

**Independence Charter School
Board of Trustees Meeting Minutes
April 9, 2008 7:00 pm**

Board Members Present: Anyabwile Banko'le, Becky Baehr, Sean Hennessy, Nicole Perkins Kilcullen (via phone), Rosina Miller, Pam Prell

Board Members Absent: Ryan Boyer, Eric Cramer, Joana Davis-Diaz, Lisa Nelson-Haynes

Others Present: Jerry Santilli, Santilli and Thomson; Jurate Krokys, Principal/CEO, Ramzy Andrawos, Director of Operations, Megan Steelman, Administrative Assistant; Matthew Drexler, Development Associate; Robin Kohles, Owner's Rep; Michael Farrell, Amy Leigh & Andrea Yanez, teachers; Maren Gaughan, Stephanie Kindt, Conswelia McCourt, Fran Melmed, & Cameron Voss, parents.

I. Call to Order

President Becky Baehr called the meeting to order at 7:15pm.

II. Approval of Minutes

Becky asked if there were any changes to be made to the March Board minutes. The minutes were approved with no changes.

III. CEO Report

Jurate reported that two ICS Odyssey of the Mind groups will be participating in the state competition in Altoona this weekend, and several 7th and 8th grade National History Day groups will participate in the state competition in early May in Millersville. Teacher surveys are being completed and plans for summer curriculum writing are in process. She stated that most ICS teachers are staying for the upcoming school year and that many interviews and demonstration lessons have been scheduled for candidates for vacant positions.

In regard to standardized testing, Jurate reported that PSSA make up tests are being completed and we are now preparing for TerraNovas. Several ICS teachers have received donations of various supplies through the organization Donors Choice. Jurate noted that ICS will not apply for the FLAP grant this time around, since there is not enough time to prepare it given the very short turnaround time. Jurate asked Board members to review and comment on the draft 2008-2009 calendar options in hopes of the Board adopting the 2008-2009 calendar at its May meeting. Becky asked Jurate to circulate comments as soon as possible, so that approval can occur at the next meeting.

IV. PTA Report

Conswelia reported on behalf of PTA Board Liaison Cristina Veal that the recent educational funding presentation was well attended and that planning for the May 3rd Silent Auction is in full swing. At the May PTA meeting, there will be a children's flea market and officer elections. She also noted that the recent fitness kick-off event, which featured an

Olympic rower, went well and that PTA representatives are researching after-school options, including a new one that is very interested in working with ICS. Jurate noted that ICS was recently told the Department of Public Welfare that we cannot submit our after-school application until we have a certificate of occupancy for the new building. Conswelia announced that the PTA will be planning an ICS trip to the Camden Riversharks for sometime in the late summer. Finally, she reported that the food service RFPs are due tomorrow; site visits to the top three bidders will occur on the April 15th, 16th and 17th.

V. **Teachers' Report**

Amy and Andrea reported that teachers are preparing for curriculum writing this summer. They also reported that some teachers are requesting that ICS consider shortening its school day. Pam replied that when ICS first started we had closed at 3, but that teachers actually requested a half hour more, which resulted in our current school hours. Pam clarified that the current School District day is 8:20-3:09 and the ICS day is 8:30-3:30, so the difference in instructional time is a matter of eleven minutes. Becky stated that the teachers are welcomed to research the issue and draft a proposal. Jurate added that we'll be picking names for the Principal Search Panel tomorrow; the teachers developed a rubric for eligibility for the panel, so names of those eligible will now be picked out of a hat. Rosina suggested getting Middle School students involved with the interview process in some way. Andrea and Amy also gave kudos to Teacher Michael Farrell on doing a great job with the ICS newsletter and announced that we are having a "name the newsletter" contest.

VI. **Construction Update**

Robin reported that construction and renovations are still going great; she encouraged everyone to come on one of the upcoming hard hat tours. She stated that the current plan is for the one floor to be "released" at a time, allowing for partial move in if we choose. She also confirmed that it is the contractor who is responsible to get the certificate of occupancy and that we might be able to get that by mid August. Robin stated that the budget is tight, but okay. A contract has been signed to start work on the surfacing of the playground; someone from the Water Department is coming to the first playground meeting. Mrs. Binswanger met with ICS reps yesterday to assist with the library design. Parent Sandra Aidar completed a Kaboom grant on behalf of ICS and they responded two days later, saying they are definitely interested in ICS. ICS will also be selling personalized bricks which will be part of the playground.

Rosina asked whether contractors always spend their whole contingency budget. Robin replied that if the contractor doesn't spend it all, the school keeps the remainder. Sean asked how much we expect to raise through selling the bricks; Stephanie stated that we anticipate selling about 100 bricks at \$100 per brick (\$10,000). Fran clarified that the brick money will be dedicated to unbudgeted items in the new building, since the paving of the playground is already budgeted. Becky asked what is happening with plans for a canopy. Robin stated that we have gotten the

required brackets. Jurate added that we are still fundraising to purchase a canopy, since it is not in the original budget. Becky stated that we have learned that we may not need the stove hood that was approved at last month's meeting. Robin clarified that we've been getting conflicting information about the hood and have now been told that if we're not cooking raw meat, we don't need the hood. The Health Department has advised that we wait until we get the food service proposals and then get more clarification. Becky asked whether we can start to move into the new building before we have the certificate of occupancy. Robin said the move has more to do with union rules and that she will get more clarification about those. Ramzy stated that although the contractor is planning to release a floor at a time, the moving companies we've talked with suggest moving all at once; he stated that the bids range from \$27,000 to \$45,000.

VII. Committee Reports

A. Finance

Rosina moved the resolution regarding February 2008 disbursements; Sean seconded. The motion passed unanimously. She introduced the Lenfest grant resolution, stating the specific purposes for which the funds will be used; Anyabwile seconded. The motion passed unanimously. Rosina reported that some Board members, Jurate and Jerry met with the auditors before tonight's meeting and moved the audit resolution; Sean seconded. Rosina then asked Jerry to walk through the audit before the vote. Jerry explained that as is good accounting practice, ICS contracted with a new audit firm this year. He said that he is pleased with the audit, which he described as very clean. He noted that pages one and two are the most significant and that ICS had a very strong financial year, which is what was planned. The auditors found that ICS's internal financial controls seem to work fine. The only concern noted in the audit is that the 2007 Board financial disclosure forms are missing. ICS had collected 100% of the forms; however, that file has been missing ever since meetings last summer regarding the bond issuance. The auditors recommended that ICS re-create that file. Jerry reminded Board members to please complete that form as soon as possible. He noted that we will need to write off some assets that we won't be taking with us to the new site. Pam asked why ICS isn't considered low risk; Jerry explained that is due to the amount of federal funds ICS receives. The motion passed unanimously.

Rosina then introduced the proposed 2008-2009 budget and noted that the Development Committee will be making recommendations for changes in that section, but since those plans are not complete yet those changes will be brought up for discussion at the first budget revision. Jerry noted that the last two pages talk specifically about staffing changes. The budget includes two months when ICS will be paying debt service and rent (July and August). There is a projected surplus of \$200,000. This budget is based on an anticipated 8% increase for medical benefits and a projected 3% increase from the School District. Sean stated this budget is amazing, considering that the Board had been worried whether we would be able to

handle the cost of the new building. Jerry added that this will be the leanest year. Jurate stated there will also be some tech improvements.

Becky asked when we expect to get actual figures for our medical benefits; Jerry stated we'll probably get those in early June and that we'll need to decide how to proceed in regard to the School District's summer contract negotiations. Sean asked whether summer school being zeroed out applies to this year or next. Jurate clarified it applies to this year, since anyone she's talked to who has gone through a move has advised not to try to do summer since, since everything is packed up, etc. She added that we are not mandated to offer summer school and that we have already identified students who are eligible for extended school year (ESY) services. Pam suggested that we ask Joana about Christopher Columbus School's summer program to find out whether parent might use that as a resource. Rosina thanked everyone who worked so hard on this budget and especially to Jerry for being such a great financial manager. Rosina moved the budget resolution; Sean seconded. Becky asked when we decide where the surplus goes. Jerry stated that any surplus amount over the agreed balance amount would go to unreserved funds and that at some point the Board would want to make some one-time purchase decisions for which it would be used. Jerry clarified that the reserve for contingency is for use in a situation such as if the School District is ever late with a monthly payment. The motion passed unanimously.

B. Development

Fran reported that we will be contracting with Fairmount Ventures to write grants. Becky asked how that will work with our contract. Fran stated that it will cost more and that it will be an amendment to our contract. She stated that Jerry has already been consulted and figured out from where the money will come. The first round of hard hat tours at the new site will start tomorrow; Fran thanked Stephanie and her committee for their hard work on this project. Fran also reminded the Board that getting people to buy bricks is a great way to work toward each Board members Give-Get commitment. Matt clarified that the April 24th tour is for VIPs and that we would like to have as many Board members there as possible.

Fran introduced parent Maren Gaughan, who gave a presentation on the rationale for ICS creating a Worlds of Opportunity fundraising board; Maren distributed a handout. Maren explained that development work takes up at least 50% of a CEO's time and that our plan is to get parents to make initial connections on which the CEO and other key people will follow-through. Rosina suggested the ICS could also tap into the pool of grandparents. Jurate also clarified that our long-term hope is to have a solid development plan so that we won't have to be constantly holding fundraisers for all the extra activities that make ICS so special. Sean asked whether David Webber has reviewed this plan from the perspective of current Worlds board members; Maren said that he has. Pam asked whether ICS depends too heavily on volunteers for development work. Maren replied that is the case and that volunteers don't usually have the

capacity and the time for development work. Jurate clarified that the amended Development budget will include a Development Officer. Becky asked whether this new timeline is in line with the development plan we adopted. Fran replied that we are behind, since that plan's goal was to have twelve members on the fundraising board by the end of June 2008. Becky thanked Maren for her presentation and urged the committee to move forward with the plan.

C. Community Relations

Becky reported that since Joana was not able to attend the meeting and since no one from this committee is available to speak about the proposed resolution, it was tabled.

D. Human Resources

Sean moved the resolution regarding changes to the teachers' pay scale; Pam seconded. Sean started to discuss the proposed changes to the policy, but then asked to table the resolution until the May meeting in order to review it further. Pam asked whether there is a separate review process for coordinator positions. Jurate stated there is a job description for each of those positions and that the payment is made in two parts after reviewing the work completed. Jurate agreed to develop a rubric for this review process.

E. Policy

Nicole reported that the committee has been discussing with what types of policies this committee should be concerned; the consensus was that this committee should not be creating policy. Instead, the committee feels the role of this committee should be to make sure there is a process in place for reviewing policy issues. Nicole moved the resolution regarding the mission of the policy committee; Sean seconded. Becky agreed to circulate the diagram, which didn't print correctly for tonight's packet, done by parent committee member Stephanie Kindt via e-mail. The motion passed unanimously. Nicole also reported that the committee has received a lot of feedback about the staff sick leave policy and will probably be bringing a resolution to next month's meeting.

F. Curriculum

Pam thanked parent Cameron Voss for writing this month's report. Pam reported that although the final decision was made for ICS not to apply for the FLAP grant this time around, the discussion was very fruitful since it led to discussion about language and whether we want to continue just one language or whether we want to add more. Pam stated that research shows the Middle School is a great time to explore languages. The committee talked about these introductions to other languages being a type of advanced country studies. The committee recommends that 7th graders study Arabic and that ICS may want to pursue a possible connection between country studies and language study, but that will take a year or two to review. Rosina asked if this proposal is the FLEX model, one of three different type of language curricula (the other two being FLES and

Immersion). Pam said the committee will need to look into that. She said that Kristen Long and Rona Buchalter are working on the specifics.

Pam also reported that parent Maribel Beas came to talk about the library. Pam also stated that since there is no longer an Immersion Curriculum Specialist, the Immersion staff have started to make recommendations as to what is needed to support the Immersion program. Pam stated that the committee will not be presenting a Gifted Support model resolution and that the Responsive Classroom resolution will be tabled until a presentation can be provided. Becky asked how much of the Middle School Task Force recommendations were able to be included in the 2008-2009 budget. Pam stated that just about all the recommendations have been included. Jurate added that a Middle States representative is coming to meet with her and some staff on April 23rd. Pam clarified that Developmental Design is the Middle School version of Responsive Classroom for K-4th.

G. Executive

Becky reminded everyone to re-submit a 2007 financial interest form, as requested during the Finance report and to make sure to hand in your 2008 form also. She also stated that ICS wants to formally recognize the law firm of Cozen O'Connor, which donated close to \$50,00 in legal services over the last year. Becky moved the motion concerning this; Sean seconded. The motion passed unanimously. Becky announced that a letter will be sent to Cozen O'Connor to notify them of this resolution.

VIII. Public Comment Period

Becky noted that the Board received written comments, circulated earlier today and in tonight's packets, from parents Timothy and Susan Gobreski, regarding ICS's communication of potential safety-related incidents to parents. Sean noted that we do not have a specific policy about this, and that it would be very difficult to write a policy that would cover every type of thing; therefore, it seems these situations are up to the discretion of the CEO. Jurate stated that we always try to balance student privacy and safety. Sending out a letter in most of these cases would be a matter of saying, "You don't have anything to worry about" and would not be able to divulge specifics. Pam stated that we cannot be held accountable for every thing kids tell their parents. Becky suggested that we may need a communication plan, as opposed to a policy. Pam asked whether we should get a consultant to work with Jurate on this. Becky stated that she and Fran Melmed have had some conversations about this type of plan. Jurate stated that there are a lot of workshops about these types of things, but they tend to be very general. Nicole suggested that this is a perfect example of something for the Policy Committee to look at. Rosina stated she feels the school may need a communications plan, too. Anyabwile stated that he agrees that we shouldn't make a policy. Pam reminded everyone that nothing we ever do will satisfy every parent. Anyabwile stated that in a communication plan, we'd have to spell out that a lot will be up to CEO discretion. Nicole suggested that a problem may be in how

parents can informally find out information. Becky recommended that parents of witnesses to these events be contacted.

Parent Cameron Voss asked if April 15th is still the school's target date for announcing when school will start for 2008-2009. Jurate replied that is still the plan; Becky noted that there is always going to be an outside chance that we'll need to change the start date if something unforeseen occurs.

VIII. Old Business

There was no old business

IX. New Business

There was no new business.

X. Adjournment

Pam moved for adjournment; Anyabwile seconded. The meeting was adjourned at 9:36p.m.

Handouts circulated at this meeting:

Agenda

Minutes from the March 2008 meeting

CEO report

Finance Committee minutes

February Financials

Budget Assumptions for 2009

Proposed Budget for 2008-2009

Construction Report & Financial Summary

Curriculum Committee minutes

Development Committee Report & Revenue Report

Worlds of Opportunity Development Board informational sheets

Human Resources Committee minutes

Community Relations Committee report

Policy Committee Minutes

Independence Charter School

April 9, 2008

Resolutions

ADOPTED

February Disbursements

Be it resolved that the Independence Charter School Board of Trustees hereby approves disbursements from February 2008 in the amount of \$1,652,123.54 as presented to the Board.

Lenfest Grant

Be it resolved that the BOT of ICS accept the Lenfest Grant of \$ 100,000 awarded to ICS for the purposes of technology enhancement.

Be it further resolved that the grant monies will be utilized to provide technology support for the mobile computer lab, to increase student access to more computers in classrooms and the computer lab and for the purpose of upgrading servers linking those computers.

2006-2007 Audit

Be it resolved that the Board of Trustees of Independence Charter School hereby accepts the audit report for the fiscal year ended June 30, 2007 and that the CEO and Controller are directed to file the report with the Commonwealth and the School District of Philadelphia.

2008-2009 Budget

Be it resolved that the Independence Charter School Board of Trustees hereby adopts the attached budget for the 2008-09 school year.

Cozen O'Connor Contributions

Be it resolved that the BOT of ICS recognizes the significant contributions of pro bono legal services donated by Cozen O'Connor in the 2007-2008 school year.

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**Resolutions
DEFEATED**

None

**Resolutions
TABLED**

Community Relations Committee Mission

Be it resolved that the Independence Charter School Board of Trustees hereby designates its Community Relations Committee as a standing committee, that the mission of the Community Relations Committee shall be as follows:

Operating in a complimentary fashion to the Mission of ICS we will:

- Serve as Ambassadors of Goodwill for our school (internally and externally)
- Help to develop and maintain relationships/partnerships with local businesses, government officials, local politicians, SRC, etc
- Serve as central repository for CR related issues

- Serve as central repository for Board Nominees

Teacher and Curriculum Specialist Pay Policy

Be it resolved that the ICS board of trustees hereby approves the attached pay scale for teachers and curriculum specialists, beginning with the 2008-09 school year.

Independence Charter School
Teacher and Curriculum Specialist Pay Policy
To take effect beginning with the 2008-2009 School Year

This policy shall be used to calculate the annual salary for full-time teachers and curriculum specialists. This policy does not apply to teaching assistants, support staff, or other administrative staff. Salaries for part-time teachers shall be pro-rated based on the number of classroom teaching hours worked.

Base Pay: **\$38,000***

Additional factors:

- **Prior Experience as a K to 12 Teacher or Curriculum Specialist:** **\$750/**
year (\$9000 maximum)

This is awarded per full year of prior experience as a K-12 teacher or curriculum specialist, and is capped at twelve years. This increment is awarded only for years in which a satisfactory or better evaluation is received.

- **Prior Experience at ICS**
 Compensation for prior experience as a teacher or curriculum specialist at ICS shall be further increased as follows: After completion of three full years as a teacher or curriculum specialist at ICS:
\$1,500 for individuals with PA Teacher Certification
\$500 for individuals without PA Teacher Certification

After completion of six full years as a teacher or curriculum specialist:
\$1,000 for individuals with PA Teacher Certification
\$500 for individuals without PA Teacher Certification

- **Cost Of Living Increase:** **\$750/year**
 Awarded annually after the first full school year of employment as a teacher or curriculum specialist at ICS. This increase shall not be applied to school years prior to the 2007-08 school year.

For the purposes of determining Prior Experience as a K to 12 Teacher or Curriculum Specialist, Prior Experience at ICS, and Cost of Living Increase, an individual who takes an FMLA-qualified leave of 12 weeks or less shall be considered to have a full year. Individuals who take a leave longer than 12 weeks shall receive an amount under these sections that are pro-rated based on the length of the leave in excess of 12 weeks.

- **Masters Degree and Masters + 30 hours coursework:**

\$1,500 each (\$3000 maximum)

Awarded with proper documentation, added to annual salary calculation and pro-rated. Eligibility for Master's Degree + 30 credits is subject to approval of the CEO. If a degree is awarded or coursework completed at any time other than before the start of the school year, the total amount of \$1,500 will be pro-rated accordingly.

• **PA Special Education Certification:**

\$1,500

Awarded to Special Education teachers who have Pennsylvania certification in Special Education.

• **Positions which require fluency in the Spanish Language**

\$2,000

For individuals fluent in Spanish who are working as a primary teacher or curriculum specialist in the Spanish Immersion program or as a Spanish FLES teacher.

• **Positions that require PA Middle School Certification:**

\$750

For individuals with PA Middle School Teaching Certification in the subject area being taught for positions requiring such certification. Limited to one certification.

• **Curriculum Specialist Certification**

\$750

Awarded for each Pennsylvania Teaching Certification, other than Pennsylvania Instructional 2, that is relevant to the job of the curriculum specialist, as determined by the CEO. This applies to curriculum specialists only.

• **Additional Work Experience**

In limited circumstances, other work experience relevant to the ICS mission, as determined by the CEO, will be compensated as listed below.

Teaching intern experience for a full year. Maximum of two years .

\$300 (\$600 maximum)

At least six months spent working in a country other than one's native country and other than the United States in a service or educational capacity, for which compensation is not otherwise granted under this policy. Examples include Peace Corps work and similar service experiences.

\$300

Relevant educational management experience obtained post bachelors degree.

\$200

to \$400.

• The annual salary amount for curriculum specialists generated under this policy shall be increased by 20% in recognition that the curriculum specialist position is a twelve month position, while teacher positions are ten month positions. Further, a 5% increment shall be added to the salary in recognition of the administrative and supervisory nature of the curriculum specialist position. Thus, the annual salary of curriculum specialists shall be 1.25 times the amount otherwise calculated for teachers.

Additional Financial Benefits

- **Program Coordinators:** **\$1,000 to \$2500**

This amount will be given to teachers who are assigned additional program coordination responsibilities, beyond regular classroom duties. These positions and amounts shall be designated by the BOT annually. The CEO shall prepare a list of Coordinator positions for the school year, subject to approval by the BOT. This increment is not available for curriculum specialists.

- **Tuition Reimbursement:** Individuals who have completed one year of teaching at ICS shall be eligible to up to \$1,200 per year tuition reimbursement for classes reasonably related to education, as determined by the CEO. Reimbursement is based on two courses costing a maximum of \$600 each. Individuals are required to earn a grade of an A or a B (or an equivalent) in order to qualify for the reimbursement. First year employees may be eligible for a loan, to be paid back by payroll deduction, for the purposes of tuition. To be eligible for tuition reimbursement, the CEO must approve the course in advance, and the teacher must document payment for the course and the grade achieved. (See ICS Policy Manual for more details on the Tuition Reimbursement Program at ICS.)

- **Professional Development:** Employees may be reimbursed for up to two hundred dollars (**\$200**) to attend professional development workshops that are pre-approved by the CEO during the school year. In addition, ICS pays teachers and curriculum specialists an amount of **\$100** per day for mandatory professional development days prior to the start of the school year. See the ICS Policy Manual for specific information about these benefits.

- **Classroom Supplies:** ICS provides generous allowances for classroom supplies.

- Assumes that the teacher holds Pennsylvania Instructional 1 Certification or other Pennsylvania Certification appropriate for the grade level and subject matter required for the position. For the purposes of this policy, Emergency Certificates do not count. If the teacher does not possess an appropriate Pennsylvania Certification, the base pay shall be \$36,000.

Policy Committee Mission

Be it resolved that the Independence Charter School Board of Trustees hereby adopts the mission and membership statement of its Policy Committee

ICS Policy Committee Mission and Membership

Mission

The mission of the Policy Committee is to confirm that the process for creating and implementing ICS school wide policies by the Board of Trustees, ICS Staff and CEO is handled swiftly, consistently and fairly by the appropriate parties and to provide assistance and guidance to such parties in this area. To accomplish this, the Policy Committee will ensure that existing school wide policies and their implementation are periodically reviewed and provide a forum and process for determining whether new policies should be created for issues that are brought to the Policy Committee's attention by the BOT, staff or CEO.

Membership

Membership in the Policy Committee is governed by the guidelines established by the Board of Trustees: at least two active Board members, at least one staff member and at least one parent/community member.

Responsive Classroom

Be it resolved that the ICS BOT supports the recommendation of the ICS Middle School Task Force to review and revise the current School Climate and Student Behavioral Support model utilizing such benchmark programs as the Responsive Model and other research based models for the coming 2008-2009 school year.