



**Meeting of the Board of Directors of ARIZONA AUTISM CHARTER SCHOOLS, INC.**

Meeting Thursday, August 29th, 2024

1430 E. Indian School Rd. Suite 220, Phoenix 85014

----- MINUTES -----

**Board Members Present:**

Ron Harrison, via virtual link  
Paul Pucino, via virtual link  
Kerrie Mallory-Thompson, via virtual link  
Ross Meyer, via virtual link  
Kiesha McKinnor, via virtual link  
Matt Simon, via virtual link

**Board Members Absent:**

NONE

**Others Present:**

Diana Diaz-Harrison, Founder and Executive Director  
Dan McCarty, Director of Operations and IT  
Annie Loftis, Director of Compliance and Strategic Initiatives  
Tracy Malcolm, Director of Teacher Preparation and Parent Engagement  
Myla Goyne, AZACS Head of Schools  
David Nguyen, AMS  
Elizabeth Simonhoff-Perez, Potential AZACS Board Member  
Lorenzo Romero, Potential AZACS Board Member  
Lena Brennan, AZACS PTA President  
Skye Nguyen, AZACS PTA Member

## **General Matters**

A quorum was determined to be present on the virtual Zoom link. Kiesha called the meeting to order at approximately 5:02 pm. Kiesha called for a motion to approve the agenda as presented. Paul made a 1<sup>st</sup>, Ron made a 2<sup>nd</sup>, all board members present were in favor, and the agenda was approved.

## **Public Comment**

Kiesha asked if there were any members of the public on the call. Lena and Skye, the AZACS PTA President and PTA member, were present. Keisha asked if they would like to comment. Lena informed the Board that a PTA representative plans to attend school board meetings in the future. Keisha asked if there were any other comments, but there were none.

## **Minutes**

Kiesha asked if board members had reviewed the minutes from the July 15th board meeting and if there were any questions. Board members indicated they had reviewed the minutes, and there were no questions. Kiesha called a motion to approve the minutes. Ron made a 1<sup>st</sup>; Ross made a 2<sup>nd</sup>. All board members present were in favor, and the minutes were approved.

## **Financials**

### **Consolidated Financial Statement**

Keisha then moved to the financial portion of the meeting and turned it over to Paul.

Paul reviewed the financial statement as of July 31 and explained that AZACS had about \$1 million in expenses in July and received about \$2.4 million in revenue. Revenue over expenses was about \$1.3 million, putting AZACS in a great financial position for the new school year. He oriented the board to look at the bond covenant projections for FY25 and shared that the Debt Service Coverage Ratio (DSCR) on all debt was 1.68, and Days Cash on Hand (DCOH) was projected at 164 days.

Keisha asked if there were any questions or comments. Lorenzo commented that AZACS is doing great financially and suggested that the AZACS evaluate the impact of the reduction of Prop 123 funds. Diana said this would be a good conversation for the upcoming finance committee.

### **Emergency Operations Plan for 24–25**

Keisha then turned the meeting over to Diana and Dan, Director of Operations and IT. Dan shared his presentation of the 24–25 Emergency Operations Plan. He explained highlights of the plan, such as having a command and control center if a situation were to occur, emergency codes, and safety information walls in every classroom for easy access to emergency information. Dan explained that drills are performed regularly, and staff are trained frequently.

AZACS will hold safety information sessions with parents regarding topics like offsite procedures and reunification plans.

Keisha asked if there were any questions or comments, and Kerrie asked about future lockdown communication with parents. Dan replied that communication would be tightened up during the upcoming school year in case of lockdown. Diana also included that text messages can be used for these communications. Elizabeth asked how the campuses prepare students for emergency drills and situations. Myla replied that kids are often presented with lesson plans from their teachers to help them reduce any anxiety or fear and create positive practice opportunities. Dan added that individual classes have opportunities to practice before schoolwide drills.

After the discussion, Keisha asked for a motion to approve the Emergency Operations Plans for the 24–25 school year. Kerrie made a first, Ross made a second, and all board members present were in favor, so the motion passed.

### **McKinney Vento: Homeless Education Policy and Dispute Resolution**

Keisha then turned the meeting over to Diana, and Diana introduced Tracy Malcom, Director of Teacher Preparation and Parent Engagement. Tracy shared the AZACS Homeless Education Policy and Dispute Resolution procedures for the 24–25 school year. Tracy explained that these documents provide a clear understanding of the step-by-step process for public notice to spread the word about homeless education services at AZACS. She then explained the process of dispute resolution.

After the presentation, Keisha asked for a motion to approve the 24–25 Homeless Education Policy and Dispute Resolution process. Ron made a 1st, Paul made his 2nd, and all board members present were in favor, and the motion passed.

### **Potential Board Members: Elizabeth Simonhoff-Perez and Lorenzo Romero**

Keisha then turned the meeting over to Diana, who explained that Elizabeth and Keisha had a formal interview the previous week. Both Diana and Keisha felt Elizabeth would be a great addition to the board as an executive at ASU and a new AZACS parent. Elizabeth introduced herself and shared her background in education and advocacy. Diana said once all the onboarding paperwork was completed, we would be in a position to welcome Elizabeth to the board.

Diana then moved on to an update regarding potential board member Lorenzo Romeo. She shared that the paperwork was almost completed, and she hoped everything would be in place to welcome Lorenzo to the board at the next board meeting.

Keisha asked if there were any questions and there were none.

### **24-25 Family Handbook**

Keisha turned the meeting over to Diana and Annie. Annie shared that the updated family handbook is the same as previous years but with updates to staffing, the McKinney Vento

documents that Tracy had previously described in this board meeting, and the updated parent-school compact for alignment with Title 1 compliance. This updated compliance is a process that AZACS already participated in with families, but this was formalizing the process.

After the presentation, Keisha requested a motion to approve the 24-25 Family Handbook. Kerrie made a first, Ross made a second, and all board members present were in favor. The motion passed.

### **Parent Directory**

Keisha then moved on to the parent directory and passed the meeting off to Diana and Annie. Annie described that this parent directory is exactly the same as last year, allowing parents to opt in via a Google form that captures their contact information and provides their consent to share their information with other families in their student's classroom. This directory is intended for play dates, carpooling, etc., and not to be used for solicitation purposes.

After the discussion, Keisha requested a motion to approve the 24-25 Parent Directory. Kerrie made a 1st, Ron made a 2nd, and all board members present were in favor of the motion and it passed.

### **FEMA Documentation**

Keisha then moved to the updated FEMA documentation. She then turned the meeting over to Diana and Annie. Annie explained that this documentation will provide Myla Goyne with access to the grants portal as an authorized user in place of Clark Crace.

Keisha asked for a motion to approve the updated FEMA document. Kerrie made a first, Ross made a second, and all board members present were in favor. The motion passed.

### **West Valley Hybrid Discontinuation**

Keisha then moved to the discontinuation of the West Valley program. She turned the meeting over to Diana, who explained that this had already been discussed in a previous board meeting, but a vote was needed to make the update official with the AZ State Board for Charter Schools. The discontinuation of the hybrid program meant eliminating grades 7 and 8 from the grades served at the West Valley Campus.

Kiesha asked for a motion to approve the discontinuation of the Hybrid program at West Valley and change the grades served to include grades in the 24-25 school year to grades K-6. Kerrie made a 1st, Ron made a 2nd, and all board members present were in favor and the motion passed.

### **Announcements**

Keisha then turned the meeting over to Diana, who mentioned that we had two exciting tours: one from Uncommon Construction on August 21 and the other from Immersion Labs on August 23. These connections will help with workforce development and AI simulation programs.

Diana explained that we would like to start a quarterly in-person board meeting routine. It was decided that December 12 will be the upcoming in-person board meeting.

## **Adjournment**

Since no further items were on the agenda, she asked for a motion to adjourn the board meeting. Paul made a 1st, Karrie made a 2nd, and all board members present were in favor and the board meeting ended at 5:38 PM.