



Volume I, Issue 4

January 15, 2003

### January Board Meeting Summary

**New Superintendent's Designee** – Mary Gifford was welcomed back to the Board in her new role as Superintendent Tom Horne's designee.

**New Charter Schools Approved** – Five more charters were approved to begin operation for the 2003-2004 school year. Four of the five will be new schools overseen by successful existing charter operators: Dr. Michael Block, Mrs. Olga Block, and Dr. Michael Matwick. The fifth charter will be run by Mr. Jay Brown. He has been working in the charter field for three years. The new school names are:

BASIS Scottsdale

Pinnacle Charter High School

Patriot Academy

**Valley Forward Presentation** – Diane Brossart and Lori Singleton of Valley Forward, an organization of business and civic groups working to make the Valley a better place, summarized for the Board the history of their Environmental Education program and the changes that are being made. The revised program focuses on grades 4 through 6 and culminates with EarthFest, an annual event celebrated on Earth Day. Schools can find curriculum and guest speakers for a variety of environmental topics at [www.valleyforward.org](http://www.valleyforward.org).

**SAIS Update** – Charter schools' equalization payments this month are being paid for the first time based on actual enrollment numbers submitted through each school's SAIS compliant software. The School Finance Department of ADE has worked diligently with individual schools that have made good faith efforts to maintain their student records system to ensure schools receive their payments.

**Notice of Intent to Revoke** - The Board voted unanimously to issue a 90 Day Notice of Intent to Revoke the charter of Mesa Academy for Advanced Studies. The school is no longer providing an educational program.

### Good Things are Happening

**Academy of Math and Science** stopped by to share some of their successes already this year:

1. Five students who participated in the Annual Reader's Digest National Word Power Challenge have advanced to the next level of competition.
2. The chess team took 3<sup>rd</sup> place in the All American Chess Cup.
3. Recognized by the Pima County Health Department for maintaining their student immunization records.
4. A growing sports program.

**Stepping Stones Academy** conducted a follow-up study for three consecutive years of their students who completed eighth grade. They found:

1. 85% of their students have been eligible for Honors classes in district schools.
2. from the students choosing to enroll in Honors classes, 82% stayed in Honors classes beyond their freshman year.
3. 94% of their students who chose to attend a charter school tested out of Algebra and entered the Geometry class as a freshman (and passed the class).
4. one district school reported that students are much better prepared for their "interview" with their freshman counselor, including being able to answer questions, make eye contact, and speaking in an appropriate voice tone.

★ ★ ★ ★ *Accolades to these schools for their accomplishments!* ★ ★ ★ ★

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Volume I, Issue 5

February 12, 2003

### February Board Meeting Summary

**Changes on the Board** – Onnie Shekerjian began her term as the newly elected President of the Board. Kurt Davis will serve as Vice President. Newly appointed member Kimberly Mosher participated in her first meeting after recently being appointed to a four-year term by Governor Napolitano. Her experience as a charter school board member and being the parent of charter school students is just a portion of her background that will be valuable to the Board. Ms. Mosher replaces Bob Canchola who has served the charter schools of Arizona since 1999. Thank you, Bob.

**New Charter Schools Approved** – Five of the nine applications for charter schools reviewed by the Board this month were approved. The following schools plan to open in their respective cities:

Academy Adventure Primary School – Phoenix	Academy of Building Industries – Bullhead City
Berean Schools – Sierra Vista	Champion Charter – Avondale
Meta Academy – Scottsdale	

**School Improvement Plans** – As required by A.R.S. 15-241, the Board was presented with School Improvement Plans for 27 of the 29 charter schools labeled as underperforming. Classroom site funds will be withheld from the two schools that have not submitted a plan in a timely manner.

**Revocation Order Vacated** – The Board voted to accept the Consent Decree and vacate the revocation hearing for Renaissance Academy and Renaissance Educational Consortium. The Consent Decree outlines on going monitoring and compliance reviews.

**Governor’s Proposed Consolidation Plan and Other Legislative Items** – The Board tabled the discussion on these items until a meeting could be scheduled to address these issues. As with all Board meetings, the agenda for this special meeting and the minutes will be posted on the web site, [www.asbcs.state.az.us](http://www.asbcs.state.az.us), when it becomes available.

### Good Things are Happening

Many schools conduct their own Parent Satisfaction Surveys to gauge their success in the eyes of their clients. **Intelli-School Charter School** reports that:

- 98% of parents believe the school is living up to its Mission
- 95% of those surveyed would recommend the school to others
- 85% are pleased with the academic progress of their student
- Communication to parents, access to counselors and teachers, and access to administration all scored in the 90s.

**Mohave Accelerated Learning Center** is putting their grant money to good use:

- \$150,000 Emergency Repair and Renovation Grant will be used to purchase land where an energy efficient building will be built. The school is working with Leaders in Environmental and Energy Design.
- \$29,000 Arizona Nutrition Network Grant is being used to teach good nutrition to students.
- \$150,000 Technology Related to Renovation Grant will be used to teach TV Production. A three-time, Emmy Award winning cameraman works with the students.

★ ★ ★ ★ *Accolades to these schools for their accomplishments!* ★ ★ ★ ★

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Volume I, Issue 6

March 12, 2003

### March Board Meeting Summary

**Changes on the Board** – Mr. Paul Smiley participated in his second meeting of the Arizona State Board for Charter Schools. Mr. Smiley brings to this position his military experience in problem solving, planning, programming, budgeting and developing operations training requirements, as well as his civilian experience as a corporate advisor and undergraduate and high school lecturer. As we welcome Mr. Smiley to the Board, we thank his predecessor, Mr. Steve Twist, for his years of service as a member of the Board, which began in July of 1996.

**Executive Director's Report** – Kristen Jordison provided the following information: 1) Staff will provide a one day workshop for approved applicants. The workshop will include information on funding, Special Education, Open Meeting Law requirements, and the requirements to sign the charter contract. 2) The Board will form two Study Committees, one for AZ Learns and another to review self-funding proposals and other potential authorizers. Both committees will have at least two Board members and members of the chartering community participating. These meetings will be open to the public. Information will be available on the ASBCS website. 3) Results of the 2002 Parent Satisfaction Survey are available on the website. 4) The Board plans to have two meetings outside the Phoenix area. Tentative plans are to meet in Tucson in April and in Flagstaff in August.

**Legislative Update** – Michele Diamond reported 1) The Joint Appropriations Subcommittee on Education met February 28 and voted unanimously in favor of consolidation, with the stipulation that the State Board of Education (SBE) maintains its authority to sponsor charter schools but have a one-year moratorium on sponsorship. The SBE has invited its charter schools to an informational meeting on March 17, from 9:00 a.m. to noon to discuss how this will impact them, should the consolidation take place. Our office will participate in this dialogue. The Arizona Charter School Association sent a letter to the Governor, supporting the consolidation. 2) The House Appropriations Committee passed HB2097, which would enable the sponsor of a charter school to withhold any portion of equalization payments for noncompliance. This bill will now go before the full House of Representatives for a decision and then to the Senate. This bill also enables the ASBCS to bypass the SBE by allowing the ASBCS to direct the Department of Education to withhold funds.

**New Charter Schools Approved** – Two of the seven applications on the agenda were approved by the Board. New School for the Arts Middle School was approved to open in the fall. The school will be located in Tempe. Tucson Small School Project was approved to open for the 2004-2005 school year as requested in the submitted application. Harvest Power Community Development Group was tabled until the April meeting at the request of the applicant.

**60 Day Compliance Report** – In an effort to monitor the progress of Omega Alpha Academy's compliance with the Board's Order of December 9, 2002, the Board has requested the Executive Director to follow-up with the school on an interim basis in regards to Special Education and the fingerprinting of personnel.

**Thanks to our Host**– Thank you to Mr. Mark Francis and the Arizona School for the Arts for hosting this month's Board meeting. The Board had the opportunity to observe students presenting thematic projects that reflected mastery of science, math, language arts, and the arts to an academic jury that included both teachers and the student's parent(s). Students chose a scientific experiment directly related to the curriculum of their science class. Students devise the question, pose a hypothesis, set up the experiment controlling for various biases, and measure the experiment over time, evaluate the hypothesis and draw inferences and new questions. Experiments are not one-time events but must occur over time or a series of experiments over time so that they can be measured using mathematical concepts drawn from their math classes. The overall benefit of this program is that students work on their topic/experiments to the extent that they expand their knowledge base on their own in order to give more depth and breadth to their presentation. The very nature of this unique skill-based program, allows all students who are fully engaged to be successful.

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Volume I, Issue 8

July 16, 2003

### July Board Meeting Summary

**Consolidation of oversight functions for State Board of Education Charters** – The Charter Board ratified the Interagency Service Agreement (ISA) between the State Board of Education and the State Board for Charter Schools. The terms of the agreement include the Charter Board staff providing all oversight and assistance services in the same manner as provided to the schools the Charter Board sponsors. The Charter Board staff shall provide appropriate documentation to the State Board if disciplinary action is necessary. According to the ISA, schools wishing to remain sponsored by the State Board will generally follow the policies and procedures adopted by the Charter Board. The ISA supports HB 2534, 46<sup>th</sup> Legislature, 1<sup>st</sup> Regular Session.

**Mid-year Transfer Option for State Board of Education Charter Schools Approved** – The Board approved an application and process for schools sponsored by the State Board of Education to complete voluntary transfers to the Charter Board, if a school chooses to do so. Interested State Board of Education schools should watch for more information to be received by mail and posted on the Charter Board website at [www.asbcs.state.as.us](http://www.asbcs.state.as.us).

**Technology Assisted Project-based Instruction Program** – Twenty-eight charter schools submitted applications for consideration for this program. The Board considered the Evaluation Team score, the application, individual school presentations, single-page handouts, written answers to six additional questions, and applicant's answers to questions from the Board in making its determination. The Board confirmed the rank order scoring of the top eight Technology Assisted Project-based Instruction Program applications. Each of the top five schools will demonstrate to a 3-member committee that its program is immediately implementable. If a school is unable to successfully complete the demonstration, the next rank order school will be considered. The top eight schools are listed below in rank order:

1. Sierra Vista Charter School, Inc.
2. Phoenix Special Programs, Inc.
3. Humanities and Sciences Academy of the United States, Inc.
4. Pinnacle Education, Inc.
5. Primarvera Technical Learning Center
6. Excel Education Centers, Inc.
7. Desert Technology Schools, Inc.
8. PACE Preparatory Academy, Inc.

The Board will award the five Technology Assisted Project-based Instruction Program contracts at a meeting scheduled for July 28, 2003.

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Volume I, Issue 9

November 4, 2003

## October Board Meeting Summary

**Former Board Member Recognized** – The Board presented Ms. Cookie Goddard with a plaque in appreciation of her two years of service on the Board. Ms. Goddard's position has been filled by Cassandra Larsen. We are pleased to welcome back Ms. Larsen, who brings extensive charter school experience to the Board.

**Executive Director's Report** – Kristen Jordison provided the following information:

- 26 new charter school applications were received and 19 were deemed administratively complete and will move forward to the scoring process.
- The Legislative Committee of Reference is scheduled to hear a presentation on the Board's recent performance audit on October 30 at 9 a.m. in Senate Hearing Room 1. A copy of the complete audit is available at [www.auditorgen.state.az.us/](http://www.auditorgen.state.az.us/).
- Charter school oversight and follow-up has included 15 site visits by Board staff since the beginning of the school year. ~At this early date, four schools have submitted their fiscal year 2003 financial audits. ~ All Board-sponsored schools receiving an Underperforming label are required to submit a school improvement plan to the Department of Education and a copy of the plan to the Board.
- Andrea Leder was introduced to the Board as the newest member of the staff. Andrea's background includes journalism and performance auditing experience.

**Subcommittee Formed** – After a presentation on Arizona Learns, the Board established a subcommittee to examine ways of holding its schools accountable for academic performance prior to being labeled Underperforming.

**Expedited Charter Transfer Process**– Three State Board of Education charter schools have submitted expedited transfer applications to the Board. When the transfer contract is signed, the Board will become the sponsor of Kachina Country Day School, Mexicayotl Academy, and Triumphant Learning Center.

**Notice of Intent to Revoke** – The Board voted unanimously to issue a Notice of Intent to Revoke the charters of three schools:

- **Future Development Education and Performing Arts Academy** – The school failed to submit the fiscal year ending 2002 audit in a timely manner, failed to follow statutory requirements for Arizona State Retirement and workers compensation, and failed to follow Internal Revenue Service regulations.
- **Laurent Clerc** – The school is no longer providing an educational program.
- **ReInventEd** – The school failed to properly administer the AIMS high school writing test and is no longer providing an educational program.

**Board Rules Underway** – The Board approved the notice of proposed rulemaking for Articles 1, 2 and 4. The proposed rulemaking is scheduled to run in the *Arizona Administrative Register's* November 7<sup>th</sup> edition.

**Internal Office Processes Adopted** – The Board adopted an internal process for staff review and follow-up on charter school annual audits and on the outcomes of new charter school applicants' background and credit check. No change was made to the items included in the background check. The adopted process includes procedures for reporting the findings to the Board.

**Thanks to Our Host** – Thank you to Dr. William Coats and South Pointe Charter High School for hosting this month's Board meeting. The Board appreciates the hospitality provided by the school.

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Volume I, Issue 10

November 19, 2003

### November Board Meeting Summary

**Former Board Member Recognized** – In recognition of his service on the Board, the Board presented Mr. Steve Twist with a plaque. Mr. Twist served on the Board from 1997 to 2003.

**President’s Report** – Board President Onnie Shekerjian reported on the National Charter School Authorizer’s Conference she recently attended. As part of a conference panel, Ms. Shekerjian presented on the Board’s new charter school application process.

**Superintendent’s Report** – Superintendent’s Designee Mary Gifford reported that the Arizona Department of Education is working on making 40<sup>th</sup> day adjustments. Additionally, Ms. Gifford mentioned that the Superintendent would meet on November 17th with his charter school policy group.

**Executive Director’s Report** – Kristen Jordison provided the following information:

- The Board’s Notice of Proposed Rulemaking for Articles 1, 2, and 4 ran in the November 7<sup>th</sup> edition of the *Arizona Administrative Register*. The Board will review draft rules on oversight and disciplinary action at its January meeting.
- Last month, the Board adopted a process for reviewing and following up on financial audits. Fiscal year 2002 audits have been reviewed and letters will be sent out by the end of the month.
- The 19 charter school applicants that are moving forward in the process have until December 1 to revise and resubmit their initial applications. The resubmitted applications will be re-scored in December. Those that meet standards will be brought to the Board in January for consideration.
- Schools that did not submit their required electronic attendance information to School Finance did not receive their November equalization payment. Schools that over-estimated their counts were paid on the revised numbers.

**Academic Accountability Process Approved** – The Board approved procedures and timeframes recommended by the subcommittee for evaluating the school goals and learning goals adopted by each charter. Information outlining the requirements and on related workshops will be sent out to all charters.

**Board Approves Withholding Funds** – The Board approved the request to the State Board of Education to withhold 10 percent of the monthly state aid apportionment from seven schools for the following:

- **Failure to submit Annual Financial Report:** Academy of Hope; Accelerated Learning Laboratory, Inc.; Center for Creative Education, Inc.; Classical Kids Academy; Ecotech Academy of Science and Agriculture; and Northern Arizona Academy for Career Development
- **Failure to comply with laws relating to the education of children with disabilities:** Luz Social Services, Inc.

**Legislative Agenda Approved** – The Board approved its legislative agenda, which includes pursuing application fees and additional disciplinary options, including the ability to issue fines and an appropriate portion of state withholding.

**Schools Transfer to Board** – The Board voted to approve the transfer of eight State Board of Education charter schools to the Board. When the transfer contract is signed, the Board will become the sponsor of Academy of Tucson, Burke Basic School, EDGE School, Inc., Horizon Community Learning Center, Little Lamb Community School dba Mission Montessori Academy, Mingus Mountain Academy, Mountain School, and The Shelby School.

**Thanks to Our Host** – Thank you to Ron Caya and New School for the Arts in Tempe for hosting this month’s Board meeting. The Board appreciates the hospitality provided by the school.

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