

**MEETING MINUTES**

**ASCEND CAREER ACADEMY**

**ANNUAL MEETING DATE: July 17, 2019**

**5251 Coconut Creek Parkway Margate, FL 33063**

Greg DuMont, as Chairman of the Governing Board, called the meeting to order at 3:00pM.

Roll call was taken with the following present: Board Chair Greg DuMont, Board Member, Cheryl Leonti (present) and Sayra Hughes (present); Principal of ACA Vincent Alessi; and confidential secretary of ACA Denise Garcia.

No members of the public attended the meeting.

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**I. AGENDA ITEM TITLE:** Ratification of May 14<sup>th</sup> 2019 Meeting Minutes

**REQUESTED ACTION:** Ratify items and actions taken from the last board meeting

**SUMMARY EXPLANATION AND BACKGROUND:** Review, Approval and Comments

**DISCUSSION:** Final Minutes of the aforementioned Board Meeting were circulated. With all Board Members having reviewed them and there being no comments, Bd Chair DuMont motioned for their approval, Ms. Leonti seconded and the motion was carried unanimously

**EXHIBIT I: Meeting Minutes from May 14<sup>th</sup> 2019 Board Meeting**

**FINANCIAL IMPACT:** None

**Board Action Taken in Open Meeting On: July 17, 2019**

Approved   X  

Disapproved           

Tabled           

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- II. **AGENDA ITEM TITLE:** Review for continuation of the Apex Learning Curriculum Contract for 2019/20 SY and continuation of the Goodheart Wilcox Career Curriculum, existing 3-year contract.

**REQUESTED ACTION:** Review and approve for the continuation of use the Apex Learning and Goodheart Wilcox Career educational resources.

**SUMMARY EXPLANATION AND BACKGROUND:** Digital curriculum for the upcoming school year must be approved by all members of the governing board.

**DISCUSSION:** Mr Alessi started the discussion by outlining that the school has had good partnership/support from both Apax and Goodheart Wilcox in the service and expansion of licensure. Apax has previously provided a 2-year licenses (SY 2019/20 will be the second year) for 250 seats with an ability to expand, the contract being approved in SY 2018/19, including training expiring 8/2020. Apax has been a benefit both instructionally for teachers and also for students and there have been solid instructional gains through its usage. Principal Alessi and the faculty was to continue its use. Consistent with the prior year, a budgeted payment plan has been agreed and the total cost is reflected in the draft budget (\$10,000 deposit and monthly payments over a further 6-months).

In addition, the Goodheart Wilcox (G-W) Career curriculum under license is wished to be extended. The breath of offerings and compliance with state course alignments make Goodheart Wilcox continues to make a core part of the course offerings for Ascend. Mr Alessi recommended approval of sufficient licenses for the Fiscal 19/20 SY. Such amounts are reflected in the draft budget and are sufficient for servicing the growing enrollments at ACA. Mr. Alessi further outlined that Goodheart Wilcox is a strong partner having several other state and Broward County aligned course offerings should ACA wish to expand the same in the future.

Mr. DuMont outlined his involvement and review of the contracts in prior years but moreover believes that given the instructional progress displayed by the school, continuation of the programs is in the best interest of the students and faculty and usability should be monitored closely to ensure both instructional progress, support and gains are made. He motioned for approval of continuation of both. Ms. Leonti seconded and the purchases for the 19/20 school year was approved unanimously approved.

**FINANCIAL IMPACT:** Approx. \$35,000

- III. **EXHIBITS:** Apex Learning and Goodheart Wilcox Career Curriculum Contracts for reference.

**Board Action Taken in Open Meeting On: July 17, 2019**

Approved  X

Disapproved

Tabled

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**III AGENDA ITEM TITLE:** Approval of student and faculty laptop purchases

**REQUESTED ACTION:** Approve the purchase of 50 laptops for the start of the 2019-2020 school year and up to 3 teacher laptops, and 2 classroom printers; Further purchase are budgeted and may be approved as needed or required later in semester 1 or the second ½ of the school year.

**SUMMARY EXPLANATION AND BACKGROUND:** Each year the school must conduct a bid process for services provided to the school. However, historically, spot purchases at Big Box stores (e.g. Best Buy & other on-line retailers e-tailers) have allowed the school to get the best possible price on the same model Chromebook as utilized by students. With this understanding, and the low scale of purchasing, approval of spot purchasing, in line with budgeted amount and historical pricing is the recommended school strategy.

**DISCUSSION:** Mr Alessi started the discussion by outlining that the school is running 3 different chromebook models, including testing models with reinforced covers. The reinforced models, while more expensive, have shown no breakage in the year implemented. That said, the school invested in low cost ruggedized covers, at less than \$10 per unit, which have proven to improve durability of the Chromebook and are being monitored as well

Mr. Alessi is seeking approval, based upon available working units as of July 1, for the immediate quotation and varied spot purchase, for up to 25 student laptops/chromebooks, sufficient to open school and budget for a further 25 for incremental student growth and/or replacement, as and when needed, which combined with functional devices already in stock will provide for approximately 275 available devices and sufficient for the start of school.

Aggregate cost of approximately \$22,500 for the year and approximately \$7,500 in immediate purchases, in line with the budget and amounts discussed at the 5/14/19 Board Meeting budget discussion re: growth plans.

Ms. Garcia added, as outlined in bids/quotes sought from time to time, Promevo, supplier from prior years continues to be the most competitive supplier on a per unit basis for devices meeting the school's specifications. Mr. Alessi further recommended the continuation of the protective cover purchases (zipper cases) for the new devices as well as new cases for all existing devices as they get worn from use during the year; total cost of less than \$3,000 in an attempt to lower the breakage/damage from student use is budgeted.

Mr. Alessi further added that enrollments will likely continue to grow in Spring, as with years past, and the approvals above will be sufficient for enrollment growth and will only be expanded as a when needed beyond the initial units and notify the board if there are requirements in aggregate, for the year, above the 75 units budgeted due to damage or growth.

Mr. DuMont expressed some concern in the number of Chromebook taken and not returned by students. He requested that the team stay vigilant in chasing them for return, filling out police reports where necessary to report as stolen and to otherwise remain as proactive as possible in ensuring the computers are protected to the best of abilities. Mr. DuMont hem motioned to approve the purchase, of 25 units immediately and such others as are necessary up to the budgeted student unit count of 75, the protective cases (up to 300 for the year, or \$3,000) to ensure it is in-line with the budget and process per Board authority. In addition, Mr DuMont suggested the approval of up to 3 Teacher Laptops and 3 office/classroom printers to support teacher and classroom needs. Ms. Leonti motioned that this purchase be approved, in accordance with the aggregate budget, that Mr DuMont and Mr. Alessi be given authority to incrementally purchase such other devices as may be necessary for student enrollment growth or break/fix/replacement. Ms Hughes seconded and the purchase for the 19/20 school year was approved.

**FINANCIAL IMPACT:** Approximately \$12-15,000 in August/September and a further \$10-15,000 in Fall/Spring per Budget, if and as needed based upon enrollment growth and/or damage.

**EXHIBIT I:** Promevo Unit Pricing

**EXHIBIT II:** Best Buy Quotes

**EXHIBIT III:** CTL (ruggedized machine); price quote.

**Board Action Taken in Open Meeting On: July 17, 2019**

Approved   X

Disapproved \_\_\_\_\_

Tabled \_\_\_\_\_

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**IV. AGENDA ITEM TITLE:** Ratification of 19/20 ACA Budget

**REQUESTED ACTION:** Ratify and Approve the Final School Operating Budget for Fiscal 19/20 School Year including, but not limited to the operating assumptions in the highlighted areas of enrollment and sub-lease based revenue, lease expenses, computer and capital investments, CAM/Utilities, staff salaries and wages.

**SUMMARY EXPLANATION AND BACKGROUND:**

The following Budget Assumptions, Highlights & and Updates are made available to the Board as of the date of this Meeting:

**Budget Revenue –**

- Predicated on per student funding levels consistent with 2018/19 actual amounts received and latest estimates from Broward County Schools, at student enrollment estimates for 250 FTE in Fall and 275 FTE in Spring; Revenue phased based upon historical funding timelines.
- Sub-Lease Revenue – Aligned to the Sub-Lease to church counter-party being continued, \$3,000 per month.
- Free & Reduced Lunch – Assumed available for 100% of the student population with such funding available for the full year.
- Estimates for Capital Outlay funds provided by the State of FL and consistent with prior year, with growth for enrollment growth.
- Based upon 250 students and associated funding starting October 1 and 275 students for the second semester, with the associated true-up for second semester occurring in May/June. As currently projected, with all costs outlined below, and all necessary teacher contracts, the school is projected to have a modest surplus for the fiscal 2019/20 school year.

**Projected Enrollments –**

- July/August/September at June 30, 2019 Funding levels.
- October 2019 to March 2020 presumed at 250 students.
- April and June 2020 reflective of a retroactive adjustment for semester 2 of 275 Students.



As of the date of this meeting, the school feels it is on pace and in line with the budget and costs assumptions

**School Lease –**

Alliance (Landlord) lease obligations are \$300,000 for SY 2019/20 per Lease Amendment #3. To the extend enrollments are funded at a level above the budget outlined above, apportion of incremental revenue will be paid in the form of incremental lease obligations, given the accommodation or repayment of debt obligations.

In addition, Ascend will be required to pay CAM of approx. \$50,000 for the year.

**June 30, 2019 Balance Sheet Liabilities** – As discuss previously, there were 6 outstanding liabilities related to prior fiscal periods:

- A. Teacher Salaries – obligation from Fiscal 18/19 school year, spread into July. Such obligation has been paid in accordance with contracts from Fiscal 2018/19 funds.
- B. Audit Obligation/Accrual – An \$8,000 accrual has been maintained to satisfy the obligation by the school for its annual audit. Funds have been reserved for this obligation which expect to be disbursed in October 2019.
- C. Alliance Note Payable – Alliance provided a Capital line of Credit. Such line of credit has been maximized and is accruing interest. The Board and Alliance have agreed to negotiate revised interest accrual terms and Alliance has agreed to wait on payment of any interest and principal. Alliance has indicated that it will waive interest for SY 2018/19 and 19/20 and beyond has been set at \$8,000 annually or 1%, whichever is greater. Principal payments are not required, only made based upon excess fund balances, post recurring debt-service obligations.
- D. Generation Z Education Note Payable – Generation Z provided an initial Capital line of Credit which it rolled into a note. Such line of credit is accruing interest and is secondary in priority to the Alliance Credit Facility and is being serviced at 4% (approx. \$2300 annually. No principal payments are due in the near future.
- E. Discretionary performance bonuses – As ACA exceeded it Budget, and generated surplus funds, approval of the following discretionary disbursements are recommended staff bonuses:
  - a. Ms Denise Garcia – \$2500
  - b. Ms. Delmy Garcia - \$1000
  - c. Mr. Rhodes - \$2500
  - d. Ms Rivera - \$1000
  - e. Mr. Alessi - \$5000
  - f. Spot bonuses for summer assistance by staff - \$1000

Notes, Contracts and Invoices for all of these obligations are available for review.

**Computer Hardware –**

- Orders to be placed as follows:

- New computers (75 for students, up to 5 for teachers), providing us enough for the open of school and likely the majority of the first semester for a total of \$35,000 combined for the year. All in-line with budgeted amounts units' costs at or lower than SY 2019/20 and working capital available as of the date of this meeting is sufficient to fund. Amounts will be expended if/as needed.
- The School will likely buy three (3) classroom printers to enhance teaching, at a cost of less than \$3,000 and may expand use of class projectors (not more than three (3)). Needs for future growth are reflected in the budget re: growth to 275 students and orders placed as necessary.

### **School Capacity –**

There are no needs for infrastructure. Teaching & Learning Capacity, including furniture exists for approximately 350 students. Furniture and space re: desks, tables, classrooms are all in good order. Painting and cleaning are taking place during the summer break and there are sufficient cash reserves to support the same. Expenditures for paint and repairs will not exceed \$10,000. Small investments in tables/chairs, and associated repairs will be done in the normal course to keep all common areas in good working conditions. Small additions such as art and school aligned decorations have and will continue to be added at nominal cost to enhance the school environment.

The school will likely need to think about some further improvements re: common area painting next summer to freshen the interior but the school is still in good shape and we can tackle that cost effectively at a future date. It is sensible to await Charter renewal before such further expenditures are made.

The School is maintaining the security system implemented in SY 2018/19 and measures undertaken at prior meetings including metal detectors and video monitoring equipment.

### **Financial Summary**

Based upon enrollments and operating expense assumptions the school is expected to meet all of its fiscal operating costs, including salaries and wage requirements, lease, computing hardware, curriculum leases, monthly recurring operating expenditures and debt service. The approximate balance of \$60,000 of estimated working capital available as of the date of this meeting and the projected \$12,000 SY 2019/20 surplus is also deemed sufficient for funding operations for the full year.

**DISCUSSION:** Board Chair DuMont presented the budget assumptions, as summarized above, using the detailed Operating Budget, including all material line item assumptions. Mr Alessi reviewed expenditures that would be trimmed, from nonessential areas, excluding instruction, should student growth targets of fund assumptions become materially different. Moreover, Mr. Alessi has phased the purchases/expenditures to align to student growth and on a need only basis, outside of instructional activities.

Mr. Alessi discussed the assumptions utilized for enrollments and operating expenses as well, in comparison to SY 2018/19 and indicated that he was comfortable that the school would

operate well at these assumed levels. Such discussion included reasons for the discretionary bonuses based upon the self-run status of the school.

Ms Leonti motioned the Board to approve the budget as accepted, and approve the discretionary bonus payments and disbursement of Mr Alessi's contractual payment based upon school performance and based upon the advocacy of Mr DuMont & Mr. Alessi. Ms Hughes seconded and the motion was carried unanimously. The Board Agreed to review progress and assumptions at the next meeting, likely to be November of December 2019.

**FINANCIAL IMPACT:** As outlined in the Final Operating Budget

**EXHIBIT I: 2019-2020 Proposed Final Operating Budget**

**EXHIBIT II: ACA - Sub-Lease (existing)**

**EXHIBIT III: Alliance Lease Amendment #3 (existing)**

**Board Action Taken in Open Meeting On: July 17, 2019**

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Approved   X  

Disapproved           

Tabled           

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**V. AGENDA ITEM TITLE:** Approval of Proposed Salaries and Teacher/Staff Contracts for of 19/20 ACA Budget

**REQUESTED ACTION:** Approve the specific Contract Parameters and, for open position, Salary parameters for new hires, for the Final School Operating Budget for Fiscal 19/20 School Year including, specifically a review of staff salaries and wages by position.

**SUMMARY EXPLANATION AND BACKGROUND:**

A position by position salary summary will be presented to the Board as part of the budget.



**DISCUSSION:** Mr. Alessi presented the budget assumptions, by position, for salaries and wages and specifically discussed adjustments necessary and his recommendations. Mr DuMont indicated that he had discussed the same and felt the recommendations were in the best interest of the stability and continued quality improvements of the school.

Mr. DuMont highlighted that the Social Sciences and Career Education teachers had been replaced having monitored and turned over the position in the prior year and felt that ACA was in a much better position for SY 2019/20 in that regard. Any other such changes shall be monitored by Principal Alessi and as with prior years changes shall be at the instructional discretion of the Principal with the Board notified.

As summarized by Mr Alessi, using the detailed Operating Budget, all salary and wage assumptions have been properly captured in the budget.

Mr DuMont motioned that he and Mr. Alessi be empowered to enter into contracts consistent with that presented and any deviations be reported back to the Board at the next meeting. Ms Hughes seconded and the motion was carried unanimously.

**FINANCIAL IMPACT:** As outlined in the Final Operating Budget

**EXHIBIT I: 2019-2020 Proposed Final Operating Budget; Salaries & Wages by Position Tab**

**Board Action Taken in Open Meeting On: July 17, 2019**

Approved  X

Disapproved

Tabled

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**VI. AGENDA ITEM TITLE:** Approval of Custodial Services Contract

**REQUESTED ACTION:** Approve the vendor who will conduct the services as outlined in the contract for the 2019-2020 school year.

**SUMMARY EXPLANATION AND BACKGROUND:** Each year the school must conduct a bid process for services provided to the school. The board must then approve the selected vendor.

**DISCUSSION:** Mr Alessi and Ms Garcia outlined outreach for competitive bids, and verbal bids have been provided as summarized, with formal quotes/bids being submitted. Both advocated

that Tic Tock cleaning, who has served the school for the past 2-years had maintained their prices and worked diligently to ensure the school is immaculate for the open, and the costs of which are embedded in the monthly charges (vs incremental/extras from others) would perhaps be modestly more expensive than the lowest bidder but is known to the school, reliable and do an excellent job to ensure well maintained facility, which is important to student/faculty. All are trustworthy and limited extra charges are made. As the difference is minor, it is recommended that Tic tock be retained.

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Mr DuMont motioned to approve. Ms Hughes seconded and the motion was carried unanimously.

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**FINANCIAL IMPACT:** Approx. \$32,000 annually

**QUOTE SUMMARY**

	Monthly Amount	VCT Strip & Wax	Carpet Cleaning	Total Monthly Amount	
Coverall Cleaning	\$ 1,794.00	N/A	N/A	\$1,794.00	(Would need to hire outside service for addtl floor cleaning)
City Wide Maintenance	\$ 2,708.33	\$ 1,071.00	\$ 357.00	\$4,600.00	(Monthly floor cleaning amount is for 2 services of each annually)
Tic Tock Cleaning	\$ 2,703.00	INC	INC	\$2,703.00	

Coverall cleaning consistent with prior years, are lower by approximately \$900 per month or \$10,800, but then charge approximately \$8,000 for VCT in the summer. Incremental/upcharges are unknown and as such are only marginally lower than Tic Toc, the incumbent.

Bids maintained on file.

**Board Action Taken in Open Meeting On: July 17, 2019**

Approved   X  

Disapproved           

Tabled           

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**VII. AGENDA ITEM TITLE:** Approval of Food Services Contract

**REQUESTED ACTION:** Approve the vendor who will conduct the services as outlined in the contract for the 2018-2019 school year.

**SUMMARY EXPLANATION AND BACKGROUND:** Each year the school must conduct a bid process for services provided to the school. The board must then approve the selected vendor.

**DISCUSSION:** Mr Alessi and Ms Garcia outlined outreach for competitive bids. The bid process is a Public Invitation to Bid via a template supplied by the Dept. of Agriculture. 2 responses were received. While Nutrispa meal costs were lower, the Educated Meals quotes included all kitchen materials, preparation and service items, including plates, utensils and ancillary condiments. Nutrispa includes meal cost only and in discussion, would, on a fully loaded basis be at a price nearly consistent with Educated Meals. Both advocated that the service provided by Educated Meals in terms of quality and student feedback was exceptional and as such it is suggested for FY 2019/20, they be retained again.

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Mr DuMont motioned to approve the recommendation by Mr. Alessi and Ms. Garcia. Ms Hughes seconded and the motion was carried unanimously.

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**FINANCIAL IMPACT:** Approx. \$150,000 annually

Bidder Responses:

**Educated Meals (including service items/materials)**

Breakfast: \$1.52

Lunch: \$3.09

**Nutrispa (meal only)**

Breakfast: \$1.10

Lunch: \$2.70

**Contract to be awarded to Educated Meals. (Approx. \$150k annually)**

**ALL Bids maintained on file.**

**Board Action Taken in Open Meeting On: July 17, 2019**

Approved  \_\_\_\_\_

Disapproved \_\_\_\_\_

Tabled \_\_\_\_\_

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**VIII. AGENDA ITEM TITLE:** Approval of annual audit services contract.

**REQUESTED ACTION:** Approve the vendor who will conduct the services as outlined in the contract for the 2018-2019 school year.

**SUMMARY EXPLANATION AND BACKGROUND:** School requires an annual audit which must be prepared by an auditing professional.

**DISCUSSION:** Mr DuMont recommended, with the audit fee remaining flat, that King & Walker CPA's be retained again. Prior competitive bid was both cost effective and efficient. They have become trusted advisors to the school. Discussions had begun already around the June 30, 2019 fiscal year-end audit during May 2019.

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Ms Leonti motioned to approve the recommendation. Ms Hughes seconded and the motion was carried unanimously.

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**FINANCIAL IMPACT:** Approx. \$8,000 annually

**Board Action Taken in Open Meeting On: July 17, 2019**

Approved  \_\_\_\_\_

Disapproved \_\_\_\_\_

Tabled \_\_\_\_\_


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**Additional items for discussion for which no Board action was required:**

- **Other Contracts:**
  1. Comcast: Sole Source (Fiber connection) – Working well, no changes. Evergreen payments monthly.
  2. Airmatic - Heating/Airconditioning – Small overall cost (less than \$5,000 annually); Company is most familiar with ACA A/C units. Given the need for consistent responsive service, ACA continuing given that cost is not increasing.
  3. McGrady Accounting – Accountants continue to monitor the checks and balances table for the auditor selection and the overall costs and reporting for the school. Per Mr. Alessi they are both vigilant and responsive.
- **Staff vacancies**
- **Open House info**
- **Facility Tour**
- **Fundraising goals/program**

**There being no other business, the meeting was adjourned at 5:00PM.**

Signed By: \_\_\_\_\_

  
**(Governing Board Chair)**

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**(Governing Board Member)**

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**(Governing Board Member)**