



Volume V, Issue I

January 16, 2007

January Board Meeting Summary

New Charter Schools Approved – Congratulations to the 17 new charters that were approved to begin operation for the 2007-2008 school year. Schools represent locations in Golden Valley, Sahuarita, Sierra Vista, and Phoenix metropolitan areas. New charters include:

America Can
Educational Enterprises, Inc.
EduPrize Schools, LLC
Freedom Academy, Inc.
Imagine Elementary at Golden Valley, LLC
Imagine Elementary at Sahuarita, LLC
Imagine Elementary at Signal Peak, LLC
Imagine High School at Sierra Vista, LLC
Imagine High School at South Mountain, LLC
Imagine High School at West Valley, LLC

Imagine Middle School at Camelback, LLC
Imagine Middle School at Desert West, LLC
Imagine Middle School at Golden Valley, LLC
Laveen Preparatory: a Challenge Foundation
Academy
Mesa Preparatory Academy, Inc.
Paragon Education Corporation
Scholastic Academy for Young Adults Charter
School, Inc.

Board Elections and Recognitions – The Board elected Lynne Adams to serve as President and Christy Farley to serve as Vice President for the upcoming year. The Board also thanked outgoing President Kimberly Contreras-Mosher and Vice President David Hume for their service, hard work and dedication.

Executive Director Position – The Board ratified the acceptance of Executive Director Kristen Jordison’s resignation. The Board expressed its appreciation by presenting Kristen with a clock and wished her the best in her next endeavors. Speaking on behalf of the Board, President Lynne Adams stated that it was a pleasure working with Kristen and that she will be missed. President Adams highlighted Kristen’s “amazing” knowledge of the facts and people skills. “From my perspective, I cannot thank you enough,” she said.

Additionally, the Board authorized the formation of a search committee, which includes President Adams and Board Members Kimberly Contreras-Mosher and Arthur Ben and is chaired by Vice President Christy Farley. The executive director’s position was posted prior to the holidays and will remain open until it is filled. As of January 12th, the Board had received 47 applications. Vice President Farley said that the committee will review all of the applications, rank the applicants, and begin by interviewing the top 3 to 5 applicants. She hopes the committee will be able to bring a recommendation to the full Board at its February meeting.

Until the Executive Director position is filled, Director of Academic Affairs DeAnna Rowe will handle all curriculum-related issues and Director of Government & Financial Affairs Michele Diamond will handle all financial and legislative-related issues. DeAnna encouraged the charter community to contact anyone on staff with their questions and staff will direct them to the appropriate person, as needed.

Superintendent’s Report – Superintendent’s Designee Mary Gifford mentioned that ADE’s School Finance Advisory Group has received a legislative request for information on charter school regulations that are onerous and duplicative.

Executive Director's Report – The following information was provided by Research & Statistical Analyst Lee McIlroy:

- **2006 AZ LEARNS charter school profiles** – A brief review of 2006 AZ LEARNS achievement profiles for charter schools was presented. The overall distribution of 2006 profiles shows that the majority fall in the Performing or Performing Plus categories. Approximately 19% of charter schools are Excelling or Highly Performing. The majority of charter schools maintained their profile from the previous year or improved to the next profile category.
- **Parent Survey data collection** – As part of its budget appropriation, the Board is required to conduct a parent survey. The Board has contracted with the Arizona Prevention Resource Center to develop the online survey instrument, conduct the survey, and compile the results in a summary report. Staff has completed letters to schools and parents about the survey. These letters will be sent to the schools on January 19th. The schools have been asked to distribute the parent letter to parents. The on-line survey will be available through the Board's website – www.asbcs.state.az.us – between January 22, 2007 and February 26, 2007.

Legislative Subcommittee Report – In addition to mentioning that the Board's budget hearing was held on Friday, January 12th, Director of Government & Financial Affairs Michele Diamond updated the Board on the Legislative Subcommittee's meeting held December 14th:

- **Board's legislative agenda** – The Subcommittee recommended essentially the same legislative agenda as last year. First, the Board will pursue money for a data system through its budget request and through a separate bill (House Bill 2042). Second, it will pursue the same fingerprinting changes as last year. Specifically, this bill (House Bill 2041) would allow a charter school sponsor to impose a fine for repeat fingerprint violations.
- **Other Subcommittee recommendations** – ADE's legislative agenda was also discussed in detail. The Subcommittee made recommendations regarding which of these bills the Board would support. The Subcommittee recommended that the Board support the following legislative concepts included on ADE's agenda: 1) End of course testing; 2) district/charter funding equalization; 3) SAIS data collection; 4) modification of the definition of a "small school" used for achievement profile purposes; and 5) a unified K-12 school achievement profile. Also at the Subcommittee meeting, the Arizona Charter Schools Association discussed its legislative agenda, which includes district/charter funding equalization, additional charter school authorizers, and transfer of charter school credits to district schools.

Board Acts on Agreements – The Board voted to approve agreements with two of its schools. First, the Board accepted the proposed consent agreement for the voluntary surrender and termination of the charter contract with Adventure Academies of America. Second, the Board accepted the proposed consent agreement with Bradley Academy of Excellence, Inc. related to statutory fingerprinting requirements. The Board tabled action on the proposed consent agreement for the voluntary surrender and termination of the charter school contract with Academic and Personal Excellence, Inc.

2008-2009 Charter Application Package – The Board completed its first read of the new charter school application package for the 2008-2009 application cycle. Director of Academic Affairs DeAnna Rowe reviewed the proposed changes, which were primarily based on feedback received from the applicants and Technical Review Panel members. The Board is expected to conduct its final read of the new charter school application package at its February meeting. Following the Board's approval in February, the application package will be made available on the Board's website and in its office. The proposed deadline for the 2008-2009 application cycle is August 10, 2007.

Board Grants Extension – Arizona Academy of Leadership, Inc. was granted an extension until June 1, 2007 to sign its charter contract.



Volume V, Issue II

February 12, 2007

February Board Meeting Summary

Technical Review Panel Member Recognition – The Board recognized those individuals who volunteered their time serving on the Technical Review Panel, which assists the Board and staff in scoring the new charter applications. President Lynne Adams called these individuals the “heart and soul” of the application process and thanked them for their time and effort. “I can’t overstate how important you are to the process,” she said. Below are the 22 Technical Review Panel members:

Taji Allen – Vice President, National Bank of Arizona
Mary Berg – Director of Student Services, The Leona Group
Matt Buchwald – Vice President, Bank of America
Stephanie Carpenter – Assist Coach, ADE
Marcie Celaya – Director of Finances, Avondale Elementary School District
Susan Chan – Director, Kingman Academy of Learning
Ray Fox – Vice President, Bank of America
Angela Germinro – Director of Special Education, The Leona Group
Justin Harris – Financial Analyst, Wells Fargo Bank
Jody Johnson – Superintendent, Pointe Educational Services
Michele Kaye – Director, The Leona Group in Arizona
Heather King – Assistant Vice President, Bank of America
Gerry Lee – Vice President, National Bank of Arizona
Reese Millen – Director, Edge High School
Jack Penczar – Assistant Superintendent, AmeriSchools
Mary Ann Penczar – Director, Adventure Academy
Ann Peschka – Consultant for charter school development and former charter operator
Aanya Rispoli – Special Education Administrator, Maricopa County Sheriff’s Office School of Hard Knocks
Curtiss Smith – Senior Vice President, Mid First Commercial Banking
Tonnie Smith – Director, Young Scholars Academy Charter School
John Todd – President and Founder, John C. Todd II, P.C.
Alissa Trollinger – Secure Care Coordinator, Exceptional Student Services, ADE

New Executive Director Named – The Board received more than 50 applications. Last week, the search committee interviewed 7 candidates and, based on the interviews, selected Director of Academic Affairs DeAnna Rowe to fill the executive director’s position. The full Board approved the hiring of DeAnna Rowe to the position of executive director effective February 12th. “I personally am very excited to continue to work with DeAnna,” said President Lynne Adams, adding, “I think we are very, very lucky to have you.”

Superintendent’s Report – Superintendent’s Designee Mary Gifford mentioned that the Superintendent’s charter school advisory group is the best attended of all of the Superintendent’s advisory groups. At its last meeting, the charter school advisory group discussed the Superintendent’s legislative agenda, which includes funding equalization for charter schools. The advisory group asked for clarification related to the testing of previously

enrolled high school students and the availability of template special education forms. Both items were reviewed with Department of Education personnel and will be included in future communications and website postings.

Executive Director's Report – In addition to reporting on the status of schools with ongoing actions, DeAnna Rowe provided the following information:

- **Pilot replication update** – The Board received 13 letters of intent from charter schools interested in participating in the Board's pilot replication application process. The letters are currently being reviewed for eligibility. Later this month, each school will be notified of the review's outcome and the next steps in the process. Additionally, staff is currently working with the team that will be presenting the Board's replication process at the National Charter School Conference in April to create the scoring criteria for the content of the application. In early March, staff plans to present options to the Board's subcommittee.
- **Parent Survey update** – The on-line survey, which includes five questions, is web-based and will be available to parents through February 26th on the Board's website – www.asbcs.state.az.us. As of last count, 2,027 responses have been received. On Friday, a reminder notice was sent to schools along with a reminder flyer for parents in hopes that each school will have a large percentage of their population participate. Each school's results will be available.

Subcommittee Structure and Composition – President Lynne Adams announced that for 2007 the Board will establish two subcommittees – Legislative and Policy, Rule & Contracts. The Legislative Subcommittee will be chaired by Superintendent's Designee Mary Gifford and include Vice President Christy Farley and Board Member Arthur Ben. The Policy, Rule & Contracts Subcommittee will be chaired by Board Member Norm Butler and include President Lynne Adams and Board Members Kimberly Contreras-Mosher and Magdalena Verdugo. As new members are appointed to fill the four vacancies on the Board, these individuals will be assigned to one of the subcommittees.

Legislative Update – Director of Government & Financial Affairs Michele Diamond focused her legislative update on the Board's legislative issues and two bills that have come out since the Board's Legislative Subcommittee met.

The Board's bills have been making their way successfully through the process. House Bill 2041, the Board's fingerprint bill that would allow a charter school sponsor to impose a fine for repeat fingerprint violations, was amended on the House floor to require that the Board post the schools with repeat fingerprint violations on its website. House Bill 2042, which would provide funding for a data system, passed unanimously the House Education and Appropriations committees. The Board is also pursuing this item through the budget process. President Lynne Adams thanked the Arizona Charter Schools Association for their support of the Board's legislative agenda. Michele noted that the Association has been available to testify in support of both of the Board's bills. Additionally, the Association provided a letter of support for the data system that they distributed to all 90 members prior to the Appropriations Committee hearing.

Michele also discussed two bills that will be heard in the education committees this week. The first bill, House Bill 2480, exempts property and buildings that are leased to a charter school from property taxes as long as the school is tax-exempt and has received charter status under A.R.S. §15-183. The second bill, Senate Bill 1633, requires district schools to accept the credits earned by pupils transferring from a charter school if the charter school is classified as Excelling, Highly Performing or Performing. The bill also requires charter schools to accept credits earned by pupils transferring from district schools under the same provisions. The Board voted to support these two bills.

School Improvement Plans – In October 2006, 21 charter schools sponsored by the Board were designated as first-year Underperforming schools under AZ LEARNS. Pursuant to statute, each first-year Underperforming charter school must present its Arizona School Improvement Plan to its sponsor at a public meeting and submit a copy to the Superintendent of Public Instruction within 90 days of receiving its Underperforming designation. A school that submits a late school improvement plan is not eligible to receive Classroom Site Fund monies for 90 days plus each day that the plan was late after the deadline.

At its February meeting, the Board accepted the Arizona School Improvement Plans submitted within the timeframe by 20 of its charter schools and thanked these schools for their timely completion of the plans. Additionally, in accordance with statutory requirements, the Board voted to retain the Classroom Site Funds for East Valley Youth and Family Support Centers through February 16th for failure to submit its Arizona School Improvement Plan.

Board Accepts Surrender Agreements – The Board accepted the proposed consent agreements for the voluntary surrender and termination of the charter contract for two schools – East Valley Youth and Family Support Centers and Humanistic Education Authentic Rigorous Transcendent. East Valley Youth’s charter contract terminates effective February 16, 2007. Humanistic Education’s charter contract terminates effective January 16, 2007.

Board Approves FY09 Charter Application – The Board approved the changes to the new charter application package for the 2008-2009 application cycle. The changes were primarily based on feedback received from the applicants and Technical Review Panel members.

Following the meeting, the 2008-2009 application materials and dates for the prospective applicant workshops were made available on the Board’s website – www.asbcs.state.az.us. The deadline for the 2008-2009 application cycle is August 10, 2007.



Volume V, Issue III

March 12, 2007

March Board Meeting Summary

Superintendent's Report – Superintendent's Designee Mary Gifford stated that the Superintendent's charter school advisory group would be meeting this afternoon. She will update the Board on items discussed at the next meeting.

Executive Director's Report – In addition to reporting on the status of schools with ongoing actions, DeAnna Rowe updated the Board on the replication process. Ten schools are moving forward in the process. DeAnna met with these schools on March 2 to discuss the next steps in the process. For those schools that plan on opening this fall, applications must be submitted by April 13. These applications will be considered by the Board at its May meeting.

Legislative Update – Director of Government & Financial Affairs Michele Diamond reported that House Bill 2041, the Board's fingerprint bill that would allow a charter school sponsor to impose a fine for repeat fingerprint violations, passed the Senate K-12 Education Committee. Funding for the Board's data system is pending based on the budget outcomes.

Meta Academy, Inc. – In May 2006, the Board voted to issue a Notice of Intent to Revoke the charter of Meta Academy, Inc. The Board referred this matter to the Office of Administrative Hearings (OAH) for a hearing. OAH conducted the hearing and upon conclusion released the Administrative Law Judge's recommendations. The Administrative Law Judge determined that the charter should be revoked. The Board voted to reject the Administrative Law Judge's decision for the sole purpose of accepting a surrender agreement with Meta Academy, Inc. With the signing of the surrender agreement, the school waived its rights to appeal. The surrender agreement includes the Findings of Fact reached by the Administrative Law Judge.

Board Accepts Surrender Agreement – The Board accepted the proposed consent agreement for the voluntary surrender and termination of the charter contract with Air Academy Charter High School dba John Glenn Academy. The charter contract terminates effective March 12, 2007

Franklin Arts Academies & Franklin High School – The Board voted to issue Notices of Intent to Revoke the charters of Franklin Arts Academies and Franklin High School for inaccurate attendance reporting and insufficient record retention. The Board also required a corrective action plan and included a 10% withholding of monthly state aid for Franklin Arts Academies until the corrective action plan requirements are met.

Board Changes Meeting Start Time – To accommodate downtown construction and to make it a little easier for those Board members who come from outside of the Valley, President Lynne Adams announced that future Board meetings will begin at 9:30 a.m. instead of 9 a.m.



Volume V, Issue IV

April 9, 2007

April Board Meeting Summary

Board Welcomes New Member – The Board was pleased to welcome Dana Kostelnik as a new member to the Board. Ms. Kostelnik fills a public member vacancy that opened with the expiration of a previous member’s four year term.

Sonoran Science Academy Presentation – Mr. Oksuz and Mr. Achilov shared the many opportunities provided to their students through the school’s rigorous curriculum, which focuses on math, science and technology, extracurricular activities, and individualized college guidance. In its six years, the school has received numerous awards, not only locally, but through state and nationwide competitions. In 2007, the school’s students have received awards in mathematics, robotics, spelling and other competitions.

Superintendent’s Report – Superintendent’s Designee Mary Gifford stated that the Superintendent’s charter school advisory group will be meeting next week.

Executive Director’s Report – In addition to reporting on the status of schools with ongoing actions, DeAnna Rowe provided the following information:

- **New staff member** – Michael Dunbar was introduced as the newest member of the staff. Mike, who will serve as an Academic Program Specialist, brings experience as a charter school teacher and administrator.
- **Grant proposal** – A proposal has been submitted for a three-year \$20,000 grant through the National Governors Association Center for Best Practices – State Leadership for High Quality Charter Schools. If received, the grant would provide financial and technical support to assist the Board in developing rules for its renewal process. The proposal was a joint effort of the Board and the Governor’s Office.

Academic Program Specialist Jason Archuleta provided an update on recent workshops offered by the Board. First, 41 people representing 24 schools attended the two-day New Operator Workshop held in March. Jason thanked the following programs within ADE for their participation in the workshop – Assessment, School Finance, Certification, English Acquisition Services, Highly Qualified and Title I. Second, Jason stated that 49 people have attended the first two Prospective Applicant Workshops. The remaining three workshops will be held on April 17th, May 10th and June 1st.

Legislative Update – Director of Government & Financial Affairs Michele Diamond reported that House Bill 2041, the Board’s fingerprint bill that would allow a charter school sponsor to impose a fine for repeat fingerprint violations, has passed both the House and the Senate. It is currently with the Governor. Michele also updated the Board on two bills that pertain to the Technology Assisted Project-Based Instruction (TAPBI) program. First, a strike-everything amendment to House Bill 2213 would require a TAPBI school to

exit pilot status and allow continued operation on a permanent basis if certain criteria are met. If a school exited pilot status, it would no longer be subject to the current enrollment limitations. In addition, the bill requires the Board and SBE select a replacement school when an existing school exits the pilot program. Second, Senate Bill 1019 increases the number of TAPBI school sites by 2 district schools and 2 charter schools.

Meta Academy, Inc. – In May 2006, the Board voted to issue a Notice of Intent to Revoke the charter of Meta Academy, Inc. The Board referred this matter to the Office of Administrative Hearings (OAH) for a hearing. OAH conducted the hearing and upon conclusion released the Administrative Law Judge’s recommendations. The Administrative Law Judge determined that the charter should be revoked. At its March meeting, the Board voted to reject the Administrative Law Judge’s decision for the sole purpose of accepting a surrender agreement with Meta Academy, Inc. Following the meeting, the Board inadvertently failed to timely file its action with OAH thereby causing the Administrative Law Judge’s decision to be certified as the Board’s decision. At its April meeting, the Board granted a motion for review and ratified its previous decision.

Board Accepts Surrender Agreement – The Board accepted the proposed consent agreement for the voluntary surrender and termination of the charter contract with Academic and Personal Excellence, Inc. The charter contract terminates effective January 16, 2007.

Board Approves Withholding Funds – The Board approved withholding 10% of the monthly State aide apportionment from the following charter schools:

- **Failure to follow Classroom Site Fund (CSF) requirements** – Challenger Basic School, Inc., Intelli-School, Inc., New School for the Arts Middle School and Visions Unlimited Academy, Inc. Since these schools have failed to follow CSF requirements for three consecutive years, the Board, in its motion, required the schools to demonstrate compliance either through their FY 2007 audits or through agreed upon procedures established by the Board before the withholding will be returned.
- **Failure to submit FY 2006 Single Audit** – Casa Blanca Middle School



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May 14, 2007

May Board Meeting Summary

Board Changes – The Board expressed its appreciation for Gabe Loyola’s service on the Board from 2003 to 2007. Additionally, the Board welcomed Ruby Alvarado-Hernandez to the Board. Ms. Alvarado-Hernandez brings experience as a project manager and program coordinator of various educational support programs.

Board Approves Replication Applications – In May 2006, the Board’s Policy and Rule Subcommittee began discussing a process to provide proven high quality charters the opportunity to replicate. A year later at its May 2007 meeting, the Board approved the replication of 8 charters through its pilot program. Math and Science Success Academy anticipates opening in August 2007. All other schools plan to begin operations in August 2008.

Imagine Elementary at Apache Junction, LLC
Imagine Elementary at Avondale, LLC
Imagine Middle at Avondale, LLC
Imagine Middle at Sahuarita, LLC

Imagine Middle at Signal Peak, LLC
Math and Science Success Academy
Peoria Preparatory Academy
Scottsdale Preparatory Academy

President Lynne Adams thanked these schools for their participation in the replication process and for all of their hard work. Additionally, President Adams asked that the Board’s Policy, Rule and Contracts Subcommittee meet soon to receive a debriefing on the replication application process and decide how to proceed in the future.

TAPBI Update – Previously, the Board requested a written report from ADE and the Office of the Auditor General (OAG) regarding the statutory requirements and definitions for attendance reporting for high school students, the differences between a traditional brick-and-mortar school and a TAPBI school, and what prompted the 2005 change in attendance reporting definitions. Lyle Friesen from ADE School Finance provided an overview for the Board. He stated that the ADM for TAPBI charter schools has grown from 2,960 to 6,382 between FY05 and FY07. He also noted that while brick-and-mortar schools must follow a 180-day calendar, TAPBI schools enjoy greater flexibility. TAPBI schools use a student level calendar, which begins on the first day the student logs in and continues until the student withdraws. As such, funding for TAPBI schools looks at hours of instruction rather than days of instruction. Vice President Christy Farley raised concerns that this is a significantly different funding formula than what is used for other public schools. Vice President Farley thought this could be an issue for the OAG to address in its TAPBI report due out this fall.

Superintendent's Report – Superintendent's Designee Mary Gifford stated that she is working with ADE to prepare a policy and academic achievement wrap-up for next month's meeting.

Executive Director's Report – In addition to reporting on the status of schools with ongoing actions, DeAnna Rowe updated the Board on the National Charter Schools Conference held in April. Together with Dan Scoggins of Great Hearts, Leah Roberts of Arizona School for the Arts and Jim Ford of Raza Development, they presented the Board's replication process for proven high quality charters. Additionally, at least 15 other Arizona representatives presented at the conference. DeAnna also mentioned that U.S. Secretary of Education Margaret Spellings referenced her recent visit to Mesa Arts Academy when she spoke of the charter schools she has visited that are making a difference.

As part of the Executive Director's Report, DeAnna introduced Eileen Sigmund, who is the Arizona Charter Schools Association's new chief executive officer. Ms. Sigmund indicated that she will initially be focusing on these items: 1) increasing the Association's membership; 2) identifying charter schools' top five needs and working on ways to address them; 3) embarking on a public relations campaign to help educate people on what charter schools are and the high quality option they provide; and 4) continuing discussions related to the Association's lawsuit and equity funding for charter schools. Regarding the second point, Ms. Sigmund stated that in addition to a poll which will be distributed soon, she will be going around the state to talk to charter schools about their needs.

Legislative Update – Director of Government & Financial Affairs Michele Diamond reported that the House and Senate Appropriation committees have met. Both committees passed their version of a budget which now needs to be reconciled, but both versions contain money for a data system for the Board. Additionally, the Senate budget includes money for three more FTE for the Board in fiscal year 2009. Further, the House version of the budget contains additional money for charter schools. Specifically, for K-8, there is an additional \$129.59 per student and for 9-12, there is an additional \$149.87 per student. The Senate budget does not contain a specific increase for charter schools beyond the traditional 2% inflator.

Board Revisits Schools with Audits Still Outstanding – Per policy, after a school has had 10% of its state aid apportionment withheld for six months, the Board revisits the issue to consider whether further action is necessary. After being provided information that CASY Country Day School's fiscal year ending June 30, 2006 annual financial audit may be completed by early June, the Board tabled additional disciplinary action for this school. The 10% withholding will continue, and the Board has asked for an update at its June meeting. Due to past noncompliance in this area and since no timeline was available for the completion of Academy of Hope's audit, the Board voted to issue a Notice of Intent to Revoke the charter of Academy of Hope for failure to submit the fiscal year ending June 30, 2006 annual financial audit.