

Regular VAL Charter Board Meeting
Tuesday, March 7, 2023
VAL Administration (639 Harrison Street, Thibodaux, LA)

Meeting called to order at 6:30pm

1) Opening of Meeting

a. Roll Call

Members present:

Michael Rieth, President; Shontell Terrebonne, Vice-President; Monique Pitre, Secretary; Donald Andras, Treasurer; Travis Touns, Shelba Harlan, Cheryl Thomas, Bernita Deville

Member absent:

Curtis Bouvier

Others present:

Edmond Adams, Holly Naquin, Jennifer Guidry

b. Pledge of Allegiance by Travis Touns

c. Invocation by Michael Rieth

d. Public Participation Policy by Michael Rieth

e. Minutes of VAL Charter Board meeting held December 6, 2022 were approved on motion of Mr. Andras and seconded by Mr. Touns. Motion carried.

2) School Director's Report

a. Student Enrollment Update

A report containing a breakdown of VAL's February 1st enrollment by site, ethnicity, gender, grade levels, and classification (special education/504) was distributed, and Mr. Adams reminded board members this count, along with the October 1st count, is used to calculate VAL's MFP allocation. He further noted the count on February 1st was 469 as compared to 477 on October 1st, and explained where the differences occurred. Mr. Adams also reported that VAL's Open Enrollment was occurring during the entire month of March, and thus far, enrollment has been low.

b. Staff Changes

Mr. Adams announced there were no specific staff changes to report at this time, and he continues to only replace those who resign when absolutely necessary.

c. Report on Sites

Mr. Adams reported that all sites were running smoothly, with ACT testing beginning today. He reported that Central VAL is busting at the seams, and his hopeful resolution is for Central PASS to relocate elsewhere. He stated that students are preparing for testing and graduation, and benchmarks are now in place for students to complete their coursework in a timely manner. Although VAL was rated a "B" school, Mr. Adams reminded members of the lack of points contributed to this rating by high school students. In an effort to address the deficiencies, Mr. Adams introduced Ms. Jennifer Guidry, who was hired as the high school liaison to work directly with the sites, along with VAL's counselors, to make certain all possible points are captured.

After being questioned about the status of relocating Central VAL, Mr. Adams stated he had looked at several options, but none were feasible for VAL's needs. He stated he will continue to explore options, and will also look at options for cutting costs at VAL's two smallest sites, Bayou Blue and VAL Central, with as little interruption as possible.

d. Finances/Budget Update

Mr. Adams referenced the financial reports viewed at the Finance Meeting, and stated he is continually looking at ways to save money and not rely on outside sources to keep VAL's doors opened and staff employed. He also noted the 2023-24 budget will be presented for review and approval at the Board's next meeting.

e. School Curriculum Changes

Mr. Adams reported there are no specific changes in the curriculum at this time, but the K-2 curriculum is being reviewed. As reported at the December board meeting, Mr. Adams reminded members of the State's requirement for all K-3 ELA teachers to participate in the Science of Reading training. Due to the unique structure of VAL's part-time staff, and the strain the 45 hours of training will place on VAL's budget and teachers, he reminded members of his attempt to obtain a waiver for VAL not to participate. He stated his request for a waiver was denied by the State, and he is awaiting a meeting with the local school district for more information before proceeding any further. In addition to the training, Mr. Adams announced the Science and Reading mandate may force VAL to change its K-3 curriculum if it does not align with their expectations for a Tier 1 Phonics curriculum.

3) School Board Business

a. Old Business

There was no old business to discuss.

b. New Business

i. VAL 2023-2024 School Calendar

VAL's 2023-24 school calendar was made available for review, and Mr. Adams stated it was closely aligned with Lafourche Parish School District's calendar. He noted a few adjustments were made to allow for professional development days to occur throughout the school year rather than all at the beginning as done in prior years. Following review, a motion was offered by Ms. Terrebonne and seconded by Mr. Toups to approve VAL's 2023-2024 school calendar. Motion carried.

ii. 2021-2022 Audit Results

Copies of VAL's 2021-2022 audit results were distributed for review, and Mr. Adams announced there were no findings with the finances and assured board members all recommendations noted on several policies and procedures will be addressed in a timely manner.

iii. Graduation Dress Code

Due to the unsuitable attire witnessed at some of VAL's previous graduation ceremonies, Mr. Adams stated it was highly recommendation that VAL adopts a dress code policy for its graduates. The proposed dress code policy was reviewed, and a motion was offered by Ms. Harlan to approve the proposed dress code and to also make it policy in VAL's by-laws. Her motion was seconded by Ms. Thomas and unanimously carried.

iv. VAL Director Evaluation

As the Board continues to refine its policies, Mr. Rieth announced the need to develop an appraisal process for the director, and asked for volunteers to serve on the committee for its development. Shelba Harlan agreed to serve as the committee's chairperson, along with committee members, Donald Andras and Bernita Deville. Mr. Rieth noted this will not go into effect until next year, and once the process is finalized, it will be presented to the full board for approval. As his one-year anniversary approaches, board members commended Mr. Adams for his outstanding performance in his first year as director. Based on his superb leadership and impressive accomplishments, Mr. Rieth stated Mr. Adams is deserving of a pay increase. A motion was then offered by Mr. Andras and seconded by Ms. Terrebonne to increase Mr. Adams' hourly rate of pay by \$10.

v. LEF King Cake Festival

Mr. Rieth expressed his appreciation for the representation of VAL staff at the Lafourche Education Foundation's King Cake Festival. Mr. Adams stated, he too, was extremely impressed with VAL's turnout, which helped in his goal to make others better recognize what VAL is and what it provides for its students. He noted the Lafourche Education Foundation cleared \$60,000 from this event, which, in turn, will benefit VAL teachers who participate in their grants.

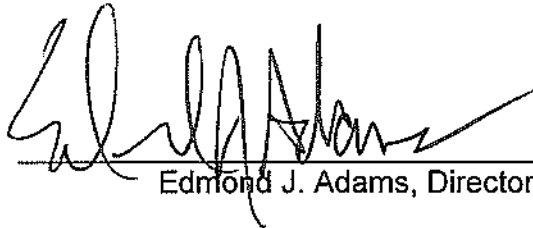
vi. Next Board Meeting Date, Time, Place

On motion of Ms. Terrebonne, seconded by Ms. Pitre, all members agreed their next meeting will be held on Tuesday, June 6, 2023 at VAL's administrative office, with times remaining the same.

Mr. Rieth recognized VAL's Robotics team for making it to State and competing in the Final level, which is hard. He also recognized Donald Andras for competing at the State level against other mentors and placing 2nd for the Compass Award.

4) **Adjourn**

There being no further business, Mr. Rieth entertained a motion to adjourn the meeting. On motion of Ms. Thomas, seconded by Ms. Harlan, the Board unanimously agreed to adjourn the meeting at 7:15pm.



Edmond J. Adams, Director