around how ARVA students perform academically after 8<sup>th</sup> grade. Ms. Ghidotti mentioned TRIAND and the information stored on that system for schools. However, she said that ARVA would not have access to the student record after leaving ARVA. Some discussion took place regarding the admission the any anecdotal evidence ARVA provided would be positive and that would be brought up. Senator Smith said he believes in the importance of providing family testimonials and wondered if it were possible to contact current ARVA families whose students have moved beyond 8<sup>th</sup> grade to see how they are doing if in a regular brick and mortar school. He understands that the SBE will be more interested in the statistics but feels that these stories are a very important part of who ARVA is. Mr. Jones stated that he would like to see the presentation that Scott created of the family testimonials to be added as an appendix to the proposal. This is the same document that Mr. Jones gave to Governor Beebe.

Mr. Jones stated that ARVA’s presentation should make all of the points as if the school was asking to renew its charter and then some. Riggs stated that a particular state board member does not know much about ARVA, and he believes that to be the case with others. He stated that ARVA should have a document that outlines the “nuts and bolts” of the school, staff, how it all works, how the school is funded, etc. Ms. Ghidotti suggested these take place in one-off meetings rather than open public session. Riggs conceded that something in written format within the proposal packet would be acceptable if the individual meetings were not afforded. The written documents should be created to bring the state board up to speed on where ARVA is in the education arena and break “home schooling” myth.

The Board discussed timing of the proposal. Ms. Ghidotti suggested that maybe June was too soon to submit and perhaps ARVA should wait for the July meeting. It was the Board’s consensus to move swiftly now to allow time for student enrollment for 2011-12 should the SBE vote in ARVA’s favor. Mr. Jones stated that the packet should be filed on Monday, May 23rd, and the Board should be prepared to attend on June 13. To finalize the requests of the Board, Ms. Ghidotti listed the items which were mentioned throughout the meeting for follow up.

Those action items are listed below:

- Three years cohort testing data showing levels of proficiency and three years individual gains
- Acquire student test result data compared to like schools
- Reach out to ARVA families for anecdotal stories from aged out students
- Bring together the 40-page document of ARVA stories for proposal appendix
- Follow renewal application requirements to make sure ARVA is meeting those specs
- Develop information piece on how ARVA works, staff, funding, etc.
- Be prepared to receive FOI regarding Pulaski County students on the waitlist with regard to demographics and home district

With no further business to discuss, meeting adjourned at 4:35 pm.