

**Independence Charter School
Board of Trustees Meeting Minutes
October 13, 2010 7:00 pm**

Board Members Present: John Eagen, Mary Fitzpatrick, Derrick Johnson, Fran Melmed Dana Twyman, Pam Prell, Pedro Rodriguez, Elsie Stern, Naomi Wyatt

Board Member(s) Absent: Eli Lesser, Rona Buchalter

Others Present: Jurate Krokys, CEO; Shavon Norris and William Loskoch, Teacher Reps; Ramzy Andrawos, Director of Operations; Stephanie Bungard, Principal; Cristina Veal, PTA Liaison; Leonora Cravotta, Development Director; Robin Kohles, Owner's Rep; Megan Steelman, Administrative Assistant; Marwan Kreidie, Parent

I. Call to Order

Elsie called the meeting to order at 7:05p.m. She noted that there are now time allotments noted on each section of the agenda. The recommended times were given by those presenting. John will keep people apprised of the time limit. She also noted that the agenda format has been changed for tonight and that the discussion of the mission and vision with the CEO will be tabled until next meeting due to time consideration. Elsie had all present introduce themselves.

II. Approval of Minutes

The minutes from the September meeting were approved unanimously without changes.

III. Executive Session

The Board went into executive session at 7:11p.m. and returned at 8:04p.m.

IV. Public Comment Period

Mr. Marwan Kreidie introduced himself as an ICS parent and a representative of the Arab-American Social Service Association, which serves the needs of the Arab-American community. He also noted that he is on the Villanova Arabic Studies Board. Mr. Kreidie thanked and congratulated ICS for its Arabic program. He noted that he feels Arabic is very important at this point in time, since the U.S.A. has taken so many Arab lives in recent wars. He stated that immediately after 9/11/2000, there was only one (1) Arabic speaker in Philadelphia's police department. He said that ICS is giving its students a step ahead by offering this course. He added that from the 1870's, the U.S.A. has had an Arabic immigration. Mr. Kreidie offered support as an individual and from the Arab-American community to assist the program. He also lauded Tr. Tarek Albasti, ICS's Arabic teacher.

V. CEO Report

Jurate noted that ICS's student racial/ethnic make up changed a bit this year and that we have an increasing number of families who do not choose to identify an ethnicity, making an increase in the the category of "other". The percentage of Caucasian-identified students has increased. In addition, our percentage of free and reduced eligible students has increased by at least one percent from last year.

Jurate reported that Back to School Nights (BTSN) went very well, noting that Pr. Stephanie and Jenny (Hoedeman-Eiteljorg, the new Family & Community Partnerships Liaison) did a great job planning the night, using suggestions from last year's parent survey. A job survey was also distributed at BTSNs and parents seemed more than happy to complete the survey. Over 200 surveys completed; they were not anonymous, so follow up can be made.

Jurate reported that Robin Kohles will be heading the reactivated Facilities Committee. Robin has identified some people who are interested in participating. Jurate noted that the Middle States Accreditation process is on target with its timeline. She also noted that ICS has increasingly been contacted by outside groups wanting to vision with us---i.e., the District of Columbia asking us if we'd be interested in taking on a turnaround school. Jurate stated these are the types of things she continues to hear again and again and that another opportunity could be with the Philadelphia Schools Partnership, which is a group working toward making quality education available to all students. Jurate asked the Board for the opportunity to discuss where our school leadership wants to go in this regard and stated that Rona is calling a Board caucus to discuss this type of visioning. She warned that the charter school community continues to come under attack and extra scrutiny and that we want to be sure to be proactive. Jurate reported that ICS did not get the charter school planning grant for which we applied; we were told it was because too much of the application talked about planning, as opposed to implementing. Apparently, although it was not stated in the application, they were looking for schools that were ready to start up in the Fall of 2011. Jurate noted this is another reason why we need the Board to discuss this topic in depth, so that we'd be ready to act when this type of opportunity arises again.

VI. Finance/Business

John asked Jerry to review the August financial report. Jerry noted that the cash flow continues to be strong and stated there are no unusual variances. He cautioned that this report is as of the end of August, so there's not a lot of changes since the school year was not yet underway. He noted that because the School District pays on an estimated number of students, the \$56,000 deficit in that area will disappear once the School District makes the correction for the actual number of students enrolled this year. He also noted that a lot of school year start-up costs, such as textbook purchases are included in this report. The salaries included in this report represent paying out the 2009-2010 school year salaries. The computer deficit is in regard to the carried over IDEA money which was used to purchase computers after June 30, 2010. That cost will be covered by the funds carried over. The disbursement list includes some classroom supply disbursements that were made to people not yet on our payroll. Fran asked what PSERS is; Jerry explained that is the state pension plan. Fran asked about the legal fees; Jerry clarified that before ICS moved to this building, Cozen O'Connor had been totally pro bono.

Jerry reported that there was a \$14,000 surplus in the 2009-2010 Food Services budget, which is very unusual for just the second year of operation. ICS had \$25,000 in its budget in case of a deficit. The \$14,000 will go right back into the Food Services budget, as required. Jerry noted that the audit will have a second column for the Food Services program. Jurate added that Linton has also said we have been selling an increased number of lunches so far this year. Pedro asked whether we can use the surplus; Jerry said that we can. Pam asked whether we could give free breakfast to all students; Jerry said ICS would need to pay for those not eligible for free food, which could get costly. John moved the disbursement motion; Pedro seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

VII. Measuring ICS Success Presentation

Stephanie gave a presentation regarding how ICS looks at student assessment and how ICS, the State and the nation measure students success. She noted that we know from scenarios that ICS is successful; however, we need to have specific factors that define whether or not we're successful. The three areas that ICS is using to measure student success are:

- 1) Academic goals & achievement
- 2) Language Acquisition and Proficiency
- 3) Manifestation of Global Citizenship

Stephanie noted that one thing that's currently being done is that ICS is entering two years' worth of test data into our data base so that we will have on-going reporting capabilities across various mixes of categories. She noted that this year is the first year that ICS was able to specifically offer in-house or tutoring support for any student who was identified as lagging in reading. We will now be able to track whether the extra support shows marked improvement in closing achievement gaps. Stephanie noted the nationwide Annual Yearly Progress (AYP) goals are 56% in math and 63% in reading. Although ICS has met AYP, we want to be sure to look at the PVVAS information, which shows whether the kids are showing academic growth from year to year. She noted that the PSSA colors in green on the chart mean our students have shown at least one year's growth. If it's red, it means they have not shown that. She stated that ICS has looked closely at last year's 5th and 6th grade (shown in red on the chart). She stated that the 5th grade had actually been in 80% the prior year to 78% this year, so that is not a major concern. She added that was not the case with the 6th grade group and that the team is continuing to look deeper into that area. Derrick asked whether a student passes to the next grade if s/he doesn't test as proficient or advanced on the PSSA. Stephanie noted that since the PSSA is just one facet, as long as they are at or near grade level in other areas, they do get promoted. Jurate added that sometimes kids who do well on the PSSA, do not perform well in the classroom. Stephanie stated that one thing the PSSA results tell us is that some students may need more practice about how to take these types of tests, as well as how to have the stamina to take them. Jurate clarified that one area under our institutional goal is to look specifically at the kids who are not doing well on standardized tests and to offer those students special opportunities to practice.

Stephanie noted that some kids who are already advanced are not showing as much progress as kids who started out low, noting this tells us we need to continue our efforts with teachers regarding differentiation of instruction, which we include in on-going professional development.

Stephanie stated that the FLAP grant allows for an outside evaluator, who will help look at what specifically we need to be looking at in terms of assessing language skills. She reported that the Global Ed team is working on ways to specifically measure success in the area of Global Citizenship and Competency. The Global Competence Matrix is a start, but is holistic, so can't be used to directly assess. The team will work on adapting an existing Global Ed checklist to ICS. She noted that assessments already exist by which ICS can start to assess how Global we are as a school. Pam added that the Curriculum Committee will be looking in depth at these three areas and welcomed people to participate in those discussions with that committee. Jurate noted that the School District uses something called the PCI Index (i.e., parent participation, etc); she stated that although they have this information about all public schools in Philadelphia, they release public school scores, but not charter school scores.

VIII. Non-BOT Reports

Teacher Report- Shavon noted that a lot of staff went to see the movie *Waiting for Superman* on Monday at the end of the Professional Development Day and Shavon will lead a discussion about that with teachers next Wednesday.

Development: Leonora noted that the date of Double Anniversary is November 16th & 17th. Fran asked why the ICS 365 event is just focused on the Take Flight trip. Leonora noted that the Board had recommended that this event may not be the best use of Leonora's time and so the opportunity was given to that group, since they need to raise a lot of funds. Leonora added that Take Flight will be an on-going effort, not just for one particular trip, and that it will also include a few local field trips.

Construction: Robin reported that one addition to her written report is that the gate installation has been delayed again; she doesn't have a new date yet. She thanked John for agreeing to be on the Facilities Committee. Others who have agreed to help with that committee are: Joe Winchester of Sullivan Construction, Steve Gendler who is involved in school initiatives, ICS parent Jeff Newburger and Lance Lukasiak who is an ICS parent, as well as an architect.

IX. Committee Reports

Policy: It was noted that Eli couldn't be at tonight's meeting, since he and his wife just had a new baby. Pam reported it was agreed that the lottery date for this year should be chosen by administration; therefore, the Board did not have to make any decision about that. The committee plans to have a lottery policy ready to vote on at the November meeting. Fran asked how the lottery date will be advertised. Jurate noted we will be advertising it on the website and in our materials. She added that the Philadelphia Schools for Charter Excellence was also pushing for a unified lottery date in March to show the large numbers of families looking for charter school enrollment. She stated that ICS's lottery will take place on March 10th. Pam noted that a building use policy is also going to be developed by the Policy Committee.

Human Resources: Naomi reported that teachers have urged that there be more communication about this year's evaluation process. Early in the new year, the committee will look comprehensively at the teacher evaluation process to ensure we have a good model to put in place for 2011-2012. In the interim, there will be more discussion at the administrative level to be sure teachers are clear about the process for this year. Naomi noted that teachers seem to be glad that there already seems to be more observations taking place than in the past year. Naomi stated that Shavon is starting to work on a recruitment initiative to move toward making our staff more ethnically diverse. Elsie asked if age is also being looked at; Shavon said we haven't talked about that, but we could. Elsie noted our teachers tend to be young, as opposed to the Philadelphia School District. Naomi said the committee is also working on what the best practice is for letting teachers know when ICS is not planning on renewing their contracts, as well as how to be sure to offer opportunities to staff we want to retain. Naomi noted that Jurate will be working on this, most likely through something like her Friday morning café or a similar venue. The concept of who should be the ICS teacher "cheerleader"----urging teachers to take advantage of particular professional development opportunities and helping them with the paperwork, etc, was discussed. Naomi reported that Jurate is also identifying a charter school structure discussion facilitator to come to talk to a working group about different successful charter school administrative structures. Naomi stated

she will be meeting with Jerry to talk about the financial ramifications of moving to Paid Time Off (PTO).

John moved the teacher termination resolution; Derrick seconded. The motion passed unanimously. The Position Title Change resolution was tabled.

X. Old Business

Elsie noted that the discussion about the Board student lottery preference will take place at next month's meeting.

XI. New Business

There was no new business discussed.

XII. Adjournment

Elsie moved for adjournment; John seconded. The meeting was adjourned at 9:33 p.m.

Handouts circulated at this meeting:

Agenda

CEO report

August 2010 financials

HR report

Policy report

Construction Update

Teacher report

Measuring Student Success Presentation outline

**Independence Charter School
October 13, 2010
Resolutions**

ADOPTED

1. August Disbursements (John moved; Pedro seconded)

Be it resolved that the Independence Charter School Board of Trustees hereby approve disbursements from the month of August 2010 in the amount of \$386,126.49 as presented to the Board.

2. Teacher Termination (John moved; Derrick seconded)

Be it resolved that the ICS Board of Trustees acknowledges the termination of the 2010-2011 employee agreement with kindergarten teacher Rachel Butler.

**Resolutions
DEFEATED
None**

**Resolutions
TABLED**

Position Title Change

Be it resolved that the following Job Title and Job Description for Senior Administrative Assistant Megan Steelman be amended to the following:

Independence Charter School
Senior Program Manager

This position requires an individual who is well acquainted with the Mission and Vision of the school while maintaining knowledge of the impact of school policies and local, state and federal compliance requirements. The Program officer manages the following:

- employee salaries, wages, and other compensation
- employee benefits
- teacher certifications and qualifications and the qualifications of classroom assistants
- Board of Trustees information and monthly meetings
- supervision of student enrollment
- federal and state compliance documents
- CEO scheduling and coordination

and be it further resolved that an adjustment to the compensation be made at the level recommended by the CEO as approved by the Independence Charter School Board of Trustees.