

**Minutes**  
**Arkansas Virtual Academy**  
**Board of Directors Meeting**  
**January 20, 2009**

**Board Members Present**

Jerry C. Jones  
John Riggs  
Kevin Smith  
Angela Driskill  
Susan Allerheiligen

**Staff Present**

Karen Ghidotti  
Lisa Williams  
Susan Underwood  
Monique Houston

**Media Present**

None

**Members Not Present**

Mike Henley  
Lepaine Sharp-McHenry

**Call to Order**

Board Chair, Jerry Jones, declared a quorum and called the board meeting to order at 4:07 p.m.

Karen Ghidotti distributed the minutes of the previous ARVA Board meeting of September 19, 2008.

<p><b>MOTION:</b> by Kevin Smith and seconded by Angela Driskill to approve the September 19, 2008, ARVA Board Meeting minutes as written Motion carried 5-0.</p>
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**Chair's Report**

Jerry Jones reminded the Board about the previous discussions around the report of the series of meetings and conversations on the ARVA enrollment. The series of meetings have continued with our lobbyists and Karen Ghidotti. A suggestion has been made to consider approaching the ARVA student enrollment limit within the legislative process. If the special language were to expire then ARVA would be governed by the State Board of Education as is true by all of the other school districts.

Ms. Karen Ghidotti, Head of School, discussed with the Board possible scenarios about the current special language in the ADE appropriation how it could either sunset on its own or it would need to be stricken so ARVA could be treated just like any other charter school or any other school within the state. For the state board of education to deal with the growth of the school as opposed to what would now be annual sessions within the legislative body to deal with the cap of the school.

The Chair thanked Ms. Ghidotti and opened the discussion to the Board.

After much discussion, the Board agreed that they were headed in the correct direction. The Chair, Jerry Jones, recognized and thanked each of the High School Committee members for their hard work in compiling the information sent to the Board. He opened the floor to John Riggs, Chair of the High School Committee, to provide a summary.

#### High School Committee Report

John Riggs thanked Susan Allerheiligen, Angela Driskill and ARVA staff for serving on the High School Committee. Mr. Riggs shared with the Board the committee's findings after meeting three times. A high school curriculum exist thorough K12, Inc. that would provide a pretty neat high school for ARVA students. He discussed some of the stumbling blocks that ARVA would have to approach such as the curricula which much was answered through discussions with k12 personnel; requesting waivers from specific Arkansas school laws; and a budget to support high school for ARVA students which we came to the conclusion that it would be critical for specific waivers to be approved in order to work.

The High School Committee shared a couple of thoughts of how ARVA could put in place a high school. First, have a bridge year to begin with. During this bridge year we would utilize the existing K12's iAcademy as the infrastructure to serve a limited number of students. Then the following year convert to our model after gaining experience in running a virtual high school. Second, prepare a request to the State School Board for expanding our current charter to include grades 9-12 as well as including those identified critical waivers.

After much discussion the Board Chair asked the Board, "Do we go down the path to start a high school?" After additional discussion the High School Committee proposed a motion.

**MOTION:** by John Riggs and seconded by Susan Allerheiligen to continue planning for presenting a petition to the State Board of Education to extend our charter. Motion carried 5-0.

#### Investment Options

Karen Ghidotti reported that she and Mike Henley have requested the help of Bancorp South to guide ARVA in how much we could possibly invest based on a year tracking of outgoing payments. Ms. Ghidotti share that Bancorp South presented us with options last week. These projections came back demonstrating that we could invest far more money than we had predicted that we could invest. We will present these options at the next board meeting.

#### School/Director's Report

##### Finical Audit

Ms. Karen Ghidotti, Head of School, shared with the Board a letter from the firm Thomas & Thomas, LLP concerning the audit for ARVA. They had planned to have a draft ready for the Board meeting but requested more time. Ms. Ghidotti reassured the Board, on

their behalf, that they have not found anything that caused them concern. Since the legislative audit deadline in March 31, Thomas & Thomas are planning to provide a draft to the Board 30 days prior to that date. We will set a board meeting for the Board to approve the audit before it is filed.

#### First Tee Golf Program

Ms. Ghidotti provided the Board an update on the First Tee Golf Program. The first semester of this school year, ARVA students participated at three sites throughout the state – Fort Smith 12 students; Bentonville/Rogers 20 students; and Little Rock 47 students. Ms. Ghidotti was encouraged by the emails from parents and communications with the First Tee Directors informing how well the students progressed in the programs and that many of the students were continuing past the 8 week program. Since the total cost of the first semester program was \$1240 out of the budgeted amount of \$2225, Ms. Ghidotti proposed to the Board that with the remaining funds we offer the First Tee Golf Program for the second semester and expand it to the Jonesboro and Texarkana sites.

After discussing the First Tee Golf Program, the Board agreed that we should offer it to additional ARVA students the second semester.

#### Enrollment Report

Ms. Ghidotti shared with the Board information and maps displaying data about currently enrolled students and students on the waiting list. The 2008-09 enrollment closed as of today, January 20, and the first week of February we will begin accepting lottery applications for 2009-10. After much discussion about the time period for applications, Ms. Ghidotti requested advice from the Board about the possibility of narrowing the window of time to accept applications so that we could aggressively market more affectively. After the Board discussion, Ms Ghidotti asked, if we begin accepting lottery applications the first week of February is the Board comfortable closing it the end of March which gives us eight weeks. The Board agreed.

#### Budget Report

Ms. Ghidotti shared with the Board the budget report and explained that it looks a bit different due to the fact that the auditors suggested it be presented in the APSCN format. She submitted and explained the budget. The chair asked for discussion and questions.

<p><b>MOTION:</b> by John Riggs and seconded by Kevin Smith to approve the budget. Motion carried 5-0.</p>
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#### ADE Standards Review Report

Ms. Ghidotti shared with the Board document and a summary of the December 5<sup>th</sup> Arkansas Department of Education Standards Review Audit Team visit. They were auditing our procedures and our teachers and their compliance with state standards. The ADE team feedback was that this was the best audit they ever had with a charter school, we were well prepared for the audit and some of the least findings they have ever had with any public school.

Ms. Ghidotti explained the letter from Shade Gilbert included two pages of findings and the responses from ARVA. The district violation included the need to amend our Discipline Policy, Parent/Student Communication Policy, Smart Core Policy which included wording in the handbook, and provide training with our parents on Smart Core. Ms. Ghidotti informed the Board that training for parent of ARVA 6<sup>th</sup>, 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> graders will be provided on January 23. She also presented and explained the proposed amendments for the three policies in order to get the district in compliance. Once approved by the Board these will be submitted to the ADE then ARVA will be in compliance.

**MOTION:** by John Riggs and seconded by Susan Allerheiligen to accept the amended policies. Motion carried 5-0.

Ms. Ghidotti shared information about findings of the Arkansas Department of Education Standards Review Audit Team that does not need Board actions. There was a data entry error in APSCN and has been corrected with the validating documents submitted to ADE. There was an additional statement that needed to be added to the teacher professional development grid. The additional wording was added and the supporting documents were submitted to ADE.

#### Public Comments

The Chair asked if there were any comments from the public or press. No response.

#### **Old Business**

Ms. Ghidotti shared with the Board information about the Accurate Yearly Progress (AYP) Status. The state views ARVA as two schools, Elementary and Junior High. The Jr. High did not meet the state's AYP due to data entry errors. She explained that after the errors were corrected and an appeal was submitted, the Jr. High met AYP as well as the Elementary.

#### Additional Item

Ms. Ghidotti requested to suspend the rules and add one action item to the Board agenda regarding the Art teacher.

**MOTION:** by John Riggs and seconded by Kevin Smith to suspend the rules. Motion carried 5-0.

Ms. Ghidotti explained that ARVA has a waiver for teacher certification but not a waiver for highly qualified. All of the ARVA teachers are highly qualified with the exception of art and music. One ARVA teacher has the art course work with adding 6 additional hours, which she could do online, which would make her highly qualified art teacher. If we could employ her as a part-time art teacher we would be in compliance with having a highly qualified art teacher that could serve all students k-12.

Ms. Ghidotti requested the Board to hire the part-time Title I teacher to be a part-time Title I teacher and part-time art teacher so we would be in compliance for art.

**MOTION:** by John Riggs and seconded by Susan Allerheiligen to hire the part-time Title I teacher to be a part-time Title I teacher and part-time art teacher. Motion carried 5-0.

**MOTION:** by John Riggs and seconded to adjourn the ARVA Board meeting. Motion carried 5-0.

Meeting adjourned at 5:29 p.m.