

Members of the Straight A Fund Governing Board

Dr. Richard Ross	Kristina Phillips-Schwartz
Rep. Gerald Stebelton	Supt. John Scheu
Alex Fischer	Colleen Grady
Sen. Lehner	

Ohio Department of Education Staff in Attendance

Dr. Susan Zelman	P.R. Casey
Brittney Cousins	Immy Singh
Donald Leming	

The second meeting of the Straight A Fund Governing Board was convened on September 25, 2013 at 10:09 am by the Chairperson of the Governing Board, Alex Fischer.

Chairperson Fischer recognized and welcomed Senator Peggy Lehner as the second appointer of Senate President Keith Faber.

Supt. Scheu motioned to accept the minutes from the first meeting of the Straight A Fund Governing Board. Ms. Phillips-Schwartz seconded the motion. There was no debate and the minutes were accepted.

Records Retention schedule

Chief Legal Counsel P.R. Casey explains that a records retention schedule was sent out for review and approval to the members of the Straight A Fund Governing

Board. Vice Chairperson Grady suggested that the Board look into how the department and the board handle records retention. Mr. Casey explained that the retention schedule is modeled after the retention schedule adopted by the State Board of Education. This retention schedule explains what records need to be retained and for how long.

Chairperson Fischer stated he has had an increase in the number of contacts and emails suggesting meetings since the program began. He said he is diverting all inquiries to the Executive Director of the Straight A Fund, Dr. Susan Zelman. Dr. Zelman stated that she is receiving calls and directing individuals to the email inbox created to support answering questions related to the Straight A Fund. Supt. Scheu said he directed all inquiries to the Straight A Fund website. Ms. Phillips-Schwartz asked if the Straight A Fund could create and distribute a Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ) document. Chairperson Fischer requested that Straight A Fund Staff provide the Governing Board with a consistent message that they can give out. Dr. Zelman outlined that she would like to give answers out via the Straight A Fund email inbox and that when Straight A Fund staff notice patterns, they will add those questions and answers to the FAQ posted on the Straight A Fund website. Dr. Zelman also told the Governing Board that every inquiry receives a response.

Mr. Casey told the Governing Board that once the retention is approved by the Governing Board, the Office of Chief Legal Counsel will send a copy of the retention schedule to DAS for approval. Mr. Casey added that regardless of DAS approval, the Governing Board will operate by the retention schedule it adopts.

Vice Chairperson Grady motioned for the approval of the retention schedule. Supt. Scheu seconded the motion. There was no debate. The motion passed unanimously the Governing Board adopted the retention schedule.

Grant Advisors

Dr. Zelman informed the Governing Board that she and the staff identified several additional Grant Advisor nominations per the Governing Board's request to include nominees with business and other private sector experiences.

Chairperson Fischer asked the Governing Board if any Governing Board members would like to remove any individuals from the list of those nominated to be a grant advisor.

Vice Chairperson Grady requested a Point of Information. Chairperson Fischer recognized Vice Chairperson Grady. Vice Chairperson Grady noted that two of the nominated grant advisors both sponsor the same community and expressed her concerns that there may be an appearance issue if both are selected as grant advisors. Chairperson Fischer expressed concerns that two grant advisor nominees were from the same organization.

Sen. Lehner said it may make sense to instate a conflict of interest policy instead of removing any individuals from the list of nominees. Sen. Lehner said Grant Advisors should self-report any conflicts of interest created by their affiliation with grant applicants.

Mr. Casey informed the Governing Board that it approved a conflict of interest policy during its first meeting that covers all entities involved. However, he cautioned that while this policy would protect against conflicts of interest from a legal standpoint,

concerns over whether there is still an appearance of a conflict of interest may still apply.

The board discussed whether there should be a policy to address two people from the same organization. Vice Chairperson Grady motioned to remove Kathryn Upton from the list of nominations for Grant Advisor. Rep. Stebleton seconded the motion.

Dr. Zelman said grant advisors must notify Straight A Fund staff and recuse themselves if they have a conflict of interest with a grant application they review. Chairperson Fischer requested a motion to approve the following names to be Grant Advisors to the Straight A Fund Governing Board:

- Daniel Navin
- Victor Thorne
- Allen Proctor
- Stacia Edwards
- Aaron Churchill
- Kirsten Toth
- Cecilia Render
- David Enzerra
- William Doggett
- Carolyn Jurkowitz; and
- John Mullaney

Vice Chairperson Grady motioned to adopt the list of nominations for Grant Advisors and Dr. Ross seconded the motion. There was no debate. The motion passed unanimously and the Governing Board selected those on the list of nominations as Grant Advisors.

Program update

Dr. Zelman presented the following information regarding the status of the Straight A Fund program.

Straight A Fund Webpage

- The Straight A webpage has been visited more than 16,000 times by nearly 10,000 people in the last 30 days.

Fiscal Sustainability and Program Overview Webinars

- The two webinars had a total audience of 967 people. The overview webinar drew 606 participants, which we believe to be one of the largest audiences ODE has ever had for a webinar. These webinars were then posted on the Straight A Fund website and received the following views.
 - Webinar 1 (9/18 overview) – 290
 - Webinar 2 (9/19 sustainability) – 13 (since 8 pm last night)
 - Note – there were technical problems with the #2 file which required us to upload a replacement – figures for views of the original, pre-8 pm version are not available

Social Media- LinkedIn

- The Straight A LinkedIn Discussion Group has more than 400 members after just two weeks and is home to a robust discussion.
- 5000 people following on LinkedIn.

Intent to Apply

- Straight A Fund Staff has received 353 Intents to Apply.

Scorer Applications

- 163 people have signed up to be scorers
- Fiscal Sustainability – 35
- Programmatic – 153

- Of the above, 25 applied for both
- Ohio applicants – 105 (64%)
- Non-Ohio applicants – 58 (36%)

Total states represented - 23

- OH - 105
- FL, MA - 8
- NY – 7
- PA - 5
- DC, NC, VA - 3
- GA, IA, KY, NJ, NV, SC - 2 each
- CA, CO, IL, KS, LA, MD, MI, MO, WI - 1 each

News Media

Dr. Zelman told the Governing Board there have been news articles on the Straight A fund in all major Ohio newspapers. She told the Governing Board that Dr. Ross' editorial was in the Cleveland Plain Dealer. She also informed the Governing Board that, upon request, Communications will send all newspaper articles to the board in the near future.

Capacity to Handle Program Requirements

Chairperson Fischer asked Dr. Zelman whether she is confident Straight A Fund staff can handle the capacity required for such a large project. Dr. Ross stated the Straight A Fund is one of the most significant programs to come from recent legislation and that the Department of Education will fulfill the resources required to successfully implement the program.

Supt. Scheu thanked Dr. Ross for the invitation to Jeb Bush. Supt. Scheu expressed that discussion about the fund emphasized that Ohio is a leader in awarding the 250 million. He identified New York as the most similar state, although it only allocated 20/25 million to award. Supt. Scheu expressed his excitement for the Straight A Fund.

Dr. Zelman noted the Governing Board should know that New York was disappointed in the quality of the applications they received. She cautioned that the poor quality of grant applications in New York negatively impacted other states, such as New Jersey, who were soliciting money from the legislature to implement similar programs.

Legislative Recommendations

Sen. Lehner said there are many stakeholders around the state that are interested in using the Straight A Fund to implement and support early childhood education programs. Dr. Zelman informed the Governing Board that a legislative change would be required to allow for a Straight A Fund grant to be used on early childhood education. Sen. Lehner asked Straight A Fund Staff to provide direction to see what the parameters would be changes in the enacting legislation.

Dr. Ross expressed concerns about the encumbered and expended dates required for the grant. He noted there may be pressure for districts to spend the money too quickly. He said applicants should spend it right not spend it fast.

Chairperson Fischer hoped grantees will not be pressured to spend money. He noted this may work well in other areas, but not for the Straight A Fund program.

Dr. Ross stated he hopes this will warrant additional conversation by the legislature.

Sen. Lehner mentioned her knowledge of other programmatic concerns with the legislation and noted if the General Assembly can come to a consensus, they may be able to change the legislation soon.

Dr. Zelman agreed to work with Legislative Affairs at the Department of Education to create recommendations to present to Dr. Ross and then to the Governing Board.

Supt. Scheu hoped this issue will be revisited and that it will be reviewed by the General Assembly.

Chairperson Fischer identified the link between early childhood education and the 3rd grade reading guarantee. However, he noted that although it is not the role of the Governing Board to change the legislation, the Governing Board will support any changes. Dr. Ross agreed to work with Rep. Stebelton and Sen. Lehner on any changes and for staff to provide recommendations quickly. Chairperson also hoped we do not get rigid and that legislative changes that occur will be reflected in the process in the second round.

Supt. Scheu noted the changes cannot impact, but may impact next round. Dr. Zelman said the next round will be in early spring for FY 15 grant applications. Vice Chairperson Grady asked whether there will be another round for this fiscal year if there are not enough quality applications. Dr. Zelman responded that it will depend on changes to the legislation and the amount of time remaining this fiscal year when grants are awarded. However, she cautioned it will be very difficult to implement a second round for this fiscal year.

Sen. Lehner asked whether there was automatic carry over in the legislation. Dr. Zelman responded it does not and will need to be added to recommendations.

Close of Meeting

Rep. Stebelton motioned for Adjournment. Supt. Scheu seconded.

Meeting is adjourned.