



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

Meeting Thursday, December 12th, 2024

1430 E. Indian School Rd. Suite 100, Phoenix AZ 85014

----- DRAFT MINUTES -----

**Board Members Present:**

Ron Harrison, via virtual link  
Kerrie Mallory-Thompson, In-Person  
Ross Meyer, In-Person  
Keisha McKinnor, In-Person  
Matt Simon, In-Person  
Lorenzo Romero, In-Person  
Elizabeth Simonhoff-Perez, via virtual link

**Board Members Absent:**

None

**Others Present:**

Diana Diaz-Harrison, Founder and Executive Director  
Annie Loftis, Director of Compliance and Strategic Initiatives  
Paul Pucino, CFO  
Hannah Moody, ADI  
Claudina Douglas, ADI  
Myla Goyne, AZACS Head of Schools  
Claire Piper, AZACS Director of ABA & Data

**General Matters:**

A quorum was determined to be present on the virtual Zoom link and in person. Matt called the meeting to order at approximately 5:06 p.m. Matt called for a motion to approve the agenda as presented. Ross Meyer made a first, Elizabeth Simonhoff-Perez made a second, Ron Harrison, Kerrie Mallory-Thompson, Keisha McKinnor, Matt Simon, and Lorenzo Romero approved the agenda, and the motion passed.

### **Public Comment:**

Matt Simon asked if any members of the public were present for comment on the Zoom virtual link or in person. No members of the public were present, either in person or on Zoom.

### **Minutes:**

Matt Simon asked if board members had reviewed the minutes from November 21st, 2024. Board members indicated they had. Matt called a motion to approve the minutes. Keisha McKinnor made a 1st, Ross Meyer made a 2nd, Ron Harrison, Kerrie Mallory-Thompson, Matt Simon, Lorenzo Romero, and Elizabeth Simonhoff-Perez approved the minutes, and the motion passed.

### **Financials:**

#### **Consolidated Financial Statements**

Matt Simon turned the meeting over to Paul, who detailed the financials from July 1 to November 2024.

Paul shared that AZACS has \$13.9 million in total revenue and \$11.2 million in total expenses year-to-date, totaling approximately \$2.7 million in net income. Cash on hand is approximately \$9.6 million. Paul compared the year-to-date numbers to the adopted budget and noted that AZACS had fared better in terms of revenue and expenses, with approximately 708K in net income projected in the adopted budget and the actuals showing a net income of roughly 2.7 million. Regarding enrollment, the Average Daily Membership (ADM) captured by the state is 924, while the actual enrolled head count is 978.

The cash flow for the fiscal year 2025, beginning July 1, 2024, was \$6.1 million. The year-to-date increase in cash was \$3.4 million. The cash balance as of November 30, 2024 was \$9.5 million. The projected ending cash for fiscal year 2025 is approximately \$7.2 million.

Regarding bond covenants, the Days Cash on Hand (DCOH) is projected to be approximately 90 days, and the Debt Service (DSCR) is projected to end at 1.68, exceeding the bond covenants.

After the presentation, Matt Simon requested a motion to approve the November financials. Ron Harrison made a 1st, Keisha McKinnor made a 2nd, Kerrie Mallory-Thompson, Ross Meyer, Matt Simon, Lorenzo Romero, and Elizabeth Simonhoff-Perez all approved, and the November financials were approved.

#### **Yass Alumni Grant Funds to NAACS**

Matt Simon then turned the meeting over to Diana, who reminded the board about the Yass alumni grant and that she had applied for funds for both AZACS and the National Accelerator of Autism Charter Schools (NAACS). The award included 750K for AZACS and 225K for NAACS. AZACS was serving as the fiscal agent for NAACS and now had to transfer the designated

funds to NAACS per the grant budget and agreement, which Diana shared with the board. After the discussion, Matt Simon requested a motion to approve the designated \$225,000 of the Yass Alumni Grant funds to be transferred to NAACS. Keisha McKinnor made a 1st, Ross Meyer made a 2nd, Ron Harrison, Kerrie Mallory-Thompson, Matt Simon, Lorenzo Romero, and Elizabeth Simonhoff-Perez approved, and the motion passed.

### **Parent Engagement & Satisfaction Survey Results:**

Matt then turned the meeting over to Diana, who introduced Claire Piper, the Senior Director of ABA and Data.

Claire explained the results of the AZACS Parent Engagement and Satisfaction surveys. AZACS asks families to submit three surveys yearly: two internal surveys and one external survey, the Arizona Department of Education ESS survey. The organization's goal is 80% participation and 90% satisfaction.

For the quarter-one survey, all campuses had more than 80% participation. Also, all campuses had over 90% parent satisfaction for parent-teacher conferences. For quarter one, it was reported that 89% or more of all families reported that their students were happy at AZACS. Overall, the number of parents who are satisfied and engaged in their students' learning is extremely positive and exceeds 90%. Claire asked if there were any questions, and board members inquired about constructive feedback in the surveys regarding teacher retention, which was noted in the slides. Diana and the team shared some of the strategies for teacher retention and shared that the executive team is continuously evaluating the effectiveness of various strategies to improve teacher retention. Diana shared that a committee could be formed if board members wanted to explore this further.

### **Teacher and Administration Evaluations:**

Matt Simon then moved to the next topic and turned the meeting over to Diana, who introduced Myla Goyne, Head of Schools.

Myla shared that to ensure compliance with the Arizona Department of Education, AZACS needed to update some specific language surrounding evaluations. Myla shared the updated teacher and principal evaluation policy and explained that teachers and administrators would also be evaluated by utilizing student academic data results in the areas of math, ELA, and engagement.

Myla reviewed the actual evaluation templates and asked if anyone had any questions. At this point, the general public could comment, but no members were on the call or in the meeting, and board members also had no comment.

Matt Simon asked for a motion to approve the updated Teacher and Campus Director/Principal Evaluation Policy, the teacher evaluation form, and the principal/Director evaluation form. Keisha McKinnor made a 1st, Ron Harrison made a 2nd, and Kerrie Mallory-Thompson, Ross Meyer, Matt Simon, Lorenzo Romero, and Elizabeth Simonhoff-Perez all approved, and the motion passed.

### **AZACS East Valley Elementary Campus: Timeline and Plans**

Matt then turned the meeting to Diana to discuss plans for an East Valley Elementary Campus offering grades K-5. Diana shared that a federal Charter Schools Program (CSP) had become available and offered funding for a planning year and start-up expenses. To be eligible for the grant, AZACS must submit an amendment to the Arizona State Board for Charter Schools (ASBCS) for the new school. Diana reminded the board that AZACS had also received a Charter Schools Growth Fund grant to start an East Valley Elementary Campus. Diana shared that a pilot program with 40 students may be considered for fall 2025 if a school facility is secured by April 2025. If a facility is not secured by then, the plan is to start a larger program with 60 for the fall of 2026. Diana requested that the board approve both options as the amendment would be presented to ASBCS with both options.

After the discussion, Matt Simon requested a motion to approve the proposed timeline and growth plans for a new East Valley Elementary Campus offering Kindergarten through fifth grades. Ross Meyer made a first, Kerrie Mallory-Thompson made a second, Ron Harrison, Keisha McKinnor, Matt Simon, Lorenzo Romero, and Elizabeth Simonhoff-Perez approved, and the motion passed.

### **Executive Director Evaluation Committee:**

Matt turned the meeting over to Diana, who shared that it is time to recruit volunteers from the AZACS Board to form the committee to conduct her performance evaluation. Historically, the committee has included Keisha McKinnor, the Board President, and two to three other board members. Mallory-Thompson and Ross Meyer volunteered.

### **Announcements:**

Matt then turned the meeting over to Diana, who explained that AZACS is still promoting the Tax Credit Campaign and asked all board members to share it with ten people in their network. To facilitate this, a postcard with a QR code was passed out to the board members. Elizabeth commented that tax credit donations could be used for a music program she was proposing.

Diana also shared that AZACS would host its annual fundraising event, the Dance for Autism Gala, in April of 2025. She asked all board members to save the date for April 26, 2025, when we will hold our gala at the Arizona Biltmore.

Diana also shared that we had our very first visit from the Valle Del Sol Mobile Health Clinic on December 11. It was successful, with about eight students/patients receiving care that day. Diana shared that she was thrilled to bring this healthcare wrap-around service to AZACS families, and they were planning to build a full-time clinic in partnership with Valle del Sol at the 1430 building.

### **Adjournment:**

Since no other topics were on the agenda, Matt Simon requested a motion to adjourn the board meeting. Keisha McKinnor made a 1st, Ross Meyer made a 2nd, and Ron Harrison, Kerrie Mallory-Thompson, Matt Simon, Lorenzo Romero, and Elizabeth Simonhoff-Perez all approved. The board meeting ended at 6:23 pm.