VALLEY ACADEMY

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Valley Academy, Inc. is an Arizona non-profit corporation and is the charter holder. It is governed by a six-member Board of Directors elected by a majority vote of the members of the Board to serve three-year terms. This single board serves as both the Corporate and School board. The Board designates one or more charter representatives as liaisons to the school's sponsor. The Board is responsible for those functions required by Arizona law, including adopting and directing school policies and procedures, assuring that policies and procedures are implemented and maintaining compliance with its Charter Contract, applicable State and federal laws and the organization's accounting requirements. The current members of the Board are:

Mark Mettes, Board President - Mr. Mettes is Vice President of Operations for the Herberger Theater Center in downtown Phoenix. He holds a Bachelors of Fine Arts degree from the University of Arizona. Mr. Mettes' many years of experience in the nonprofit arena has assisted the Valley Academy organization in many ways, including board development and community relations. Mr. Mettes is experienced in budgeting, facility oversight, emergency preparedness, negotiation techniques and human-resource issues. His financial experience and business acumen make him a valuable member of the Board.

Angela Fischer, Board Secretary - Mrs. Fischer's career of public service began as a Child Protective Worker in 1994. She currently works for the State of Arizona Department of Administration, serving as the Executive Director of the State Employees Charitable Campaign. Mrs. Fischer has a Bachelor's Degree in Organizational Management and a Master's Degree in Counseling. She currently holds a Professional Counseling License and has provided consulting and counseling services to individuals, couples, groups, organizations and families in a variety of settings since 1991. Active in community service, Mrs. Fischer is an adoptive parent, a former foster parent, and a member of the State of Arizona Foster Care Review Board. With her business and social-services background, Mrs. Fischer brings to the Board a well rounded view of both the practical and human sides of life and business in Arizona.

Letha Warner, Board Treasurer - Mrs. Warner is a Business Associate with Wells Fargo Bank. Her job experiences include depository relationships with specialty markets, including charter schools and, most recently, loan support. Mrs. Warner brings financial acumen and more than thirty years of banking experience to the Board. She was drawn to Board service by her support of the traditional values of Valley Academy and by the commitment of its employees. Mrs. Warner is a native of Phoenix and is the mother of two grown sons.

Cuyler Reid, Board Member - Mrs. Reid is a former teacher, a published author and one of the school's founders. She is currently working with many charter schools to prepare grants and assist with new charter applications. She has worked with the Challenge Foundation to establish a Core Knowledge school in Arizona. Previously, she worked for five years with the Leadership for Educational Entrepreneurs master's program through Arizona State University. In addition to her work on the Board, Mrs. Reid was a member of the Governing Board of the Arizona Charter Schools Association and continues as the Vice President of the Association's Parent Choice Coalition. She serves on the Superintendent's Charter School Advisory Committee. Mrs. Reid holds a Bachelor of Science Degree in English Education from Florida State University. Her background in the education field and her experience with education reform has made her a critical part of Valley Academy's development.

Samuel Kerch, Board Member - Mr. Kerch is the controller and tax research director for a payroll software company. He travels the country teaching payroll research techniques and encouraging the use of new technology within payroll departments. Mr. Kerch also runs a tax preparation practice. His undergraduate degree is in finance, and he holds a Masters degree in Finance and Accounting and is a licensed CPA. Mr. Kerch's financial knowledge is a great asset to Valley Academy. He is the father of two Valley students and one future Valley student.

Denise Burton, Board Member - Mrs. Burton is a deeply involved Valley parent who has donated many hours to the school. She holds a Bachelor of Arts degree in Psychobiology from Holy Family College in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. She served on the Valley Academy Parent Organization Council and was president of the Council for one year. Mrs. Burton owns and operates a small business. She is the parent of one Valley student and enjoys contributing her time to the school. She believes in traditional education and strong parental involvement.

Management

Ms. Heidi Mitchell, C.E.O. – As the Chief Executive Officer of Valley Academy, Ms. Mitchell is responsible for the oversight of all business and academic areas of the school. Ms. Mitchell holds a Masters of Education Administration and Supervision and a Certificate of Focus in Business from Arizona State University's Leadership for Educational Entrepreneurs[1] program and a Bachelor of Science in Business Management degree from the University of Phoenix. Ms. Mitchell served on the Valley Academy Board from 1996 to 2002, in various employment capacities for the school since 2002, and has been involved with education, and specifically with charter schools, for more than 13 years. She has written more than $1 million in successful school grants. Ms. Mitchell has significant experience in finance, management, real estate, public relations and marketing. Ms. Mitchell has been active with Valley Academy since the charter school's inception in 1995.

[1] The Leadership for Educational Entrepreneurs program is a federally funded national model Master's program for charter school leaders. It is an interdisciplinary Masters-degree program that bridges the College of Teacher Education and Leadership M.Ed. and the School of Global Management and Leadership business degrees.

Ms. Leslie Szostak, Principal – Ms. Szostak has served as Valley Academy's Principal since 2006. In that capacity, she manages the academic program at the school. Ms. Szostak is a State-certified Principal with more than 16 years of experience in public schools. Prior to joining Valley Academy's administration, Ms. Szostak taught seventh grade history and served as an assistant principal and the Principal of a K-8 school that served more than 1,500 students. In her prior positions, she helped to implement a phonics-based program and worked with district officials to expand school facilities. Ms. Szostak was invited to the White House in celebration of her work with the Reading First program. She holds a Masters of Education Administration and Supervision Degree from the University of Phoenix and a Bachelor of Arts Degree in Secondary Education from Arizona State University. She strongly believes in the principles of direct instruction.

Ms. Victoria Wilber, Assistant Principal – Mrs. Wilber is Valley Academy's Assistant Principal and Instructional Coach. She is a certified Spalding Teacher Instructor level II and coaches faculty members in proper teaching techniques and classroom management methods. She is an ASA Qualified Evaluator and has earned many other certificates including a Structured English Immersion Instructor Certification with the Arizona Department of Education. During the current year she has worked with the Arizona Department of Health Services to obtain state licensing and certification for our new Pre-school and Before /After Care programs. Mrs. Wilber began her teaching career with Valley Academy as an Academic Aide in 1998 and has worked diligently through the years to become a classroom teacher in 2002 and an Assistant Principal in 2007. Mrs. Wilber holds a Bachelor of Science in Business Management and a Master's Degree in Education, both from the University of Phoenix. As the mother of a Valley Academy graduate, Mrs. Wilber shares the perspectives of parents, teachers, aides and administrators.

RECRUITING, SELECTION AND BOARD DEVELOPMENT

Any member of the public is eligible to submit an application for board service, and an application form is available on the school website. Prospective board members are encouraged to attend board meetings prior to applying for service. They are given the school's "Introduction to Board Service" booklet. This informational guide gives the applicant information on the school's history, mission, philosophy, and curriculum. It outlines the duties of board membership and introduces other board members and school administrators through short biographies.

The members of the Board of Directors review the application. At this point, the Board may decide to invite the prospective member to interview with the Board. If the prospective member is placed on the Board agenda, the board may vote in open meeting to invite the new member onto the Board.

New members to the Board of Directors are presented with reference materials which includes an Employee Manual and a Board Member Book containing: Robert's Rules or Order; the charter with amendments; corporate documents including bylaws; open meeting laws; financial information; an organizational chart; job descriptions; the school calendar; the student/parent handbook; and important telephone numbers.

Additional information presented to board members: a synopsis of the curriculum at every grade level; AIMS results; the school calendar of events; the conflict of interest policy; assistance in interpreting financial reports; signs and symptoms of fraud; information regarding the fiduciary duty to public funds; a staff directory; meeting procedures; and the names and numbers of professionals who work with the school such as auditors, attorneys, and insurance representatives.

Board members serve three year terms, which are renewable with the approval of the Board by a majority vote of the board. Periodic board development opportunities are available to board members, including financial seminars and board training through the Arizona Charter Schools Association.

BOARD OPERATIONS

The Valley Academy Board of Directors is responsible to the school's sponsor (Arizona State Board for Charter Schools) and the charter which allows Valley Academy to exist. The charter makes it clear that the Board must supply a public traditional, back-to-basics education.

The Board sets policy, approves educational programs and textbook adoption, sets salaries and compensation and adopts a yearly budget. The Board is also the final step in the organization's due process for employees, students and their families, and other stakeholders.

The responsibility to oversee and administer programs and policies rests with the Chief Executive Officer, who is hired and supervised by the Board. The C.E.O. hires and supervises the Principal.

The advice of the public (primarily client parents and guardians) and employees is given careful consideration before action is taken on any item. The Board's first concerns are for the educational program as it affects students, the charter, and compliance with all applicable state and federal regulations. Final decisions may depart from the advice of the public when, in the judgment of the Board, such advice is not consistent with the charter, school's focus and goals, or within reach of available financial resources.

The Valley Academy bylaws prohibit board members or members of their family from being employed by the school. A simple majority of the directors constitutes a quorum. When quorum is present at a meeting, an affirmative vote of a majority of the directors present at the meeting constitutes an act of the Board. Each director is entitles to one vote.

Regular meetings of the Governing Board are usually each month. However changes are made to avoid holidays and when quorum is unavailable. Special meetings are called as needed, usually to meet compliance with applicable regulations or to facilitate efficient business operations. The board may occasionally adjourn into Executive Session, which is a private meeting closed to the public, only under certain circumstances as prescribed by law. All meetings except Executive Sessions are open to the public, and everyone is encouraged to attend. Public notice is given of all meetings of the Board. The Board closely adheres to Arizona Open Meeting laws.

MONITORING ACADEMICS

The Board of Directors reviews AIMS results annually. For the lower grades, a report on DIBELS testing is presented. Analysis of Valley Academy AIMS scores includes comparison to surrounding districts, charter schools, and to the highest performing schools in the state. AIMS scores are analyzed by current grade level and by cohort, comparing previous years. When scores dip below 90% in any subject area in any grade level, administration develops and presents to the Board plans to increase performance.

The monthly dashboard report lists the numbers of academic probation and serious behavioral issues. These statistics are compared to previous years, and the Board and administration discusses deviations.

The key to Valley Academy's academic success is the Board's commitment to the school's traditional philosophy by providing a challenging, sequential, teacher-directed, standards-based, textbook-driven curriculum supported by individual accountability and high academic and behavioral standards.