

AVANT GARDE ACADEMY, INC.

MINUTES OF THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING

March 13, 2013

10:00 am

CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order by Julia Valent at 10:15 am.

PRESENT: Julia Valent, Dr. Antonio Cruz, Mario Ruiz

Staff Present: Frank Bolaños

PUBLIC COMMENTS (No comments)

1. **REPORT ON AVANT GARDE ACADEMY, INC. d/b/a AVANT GARDE ACADEMY OF OSCEOLA**
 - i. REVIEW OF APPLICATION SUBMISSION & APPROVAL PROCESS
 - ii. Draft Application Submitted June 1, 2012
 - iii. Revised, Final Application Submitted On August 1, 2012
 - b. Five (5) year contract approved by the school board on March 5, 2013
 - c. SCHOOL Mission, Educational Plan, Grade configuration & enrollment (see attachment A)
 - d. FACILITIES - School Start Up Efforts
 - i. Negotiating terms on a 9 acre site property located at 2880 N. Orange Blossom Trail, Kissimmee, FL 34741
 - ii. Alliance Cos. <http://www.alliance-companies.com/> proposes to assist in the purchase the land, finance and build a 70,000 square foot facility.
 - e. FINANCING: School site and start up costs for opening of school on August 19, 2013
 - i. Applied for competitive State of Florida start up grant on December 24, 2012, but did not receive the award. May reapply for funding in 2014.
 - ii. Applied for Florida Growth Fund \$250,000 competitive start up grant on March 12, 2012; pending decision.
 - iii. Holding discussions with several banks and companies to provide financing for start up costs, FF&E, textbooks & computers at prevailing market rates.

A motion was made by M. Ruiz to accept and approve the report on Avant Garde Academy of Osceola, including attachment A. The motion was seconded by A. Cruz. Passed unanimously.

2. AVANT GARDE ACADEMY, INC. d/b/a AVANT GARDE ACADEMY OF BROWARD

- a. Efforts to locate a suitable site and financing for school start up costs are ongoing
- b. There is a high possibility of having to defer the contract for one year, for a school opening of August 2014. The deferment will not affect the application approval or five (5) year term of the charter contract approval.

A motion was made by A. Cruz and seconded by M. Ruiz to accept and approve the report on Avant Garde Academy of Broward. Passed unanimously.

MEETING ADJOURNED AT 11:39 am.

ATTACHMENT A: SCHOOL MISSION & EDUCATIONAL FOCUS

Avant Garde Academy of Osceola (AGAO) will focus on serving the needs of Hispanic, African American and other minority students in the high needs area near downtown, historic Kissimmee. We sited our school in an area where students of need are not being served by the local school options. The performance data for the surrounding schools is below state average for reading and mathematics. Gateway High School, situated one mile from the AGAO site, is 69% Hispanic and scored below the state average in reading and mathematics.

Our educational program is designed to be highly effective in transforming our selected community. We have found that there are four proven, innovative, transformational elements in the school's educational and management program:

1. Project Graduation: Bridging the Digital Divide
2. Dual Language Program
3. Civic & Character Education
4. Teachers & Administrators that relate to the student population

We have sought to bring the advantages of these highly touted and researched programs to our school in order to bring academic success to the neediest of students.

Project Graduation: Bridging the Digital Advantage

The School will be the first schools in Florida to implement *Project Graduation: Bridging the Digital Advantage*. This innovative program resulted in increased attendance and graduation rates in its maiden implementation in Tucson, Arizona, a city with very large Hispanic student populations and increased dropout rates. In *Project Graduation: Bridging the Digital Advantage*, students are provided incentives and support systems to motivate them to stay in school, stay out of trouble, focus on their academics, and get involved in an extra-curricular activity. This combination formulates a future of success and achievement. The School plans to replicate the remarkable successes of this program in its own community, providing students with greater opportunities for success. To fund this program is daunting. We will seek help to provide student laptops at a 1:1 ratio as it has been proven to help make remarkable learning gains with high needs students.

Creating a Tech-Savvy School with Tech-Savvy Students

Project Graduation: Bridging the Digital Advantage will serve our commitment to improve academic achievement through motivation and enhanced levels of support for our students. Initially, the program focuses on 9th graders, ensuring that students begin their high school career on the right path for success. Students become focused on performance and outcomes. They are highly motivated to reach their goals and rewarded with a laptop computer. This provides the student with a valuable, tech-savvy tool to continue their success throughout their high school career and beyond. *Project Graduation: Bridging the Digital Advantage* promotes the following goals to be achieved by the end of the first semester of 9th grade, the 4 A's:

- Achievement – 2.5 GPA
- Attitude – good citizenship and no disciplinary issues
- Attendance – 95%
- Activities – participation in at least one extra-curricular activity

ENHANCED, HANDS-ON, PERSONALIZED SUPPORT

The success of this program is more than the laptop computer that students are motivated to earn. Students are supported in their endeavors through an adult advisor who connects with the student regularly to provide support and encouragement. This person is more than a program overseer, but becomes a person that the student can rely on. The advisor is available to assist with attendance issues, academic concerns, and to teach life, social and study skills. After the initial semester, students are monitored and supported throughout high school until graduation.

After five years of implementation in Tucson, Arizona, participating high schools have documented success rates, consistently increasing with each year of participation and demonstrating increased attendance overall, increased numbers of students promoted to the next grade level, and increased graduation rates. AGAO has discussed the implementation of this program with Dr. Isquierdo, Superintendent of the Sunnyside Unified School District (SUSD). SUSD will assist in the implementation by providing: Organizational Implementation Design, Infrastructure, Policy Development (Use of Digital Resources), Leadership/Change Management, Coaching/Teacher Support Model, Digital Curriculum, Professional Development & Classroom Support, "Project RED" Keys to Technology Transformation, Family and Community Engagement, and Marketing & Messaging. Funds from this grant will be instrumental in the implementation of this program.

Dual Language Program

AGAO will be the first and only middle-high school offering a dual language program in Osceola County. Dual language programs are currently offered in six (6) Osceola Elementary schools, but not at the middle and high school level. This program will serve the community's English Language Learners (ELLs). In 2009-2010 Osceola County had the highest percentage (18%) of ELL students in the entire State (Florida's CELLA Updates for 2010-11). Students who achieve academic success in their native language are more likely to achieve academic success in English. This phenomenon can be explained through Common Underlying Proficiency (CUP). The linguistic knowledge a student possesses transfers to any additional language during the process of second language acquisition. National data shows that this immersion program is much more effective than remedial programs (Thomas & Collier, 2009).

The flexibility within the program allows the teachers in the Dual Language program to meet the needs of students who enter the program from different backgrounds. Students are able to move from one level to another according to their progress. Careful articulation between homeroom and Spanish teachers exists in order to ensure continuity and avoid redundancy.

Civic & Character Education

A strict code of conduct will be followed at the School to stimulate a productive learning environment and to promote responsible citizenship. Character development and ethics instruction will be integrated into daily classroom instruction and will be present throughout the School. This focus will improve both the academic and emotional lives of its students, helping them to become more confident individuals and responsible citizens.

We will follow Osceola County Public Schools' Code of Student Conduct and will utilize *The 7 Habits of Highly Effective Teenagers*, by Sean Covey as a resource and tool. The book's use of character education will assist in the implementation of the program. Using the proven strategies in the book, *The 7 Habits of Highly Effective Teens*, a school-wide initiative will include mini-lessons conducted by guidance counselors and teachers, parent education through orientation and PTSA meetings, assemblies, and daily morning announcement messages. Faculty and staff members will infuse teachings and principles, which are being emphasized into everyday interactions with students.

Students will have the following responsibilities: To earn the respect and admiration of the administration, staff, faculty and peers; To attend school and class every school day and be on time; To wear the required uniform; To be prepared for class; To behave in an orderly, safe and respectful manner; To achieve the best academic grades possible to stay on track to successful high school graduation and college acceptance; To help keep a clean, attractive and orderly environment, and to fulfill the signed conduct and performance contract. The student code of honor is central to our program of student conduct.

We have a clear understanding of our target area students and their respective needs. We are innovative as we bring an educational dimension unlike those found within the area schools. We find ourselves to be hurried because we want to deliver the right education to our neediest students as quickly as possible. Our concern for their welfare is giving us drive and a focused purpose to get involved in their lives now.

FINANCING & START UP

FINANCIAL PROJECTIONS

PROJECTED SCHOOL ENROLLMENT & REVENUES

	2013-2014	2014-2015	2015-2016	2016-2017	2017-2018	Total
# of Students	750	922	1163	1288	1300	1300
Revenues	\$4,337,875	\$5,232,453	\$6,600,155	\$7,818,304	\$7,970,057	\$31,958,844

SCHOOL START UP COSTS

START-UP COSTS	
MARKETING & STUDENT ENROLLMENT	\$76,500
APPLICATION, LEGAL & COMPLIANCE	\$38,322
ADMINISTRATION (1 month salaries principal	\$66,583

RENT, FACILITIES, UTILITIES	\$59,375
STUDENT UNIFORMS	\$58,400
OFFICE EQUIPMENT LEASE, SUPPLIES	\$10,500
Total Start-up Costs	\$309,680
SHORT TERM LOAN TO CHARTER	
TEACHER'S SALARY, SUPPLIES & DEVELOPMENT-1 MONTH	\$83,375
RENT, FACILITIES, UTILITIES	\$74,581
Total Short Term Loan *	\$157, 956
LONG TERM LOAN FOR CHARTER	
STUDENT TEXTBOOKS	\$175,070
FF&E, OFFICE COMPUTERS, SOFTWARE	\$335,680
STUDENT COMPUTERS & COMPUTER LEARNING LAB	\$300,000
Total Long Term Loan**	\$810,750
TOTAL INVESTMENT & LOANS	\$1,278,386

* repaid within 60 days

**charter to borrow funds, investor to provide loan guarantees, loan repaid principal and interest of 60 to 84 months by charter as student enrollment and revenues increase.

PROPOSED GRANT SCHEDULES.

STATE & FEDERAL GRANTS	2013-2014	2014-2015	2015-2016	2016-2017	TOTAL
Start Up Grant - Florida		\$175,000	\$100,000		\$275,000
Over 200 Kids at School-FDOE Start-up		\$75,000			\$75,000
High Needs Grant-Florida Growth Fund	\$250,000				\$250,000
PECO Funds (\$700 per student)*				\$420,000	\$420,000
TOTAL	\$250,000	\$250,000	\$100,000	\$420,000	\$1,020,000

PECO dollars are available automatically in year four. They may be used for any capital expenditure or repayment.

START UP MANAGEMENT TEAM

The following individuals are collaborating in the start up phase of the school.

Frank Bolaños is an experienced Fortune 500 senior executive and former Chairman of the Miami-Dade County School Board. He has been active in the charter school industry for over ten years and has been a consultant for Florida's largest and most successful charter school administrators. Bolaños has a wealth of community, political and civic contacts in The State of Florida.

Robert Cambo has developed 8 charter schools in the State of Florida representing 7,400 student stations. Robert is the Co-Founder and Vice Chairman of the South Florida Autism Charter School, Miami-Dade and Broward only Public Charter School for Children with Autism.