

**Heartland AEA
Board of Directors Retreat
September 29, 2009
West Des Moines Learning Resource Center**

MINUTES

Board President Ms. Ann Wilson called the Board of Directors retreat to order at 9:27 a.m.

Board Members Present: Dr. Jane Bell, Mr. Bruce Christensen, Dr. Steve Rose, Ms. Marcy Sparks and Ms. Ann Wilson.

Dr. Earl Bridgewater arrived at 11:10 a.m.

Ms. Margaret Borgen arrived at 1:00 p.m.

Absent: Mr. Nels Turnquist

Administrative Staff Present: Ms. Laura Gillon, Ms. Sheila King, Mr. Steve Prall and Ms. Jenny Ugolini.

Additional Guests: Mr. Cal Halliburton, future board member.

Welcome

Ms. Wilson informed board members that Hazard & Young would not be able to present today due to a client emergency. Board members agreed to reschedule their presentation to Thursday, October 1 at 10:00 a.m.

Evaluation and Review of Board Goals

Board members spent the majority of their meeting reviewing progress toward their four goals.

Goal #1: Be responsible employers

– *Increase Heartland's capacity to meet agency initiatives.*

The staff and administrators at Heartland have done a fine job delivering services to school administrators, staff and students throughout AEA 11. However, the challenge remains in how do we accurately measure the impact on student achievement.

- The picture we have is too broad and needs to be narrowed. We need to focus on areas that show staff make a difference and seek objective measurements besides ITBS and DIBELS.
- The data needs to be demonstrated over two-or more years to have impact.
- How do we track the impact staff have in areas such as dropout rates, attendance or suspensions and expulsions.
- Do the partnership directors use different data to asses the effectiveness of their team. Is every partnership director using a different set of data?
- The data we have gives great insight, however we need to know how we're doing it.

– *Build cultural competence.*

Ms. Wilson was a member of the Cultural Competence Committee and presented a list of their 2008-09 accomplishments. Although staff participated in numerous cultural competency activities and were willing to listen and appreciate, there is no data to back the impact it had on student achievement.

- The Agency is still not at the point where it has a staff that represents the diversity of children it serves.
 - Would like to see more emphasis on the atypical family. Poverty and atypical families are more pervasive issues than race. This is a direction we need to look at and make it an expectation.
 - Staff are also participating in activities outside of work.
- *Compensate all employees appropriately.*
 - The process is very involved.
 - There is an overriding event – legislators set allowable growth so the settlement must show a relationship to this amount.
 - Be fair to all staff, not just new or senior staff.
 - Try to make adjustments so we can hire in the difficult to fill jobs.
 - Provide funds so staff can stay current in their fields with cutting-edge education.

– *Improve teaching and learning quotient.*

The reporting system we have for tracking staff development is poor, it's showing we spend 13 percent on staff development. There is a wide variety of staff development that doesn't show up in the figures because of the way the Agency is required to report its finances.

- We're spending just shy of \$7 million on staff development. Shouldn't more of this money be spent on the teachers we serve? It would be interesting to see three years of reporting data in this area. Could this figure also diminish as staff grow in competency or will it always be this way due to new initiatives such as Iowa Core?
- The Agency is offering much better curriculum than in the past.
- There were concerns about how little the Agency profits from Drake University. The Board would like to look at other schools for additional opportunities.
- Should there be consistency in fees across the AEAs?

Goal # 2: Be fiscally responsible and accountable.

- *Make transparent the degree to which allocation of financial resources is aligned with agency goals and initiatives.*
- *Align budget responsibilities with managerial responsibilities.*
- *Demonstrate practical contingency planning.*
- *Develop a financial data system to model effects of management alternatives.*

The Agency's accounting system is very complex due to the regulations tied to the funding streams. Due to these regulations, developing management alternatives may not be an achievable objective.

- A financial system was created that didn't previously exist. It's actually a system that works because of staff input. We also know that we're spending money on things that are important.
- The Agency continues to follow state guidelines but is still able to make sense of the system.
- Board member need to think hard about what new expectations would be for this category.

Goal #3: Continue the transformation

- *Create powerful partnerships with the schools/districts Heartland serves.*
- *Align human and material resources with agency goals and initiatives.*
- *Improve classroom instruction.*

– *Improve student achievement in reading, math, science and social-emotional growth.*

How do you accurately measure the impact on student achievement? When you're a support agency it's next to impossible to make a direct link. Are we asking the right questions, are we looking at results data instead of support data? How do we know what we're doing is right.

- We are not satisfied or pleased with the student achievement trajectory.
- Roles have to be clear to be able to measure performance.
- The Agency exists to improve student achievement.
- We need to find major initiatives that work and follow the data.
- Use the data we have with integrity.
- We need to continue to look at partnerships, as this can be a barrier.
- As we continue to look at district data, is that going to affect partnership and teams. Can that direct our performance data?

Goal #4 Advocate for a unified state AEA system

- *Hold agency leadership accountable for advocating for and contributing to a unified state system.*
- *Join with agency leadership to improve the AEA system's image and funding situation.*
- *Join with agency leadership to determine the partnerships that need to be developed, to set targets, and to pursue those targets.*
- *Hold the Chief Administrator accountable for designing and implementing a plan to build/ strengthen strategic relationships.*

What does a unified AEA look like. We need to develop a common approach to K-12 services in Iowa.

- The state AEA bylaws need to be revisited to make sure the AEA Board is following its guidelines.
- The AEA Communications Committee is working together on how to support administrators, legislative issues and internal communications.

Dr. Bell reviewed the three priorities from 2008-09. Board members were asked to email Dr. Bell their ideas for 2009-10.

2008-09 Priorities:

- 1.) Partnerships
- 2.) Fix financial systems meets priorities
- 3.) Increase internal capacity

Overview of Search Firm Selection Process

The Board of Directors formed a subcommittee to screen search firm proposals. Using input submitted by other board members, they used these characteristics to base their decisions.

- Interest in K-12 education
- Knowledge of AEA system
- Proven track record with intermediate agencies
- Can recruit candidates from across the nation and Iowa
- Understanding of Iowa's culture

Five proposals were received and the subcommittee chose two to interview; Ray & Associates and Hazard, Young, Attea & Associates.

Search Firm Interview – Ray & Associates:

Present: Mr. Gary Ray, President and consultants Steve Triplett and Virginia Moon.

Ray & Associates has been in the business for over 30 years and is based out of Cedar Rapids. They have over 100 consultants across the country. Mr. Triplet has previous experience with Iowa AEAs as he was a previous superintendent in Fairfield, Iowa.

Questions:

1.) *What do you know about our agency and what makes the AEA system unique:*

- The breadths of services the AEAs provide in Iowa are not the same across the country.
- K-12 schools are dependent on AEAs to provide services especially in special education.
- When you compare Iowa to Illinois or Nebraska they do not offer the same amount of services. That makes a difference when you recruit candidates for Iowa versus education agencies in other states. They are not the same as they are here.

2.) *Can you tell us anything about our vision, mission and values?*

- A dynamic leader will be important to you, especially with the implementation of the Iowa Core. In order to accept all those responsibilities you will need a person who believes in the vision of the organization. It's a lot of hard work.
- You will need to get districts and boards to collaborate. You will need to bring everyone together in the interest of kids.
- Focus on partnerships. You have a lot of parents and districts to work with. AEAs are the glue.
- There is a strong focus on student achievement.
- *What type of leader does Heartland need?*
 - Dynamics will be very important as Heartland is the focal point of the state. You need somebody who continues the tradition of making this a top AEA in the state. Somebody with a proven track record of bringing people together and making an impact. A person who can assess the situation and find the strengths and concerns within the organization. They can then determine what continues or what needs improvement or enhanced for districts.
 - We're from Iowa and we know the AEAs. Recruitment will be very important and that is the strength of this firm.
- *How do you employ your associates?*
 - Associates have connections with all the national organization. They get to work with topnotch boards and make connections. We're not just a bunch of retired superintendents.

3.) *Describe the process you use for conducting your searches.*

- Build the profile
- Develop a timeline, promote materials, board updates
- Advertise and recruit
- Candidate screening
- Background investigation – Our background investigation is very thorough to make sure candidates are who they say they are. We check the Internet, personal references, other associates, other associations and organizations that can tell us about that candidate. That way we don't bring you a candidate who has something underneath that wasn't known. You're not going to get a bad reference from a candidate that's why we investigate.
- Written confidential reports – Will develop a matrix that rates the candidates and the Board comes up with the list of those they want to interview. We want the process to be smooth and quick. Will also do onsite visits.
- Present semi-finalists
- Search report to the board, board consensus, finalize interview process

- Candidate interviews
- Determine final interviews
- Select candidate
- Notification of candidates

4.) *How can you customize your services to meet specific client needs?*

- We're an open and objective firm.
- We hate the term "good old boy".
- Every search is different. We know you have your criteria but we'll want to interview and talk to every board member. We'll ask you what your challenges are because you're going to be the one working with your next chief administrator.

5.) *What is the priority level of our search to your firm?*

- As the president of the company, I'm not at every presentation so my presence shows it's a high priority for us. It's an Iowa agency, it's a premier agency and we have to do a good job in Iowa from a national standpoint. I will be on your team.

6.) *Describe your most effective search practices within the educational field that distinguish you from your competitors?*

- Candidates understand that we work for the Board and it will be open and objective.
- Our recruiting is second-to-none. We are recruiting on a continuous basis.
- Our candidate investigations are very thorough.
- We do a lot of handholding with our client to make sure you get the candidate you want.

7.) *What questions do you have?*

- What timeline are you on for starting the process. *We're fairly ready.*
- Have you made any promises to anybody? *No, we don't operate that way and we don't want a firm that operates that way.*

Consent Agenda Purchase Orders:

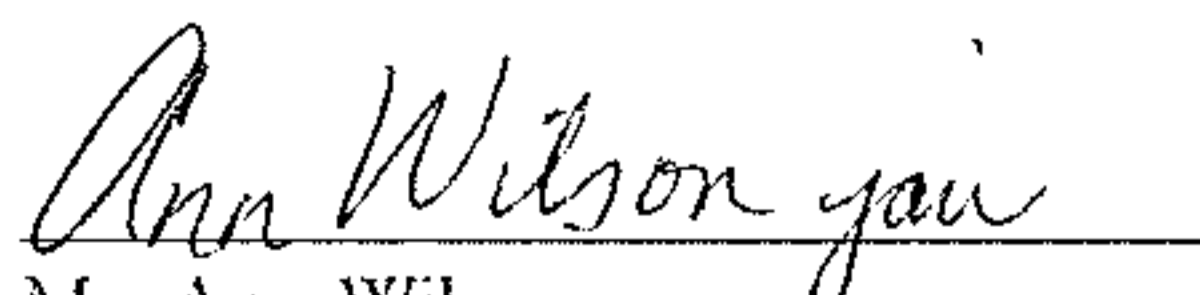
A MOTION was made by Dr. Steve Rose and seconded by Ms. Marcy Sparks to approve the purchase orders for Drake and Hewlett Packard. Motion passed unanimously.

Drake University - \$667,500.00

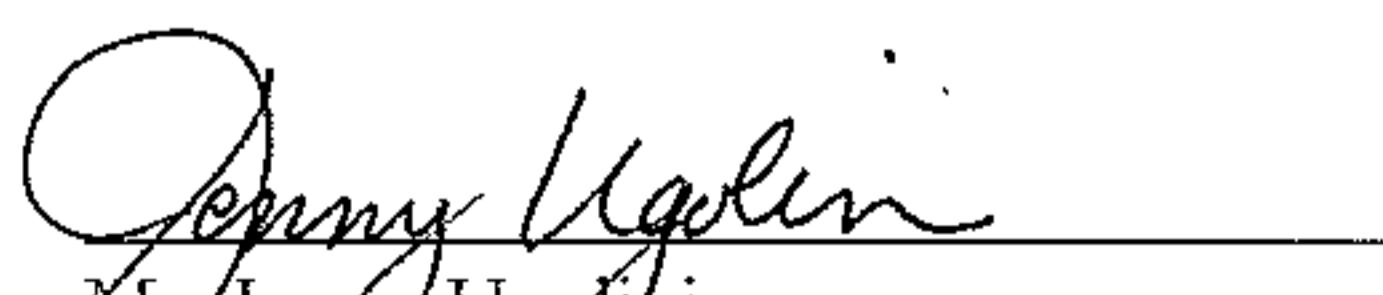
Hewlett Packard/Compaq - \$27,634.15

The meeting adjourned at 2:47 p.m.

Reports and documents and the full text of motions, resolutions or policies considered by the Board at this meeting are on file in the Board Secretary's office, 515/270-9030 ext. 14441, Monday through Friday, 7:30 a.m. – 4:30 p.m.



Ms. Ann Wilson
Board President



Ms. Jenny Ugolini
Board Secretary

Heartland Area Education Agency is dedicated to enriching people's lives. We are partners for learning who provide cutting-edge services for children and youth, families, schools and communities. Heartland AEA is a pro-active and caring organization fueled by a passion for excellence in all we do. We are committed, every day, to helping people grow, develop and learn. Heartland Area Education Agency 11 does not discriminate based on gender, gender identity, race, national/ethnic origin, creed, age, marital status, sexual orientation, or disability.