

Minutes
Arkansas Virtual Academy
Board of Directors Meeting
June 11, 2009

Board Members Present

Jerry C. Jones, Chair
Susan Allerheiligen
Angela Driskill
John Riggs
Lepaine Sharp-McHenry
Kevin Smith

Staff Present

Karen Ghidotti
Lisa Williams
Susan Underwood
Monique Houston

Media Present

None

Call to Order

Board Chair, Jerry Jones, declared a quorum and called the board meeting to order at 3:06 p.m.

Jerry Jones asked the Board if all had reviewed the minutes for the previous ARVA Board meeting of March 26, 2009.

MOTION: by Susan Allerheiligen and seconded by Angela Driskill to approve the March 26, 2009, ARVA Board Meeting minutes as written. Motion carried 5-0.

Chair's Report

Jerry Jones shared with the Board that the results of the legislative session were not the anticipated positive outcome for ARVA. For awhile it looked very, very promising since we do have a lot of supporters in the legislature. It did not have anything to do with the merits of the school. It is unfortunate but we are regrouping and we will keep coming at it.

Mr. Jones reminded the board members of the vacancy on the Board created with the resignation of Mike Henley. The Board discussed the vacancy and tenure issues with some of the current board members terms expiring at the end of September. Both Jerry Jones and Kevin Smith's terms expire September 30, 2009.

MOTION: by Angela Driskill and seconded by John Riggs to allow Kevin Smith to be placed in the vacant unexpired three-year term which will expire September 30, 2011. Motion carried 5-0.

Lepaine Sharp-McHenry joins the Board meeting at 3:12 p.m.

MOTION: by Lepaine Sharp-McHenry and seconded by John Riggs to reappoint Jerry Jones to a three-year term which will expire September 30, 2011. Motion carried 5-0.

Karen Ghidotti reminded the Board that according to the by-laws we can have a minimum of five and a maximum of nine board members. The Board discussed the process to find potential new ARVA board members. Each board member is encouraged to search for high quality candidates as potential board members. A committee of board members will review the resumes and letters submitted by potential candidates to the ARVA office. The committee will select the top candidates to be recommended to the full Board during the September board meeting. All board members agreed.

John Riggs reminded the Board that the by-laws state we must have three officers. In addition to the Chair we must have a Vice Chair and a Treasurer/Secretary. The Board discussed the need for additional officers.

MOTION: by Lepaine Sharp-McHenry and seconded by Kevin Smith to elect John Riggs to the office of the Treasurer/Secretary. Motion carried 5-0.

MOTION: by Kevin Smith and seconded by John Riggs to elect Lepaine Sharp-McHenry to the office of the Vice Chair. Motion carried 5-0.

School/Director's Report

Karen Ghidotti, Head of School, asked the Board to deviate from the agenda. The Board agreed.

Student/Parent Handbook

The 2009-2010 Student/Parent Handbook is in your Board packet. Ms. Ghidotti pointed out to that the highlighted sections indicate revisions. She invited questions and suggestions.

The Board discussed the revisions and suggested to list the name of the board members and ARVA mission statement in the front of the Student/Parent Handbook.

MOTION: by Angela Driskill and seconded by Susan Allerheilgen to approve the 2009-2010 Student/Parent Handbook with the suggested changes. Motion carried 5-0.

America Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA) Funds

Ms. Ghidotti shared with the Board via Elluminate the information on the Stimulus Funds that President Obama's administration has made available to Arkansas which is one of the few states without a deficit. She explained that there are three buckets of funding – IDEA; Title 1; Stabilization. The proposals for each of the three buckets of funding have been prepared by the ARVA staff according to the guidelines provided during ADE training to address goals and meet the filters to improve or stimulate the economy and affect student achievement. Once the proposals have been approved by the Arkansas Department of Education, the access to each bucket of funding will be a given percentage – IDEA 50/50; Title 1 50/50; Stabilization 66/34. When we demonstrate proper utilization of the funds then the second percentage of funds will be available.

Lisa Williams, Academic Administrator, shared with the Board the proposal she and the Carol Hooder, Title 1 Coordinator, prepared for targeting specific math tutorial for ARVA students who scored basic and below basic on the AR Benchmark Exams. The proposal includes hiring a Math Tutor for a 12 month period to work with those students and learning coaches, teachers, and Title 1 math teacher. The Math Tutor will be provided and trained in the use of the tools including Scantron, Odyssey, Wacom tablets, Elmo document cameras as well as other professional development opportunities.

Ms. Ghidotti explained that ARVA is allocated a total of \$101,658 in the Title 1 ARRA funds of which \$50,829 will be accessible once the proposal is approved and the remainder will be available in October.

The Board discussed the details of the Title 1 Stimulus proposal.

<p>MOTION: by Kevin Smith and seconded by Angelia Driskill to approve the Title 1 Stimulus plan. Motion carried 5-0.</p>

Ms. Ghidotti shared with the Board that ARVA is allocated a total of \$322,596 in the Stabilization ARRA funds to be drawn down over a 12 month period. Lisa Williams explained that the Stabilization proposal would include merit pay to current ARVA teachers based on data collected from reports such as Scantron and Study Island; hiring four Math Tutors for a 12 month period and providing appropriate tools; professional development and training; three-year site license for HeadSprout program; and auto dialer services.

The Board discussed the details of the Stabilization Stimulus proposal. Ms. McHenry-Sharp requested that the wording in paragraph 3 under Goal: Teacher Evaluation - “good attitude” either be reworded or receive additional clarification. Ms. Ghidotti reminded the Board that they can visit any of the teachers’ classroom Elluminate sessions to observe and to fulfill the yearly requirement of each Board member to visit a classroom.

<p>MOTION: by Kevin Smith and seconded by Lepaine McHenry-Sharp to approve the Stabilization Stimulus plan with the requested corrects. Motion carried 5-0.</p>
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Ms. Ghidotti shared with the Board that ARVA is allocated a total of \$115,482 in the IDEA – Special Education ARRA funds. Tara Richardson, Special Education Coordinator, explained that the IDEA proposal would develop a lending library by purchasing items including speech programs providing students with tools to verbally dictate their school work; software to assist struggling readers to read text on the computer screen; reading pens to assist reading textbooks; Elmo document camera for teachers’ use; hire a part-time Special Education teacher; contract with reading specialists; professional development opportunities for general education teachers; purchase evaluation tools; and provide Regional Around the Table Conference.

The IDEA proposal follows the same guidelines as the normal Special Education program and will provide services for ARVA students currently enrolled in the Special Education program as well as those students in the Response to Intervention Process.

The Board discussed the details of the IDEA Stimulus proposal.

MOTION: by Kevin Smith and seconded by Angela Driskill to approve the IDEA Stimulus plan. Motion carried 5-0.

Draft 2009-10 Budget Report

Ms. Ghidotti shared with the Board the budget layout consisting of the currently budgeted items; 2008-09 expenditures; and projected expenses. She explained that the Budget Report for the September Board Meeting will provide a full picture.

The Board discussed the details of the budget report. Ms. Ghidotti presented proposed teacher salary increases for the 2009-10 fiscal year. The board discussed the impact of the increases to the 2009-10 budget.

MOTION: by Lepaine Sharp-McHenry and seconded by John Riggs to approve the teacher salary increases. Motion carried 5-0.

Ms. Ghidotti asked if it is the pleasure of the Board, we could schedule a Board meeting the later part of July or first of August to discuss and approve the 2009-10 Budget. The Board agreed.

Student Test Scores

Ms. Ghidotti informed the Board that the results of the 2008-09 student test scores had been briefly posted by the Arkansas Department of Education (ADE) but were quickly recalled to make corrections. The state has not released the K-1st-2nd grade scores but it is anticipated that the ADE will release these by June 23rd. Ms. Ghidotti briefly explained the different components in the report of student test scores.

Audit findings

Ms. Ghidotti informed the Board that under the guidance of the audit findings and the request of the Board, ARVA has opened an account with Arvest Bank to ensure that funds are protected in accordance with the FDIC.

k12 curriculum opportunities

Ms. Ghidotti briefly shared with the Board additional avenues to provide students opportunities to use the K12 curriculum. Race-to-the-Top is a K12 adventure to go into a failing school, train teachers in the k12 curriculum to provide students the tools to increase academic success. Conversion Charter School contract with K12 – Lincoln School District has an approved Conversion Charter School for grades K-12 and 300 students.

The Board discussed opportunities and avenues for K12 curriculum.

Director Announcement

Ms. Ghidotti announced to the Board that she had been offered the position of the Southern Region Vice President with K12. She has accepted and will transition into the position while assisting in the search for a replacement for the ARVA Head of School position.

The Board congratulated Ms. Ghidotti and thanked her on her leadership in establishing a great staff and teachers, advancing the students in Arkansas, and now extending across the southern region.

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

The Chair asked if there was any other business. No response.

<p>MOTION: by John Riggs and seconded by Kevin Smith to adjourn the ARVA Board meeting. Motion carried 5-0.</p>
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Meeting adjourned at 5:15 p.m.