



Minutes
Arkansas Virtual Academy
Board of Directors Meeting
April 22, 2008
via Conference Call

Board Members Present

Jerry C. Jones
John Riggs
Lepaine Sharp-McHenry
Kevin Smith

Staff Present

Karen Ghidotti
Dr. Gary Smith
Susan Underwood

Media Present

None

Board Members Absent

Mike Henley
Lisenne Rockefeller

Call to Order

Board Chair, Jerry Jones, declared a quorum and called the board meeting to order at 4:04 p.m.

MOTION: by Kevin Smith and seconded that the last month's minutes be approved as written. Motion carried 4-0.

Chair's Report

Jerry Jones discussed the progress of filling the vacant positions on the ARVA Board of Directors. He reported that a letter had been sent to Ms. Lisenne Rockefeller inquiring of her interest to remain on the Board. A response has not been received to date. Mr. Jones reported that Joe Klein, assistant basketball coach at UALR and Little Rock resident, was sent a letter inquiring of his interest to serve on the board. Arkansas Representative Mike Lamoureux was also sent a letter inquiring his interest to serve on the board. We have a verbal interest but not a written letter of interest. The Board was informed that Kevin Anderson declined the offer to service through this calendar year, but would consider serving as a Board member the following year.

Ms. Karen Ghidotti suggested that the terms of the current ARVA Board members begin as of April 22, 2008, as slatted on May 11, 2004, according to the By Laws of having at least five and no more than thirteen Board members.

MOTION: by John Riggs and seconded by Kevin Smith to accept the terms of the current Board members beginning on April 22, 2008. Motion carried 4-0.



John Riggs suggested that a letter should be sent to the current Board members listing the terms and expiration dates. Then upon the expiration, the Board member would express interest if they wish to continue service and the Board would take action accordingly.

School/Director's Report

Tests Scores

Ms. Karen Ghidotti shared with the Board the statistical data of the ARVS 2006-07 tests scores. Comparing the history of our student enrollment, the longer students are enrolled in ARVS/ARVA the more advanced and proficient they seem to score on tests.

Jerry Jones asked when the school would receive the 2007-08 tests scores. Ms. Ghidotti replied that all of the testing documents are being shipped back to the testing companies this week. The Arkansas Department of Education is scheduled to receive test results by the end of May and the local school districts are scheduled to receive their test results by the end of June.

Enrollment

Ms. Ghidotti discussed the enrollment and withdraws of the ARVA students. She shared that as of April 17th ARVA had 498 students enrolled with 105 withdraws since July 2007. The enrollment process was stopped on March 30th due to the issues of ordering and shipping testing materials.

Lepaine Sharp-McHenry inquired of the 105 withdraws how many did not actually attend any classes. Ms. Ghidotti responded that there were 22 students withdrawn during July and August before classes began.

Applications

Ms. Ghidotti shared that to date; ARVA has received 300 on-line applications. The ARVA staff during the month of March conducted four Elluminate (on-line) informational sessions making contact with eight families. During the month of May, the ARVA staff plans to conduct face-to-face informational sessions in strategic areas across the state including areas of Texarkana, Jonesboro, Little Rock, Fort Smith, Fayetteville, Helena, Pine Bluff, and Monticello. Plans for additional informational sessions in July and August will depend on the enrollment and waiting list.

John Riggs asked of the 300 on-line applications, how many are current students. Ms. Ghidotti responded that the staff was in the process of analyzing those numbers. All current students by May 30th must inform the school of their intent to re-enroll.

Mr. Riggs asked of the 498 current students, minus the 56 eighth graders, how many do we anticipate will return. Ms. Ghidotti explained that typically we have around a 60% retention rate.



John Riggs inquired about the type of marketing ARVA is using to both retain the current students and recruit students for the new school year.

Ms. Ghidotti shared with the Board how the school has been reaching out to students and families to provide encouragement and support. ARVA worked with local businesses to award students with certificates for their participation in activities including study halls, clubs, Study Island test practice, etc. Other school sponsored events to promote the growth of school community have included weekly student outings scheduled throughout the state; school t-shirts offered for purchase; and K12 offering our families incentives for completing enrollment by a certain date.

Ms. Ghidotti explained that K12 has a list of families throughout Arkansas with children ages K-8th grade levels to recruit as potential students through advertisements in the Arkansas Democrat Gazette, on radio stations, e-blast, etc.

Budget

The Board was presented the 2007-08 School Budget and Expenditures to date. During the discussion, John Riggs asked what the predicted amount of carryover in state funds would be for this school year. Ms. Ghidotti predicted a 10% to 15% carryover. It was suggested by Board members that a Board policy be created for a targeted percentage of funds to carryover each year. Most school districts have a projection of funds in order to continue business and this type of information might be obtained through the School Board Association. The Board requested that Ms. Ghidotti bring to the next Board meeting a proposed policy of projection for carryover of funding.

Ms. Ghidotti shared with the Board documents for the District-Wide Budget Reports for Title I, Title II-A, and Title V funds as well as the District and School Level Plans submitted for the Arkansas Comprehensive School Improvement Plan (ACSIP). ARVA would need to hire 1 full time and 1 part time Title I Math teachers to serve the students who qualify for Title math services according to the proposed criteria.

MOTION: by John Riggs and seconded by Lepaine McHenry to approve the budget and Title funds to hire one 1 FTE and one .5 FTE Title I Math teachers. Motion carried 4-0.

Dr. Gary Smith provided the Board with information of the use and services provided through the Title VI-B Special Education Start-up Funds. Dr. Smith explained that a school district would typically receive funds at the beginning of the school year. Ms. Ghidotti added that we can use these funds to repay costs occurred this far for special education services for students and salary of the special education teacher.

Kevin Smith asked how much is anticipated to be spent on special education services this school year. Ms. Ghidotti responded that the school has averaged \$4000 per month or about \$45,000 for the year.



MOTION: by Lepaine Sharp-McHenry and seconded by Kevin Smith to approve the Special Education assurances and agreements as submitted in the Board package. Motion carried 4-0.

MOTION: by Kevin Smith and seconded by John Riggs to approve the allocations of the Title VI-B funds. Motion carried 4-0.

State Testing

Ms. Ghidotti shared with the Board the process and results for the week of state testing. There were 98% of ARVA students present for the Arkansas Benchmark and SAT 10 tests at the nine regional ARVA testing sites. Our teachers and administrators were joined by 50 Arkansas certified teachers to proctor the tests. The first year of testing the ARVA students went without any major incidents due to the high level of planning and organization.

End-of-Year Event

Ms. Ghidotti encouraged each Board member to reserve the date of May 30. ARVA will be conducting the End-of-Year Event in the Rotunda of the State Capitol to recognize the graduation of our eighth graders and kindergarteners. Awards will be presented to students who participated and excelled in programs such as the Duke TIP, Head Sprout, Study Island as well as school clubs. A special presentation will be presented to those families who have been with us through ARVS becoming ARVA. Families will have the opportunity to enjoy a guided tour of the state capitol. The event will conclude with a fun filled evening at the Arkansas Travelers Baseball game.

Operation Lemonade

ARVA is participating in the Operation Lemonade Weekend campaign to help raise funds to support the fight against pediatric cancer. One of our ARVA students is currently battling against the same type of pediatric cancer as the young lady, Alex Scott, who is the founder of Alex Lemonade Stand. Ms. Ghidotti shared with the Board that ARVA is joining the other K12 schools across the country in sponsoring one of the 1000 plus lemonade stands the weekend of May 30th. She encouraged the Board to visit <http://go.k12.com/operationlemonade/> for more information and to help support the cause.

Policy

Ms. Lepaine Sharp-McHenry reminded the Board of the Constitutional Protected Prayer Policy that needed to be approved. After a short discussion, action was taken.

MOTION: by John Riggs and seconded by Kevin Smith to approve the Constitutional Protected Prayer Policy as submitted in the Board package. Motion carried 4-0.



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Executive Session

The ARVA Board officially went into Executive Session at 5:30 p.m. to discuss 2008-09 Teacher Contracts and concluded at 5:40 p.m.

Old Business

John Riggs reminded the Board of the need to add a parent as an ARVA Board member. After much discussion, Ms. Ghidotti asked the Board how they wished to proceed with the search of a parent to serve on the Board. It was suggested that we first develop and approve a policy. Then notify the current ARVA parent community of the opportunity to serve on the ARVA Board; a committee will review the applications; the selected nominees will be brought to the Board for approval.

Jerry Jones thanked Ms. Karen Ghidotti and the ARVA staff for all of their hard work and organization in bringing ARVA to its successful status.

MOTION: to adjourn was made by Kevin Smith and seconded by Lepaine McHenry to adjourn the ARVA Board meeting. Motion carried 4-0.

Meeting adjourned at 5:44 p.m.