

**Independence Charter School
Board of Trustees Meeting Minutes
April 15, 2009 7:00 pm**

Board Members Present: Anyabwile Banko'le, Rona Buchalter, Nicole Perkins Kilcullen Rosina Miller, Kristin Nocco, Pam Prell, Pedro Rodriguez

Board Members Absent: Becky Baehr, Eric Cramer

Others Present: Jurate Krokys, CEO; Ramzy Andrawos, Director of Operations; Stephanie Bungard, Principal; Megan Steelman, Administrative Assistant; Jenny Hoedeman-Eiteljorg, Development Director; Michael Farrell, Amy Leigh (Teacher Rep for this meeting) & Andrea Yanez, teachers; Mike Thomson, Santilli & Thomson; Cristina Vea, PTA Liaison; Robin Kohles, Owner's Rep (& Parent)

I. Call to Order

Co-President Nicole called the meeting to order at 7:14pm.

II. Approval of Minutes

The March minutes were approved unanimously.

III. CEO Report

Jurate explained how the CEO report will now be given, partly by her and partly by the Principal, and explained the revised format of the report. Jurate apologized that there are some typos in the report. Stephanie reported that 15 Middle School students will be participating in the statewide National History Day competition in May. She also gave an update regarding the lower school's review of the current literacy program. Kristen Long and Stephanie will be going to "Model Schools" to get more information. We're very excited about 2009-2010 recruiting. All current staff have returned their "Intent to Return" letters, regarding whether or not they would like to return next year if offered a contract; at this point, only two teachers are undecided about their plans.

Jurate reported that she was bursting at the last meeting because she was not allowed to announce the Goldman Sachs award decision at that time; she reported that this award seemed to be a validation of the model that ICS has developed. She pointed out that the demographic projection for next year's kindergarten class seems to show that ICS has a true lottery system---more people are applying, etc. Pam also pointed out that part of it could be also be our starting the village system, changing the name, etc.

Jurate clarified that due to the Phillies Parade and 3 snow days, the 7th & 8th graders need to make up some hours. Administrative staff is working on ways to make up these hours. She asked the Board for their thoughts. Pam asked if the after school club time counts; Jurate and Stephanie agreed those are under consideration. Jerry said that you are allowed to add days for 8th graders after their graduation date; the total for MS has to be 180 days or 990 hours. Kristin asked if the dances can be considered a movement/arts activity. It would need to be a mandatory activity. Jurate asked for approval to move forward to plan for this, consult with our legal counsel, and then notify the Board. Anyabwile said it seems the most important thing is to make a decision in a timely manner. Nicole stated that she'd want to make sure that we're offering worthwhile activities and that the ideas in the CEO report sound good. Pam recommended doing as much as possible after school. Jurate reviewed the draft calendar. We would like to miss the second Professional Development Day to right after New Year's in order

for it to be more productive. Stephanie publicly acknowledged the teachers and a classroom assistant who presented at the April Professional Development Day. Rona asked why this seems to be the best received PD Day. Stephanie and Amy said it seems to be the element of choice and the collegiality. Rona asked whether we're thinking of using that model for all the PD Days. Stephanie said it is very labor intensive, but it will be considered.

IV. PTA Report

Cristina reminded everyone that the Silent Auction is on May 2nd and asked if the Board will be able to donate a basket this year. Rosina explained that in the past the Board has made a wine basket. The Board agreed to do that; Pam will coordinate it. If anyone has contacts for gift certificates; those are needed also. The Scholastic Book Fair will be held next week. There will be another Northeast parent gathering next month. We made a \$3,000 profit from Corbi sales, which will go toward the 8th grade trip this year.

V. Teachers' Report

Amy reported that the Middle School dances are coming up soon. Several teacher and parent volunteers are coordinating it. Stephanie noted that there were mistakes on the dance permission slips; jeans WILL be allowed and 5th & 6th graders will not be allowed to bring guests. Amy reported that the Teacher Reps are collating the results from their teacher survey. The staff liked the PD Day, including the benefits presentation and turn-around training. The Middle School Parent Night will be held next week for parents of students who are in the lower school. Rona suggested that the name be changed, so that lower school parents realize it's for them; Stephanie and Amy agreed to do that in the rest of the mailings.

VI. Development Report

Jenny, the ICS Development Assistant, reported on behalf of Leonora. Jenny reported on recent awards and grants CCRA Preservation Award. The wine tasting will be held on June 19th; Board members will receive invitations to distribute. Jurate and Jenny emphasized that this event is targeted for potential ICS friends and supporters. The only budget item that is changed on the budget page is that we've gotten an additional \$1,000 donation. Jenny noted that ICS has recently received several grants, including one for \$10,000 from the Caroline Buck Foundation. Rona asked whether the FLAP grant has been posted yet; Jurate said it has not. Jurate reported that she has submitted the Critical Languages grant application.

VII. Construction Update

Robin reported that the locker installation and window grates were completed over the Spring Break. She reported that we are starting to get information about the possibility of converting the Royal Theater into a gym for ICS. There will also be a staff survey regarding any problems or suggestions about our current building. Rosina asked whether Robin is currently working as our official Owner's Rep or just as a generous parent. She said currently a generous parent, but that once the second phase of the playground starts, she'll need to go back to being Owner's Rep. Kristin clarified that the Royal Theater is currently owned by Universal, which has a charter school and several other entities. Rona said we also have to determine whether we have the funds and people power for that project. Robin was thanked for all her continued hard work.

VIII. Committee Reports

A. Finance

Rosina reported that we won't be voting on our 2009-2010 budget yet, because we need to wait until we get final numbers on the federal stimulus package. Jerry reported that our cash flow is strong and there are very few changes on the balance sheet. The line 3 variance will disappear by the end of the school year. The other variances are relatively small. He drew attention to page 6 "Operations for Maintenance" line. We are currently running a considerable excess funds, but there are still several months of the school year left. We need to have a reserve to have funds available for paying 10-month staff over the summer (since their salaries are spread over 12 months). Rosina moved the disbursements motion; Pam seconded. Pam asked if Bartlett Tree Service is due from Worlds because it was connected with construction; Jerry said that's true. Kristin asked what will happen if the 8th grade doesn't raise enough money for the 8th grade trip. Nicole asked that that be held until later. The motion passed unanimously. Rosina asked why Professional Development is over budget; Jerry said teacher conferences, tuition reimbursement, etc. get charged to PD and some to other line items. Rona asked why there is still an expense for WINGS; Jerry said that was due to late bills from the last fiscal year. Rona asked if there's enough to cover that; Jerry said there is, because the Coordinator's position is now split between General Operating and Food Services. Jerry said he owes us an updated Food Services report.

Jerry reviewed the 2008-2009 budget adjustment sheet. Due to the economy, interest income is down; IDEA (federal special education money) funds are down this year due to a formula change. There are some changes made to make more realistic projections for fundraising projections. Rosina asked why these are based on the fund balance, instead of the regular budget. Jerry said we don't yet have the final 2007-2008 audit, which is why he hasn't offered a revised budget yet. Debt service is based on several factors; we had decided what we'd invest in. The rent is less than we anticipated. Pedro asked if made any changes with PNC (due to their high charges); Jerry said he's looked around, but hasn't found a better rate yet. For next year, we can project this lower amount; Jerry confirmed that with the Bank of NY (our trustee). Greg McKenna gave ICS very good advice. Pedro asked when stimulus funds will be available; Jerry said they probably won't be available for use until July 1st. Jurate clarified that the reason we're not able to pass a budget is because once you pass a budget, you can't make changes for 90 days, which would mean we couldn't make changes when we need to use the stimulus money. Jerry stated the challenge to is ensure you don't use stimulus money for something that you couldn't continue if/when that funding ends. Jerry said we should have the final numbers by next week. Pam suggested that we look at our "wish list" that we developed when moving to this building (i.e., more energy efficient). Rosina moved the resolution regarding the budget adjustments; Pam seconded. The motion passed unanimously. Rosina moved the Goldman Sachs Award; Pam seconded. The motion passed unanimously. Rosina moved a new motion to approved the Carolyn Buck award for \$10,000; Anyabwile seconded. The motion passed unanimously. Rona asked that the Board be given an update next week regarding the stimulus money.

Rosina asked Jurate to review the staff contract resolution. Jurate read the proposed resolution. Rosina noted that these are the same figures that the Board looked at last month in the budget assumptions. Rosina moved the motion. Pedro asked what the average teacher salary is; Jerry said it is about \$45,000. Rona asked if we need to build in any contingencies; Jerry said we do not at this time. Rona seconded. The motion passed unanimously. Rosina explained the resolution about Santilli & Thomson, but asked whether the contract needs to first be reviewed by our legal counsel. Jerry stated this is the same contract, except the

amount has been changed. Rosina suggested that we get legal review first and vote next month. That was agreed. Jerry will forward the contract to Terry.

B. Board Development

There was no report. **Pedro** will be forwarding a few names to the Board for consideration before having any formal conversations with them. Pam asked if these names will be considered by the whole Board or just the Board Development Committee; Pedro said at this point it would just be the committee. Nicole said she feels the approach we've taken for the Parent Board seat was great and that we should do a similar thing for the other Board seats, since parents can also run for them. Pam recommended that the candidates attend the May Board meeting. Pam and Kristin suggested that they also be invited to the pre-meeting session on how to read financial statements.

C. Curriculum

Rona reported that the committee has discussed the FLAP grant and how we'd like the Middle School additional languages offered---possibly letting students take more sessions. There may be some benefits for them staying with one of the languages for two years to give more of an opportunity for them to be able to move on with that in high school. The committee also discussed how we want to handle the teaching of literacy in the lower grades. We want to particularly look at reading comprehension. Children's Literacy Initiative (CLI) is a program that many ICS teachers are enthusiastic; it teaches techniques and styles, as opposed to curriculum materials. The committee also discussed the Gifted Support program; the plan is to stay with last year's plan, which is to offer an array of after school enrichment opportunities that would be offered to all students. It would include some limited in-school pull outs on a case-by-case basis. Kristin asked how the pull out option work. Rona said they'd come to the Principal and the determination is based on an evaluation. Stephanie noted that it would not be based on whether or not the child is available to attend after school. Pam added that an IEP can be fulfilled by offering enrichment in the classroom. Kristin said it doesn't seem to be clear to parents. Nicole summarized that communication has been a problem. Rona clarified that what didn't happen was that there wasn't supposed to be a separate program just for students in the Gifted Support program. Stephanie clarified that we need to better communicate that we want to differentiate for all students. Pam clarified that a lot depends on the make up of the class. If 20 out of 24 kids are designated as gifted, then it makes no sense to pull out those children for those kids for one hour. Anyabwile stated that he sat in on the meeting for a short time and that there were five or six white females and they've decided on Chinese and Swahili as our two new Middle School languages; he noted that seems to be a great thing.

E. Human Resources

Becky was not in attendance; the committee report was circulated.

IX. Public Comment Period

No one signed up for the Public Comment Period.

X. Old Business

Pam reported feedback is needed from Board committees regarding updating the Strategic Plan; she noted that the Curriculum Committee didn't do that at the last meeting, but will do that next month. Pam asked Pedro to review it in terms of the Board Development Committee. Pam pointed out that Leonora structures the Development Report around the Strategic Plan.

Jurate gave a brief presentation about the Middle States Accreditation process. She handed out information, which outlines each year of the process. Rona has volunteered to be on the steering committee; that committee will comprise a diverse group and should not include experts; the steering committee's job is to keep everyone on tract. Those with specific expertise should be on one of the other committees. Pam suggested that once all committee have reported back on where we are based on our strategic plan, then we should pass a resolution regarding extending the current plan until Middle States Accreditation. Rosina asked if this might be too much to be doing while going through charter school renewal. Pam stated she feels they are two different things and that the renewal process is a staff issue and there should be less Board involvement. Rosina stated that staff will also be involved a lot with Middle States also. Jurate said she feels it's doable. Jurate said that the School District is not yet sure what their plans are regarding having other schools take over some of the School District process. Pedro suggested that we be sure to be on the offensive regarding renewal. Pam asked whether the School District would want to not approve a successful, high-performing schools; Jurate said that doesn't seem to be a problem. Rosina asked whether they've announced the decisions from the schools that went through the renewal process in September 2008; Jurate said that information is not yet available. Jurate said the challenge will be to find diverse, committed volunteers to go through the accreditation process. Rona suggested that Board members look through and see where they can participate. It was clarified that schools can take longer for the process. Pam stated we don't want this to be a pro forma process, but to be a reflective, personal growth process for all involved. Pam said the Curriculum Committee can present a resolution about this next month. Nicole asked all members to review this information before the May meeting.

Pam announced that Teacher Mike Farrell will be presenting with Need in Deed at the PA Charter School conference regarding service learning. Jurate said she has registered several Board members for the Sunday section of the conference, when board workshops are scheduled.

XI. New Business

There was no new business.

XII. Adjournment

Pedro moved to adjourn; Anyabwile seconded. The meeting was adjourned at 9:22p.m.

Handouts circulated at this meeting:

Agenda
Minutes from the March 2009 meeting
CEO report
Goldman Sachs Award Letter
Teachers' Report
PTA Report
Construction Update
February financials
2008-2009 Budget Adjustment Sheet
Development Report
Curriculum Committee Minutes
Human Resources Committee Minutes
Middle States Accreditation Information

Independence Charter School

April 15, 2009

Resolutions

ADOPTED

1. February Disbursements

Be it resolved that the Independence Charter School Board of Trustees hereby approve disbursements from the month of February 2009 in the amount of \$114,955.72 as presented to the Board.

2. Goldman Sachs Award

Be it resolved that the Board of Trustees of Independence Charter School acknowledge and approve the acceptance of the Goldman Sachs award for excellence in international education in the amount of \$ 25,000.

3. 2008-2009 Budget Adjustments

Be it resolved that the Board of Trustees of Independence Charter School hereby approves the 2008-2009 budget adjustments as presented to the Board.

4. 2009-2010 Staff Contracts

Whereas Independence Charter School plans to delay adoption of its consolidated school budget until the June Board meeting so that the federal stimulus funds may be included in that adoption.

Be It Resolved that the Board of Trustees authorizes the CEO to offer contracts to instructional and support staff under the parameters of the preliminary budget approved by the Finance Committee and detailed below:

- 49.5 teachers not to exceed a cost of \$2,261,518
- 29 part time classroom assistants not to exceed a cost of \$320,243
- 4.5 special education teachers not to exceed a cost of \$212,400
- 5 instructional support staff not to exceed a cost of \$284,085
- 27 (full & part time) administrative and non instructional support staff not to exceed a cost of \$960,310

5. Caroline Buck Award

Be it resolved that the Board of Trustees of Independence Charter School acknowledge and approve the acceptance of the Caroline Buck award in the amount of \$ 10,000.

**Resolutions
DEFEATED
None**

**Resolutions
TABLED**

Santilli & Thomson Contract

Be it resolved that inasmuch as the Board of Trustees of Independence Charter School has maintained a professional education business services agreement with Santilli and Thomson and inasmuch as the Board of Trustees of Independence Charter School wishes to continue this business agreement at the conclusion of the current agreement, therefore be it resolved that the Board of Trustees of Independence Charter School sign a three year contract extending business services from July 1, 2009 to June 2012 for the sum not to exceed the following:

Year 1: \$ 65,000 Year 2: \$ 66,950 Year 3: \$ 68,958