Minutes of Imboden Area Charter School

The regular March Meeting was rescheduled due to Spring Break and held Thursday April 7, 2025, at 6:00 PM, at Imboden Area Charter School, 800 Beech St. Black Rock, Arkansas.

Board members present were Jade Sanders, Mike McLeod, and Scott Rorex, Sara Juhl attended remotely via conference call. Director Matthew Wells was also present. Board President, George Morris was not in attendance.

Vice President Mike McLeod Presiding: Meeting was called to order at 6:03pm.

Director Matthew Wells’ report:

* Current enrollment numbers are at 42. Mr. Wells has expressed his concerns over enrollment to the Board each month since October. While advertising campaigns are under way, this does not solve the immediate problem. IACS is always funded based on prior year enrollment numbers, and at 42, funding will be cut significantly. This lack of enrollment will inevitably lead to numerous employees being non-renewed because the school simply does not have funding to pay for them.
* Mr. Wells continued his report with details regarding this year’s financial audit. While things thus far have seemingly gone alright with the auditor being very understanding, it is Mr. Wells’ belief that there will be audit issues. Obviously last year, bookkeeper Lisa Lewallen had significant health issues that prevented her from working for a period of time. During this time frame, Mr. Wells became bookkeeper in addition to his regular duties. This definitely created a major issue with segregation of duties that will likely become an audit finding. Very simply, there really wasn’t another option available.
* In previous meetings, Mr. Wells had explained to the Board that the school was working on what the state calls a Corrective Action Plan for both Special Education and for Child Nutrition programs. Both of these Plans were the state’s response to paperwork problems that had occurred during monitoring cycles for each program. Special education problems revolved around dates for psychological evaluations and maintenance of student folders. These problems can be traced back to 2022 when the school was unable to find and hire a certified Special Education teacher. All problems associated with this Corrective Action Plan have been addressed and approved by DESE. The Child Nutrition Plan revolved around student meal applications that were missing information. Mr. Wells worked with Meredith Mannix from the Child Nutrition Department at DESE to develop a checklist to ensure all required information was provided by the family applying. In the past meal apps were reviewed and approved/denied by Lisa Lewallen. This process was changed and Mr. Wells has taken over this duty to ensure compliance with DESE rules. All meal apps for the year have been reviewed, then approved or denied by Mr. Wells using the checklist mentioned previously. A representative from the Child Nutrition Office at DESE was on campus last week to review records, and IACS passed with flying colors. Therefore, both Corrective Action Plans have been rescinded, and IACS has no current monitoring issues.
* In other positive news, Mr. Wells explained to the Board that IACS has recently been released from Act 1082 Literacy Support. This was a program enacted by DESE after the Covid crisis to assist schools with low scores in literacy on state mandated testing. Scores from last year were astonishingly higher than normal, and DESE has chosen to release IACS from support status. Mr. Wells attributes this increase in scores to quality teachers, and the school’s investment in Amplify Literacy Programs. The partnership developed by the school and Amplify has been highly beneficial with Amplify sending out a trainer to campus for several days each month.
* The School PTO has had several events lately to celebrate Autism Awareness week. Students have learned about autism and some of its effects on students. This was all done in a very kid-friendly manner where students were encouraged to celebrate all peers despite what some may consider “odd” behaviors. Students all were able to enjoy activities revolving around stimulation. Overall, a very positive ordeal that students enjoyed and learned from.
* Mr. Wells next presented the Board with the signs that the PTO was able to procure for advertising. Plans are being made between the school and City Mayor Zach Wilson to mount these signs in a high traffic area somewhere along highway 63 near the Kum and Go station. Mr. Wells requested the board approve a few hundred dollars budget to acquire materials to mount and display these signs. Motion made by Mike McLeod and seconded by Scott Rorex to approve the advertising budget. Motion passed 4 to 0.
* Lastly, Mr. Wells presented the Board with a copy of the calendar created for the upcoming state summative testing. This testing applies to all students grades 3-8. The testing calendar will utilize Tuesdays and Thursdays the first two weeks of the window. This should get all testing done including any makeups before the end of April. The testing window will be closed by DESE the second week of May which will put us well ahead of schedule. Motion made by Jade Sanders and seconded by Mike McLeod to approve the testing calendar. Motion passed 4 to 0.

Action Agenda:

Both requests made by Mr. Wells were approved in the previously presented Director’s report.

Consent Agenda:

Motion made by Jade Sanders and seconded by Mike McLeod to approve the consent agenda. Motion passed 4 to 0.

Meeting adjourned at 6:50pm.

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Scott Rorex, Secretary Date