

**Independence Charter School  
Board of Trustees Meeting Minutes  
October 8, 2008 7:00 pm**

**Board Members Present:** Becky Baehr, Anyabwile Banko'le, Nicole Perkins Kilcullen Kristin Nocco, Pam Prell, Pedro Rodriguez (via phone)

**Board Members Absent:** Rona Buchalter, Eric Cramer, Rosina Miller

**Others Present:** Robin Kohles, parent & Owner's Rep.; Jurate Krokys, CEO; Ramzy Andrawos, Director of Operations; Megan Steelman, Administrative Assistant; Leonora Cravotta, Development Director; Jenny Hoedeman-Eiteljorg, Development Associate; Michael Farrell, Amy Leigh, Kelly Nelms & Andrea Yanez, teachers; Jerry Santilli, Santilli & Thomson; Cristina Veal, PTA Liaison.

**I. Call to Order**

**Co-President Pam Prell** called the meeting to order at 7:06pm.

**II. Approval of Minutes**

**Nicole** moved to accept the September minutes; Pedro seconded. The minutes were approved without changes.

**III. CEO Report**

**Jurate** reported that things are running well and that adjustments are being made while the playground work is happening. She noted that we are constantly reassessing recess and that the Finance Committee has discussed the concern about the lead-based paint on the fence. Robin is getting estimates for replacing the fence as soon as possible. She stated that ICS is sending four teachers and our Curriculum Specialist to the CARLA conference later this month. ICS has sent several people each of year and has found the information very valuable. In addition, the Spanish Embassy has finally responded to us and we look forward to partnering with them. The KABOOM playground project is moving ahead very well and includes very impressive groups of parent volunteers. Jurate expressed her disappointment that after agreeing to donate labor for preparing the playground for the build day, the labor unions then refused to respond; therefore, we had to hire a company to do that work.

Nicole asked whether there is more detailed information available yet about last year's PSSA scores. Jurate stated that the students scored very well and that in fact ICS was recently asked to apply for the EPIC teacher incentive program. This one is less labor intensive than the TAP grant we looked into last year. If we're chosen as a participating EPIC school, representatives would come to ICS to ask teachers to reflect on what works great at our school. Pam asked for clarification from Jerry, since he had been concerned about the cost of the TAP program. Jerry stated that EPIC involves smaller bonuses and is much more manageable. Lastly, Pam asked whether we are doing extra hand washing due to the lead paint on the fence; Jurate agreed that we are.

**IV. PTA Report**

**Cristina** reported that the first meeting of the year was very well attended and that many new parents have volunteered to help. The PTA will once again be a \$1,000 sponsor of the ICS Calendar Event. Mugs are also

being purchased for all ICS staff with the hope of getting area coffee shops to offer discounts to staff bringing their mugs in to be filled. The PTA is working on their budget to figure out how much financial aid they can offer to teachers for their classrooms this year. This year a separate Middle School Parents' Committee has been formed. The PTA is also looking into offering First Aid classes to some 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> graders to help prepare them for babysitting. They are also looking into some basic self defense classes.

#### **V. Teachers' Report**

**Andrea** reported that dismissal is going very smoothly. She stated that the three teacher reps are meeting regularly with Pr. Stephanie. The staff and students are getting to know the new neighborhood. The teachers have noted that with the students and staff eating more food at school, they also need to use the bathrooms more often, which has been causing some traffic at the bathrooms. The teachers are also requesting that the Board consider offering loans for Praxis tests. Pam asked the Human Resources Committee to consider that. Kristin asked if the lines in the lunchroom are getting better. Andrea stated that we're still working on that. Pam asked what the issue is with getting the lunchroom computer system working. Ramzy stated that we changed our decision about which vendor to use and the contract is still under attorney review.

#### **VI. Construction Update**

**Robin** reported that she doesn't have anything to add to her written report.

#### **VII. Committee Reports**

##### **A. Finance**

**Rosina** was not able to attend tonight's meeting; Becky asked Jerry to review the financial information. Jerry stated that he first would like to briefly address the federal financial situation. He explained that ICS has zero balance accounts and that we're covered by a statewide investment pool, so we're significantly insured and relatively safe. He stated that everyone can expect some government repercussions due to the tax base being affected by the economy. He stated that we don't anticipate any cuts for this year; however, there could be changes over the next several years---possibly a lower subsidy increase, etc. PSERS hasn't made any changes yet. The ICS cash flow is steady; Jerry explained that line #5 is a timing issue, because the School District starts the school year by paying on last year's enrollment. That will be corrected in November. Becky moved the August disbursement resolution; Nicole seconded. The motion passed unanimously. Becky moved the lease reimbursement motion; Nicole seconded. That motion also passed unanimously.

##### **B. Curriculum**

**Pam** reported that there was a problem copying the report; however, it was circulated via e-mail. There were no questions about the report.

##### **C. Community Relations**

**Kristin** reported that the committee discussed whether or not the committee needs to continue. It was decided that the Committee would continue to meet monthly, along with Jurate, but not as a Board committee. The members agreed that they just want to get things done. The main concerns were Board nominations; the committee is satisfied

that there will be now be a Nominating Committee. Pam recommended that the committee's report be incorporated into Jurate's monthly CEO report; she stated that she thinks it's great to have Board member involvement to make sure there's no overlap. Nicole stated that it seems the committee structure process has worked very well in this case and that the Board will make an official decision about the committee at its annual meeting in June, since they will look at all temporary committees annually. Kristin stated that there are committee volunteers who will be working on creating a new e-mail list and that Joana Davis-Diaz and Consuelia McCourt are working on planning ICS parent meetings in various parts of the city to help parents connect with each other.

#### **D. Development**

**Leonora** reported that the Committee is working on increasing the visibility of the school and expanding funding sources. The group has met with a branding consultant and is seeking input on some sample logos before meeting again with the consultant; it was agreed that Board members would look at the samples after tonight's meeting. Nicole clarified that the Board and CEO have been discussing the possibility of adding the word "international" to the name of the school. Anyabwile stated that he does not recall having discussed this yet. Jurate stated that Rosina had suggested that Jurate float this idea, since it seems that most schools with similar goals have "international" included in their names, which helps identify them. Pam recommended that Jurate find out what the process will be do make this addition. Jurate agreed to get that information before next month's meeting. She stated that Jerry has had experience with this with other schools and that he said it can be done outside of the renewal process. Nicole recommended that this discussion continue during the "New Business" section of tonight's meeting.

Leonora stated that the ribbon cutting will take place on November 7<sup>th</sup> starting at 9:30a.m. with the actual ribbon cutting happening at 11a.m. She reported that it has been harder getting sponsors for the calendar event this year, so the committee is looking for other ways to raise funds. She also asked the Board to give input on the naming rights recommendations. Leonora also welcomed Jenny Hoedeman-Eiteljorg, who is the new ICS part-time Development Associate. Nicole stated that she thinks the naming rights document is great and stated that now that ICS owns our building, the Board will need to be involved in any major naming decisions. Becky clarified that the Worlds of Opportunity Board also needs to be involved.

#### **E. Human Resources**

**Becky** reported that upcoming topics to be discussed are Praxis loans and the policy manuel. The regular meeting date will be the Friday before the Board meeting right after the Finance meeting. However, the November meeting will need to be re-scheduled due to the Ribbon Cutting.

#### **F. Policy**

There was no report. Nicole explained that Eric is the chair of this committee; however, due to his work and personal schedule, he has not been able to call a meeting. She stated that she had expected Eric to be in attendance tonight to discuss how we should proceed and to find out when he will be available. Becky stated she is willing for the Human Resources

Committee to handle any HR policy issues. Pam recommended that we look at what's currently on the Policy agenda and see if the issues can go to appropriate committees. Nicole agreed to figure out a "to do" list to see how we can proceed; she stated that some things, like the Absence and Lateness policies, can probably come right to the Board. Becky and Pam recommended that Jurate circulate the Absence and Lateness policy to the full Board for review, then discussion can occur at the November meeting. Kristin asked what the concerns are with the current Absences and Lateness policies. Pam clarified that the Board had wanted a committee to review concerns before they come to the full Board. Nicole stated that the Policy Committee looks at whether we want a new policy or not and that the Committee is not involved with writing policy.

#### **VIII. Public Comment Period**

No one requested to speak during the public comment period.

#### **IX. Old Business**

**Becky** stated that she had circulated a draft RFP for legal services. She stated that the plan is to send the RFP to Cozen O'Connor and to several other firms recommended by Jerry and Becky. She asked Jurate to give her a one paragraph description of ICS's history to add to the RFP. Nicole stated that she'd be in touch with Becky with her comments. Anyabwile stated that we should only send the RFP to 5 or 6 firms. Becky stated that we're not obligated to send this out, so we can limit how we circulate it. Kristin stated that we'll probably get a wide variety of feedback. Becky stated that we may need to ask firms for more details. Nicole recommended including the anticipated number of hours.

#### **X. New Business**

**Nicole** stated that the April Board meeting falls during Passover and Spring Break and recommended that we change the meeting date to April 15<sup>th</sup>. Everyone agreed to the change; Megan will make sure the change is posted.

Pam asked how we should gather opinions about adding "international" to our name. Jurate stated that it would not be changing the essence of the school, but would elucidate what ICS is. Jurate added that it does not seem to be something for which we need to find favor. Pam clarified that the proposed name would be "Independence International Charter School." Nicole stated that it's important for the ICS community to understand that we like our name; however, we're seeing that other schools with an international focus have this in their names. Several people asked whether we'd be able to announce this in conjunction with the ribbon cutting. Pam suggested that if Jurate finds that the process is for officially changing the name is very easy, then we may be able to start making the announcement. Kristin stated that her only concern is that this will be a surprise for many people; she suggested possibly calling a special meeting to discuss it. Pam stated that the Board could give Jurate the authority to do this and to get the word out. Kristin cautioned that people could still feel disenfranchised. Nicole stated that this is not a name change; it is adding to the name. She added that sometimes the Board needs to lead and not necessarily get consensus. It's similar to the Board making the decision to split the CEO and Principal positions. Amy started that although we might not be able to get everyone's feedback, it's

important to keep people informed. Cristina stated that the addition will help better define ICS. Becky stated that she doesn't feel we can do this officially by the ribbon cutting, but that the Board can give Jurate the okay to start discussing it. Pam stated that she's reluctant to pass a resolution tonight with so few Board members present. Nicole stated that if needed, we will call a special meeting.

**XI. Adjournment**

**Anyabwile** moved to adjourn; Becky seconded. The meeting was adjourned at 8:41p.m.

Handouts circulated at this meeting:

Agenda

Minutes from the September 2008 meeting

CEO report

Construction Report

Finance Committee Report

August financials

Development Committee Report

Naming Opportunities Outline

Community Relations Committee Report

Human Resources Committee Report

Curriculum Committee Report (circulated via e-mail)

**Independence Charter School  
October 8, 2008  
Resolutions**

**ADOPTED**

**August Disbursements**

Be it resolved that the Independence Charter School Board of Trustees hereby approve disbursements from the month of August 2008 in the amount of \$769,610.27 as presented to the Board.

**2008-2009 Lease Reimbursement**

**RESOLVED**, that the Board of Trustees of Independence Charter School apply for and accepts funds under the Pennsylvania Department of Education, Division of School Facilities, Charter School Lease Reimbursement Program for fiscal year 2008/09. This program will provide reimbursement of lease payment costs at an annual rate of approximately \$160.00 per elementary student and \$220.00 per secondary student with reimbursement to be requested and received quarterly.

**Resolutions  
DEFEATED**

**Resolutions  
TABLED**