

**Independence Charter School
Board of Trustees Meeting Minutes
December 10, 2008 7:00 pm**

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

Board Members Absent: Eric Cramer, Pam Prell

Others Present: Robin Kohles, Owner's Rep; Jurate Krokys, CEO; Stephanie Bungard, Principal; Ramzy Andrawos, Director of Operations; Megan Steelman, Administrative Assistant; Leonora Cravotta, Development Director; Scott Craig, Martha Curren-Preis, Michael Farrell, Amy Leigh, Kelly Nelms, Noga Newberg & Andrea Yanez, teachers; Jerry Santilli, Santilli & Thomson; Cristina Vea, PTA Liaison; Ernst Hohmann, parent.

I. Call to Order

Co-President Nicole Perkins Kilcullen called the meeting to order at 7:07pm.

II. Approval of Minutes

Pedro moved to accept the November minutes; Rosina seconded. The minutes were approved without change. Nicole reminded everyone to recognize each other when speaking and to refrain from sidebars. She also reminded everyone that all reports need to be circulated and read prior to the monthly Board meetings and that we will not go through reports during the meetings unless there are specific questions.

III. CEO Report

Jurate reported that ICS has been accepted as one of 145 schools in the initial review for the EPIC teacher incentive grant; the final decision on schools will be made by March. EPIC is a research-based teacher incentive program which is funded by federal TIF money. EPIC rewards all current and/or prior teachers for "value-added growth." There were some costs involved to gather the required data; those costs were discussed with the Finance Committee. This is the second year of a four-year program. A new aspect of EPIC is that if you're chosen as a "gold" school, there would be the possibility of specific teachers being named "spotlight" teachers.

Jurate reported that today was the 60th anniversary of Human Rights Day and ICS had its first Human Rights Program with several special guests. She stated that many teachers have been talking about wanting to make this an annual event. The impetus was several teachers approached ICS administration regarding plans to call out in support of gay and lesbian staff. Jurate noted that it was great that staff felt comfortable talking with administration in this regard.

Nicole asked if there were any questions regarding the CEO report. Rona asked whether EPIC's decision will be based on data from existing test scores or future test scores. Jurate stated that it's based on value-added performance, which required that we submit test scores from the past several years. Kristin asked what the status is of the community's request to use the playground during non-school time. Jurate stated that is an insurance issue and that we should have a definite answer by the January

Board meeting. Jurate asked Stephanie to give an update on the meal program. Stephanie reported that according to Linton, the first month we were under budget, which generally doesn't happen with a new program. She noted that ICS has had some preliminary discussions with Linton regarding possible changes. One decision that was made is that ICS will handle all the money. We will ask Jerry to let us know when we can start to plan to spend any profits on making improvements to the program. Kristin asked about the hours the Linton staff work. Stephanie stated that we added an additional half hour, which has eased the middle school lunch schedule. She added that if we had a lot more money, we'd have two lines---one on each side of the room; this plan would require more staff. Stephanie also reported that Linton will be circulating a basic survey to one grade at a time once a month. She will circulate the survey to the Board once Linton makes the changes ICS has requested.

Nicole asked Leonora to give an update at the January meeting on the plan for ICS ambassadors. Nicole congratulated ICS on the good day today; she stated that it appeared to be a safe and effective day. Nicole stated that she asked for the employee sick and personal leave policies to be circulated so the Board can determine if any changes may be needed in case of future events like today's.

IV. PTA Report

Cristina reported that the theater trips are going well. She reported that the Clay Studio has asked ICS to be part of an airport exhibit in 2010. It will include ICS's current 8th grade; ICS is the one charter school to be represented in the exhibit. Jurate noted that it was so nice of the PTA to include the current 8th grade, since that is the only ICS class that did/will not have the Clay Studio experience. Cristina stated that the PTA hopes to be able to purchase a kiln. Kristin asked Robin if there is enough space for a kiln; Robin agreed to look into the requirements.

V. Teachers' Report

Rosina stated that she loves the idea of inviting back the ICS alumni. Rona asked whether the 8th grade trip to Montreal is just in the idea phase or is definite; Jurate stated it is definite and that this will be our first international trip. Insurance for any trip involving air transportation is very expensive, which is why a bus trip was planned. The trip will require passports and fundraising, which is already underway.

VI. Construction Update

Robin reported that the basketball hoop arrived today. Sullivan is getting prices on new fencing and ground floor grates. Attic insulation is being installed. We will be bidding out the playground re-paving project.

VII. Committee Reports

A. Finance

Rosina stated that the committee has asked Jerry to look into getting an extension (from 18-24 months) for us to expend the rest of our bond money. Jerry reported that he met with the accounting group regarding the acquisition of the building in order to figure out whether the building belongs to Worlds or ICS. By the next meeting, the \$18 million debt will probably move off the ICS books and onto Worlds. The ICS Board will

be able to look at the books of both entities; Jerry stated he'll plan to share that information quarterly and more often as requested.

He stated that the only major variance is on line number five (5), that is due to a timing issue with the School District payment. He added that he is happy with the utility bills, which are coming in within the budgeted \$10,000 per month. Kristin noted that she sometimes goes by the school at night and there seem to be a lot of lights on throughout the building. Jurate agreed to look into that. Pedro stated that there are sometime utility rebates available. Jerry stated that Robin is looking into those details, but that we know we need to be here at least a year before being eligible. Robin clarified that we'd be eligible to switch from gas to oil as prices fluctuate. Jerry cautioned that we're currently at the lowest cash flow point due to lots of expenses at the beginning of the school year. He also stated that the high PGW and PECO costs incurred during construction were moved to construction expenses. Rosina asked what Virco was; Jerry stated we purchased furniture and lockers from them. Pedro asked why we still have several phone plans. Jerry stated we needed Verizon for the elevator and the security system and that Ramzy is working on consolidating cell phone contracts. Rosina moved the October disbursement motion; Becky seconded. It passed unanimously.

Rosina explained that new 403 (b) regulations require us to have an official 403 (b) plan. Lincoln Investments will write the plan for free as long as we continue to allow them to talk with staff. Jerry clarified that there is no cost to the school and we will still have two available plans. Rona stated that the disbursements seem to show payments to several different insurance companies; Jerry explained that is because our broker solicits bids as rates change. He also stated that we pay our broker for director and officer insurance. Rosina moved the 403 (b) motion; Anyabwile seconded. It passed unanimously. Nicole asked that Megan start to number the resolutions on the agenda each month.

B. Human Resources

Nicole stated that Becky asked for her committee report to be next so that Jerry is available to respond as needed. Nicole asked for clarification on the current tuition reimbursement policy. Becky stated that first year teachers are offered a loan for up to \$1,200. The committee favors a revision that would reimburse those first year teachers if they return to ICS the following year. Jerry stated that he would recommend waiting for the budget process to make those kinds of recommendations, since a priority list needs to be made. He stated April would be the ideal time. Becky thanked Jerry for that suggestion so that the whole Board can be more mindful of that type of planning.

Becky moved the resolution regarding donating sick time; Pedro seconded. Becky explained the genesis for this came from administration and stated that other institutions have these types of policies. She added that Jerry's concern was that we cap the number of days to those that would be unpaid until short-term disability payments start. Rosina asked if we would already have budgeted for this. Jerry stated that our budget is based on assuming staff use about five of their 13 days (10 sick and 3 personal). Rona suggested that we might want to have a policy that anything that impacts the budget that isn't an emergency needs to be

considered in February. Nicole stated we might need more details regarding benefits. Jerry stated he'd be happy to give that type of presentation to either the Human Resources Committee or at a Board meeting. Nicole stated she feels that the whole Board needs this type of information in order to better understand the budget. Becky asked if anyone had any other questions about the motion. Jerry suggested that the Board consider this for this year, stating that it will revisit it at budget time in regard to next year. Pedro asked whether an executive session is needed to discuss the current need for this policy. Rosina stated an executive session doesn't seem necessary and that she feels that Board wants to do the right thing. Rona asked if we can deal with an individual situation instead of a resolution; Jerry strongly suggested that a resolution is necessary. The Board agreed on a friendly amendment to have the resolution expired on August 31, 2009. The motion passed unanimously. Anyabwile stated that he thinks it's a great idea to vote on items impacting the budget in April of each year, but encouraged the Board to be sure to have discussion on those items in advance of that. All agreed to this suggestion.

C. Development

Leonora reported that this year's calendar event raised less than last year, but that she's already working on revamping for next year. She stated now that she is on board and has an assistant, she doesn't see the need for monthly committee meetings and would like to have quarterly meetings. Nicole stated she's not surprised at that designating Development as a "temporary" committee seemed to be appropriate, since staff is starting to take on more and more of that role. The Board will review all committees at its June meeting. Nicole added that even though the calendar event was not as financially successful, it was a great event. Anyabwile asked about whether Board members would be receiving training on fundraising. Nicole stated that decision is in flux, which is why we need an update on the fundraising board plans. Leonora stated that she feels the training will be beneficial whether or not we have a fundraising board. Jurate stated that yesterday she and Leonora met with three individuals who recommended the possibility of an advisory council, as opposed to a foundation board, to ask for concrete requests. She stated she and Leonora are continuing to work on that issue.

Legal Services Update

Nicole asked that Becky give her legal service report now, since she needs to leave early. Becky stated that she and Jurate need some more time to talk with references. Becky circulated a summary of the bids received and said she'll make a recommendation before the January meeting. Rosina asked whether Cozen was being weighed in some way due to their history with ICS. Becky said they were, because they are a known quantity. Kristin asked whether ICS would be charged for the Board training that one mentioned; Becky said ICS would be charged for that. Nicole clarified that when the recommendation comes to the Board, it will be assumed that anyone who has a particular interest in this will get involved now and not wait until the January meeting to voice any concerns. Pedro asked what the average number of hours would be; Nicole asked Becky to recirculate the information.

D. Curriculum

Rona reported that the committee has been discussing the World Cultures Task Force and the Gifted Support program. Next month the committee will look at on-going curriculum review. **Nicole** stated she was happy that the Gifted Support program was being discussed and said that as a Board member she has been receiving lots of comments from people; she stated she's shared those comments with Pam.

E. Board Development

Pedro circulated a sheet regarding the process of a Board member nomination. **Rosina** asked if we have the forms that were mentioned. **Nicole** stated **Pedro** circulated them a few months ago and asked him to re-send them to everyone for review. **Becky** asked whether this process will be on-going or only at certain times. **Pedro** stated it has to be on-going. **Rona** asked whether **Pedro** has compiled the results from the forms completed by current Board member. **Pedro** said he's waiting for the last form to be completed. **Nicole** clarified that although the Board decided against setting term limits, the Board may still want to rotate the Board. **Cristina** asked if the PTA can have the Board nomination procedure. **Nicole** said it is public and that we will also post it on the website.

VIII. Public Comment Period

No one signed up to speak during the public comment period.

IX. Old Business

This was discussed between the Development and Curriculum Committee reports.

X. New Business

Nicole stated that the state is requiring all schools to pass a resolution regarding bullying and harassment by January 2009. **Pedro** asked whether we keep data about this; **Jurate** said that we do. **Rosina** moved the motion; **Pedro** seconded. **Rosina** clarified that the table attached to the resolution is confusing and noted that the items are not supposed to line up. One column is behavior and one is possible consequences. **Jurate** agreed. **Pedro** asked why invasion of privacy and computer hacking aren't included. **Nicole** asked **Jurate** if she felt comfortable with the resolution. **Jurate** stated she had not received any comments from the Board and that the deans reviewed and concurred with the resolution. **Nicole** suggested that in regard to implementation be sure to clarify if something specifically comes under the bullying/harassment policy in regard to parental notification, etc. **Pedro** asked whether texting and photographs are included in the harassment policy; **Jurate** agreed to check. **Rona** stated she is fine with this as long as it satisfies the state requirements and it doesn't tie our hands. **Jurate** stated that we always consult with legal counsel in these types of situations and that we also send staff to workshops to learn about these issues. The motion passed unanimously.

Nicole stated that she asked that the employee sick and personal leave policies be circulated to raise the issue to the Human Resources Committee and to the CEO in regard to possible future civic actions, such as the possibility for the inauguration, etc. to make sure the policies do what we want them to do. **Nicole** asked Board members to review the policies and give feedback, since this deals a bit with governance.

XI. Adjournment

Pedro moved to adjourn; Anyabwile seconded. The meeting was adjourned at 8:45p.m.

Handouts circulated at this meeting:

Agenda

Minutes from the November 2008 meeting

CEO report

Teachers' Report

PTA Report

October financials

Development Committee Report

Summary of Proposals for Legal Services

Recommendations for Process for Getting and Securing Nominations to the Board

Employee Sick Leave and Personal Leave Policies

Human Resources Committee Minutes

Finance Committee Minutes

**Independence Charter School
December 10, 2008
Resolutions**

ADOPTED

October Disbursements

Be it resolved that the Independence Charter School Board of Trustees hereby approve disbursements from the month of October 2008 in the amount of \$ 359,800.25 as presented to the Board.

403b Plan

Be it hereby resolved that the Independence Charter School enter into an agreement with Great American Insurance Company to develop a 403b plan for ICS and act as the third-party administrator.

Donation of Sick Leave

Whereas ICS values its employees and recognizes the commitment and dedication of ICS employees, and

Whereas employees may at any time find themselves faced with serious medical illness resulting in loss of work days, some of which may not be covered by sick leave and/or disability insurance, and

Whereas the ICS employee community desires to acknowledge its concern for fellow employees,

Be it hereby resolved that the Independence Charter School (ICS) Board of Trustees resolves as follows:

ICS employees who earn sick days may contribute a maximum of one (1) sick day per fiscal year to another staff member for use due to a serious medical illness. Staff members may donate a maximum of three (3) sick days per fiscal year. Sick days may not be donated for maternity leave. The collective maximum number of sick days contributed to a single employee under this policy shall not exceed the number of days required for the employee to become eligible for short-term disability insurance benefits. This policy shall be effective retroactive to July 1, 2008 and will expire August 31, 2009.

Bullying and Harassment Prevention

Whereas the Board of Trustees of Independence Charter School values a school setting in which all students feel safe and free from bullying and harassment, and whereas, the Board of Trustees of ICS has adopted the Responsive Classroom and Developmental Design models for supporting students and teachers,

and whereas all teachers have participated in appropriate training in these methods be it hereby resolved that any incident of documented bullying or harassment will be followed by appropriate consequences as listed in the student Code of Conduct and that such student conduct will be assessed following consequences to ascertain cessation of bullying and/or harassment

and be it further resolved that acts of bullying or harassment may conclude with suspension, probation and possible expulsion, and

be it further resolved that the ICS BOT approves the Bullying and Harassment policy as stated in the ICS Code of Conduct this 10th day of December, 2008

(excerpt from the Student Code of Conduct)

DEAN INCIDENTS

When a student demonstrates inappropriate behavior, including but not limited to:

Behavior	Possible Consequences
<i>Aggressive Language (including cursing)</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The student will be immediately removed from the classroom and sent to the Dean’s Office.
<i>Bullying</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Student will “Take a Break”.
<i>Defiance</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Student will discuss and practice expected behavior with Dean of Students.
<i>Deliberately throwing chairs, furniture, school property</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Mediation between all participants. This will include a chance to “fix” relationships or objects.• Parent may be called by the Dean of Students.
<i>Deliberately walking away from school group when on a field trip or at the park</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• A letter, documenting the incident, will be given to the parent.• Student may lose a privilege.• Student may be given an assignment to be done at home and signed by a guardian.
<i>Destruction of Property (major)</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Student may be assigned Saturday School.
<i>Endangering self or others</i>	
<i>Extortion</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Student may be given in-school community service to “fix” relationships or objects.
<i>Fighting</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Student may be sent home. Parent will be asked to come to school and take their student home within one and a half hours.
<i>Harassing or instigating the harassment of another student</i>	

<p><i>Inappropriate Touching</i></p> <p><i>Instigating a Fight or Assault</i></p> <p><i>Making threats</i></p> <p><i>Making threats that refer to the use of a weapon to cause harm</i></p> <p><i>Physical Violence</i></p> <p><i>Spitting on another person intentionally</i></p> <p><i>Stealing (K-8)</i></p> <p><i>Tantrums that disrupt learning and/or make the class feel unsafe</i></p> <p><i>Vandalism</i></p> <p><i>Walking out of class</i></p> <p><i>Walking out of the school building</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Student may be suspended out of school between 1 and 3 days, not including the day of the incident. • Parent will be required to attend a meeting (reinstatement meeting if student was suspended) with the Dean of Students on the day the student is allowed back into school. • Student may be place on 30 day probation.
--	--

If the behavior continues the student may be brought to the Board of Trustees for expulsion.

Independence Charter School will consider the facts of each case in determining whether expulsion should be an option.

DEFEATED

None

Resolutions

TABLED

None