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Minutes
Arkansas Virtual Academy
Board of Directors Meeting
September 19, 2008

Board Members Present

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

Staff Present

Karen Ghidotti
Lisa Williams
Susan Underwood
Tara Richardson
Monique Houston

Media Present

None

New Board Members

Susan Allerheiligen
Angela Driskill

Call to Order

Board Chair, Jerry Jones, declared a quorum and called the board meeting to order at 3:15 p.m.

Karen Ghidotti distributed the minutes of the previous ARVA Board meeting of April 22, 2008.

MOTION: by Mike Henley and seconded by Lepaine Sharp-McHenry to approve the April 22, 2008, ARVA Board Meeting minutes as written Motion carried 5-0.

Selection Committee Report and Recommendation

John Riggs reported that the committee reviewed applications of several ARVA parents. The Selection Committee is recommending that Susan Allerheiligen and Angela Driskill to serve on the ARVA Board of Directors.

MOTION: by John Riggs and seconded by Lepaine Sharp-McHenry to adopt by acqulation the two new board members, Susan Allerheiligen and Angela Driskill, for a term of three years beginning in September 2008. Motion carried 5-0.

Jerry Jones, Board Chair, swore in Susan Allerheiligen and Angela Driskill as members of the ARVA Board of Directors.

MOTION: by John Riggs and seconded by Lepaine Sharp-McHenry to suspend the rules and elect the officers of the ARVA Board of Directors as follows – Jerry Jones-Chair; Mike Henley-Vice Chair-Treasurer/Secretary. Motion carried 7-0.

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MOTION: by John Riggs and seconded by Lepaine Sharp-McHenry to elect the Dispersment Officers as Jerry Jones-President and Mike Henley-Vice President-Treasurer/Secretary. Motion carried 7-0.

Chair's Report

Jerry Jones discussed the series of meetings and conversations that he, Mike Henley and Karen Ghidotti had with Morril Harriman of the Governor's office; Ken James, Commissioner of the Arkansas Department of Education, and Robbie Wills, Speaker of the House. The intent of these meetings was to provide an understanding about the Arkansas Virtual Academy (ARVA) and to discuss the special language that prohibits the growth of the school. The message and information of ARVA has been well received. Reactions to the conversations have been positive and supportive. All agreed to the necessity of continuing these types of meetings to help make plans of for future of ARVA

Ms. Karen Ghidotti discussed with the Board both possible issues and scenaros of ARVA as serving students K-8 and high school; enrollment growth; areas around the state for information sessions; student applications; teacher applications; potential policies; financial impact; and additional audiences to have conversations with.

After discussions about students in grades 9-12, the possibility of accepting those students in the iAcademy and providing credit for their course work, Jerry Jones appointed John Riggs, Angela Driskill and Susan Allerheiligen to a committee to explore the issues. The committee will explore the possibilities and issues then report their findings at the next Board meeting.

The Board discussed the possibilities of exploring options including financial investments, specific state laws and guidelines, and parameters. Mike Henley and Karen Ghidotti have begun the task of exploring financial options for ARVA. They will put together specific proposals to submit to the Board before the next Board meeting.

School/Director's Report

Ms. Karen Ghidotti, Head of School, presented the Board members ARVA Diamond paperweights in gratitude for all that the Board does and the tremendous impact they have made on the educational opportunities for ARVA students.

Required Financial Audit

Karen Ghidotti shared with the Board the requirement by state law that ARVA has an annual audit. The statue states that audits will be conducted by the Bureau of the Legislative Audit. Upon suggestion by the Board Chair to contract with a private company to conduct the first audit, Ms. Ghidotti sought out quotes from three different firms. The decision to put before the board a proposal from Thomas & Thomas LLP was based on their experience conducting audits with schools, school boards, and 503C boards. Nicole Ellis, representative of Thomas & Thomas, provided the Board information about the company and audit process.

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Nicole Ellis presented each Board member with a packet containing the pre-audit report and engagement letter. She explained that the audit for ARVA would be conducted with an AICPA as well as state and federal law audit standards; perform interviews with staff and send questionnaires to Board members; high level overview; access risk areas of management override of controls. The timeline would be to produce a draft report in December of 2008 then conduct field work in late November and early December followed by the final audit report.

The Board discussed the audit process and cost of services.

MOTION: by Mike Henley and seconded by John Riggs to approve Thomas & Thomas LLP to conduct the audit for ARVA and that the Head of School and Treasurer of the Board negotiate the fees. Motion carried 7-0.

First Tee Golf Program

Ms. Ghidotti introduced Chad Kauffman the Executive Director of the Little Rock First Tee Program. She provided background information of ARVA's involvement with the Arkansas First Tee Programs. A survey was sent to ARVA families inquiring of their level of interest in participating in a First Tee Program. Of the 89 responses ARVA could have a relationship with four First Tee Programs enrolling 14 students in Fort Smith, 16 students in Springdale, 46 students in Little Rock, and 9 students in Bentonville. These 89 students would participate one day a week in an 8 week instructional program, averaging \$25 per student for a total of \$2,225 for the program.

Chad Kauffman shared with the Board that as a non-profit organization the mission of the First Tee Program is to impact the lives of young people, ages 5 to 9 years, to grow as a person and develop life skills through interpersonal management skills. Trained volunteer coaches use golf as a tool to teach life skills and intercommunication skills while learning the game of golf. If children meet the minimum requirements at their level on the written test over life skills and golf, then they graduate with a certification from the program. Once certified, the child then receives a set of golf clubs, bag and gloves. The \$25 fee per student only covers program expenses and can be applied toward a membership.

The Board discussed the information about the First Tee Golf Program.

Ms. Ghidotti stated that all ARVA students are required by the state to have PE hours which the First Tee Program could assist. She proposed to the Board to fund the membership fee for the 89 students as a starting point with the opportunity to expand to other First Tee Programs and local Country Clubs.

MOTION: by Mike Henley and seconded by John Riggs to fund the First Tee Golf Program for the 89 students. Motion carried 7-0.

Required Classroom Visit

Ms. Ghidotti explained to the Board that the state requires each Board member to visit an ARVA teacher's classroom once a year. She then demonstrated the use of the ARVA website, Elluminate, on-line opportunities and tools made available for ARVA students - Study Island, school calendar, CalendarWiz, Elluminate sessions, Bench Mark Blasters, and Bamboo tablet to use for math

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instruction have been issued for students who qualified for Title I. She reminded Board members to sign in with your first name and title “Board member” when visiting an ARVA classroom.

The Board visited the online second grade classroom of Julie Roark. Ms. Roark provided an overview of how the Elluminate sessions work and shared with the board a presentation that an 8th student had prepared with her advanced learners class.

Booster Club

Ms. Ghidotti introduced Tara Richardson, our Special Needs Teacher as well as the Parent Facilitator, who oversees the Booster Club. Through the Booster Club she encourages parents to host events and student outings in their local area to provide additional resources.

Tara Richardson shared with the Board that the goal for Booster Club this first year is to get parents involved and out to meet other families in their local area. The Booster Club will be used as our base for volunteers to help in outings, at testing sites, volunteer activities, and encourage them to join the National k12 Booster Club.

Scantron

Karen Ghidotti and Lisa Williams, Academic Administrator, explained the use and significance of Scantron which is a testing mechanism made available by k12 for those students who come to us with no prior test scores. This is one of the tools teachers utilize to customize assessments to guide individualized instruction to help students make gains and be academically successful.

The Board expressed interest in observing and experiencing more of the tools and learning opportunities that are being offered to ARVA students during the Board meetings. Jerry Jones recommended that each of the Board members read a book entitled “Disrupting Class” by Clayton M. Christensen.

Marketing Presentation

Ms. Ghidotti shared with the Board the different modes of marketing that has been provided for ARVA by k12, Inc. She provided highlights on each of the marketing documents in the Board packet.

Foreign Language- Power Glide

Ms. Ghidotti explained to the Board that ARVA will be offering foreign language as a club beginning January 2009 the 2nd semester for students in 2nd-8th grades. There will be four languages [Spanish, German, French, Latin] offered. In order to participate, families must be compliant and have met certain criteria. It is a self-guided, self-paced curriculum and language lab that students can do with or without a teacher. We are opting with a teacher but without a teacher. At this point, we cannot as a school offer credit for foreign language.

Special Education

Ms. Ghidotti shared with the Board that the ARVA Special Education student numbers have increased over last year’s numbers. The Title IV-B funds to support services have increased as well.

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Tara Richardson shared that we currently have 37 students who have qualified, 16 evaluations in process and 2 additional referrals. We provide both direct and indirect speech and language services. As approved by the Arkansas Department of Education Special Education, Ms. Richardson conducts the IEPs via Elluminate sessions then mails out the documents to collect the proper signatures.

The Board discussed potential scenarios for students qualifying for SPED services.

School Events

Ms Ghidotti reported to the Board that ARVA conducted two Back-to-School events. There were approximately to 200 people at the Little Rock Zoo and 100 people at a Fayetteville park and cookout. These were great opportunities for our families as well as potential families to get together.

We will be going back before the Arkansas Activities Association Board to request membership so ARVA students can participate in events such as Quiz Bowl, Odyssey of the Mind, Spelling Bee, chess competitions, vocal and instrumental contests.

ARVA Vision / Mission

The Board was given a copy of the ARVA Vision/Mission statement that was created by the ARVA faculty. This is read out loud at every Professional Development meeting.

Budget

Ms. Ghidotti shared with the Board an overview of the funds for 2007-08, budget expenditures, proposed 2008-09 budget and expenditures.

The Board discussed the budgets. It was suggested that the next Budget Report be provided with the 2007-08 and 2008-09 budget, proposed and actual expenditures side-by-side to provide better clarification.

Ms. Ghidotti explained that once the budget is approved by the Board, the deadline is October 1 to have it posted on the school's website.

<p>MOTION: by Lepaine Sharp-McHenry and seconded by John Riggs to approve the 2008-09 proposed budget upon putting a budget line item under the Administrative expenditures for Legal Services at \$15,000 and for an Audit at \$19,000. Motion carried 7-0.</p>

Board Training

Ms. Ghidotti shared information about the State requirement that each Board member must attend six hours of training each year. The training options include online courses offered by the Arkansas School Board Association (ASBA) website and the ASBA conference December 3-5, 2008. New board members must attend six hours of New Board Member Training. These trainings must be completed by December 31, 2008.

The Board discussed the training options and inquired about other options for statewide board member training for the Charter Schools. At this point board member trainings must be approved by the ASBA. Ms. Ghidotti will share their concern and request with the newly formed Charter School Resource Center.

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Lepaine Sharp-McHenry apologized to the Board but needed to leave early due to a prior engagement.

Student/Parent Handbook

Ms. Ghidotti requested the Board to approve the 2008-09 Student/Parent Handbook. The Board discussed the concern to clarify the statement in the ARVA Parent/Student Contract section to clearly state that ARVA students are full-time students and may not be enrolled in other full-time public, private or charter schools.

MOTION: by John Riggs and seconded by Angela Driskill to approve the 2008-09 Student/Parent Handbook with the change wording to provide clarification of full-time enrollment. Motion carried 6-0.

Smart Core Curriculum Policy

Ms. Ghidotti informed the Board that they will be receiving information on the Smart Core Curriculum. The state requires school districts to inform all 6th graders about the Arkansas Smart Core and Core curricula and course of study for graduation to better inform students and their families.

Arkansas Teacher Retirement

Ms. Ghidotti requested the Board to approve the Arkansas Teacher Retirement System document to be submitted authorizing payroll deductions for the ARVA teachers.

MOTION: by John Riggs and seconded by Kevin Smith to approve the Arkansas Teacher Retirement System document to be submitted authorizing payroll deductions. Motion carried 6-0.

Fund Balance Policy

At the request of the board a fund balance policy draft is provided for review.

MOTION: by John Riggs and seconded by Mike Henley to approve the Fund Balance Policy. Motion carried 6-0.

Mileage Reimbursement

Ms. Ghidotti requested guidance from the Board for determining the mileage reimbursement rate. The State level of mileage reimbursement will be \$.45 per mile this year. Operating under the federal grant, ARVA has reimbursed at the federal rate which was \$.485 this past school year. The new IRS federal mileage reimbursement rate is \$.585 per mile. Ms. Ghidotti proposed to the Board that the Board set a mileage reimbursement rate of \$.50 per mile as the budget allows.

The Board discussed the issue of mileage reimbursement, cost of fuel, and school budget.

MOTION: by John Riggs and seconded by Kevin Smith to adopt a practice of mileage reimbursement at the IRS reimbursement rate. This practice will be effective as of September 20, 2008. Motion carried 6-0.

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State Test Scores

Ms. Ghidotti shared with the Board the ARVA student 2007-08 test scores. We have met the State requirements by publish the information to our parents in the school newsletter. In your documents, you have a letter from the Arkansas Department of Education (ADE) sharing our AYP progress which is the “average yearly progress”. The last page states that LEA 6043701, which is K-6th grades, has met AYP. We have yet to receive notification for LEA 6340702, which is 7-8th grades. Because of some miscoding in the state system for 100 of our 7th and 8th graders, we are on the state alert status. We have submitted and appealed this status after correcting the coding in the system. Our teachers are working with the students on the deficit areas of open response and geometry as well as providing additional face to face regional training opportunities for the parents.

The Board discussed the results of the student test scores. The Board requested to have a short statement of progress sharing the AYP status, appeal response, and training for students and parents.

Board Terms

The Board revisited the discussion and motion from the April Board meeting about resetting the terms of the members of the ARVA Board of Directors.

MOTION: by John Riggs and seconded by Mike Henley to approve resetting the terms of the members of the ARVA Board of Directors to end in September instead of April. Motion carried 6-0.

MOTION: by John Riggs and seconded to adjourn the ARVA Board meeting. Motion carried 6-0.

Meeting adjourned at 5:55 p.m.