

**Independence Charter School
Board of Trustees Meeting Minutes
October 12, 2011 7:00 pm**

Board Members Present: Lauren Ayala, Rona Buchalter, John Eagen, Mary Fitzpatrick, Susanna Greenberg, Derrick Johnson, Eli Lesser, Pedro Rodriguez, Gloria Shabazz, Elsie Stern, Dana Twyman, Naomi Wyatt

Board Member(s) Absent: Rebecca Clothey

Others Present: Jerry Santilli, Business Manager; Jurate Krokys, CEO; Ramzy Andrawos, Director of Operations; Richard Trzaska, Interim Lower School Principal; Kristen Long, Middle School Principal; Amy Leigh, Teacher Representative; Lynn Eckerman, Teacher Leader; Ebru Erkut, Parent; Caroline Masters, PTA Representative; Erin Horvat, community member; Erin Rooney, community member; Megan Steelman, Administrative Assistant

I. Call to Order

Eli called the meeting to order at 7:10p.m. and announced the Board members will now be going into a brief executive session to discuss a personnel issue. The Board returned at 7:17p.m.

II. Approval of Minutes

The minutes from the September meeting were approved unanimously.

III. CEO Report

Jurate reported that things are going very well; Philadelphia Magazine named us as a top school. A staff member has a suspected case of tuberculosis; information was shared with staff and families. A target group of students and staff received TB tests as a safety measure. We've had several visitors over the last month, including an original founder Jay Borowsky and Paul Levy from the Center City District. She reviewed the PSSA test result information. She noted that PSSA results are different than PVVAS, which follows individual student achievement. She noted that a recent newspaper article indicated that our school had significant dips; the only major dip was in fifth grade. Due to the No Child Left Behind regulations, the percentages that need to be met go up each year as the country approaches the year when 100% of students are expected to be proficient or advanced. She noted that if you compare how cohorts of students perform from year-to-year, you see how well ICS students do. She noted that many factors go into the final results (i.e., number of students receiving special education services, number of new students, number of ESL students, etc). At the November meeting, ICS Student Achievement and Testing Coordinator, Odamis Fernandez-Sheinbaum, will be presenting in more depth. Rona noted that the chart shows that the year before was the aberration and the drop wasn't that dramatic. Eli stated that we need to post something very clear and transparent on our website. Eli noted that the Lower School Principal search process has started and resumes are starting to come in. Rona stated that the professional development day agenda looked terrific. Rona asked Jurate to share information from the recent PaCIE (PA Council of International Education) conference roundtable she ran. Jurate stated that PaCIE has been concentrated on college and high school and are now trying to integrate elementary school. She stated that she learned about a global education review tool that's used by colleges and universities that might be able to be adapted for the elementary level.

IV. Public Comment Period

No one signed up for the public comment.

V. Non-BOT Committee Reports

PTA: Caroline noted that a report was circulated; she reported that the first meeting of the year was well attended and almost a pep rally. She noted that the annual fall carnival is coming up at the end of this month and is always a fun day. This year the PTA is sponsoring the clubs. Clubs are for grades 3rd-8th; they are being run for a one trimester trial period. Clubs will run Monday-Thursday and on Fridays there is the opportunity for parents to come to the playground with their children. Jurate noted that ICS had used federal stimulus funds for lots of clubs last year and that we are fortunate that the PTA was willing to take on this challenge. Caroline emphasized that this is not meant to be child care. Lauren noted that she attended the PTA meeting to make sure parents understand the role of the parent reps.

Teachers: Amy noted that a report was circulated. Eli asked about the Sunshine Committee; Amy said that has existed for several years and that it does lots of things to boost staff morale.

VI. BOT Committee Reports

External Relations: No report was circulated. **Derrick** reported that the purpose of the anniversary celebration on November 17th is to celebrate the success of ICS, as well to reach out to the community. The event will be held at the Racquet Club. Derrick asked each Board member to sell at least ten tickets (@ \$100 each). He added that we will also be trying to identify sponsors. He asked the Board members to consider sponsorship also; he will send out information as to how the invitations will be mailed out. Naomi asked if we will be able to have people pay at the door; Derrick said we'd prefer to have it ahead of time, but if necessary it will be accepted at the door. Amy asked if there might be discounted tickets for staff; Derrick stated we plan to have a limited number of half priced tickets available for staff to purchase. Jurate reported that we have an impressive honorary committee and that some awards will be presented at the event. Global citizenship awards will be presented to Judi Bernstein-Baker, the International Visitors' Council and Comcast. Other awards will be the Dream Maker awards, which will go to IBM, SAP and KaBOOM. Derrick also noted that the committee has been assessing fundraising opportunities for expansion, etc. He states that this committee wants to make sure they're aware of all ICS fundraising efforts to make sure they don't all go to the same donors. He will begin to reach out to find event chairs to partner with for future events.

Human Resources: Naomi noted that her report was saved in the Drop Box today and urged people to review it. She noted that the Lower School Principal position has been advertised; applications will be accepted through the end of October. In early November a small administrative group will review all applications and will forward a smaller number to the interview committee. That committee will review those resumes to decide who should have first interviews. The committee members will participate in the first interviews, as well as the full-day interviews for finalists. Naomi asked for Board representatives for that committee; she asked those interested to contact her via e-mail. Megan will send out the proposed meeting dates for the committee. Naomi noted that it is preferred that participants be able to meet in person.

Naomi stated that the new teacher supervision and evaluation process seems to be going well. She stated that the HR committee has developed six goals for this year.

VII. Finance/Business

John asked Jerry to review the financial reports. Jerry noted that ICS has still not received lease reimbursement funds from last year. He stated that the School District will correct the subsidy amount in November; the first few months are estimated. Jerry stated that some funds were moved from professional development to curriculum writing. Kristen noted it's more encompassing than just curriculum as it also included work on the new supervision and evaluation model. Jerry noted that June's disbursements are included here, because the Board didn't meet in August. John asked about MMLA on the June disbursements. Jurate stated it's payment for Responsive Classroom training; Jerry said it was paid out of federal stimulus and Title I funds. Eli reported the governor made some big announcements yesterday; he asked Jerry whether we're expecting any more cuts. Jerry stated that there's the possibility of charters getting paid directly from the state; Jerry anticipates that would be a more costly process involving a receivable. He said the current system works well with Philadelphia. Another problem with the proposed system is it would not pay schools until August (instead of July). Jurate asked how that might affect the charter school office at the School District; Jerry said he doesn't know. Pedro said there will be an event on the 27th; he'll send out information. Elsie asked about the legal engagement rate; John said he's waiting to get a definite amount, but there will be a cap. Jerry stated that the state also eliminated paying for part of charter schools' FICA costs, although they still pay it for the regular public schools. He said there is a possibility they may do the same with PSERS. Rona asked what we plan to use the food services excess funds on. Jurate stated the first Food Services monthly meeting for this year will be held tomorrow and that the committee already has an on-going wish list and will update that at tomorrow's meeting.

Eli moved the June disbursement motion; Derrick seconded. The motion passed unanimously. Eli moved the August disbursement motion; Rona seconded. The motion passed unanimously. John asked if there are any questions about the budget adjustments; there were no questions. Eli moved the resolution; Derrick seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

Eli asked Jurate to talk about the resolution about the FLAP grant funds. Jurate explained that we asked for proposals to review our language programs. We received two proposals and got references for both. The Curriculum Committee recommends using that ACTFL. ACTFL is able to contain costs because they receive grant money that cover some of their costs. Dana noted the references are in the CEO report. Eli asked Rona if she agrees; she said that she does. Her only concern was whether they can address all three programs. Dana stated we would pay to have additional evaluators (one for Immersion, one for Enhanced and one for Arabic). Rona asked whether there are any known bias' that ACTFL has. Jurate stated they are practitioner-based and are very reflective and that other FLAP grant recipients often use them. Elsie asked whether the FLAP group would be concerned that we're using these funds for the Spanish program; Jurate said it is allowed. Pedro moved the resolution; Rona seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

Eli asked Jurate to summarize the emergency fund resolution. She noted that there were some planned renovations for the summer; however, some other unexpected repairs had to be made---a floor being replaced, etc. The Finance Committee approved the plan. Derrick moved the resolution; John seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

VIII. Old Business

Eli reported that the Board started to discuss goals at the September meeting:

-Create a long-term (instead of a specific number at this point) strategic plan (decide on whether it should be for 3, 5 or 7 years)

-Work with the CEO to create and implement a financial plan that will minimize the impact of budget cuts

-Set and meet goals for fundraising that go beyond our current give-get

-Complete a review of our board structure

-Define and implement that board's role to achieve the goals of the Middle States Accreditation plan—determining how the Middle States goals and strategic goals fit together

Eli recommended making it a long-term strategic plan; Lauren asked whether we'd get specific once we're in the process. Eli said we would. Rona asked whether the Board fundraising needs to be a separate goal; it was agreed it does need to be, especially during the current financial environment.

Rona asked whether there was an update on the research project. Elsie introduced the two researchers Erin Horvat and Erin Rooney. Rona asked the researchers what the cost for a separate report would be. The cost was estimated at \$10,000. They noted that as part of the regular research, they will give an oral report to the Board.

IX. New Business

Eli asked Jurate to give a summary about the lottery date for the 2012-2013. Jurate explained that ICS had traditionally held its lottery in December. Last year there was a charter school initiative to have lotteries on the same day, so we moved it to March. Some parents were concerned about the late lottery if parents need to give responses to private schools. Also we didn't have a significant increase in the number of applicants. Rona reminded everyone about the fundraiser that was done several years ago, asking new families to consider giving one month of private school costs to ICS. The deadline for applications will be Friday, January 20th; the lottery will take place on Friday, February 10th.

Eli reminded everyone about the anticipated additional budget cuts as we plan for the 2012-2013 school year. We need to plan now for that likelihood. Jurate noted that we made significant cuts this year, so decisions about future cuts will need to involve lots of discussion. Eli agreed that we will have a transparent process as we make these difficult decisions. Caroline Masters stated that her kids came from a cooperative pre-school. Since she's a stay-at-home mom, she comes into ICS twice a week. She suggested that we seek out additional parents to assist.

X. Adjournment

Pedro moved for adjournment; Mary seconded. The meeting was adjourned at 8:46p.m.

Handouts circulated prior to this meeting:

Agenda

CEO report

PTA report

Teachers' report

Finance Committee report

Language Evaluation information

June 2011 Disbursements and August 2011 financials

**Independence Charter School
October 12, 2011
Resolutions**

ADOPTED

1. June Disbursements

Be it resolved that the Independence Charter School Board of Trustees hereby approve disbursements from the month of June 2011 in the amount of \$422,868.70 as presented to the Board.

2. August Disbursements

Be it resolved that the Independence Charter School Board of Trustees hereby approve disbursements from the month of August 2011 in the amount of \$205,737.03 as presented to the Board.

3. Budget Adjustments

It is the policy of the Board of Trustees that the annual budget may be amended periodically throughout the school year as circumstances, funding levels and needs arise.

Given the current funding issues which have occurred since the 2011-2012 ICS Budget was adopted, the Business Manager & CEO have presented necessary Amendments to the Board for their approval.

Therefore, be it resolved that the Independence Charter School Board of Trustees hereby approve the Budget Adjustments for the fiscal year 2011-2012 as presented to the Board of Trustees.

4. FLAP Grant Funds for Language Evaluation

Be it resolved that the Independence Charter School Board of Trustees authorize the CEO to allocate up to \$15,000 from the FLAP Grant funds for language evaluation. The agreement will be submitted to the board for review and approval before the process can be finalized.

5. Use of Emergency Funds

Be it resolved that the Independence Charter School Board of Trustees authorize the CEO to spend emergency funds up to \$19,000 for the emergency repair of the building in August 2011.

**Resolutions
DEFEATED
None**

**Resolutions
TABLED
None**