



APPROVED 05/19/2020

**Arkansas Connections Academy, Inc. (ARCA)
MINUTES OF THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING
Tuesday, April 21, 2020 at 10:00 a.m.**

**Held via teleconference due to State Precautions regarding Public Health and Safety
During COVID-19 Pandemic:**

800-747-5150; Access Code 028-1338#

I. Call to Order and Roll Call

Dr. Beck called the meeting to order at 10:03 a.m. when all participants were able to hear each other. The school was open to the public to attend the meeting. Dr. Beck conducted a Roll Call.

Board Members Present: Dennis Beck, Virginia Walden Ford, Carla Hartwell, David Hartman and Hailey Maloney (via phone);

Guests: Darla Gardner, School Leader; Nicole Stephens, School staff; Kristin DeGroff, Whitney Cardenas, Bryce Adams, Tina Blair, and Kristie Clements, Pearson Online & Blended Learning (OBL) staff (via phone).

II. Public Comment

There were no public comments.

III. Routine Business

a. Approval of Agenda

Dr. Beck asked the Board Members whether there were any changes necessary to the Agenda that has been posted in accordance with Arkansas open meeting law. There being no changes noted, a motion was made and seconded as follows:

RESOLVED, that the Agenda for the April 21, 2020 Arkansas Connections Academy, Inc. Regular Board Meeting, as presented, is hereby approved.

The motion passed unanimously.

IV. Oral Reports

a. School Leader Report

Ms. Gardner reviewed the Monthly School Report data with the Board. She discussed recent trends in enrollment, and further highlighted the decrease in withdrawal rates from the same time last school year. Ms. Gardner advised that under state guidance, there will be no more withdrawals of students for any reason for the remainder of the school year due to the COVID-19 Pandemic. She further emphasized ARCA's support and dedication to students and families during this unprecedented time.

i. Update on State Testing

This item was not discussed.

ii. Update on Graduation Plans and End of Year Activities

Ms. Gardner presented this item to the Board. She advised that ARCA's first high school graduation will be held virtually on May 31, 2020. Additionally, optional individual graduation ceremonies with seniors, family members, and select school staff will be held in the ARCA offices at individually scheduled times. Ms. Gardner noted that these ceremonies will follow all necessary social distancing guidelines.

Ms. Gardner introduced Ms. Stephens to the Board. She shared positive feedback from families regarding the alternative graduation plans. Ms. Stephens further shared with the Board examples of gratitude expressed by ARCA's families for the school's hard work and dedication to students during the COVID-19 Pandemic.

Ms. Gardner further updated the Board on end of year activities, noting that all in-person events, including prom and field trips, have been cancelled for the remainder of the school year.

At this time, the Board requested an update on state testing from Ms. Gardner. She advised that state testing has been cancelled in Arkansas for the 2019-2020 School Year.

b. OBL Products, Services, and Initiatives Update

Mr. Adams reviewed details within the Pearson Online & Blended Learning's (OBL) 2020-2021 Products, Services and Initiatives memo, as included in the Board materials. He reviewed upcoming program enhancements, planned product roll-outs, and specific initiatives that are high on the priority list of OBL for deployment to the school both within the next school year, and beyond. Mr. Adams further detailed curriculum changes and alignment initiatives, including all the advantages of utilizing Polaris® for curriculum development and improving the student experience. He reviewed the anticipated timeline for the next generation of the school's learning management system to be available, and highlighted specific enhancements being made to the current platform, resulting largely from what's received positive feedback in beta testing. Board members expressed satisfaction with OBL's ongoing dedication to the school's success, and thanked Mr. Adams for the detailed update.

c. Financial Report

Ms. Blair reviewed the financial report included in the Board Meeting materials. Additionally, Ms. Blair highlighted key aspects in the school's revenue and expense reports, as well as the current forecast. She further discussed the potential budgetary impacts anticipated to be forthcoming due to the cancellation of state testing and student activities for the foreseeable future.

V. Consent Items

Dr. Beck asked the Board members whether there were any items from the Consent Items that they wished to have moved to Action Items for discussion. There being no discussion or changes, a motion was made and seconded as follows:

RESOLVED, the Consent Items:

- a. Approval of Minutes from the March 17, 2020 Board Meeting;
- b. Approval of Staffing Report;
- c. Approval of Online & Blended Learning Invoice(s) for March;
- d. Approval of Staff Compensation Plan for the 2020-2021 School Year; and
- e. Approval of Revised Enrollment Documentation: Parent Legal Guardian Agreement; are hereby approved.

The motion passed unanimously.

VI. Action Items

a. Approval of Budget and Fee Schedule for the 2020- 2021 School Year

Ms. Blair reviewed the proposed 2020-2021 school year budget outline and Budget Notes documents with the Board, also reminding them of the budget development process to date that included the school leader, Board Treasurer and/or other Designee(s) and OBL staff. Ms. Blair discussed the budget, including related staffing, outreach and other specific expenses for the school, as well as the fee schedule and all services provided by OBL under the schedule. The Board held discussion on the benefits package and Ms. Blair advised that there will be no cost increase to employees. There being no further discussion, a motion was made and seconded as follows:

RESOLVED, that the Budget and Fee Schedule for the 2020-2021 School Year, as presented, is hereby approved.

The motion passed unanimously.

At this time, Dr. Beck inquired if there was an emergency fund for employees who have been negatively impacted by the COVID-19 Pandemic. Ms. Gardner informed the Board of the OBL Foundation Grant as a resource for families going through hard times.

Dr. Beck further inquired about the school's Back to School Bash to be held later in the year, and the possibility of inviting graduates from the class of 2020. Ms. Gardner thanked Dr. Beck for the suggestion and advised that all 2019-2020 graduates will be invited to the event, as well as next year's graduation.

VII. Information Items

a. State Account Relations (STAR) Update

Mr. Adams provided the Board with an update on recent legislative activities which may impact the school. He informed the Board that he will continue to track potential legislation regarding the budgetary impact of the COVID-19 pandemic.

i. OBL Agreement/Charter Renewal Timeline Update

Mr. Adams advised that an update was not necessary at this time and that the Charter renewal process will begin this summer, upon the state's release of all application documentation

b. Partner School Leadership Team (PSLT) Update

Ms. Clements presented to the Board on behalf of OBL's Partner School Leadership Team.

i. School Operations Metrics

Ms. Clements presented this item to the Board. She reviewed the data included in the Board materials, highlighting the school's performance as compared with other OBL partnering schools of similar size and years in operation. Board members discussed the metrics data with Ms. Clements.

Ms. Clements further commended Ms. Gardner and her staff for their dedication to students and families during this uncertain time.

c. Board Planning for the 2020-2021 School Year

Ms. DeGroff discussed the planning for the 2020-2021 school year that OBL has been working on with the school.

i. Board Support Update

Ms. DeGroff reviewed the current support personnel provided to the Board through OBL.

ii. Board Composition

Ms. DeGroff discussed with the Board the current composition, including board member terms that would be up at this year's Annual Meeting, and encouraged

Board members to discuss their intentions regarding terms and renewal with the Board Chair.

iii. Proposed Meeting Schedule

The Board confirmed their support of maintaining the current meeting schedule for the upcoming school year. Ms. DeGroff advised that the consideration of the Board meeting schedule for the 2020-2021 school year will be included on the June Annual Meeting agenda.

iv. Board Experience Survey

Ms. DeGroff advised the Board of an upcoming Board Experience Survey which will allow the Board to provide feedback on services provided by OBL. She discussed with the Board the purpose of the survey and the value of their participation. Ms. DeGroff further provided the Board with details on the survey delivery date.

VIII. Adjournment and Confirmation of Next Meeting Date – May 19, 2020 at 10:00 a.m.

Dr. Beck noted that the Board was at the end of its agenda and that the next meeting was scheduled to be held on April 21, 2020 at 10:00 a.m. At 10:45 a.m. the Board made and seconded the following motion:

RESOLVED, that the adjournment of the Arkansas Connections Academy, Inc. April 21, 2020 Board meeting, is hereby approved.

The motion was approved unanimously.