

**Independence Charter School
Board of Trustees Meeting Minutes
September 14, 2011 7:00 pm**

Board Members Present: Lauren Ayala, Rona Buchalter, Rebecca Clothey, John Eagen, Gloria Shabazz, Elsie Stern, Dana Twyman, Naomi Wyatt

Board Member(s) Absent: Mary Fitzpatrick, Derrick Johnson, Eli Lesser, Pedro Rodriguez

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; Megan Steelman, Administrative Assistant; Krista Pfeiffer, community member; Susanna Greenberg, Board nominee; Lynn Eckerman, Teacher Leader.

I. Call to Order

Naomi explained that Eli is not able to be at tonight's meeting, so she will be the chairperson. The meeting was called to order at 7:07p.m.

II. Approval of Minutes

The minutes from the July meeting were approved unanimously.

III. CEO Report

Jurate reported that three students who were expected to return for this school year did not return; she explained that those types of situations are the reason ICS purposely over-enrolls by a few students to ensure that our enrollment stays within the number needed for our budget. She noted that the School District has changed our yellow bus service provider to Atlantic Express. There have been some initial problems with late arrivals/drop offs, but Ramzy and Pr. Richard are working with the School District and Atlantic Express to resolve the issues.

Jurate noted that the school has been using the RACI (Responsibility, Accountability, Consulting, and Informing) model for streamlining and clarifying staff roles, including new positions, titles, etc. She stated that she started explaining these changes to parents last spring when she started to introduce the new administrative model. Additional information will be included in the updated Parent-Student handbook.

In regard to assessments for Spanish, both immersion and FLES, and Arabic, Jurate noted that since ICS's programs are unique, it is not possible to find an "off the shelf" assessment tool. She reported that she reported that Timeline (goes back a couple of years) regarding assessments for Spanish (Immersion & FLES) and Arabic. She stated we are currently reviewing two proposals and are talking with our FLAP grant contact to determine if we might be able to use some of those funds for this. Rona added that it's good to see this is happening, since it has been something the Curriculum Committee has wanted to happen for several years.

Jurate also reported that she'll be sending a weekly update to the board about highlights for that week; she noted this is not for deliberating, just for information-sharing. She noted that the building didn't sustain any damage from the recent earthquake. Jurate reported that she has gotten approval from the Finance Committee to fund one more part-time NTA position to ensure adequate supervision for recess, lunch and bathrooms.

Jurate noted that to alleviate the lunchroom overcrowding, we decided to have kindergartners eat in their classrooms. Jurate stated that since we now provide so many regular forms of communication with ICS families, the newsletter will be offered every-other month. We are ensuring that all parents are getting the information via e-mail or hard copy. Jurate thanked Rona for her generous donation for materials and resources for school and noted it was decided it would be used for Spanish software and books for both the Immersion and Enhanced programs. Amy reported that she and teacher Luz Angela worked on the plan for using the funds and said the resources have been ordered and have started to arrive. Jurate noted that the need for even more reading materials was something that came out of some of the Middle States surveys. Rona was given applause.

IV. New Board Member

Naomi gave the oath of office to Susanna Greenberg. She was welcomed to the Board.

V. Public Comment Period

Naomi noted that the Board listens to public comments, but will not respond at the meeting.

Wayne Terry (parent) asked whether there is an emphasis on trying to hire more African American male teachers.

VI. Non-BOT Committee Reports

PTA: There was no report circulated and no update given.

Teachers: There was no report circulated; Amy asked if she can submit one in October and was given permission to do so.

VII. BOT Committee Reports

Human Resources: No report was circulated.

Naomi reported that the Committee worked over the summer to ensure all positions were filled and received updates from Pr. Kristen about the new teacher supervision and evaluation model; she asked Pr. Kristen to give a brief overview of the planning process and the model. Kristen reported that teacher representatives from many areas participated over this summer to develop this model. There are two tracks: Track I for novice teachers, who are teachers who have been at ICS for less than three full years, and Track II for those starting their fourth (or greater) year at ICS. The September formal observations for new teachers have been scheduled. As part of the new model, teachers will use one early dismissal Wednesday for their own professional development. Rona asked if there is differentiation for struggling teachers; Kristen stated there is specific assistance for struggling teachers. Naomi asked if someone in the Novice track can get intensive assistance. Kristen said they will get assistance, because there will be constant feedback from the multiple observations that occur in that track. Naomi noted that these workgroups did a tremendous job, including doing lots of research, etc. Elsie asked what parts of this would be helpful to share with parents. Kristen said she can talk with ICS Family-Community Liaison Jenny, but that we need to be aware that this is the first year and that some things will be revised based on feedback during the first year. Rona suggested posting the entire document, along with an executive summary, on the ICS website. Jurate cautioned that could lead to some parents trying to direct employee disciplinary proceedings based on how parents interpret whether or not the teacher is following the process. Kristen said she'd feel more comfortable posting the general categories and a summary for the first year. Lauren asked by what means are we going to let parents in on the evaluation process. Kristen stated there is a lot of emphasis on parent feedback in this process.

Naomi welcomed Interim Lower School Principal Richard Trzaska; Richard noted that ICS is an amazing, action-packed school with lots of great things happening. Rona asked who is heading up the search for the permanent Lower School Principal. Jurate noted that we will start advertising next week with a starting date of July 1, 2012. Jurate will be reconvening the Review Committee; some members will not be able to continue on the committee for various reasons, so some new members, including new Board members, will be participating. The plan is to make a decision by late December 2011 or early January 2012. Naomi asked for some Board member volunteers to participate during the interview phase.

Curriculum: There was no report. Dana reported the next meeting will be on Monday afternoon. Jurate stated that part of what will be discussed will be what part the Curriculum Committee will play in the Middle States Accreditation strategic planning process. Elsie stated she feels it makes sense for this conversation to start in the Curriculum Committee and then may move to the Governance Committee. Rona said she wants to clarify that the Middle States goals and strategic planning are two separate things. Dana stated that since there is no current strategic plan, they will start with the Middle States goals.

Committee Meeting Dates: Elsie asked everyone to send her meeting days/times for this year.

VIII. Finance/Business

John noted the Finance Committee will be making a special subcommittee to plan for the next three or four budget years given the financial outlook. John stated that they will also include the External Communications Committee. Jerry stated the auditors will be visiting soon to begin the 2010 audit. Jerry expects to have the audit back sometime in November and should have it ready for Board approval by the December Board meeting. Naomi, Derrick and Pedro comprise the Audit Committee. Jerry noted the Audit Committee decided to stay with Citrin Cooperman for the 2010 audit. Jerry explained to the new Board members that the financials will always be one month behind due to the timing of the meeting. Jerry will include June and August disbursements for the October meeting. Jerry noted that his office is just closing up the books for the various federal Title monies and Stimulus money.

Rona asked what the Food Services excess funds are being for used. Jerry said all those funds always need to be returned to the program. An additional freezer was purchased and part of one employee's salary is covered by that budget. Naomi asked if we can charge lunchroom staff to that fund; Jerry said that is not allowed. Rona asked Jurate to bring a list of possible uses for those funds to the next meeting; Jurate said the first item that needs to be considered is whether or not additional Linton staff is needed. Elsie asked if there's a way to construct the job so it could be covered by Food Services.

Jerry explained that the School District subsidy payment is always lower than anticipated at this time of the year, because the first several months are based on last year's enrollment estimates. Rona moved the disbursement resolution; Elsie seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

John asked Jurate to give a summary about the plans for the double anniversary celebration (10+ years of ICS and 100 years of the Durham School). Jurate stated the kick-off will be at the PTA's Fall Festival. Another celebration will be on November 17th at the Racquet Club; we will also have various events to highlight special events (i.e., international human rights day, etc) at ICS. We plan to involve Avi Eden, Marsha Wilkoff, etc to have public discussions, etc. The plan is not to put a lot of pressure on

staff, while still showcasing our programs. Jurate noted that there is a sponsorship plan, which will be finished by Monday. She asked the Board to review the draft honorary committee list and give suggestions for more names. The estimate for costs is no more than \$12,000--- most likely less. Jurate reported that we plan to do another “brick” selling fundraiser. Lauren asked whether we’re considering naming rights, etc. Jurate stated at this point, we’re only considering naming in the program, on the website, etc. Elsie asked whether Monika is the “R” for the celebration; Jurate stated that Jurate is the “R” and will be working with Monika. The culmination will be the Global Citizenship Days in early May. Elsie asked whether the November event is where we should invite potential board members; Jurate said it could be, but there will be more opportunities in the spring. John moved the anniversary expense resolution; Elsie seconded. Rona asked if it is true that the gala celebration is not about raising money, but about celebrating. Jurate said that is the plan, but we decided to try to get sponsorship. The budget circulated is the basic budget of expenses; she said the room at the Racquet Club holds up to 250.

Jurate noted that the calendar event, now handled by the Take Flight group, will not occur this year, but will instead be incorporated into the anniversary events. Rona asked whether Take Flight needs the calendar event to exist. Jurate stated that the anniversary celebration committee agreed not to go to the sponsors of the calendar. Lauren said let’s make sure we maximize the opportunity to use the gala celebration as a time to charge a higher amount (i.e., \$100 for the 100th anniversary). Elsie stated that she’s afraid that making the prices too high might exclude some people. Jurate encouraged people to come to Monday morning’s meeting to work on these suggestions. The motion was passed unanimously.

IX. Old Business

Rebecca reported that Elsie, she and Jurate met with the researchers who want ICS to be a case study of what are the success factors that make a charter school work. They hope to then expand it to more schools. The plan is to keep the name of the school anonymous. Elsie noted that we will have the opportunity to “out” our school if we want to. Jurate added that the researchers have received a grant for \$40,000 for this work. For an extra cost, we can commission the researchers to produce a more nuts and bolts report. Rebecca noted that this will be an independent study. Jurate stated that having this research done will give us presence when we seek grants, etc. Elsie noted this will highlight the elements that are helping make us successful, as well as those that may get in the way of our success. Lauren asked why we want to be anonymous. Rebecca stated you want interviewees to be as honest as possible when responding. She noted we don’t have to agree to that, but we feel it will make interviewees more comfortable. The research will take about eight months. Jurate noted this is primarily a qualitative study, but some parts will be quantitative. Rona asked what the commissioned report would include; Rebecca stated that would include the information we would want included. Rona asked Rebecca to get the costs for that.

X. New Business

Naomi stated the Executive Committee has started the conversation on setting goals.

Last year there were three goals:

- Encourage implementation of Global Citizenship goals school-wide.
- Develop and implement processes for articulating, aligning, and assessing goals (board, committees, members, school). Move to Board Reports and Board Training to align with goals.
- Develop collaborative strategy/plan for board’s role in external relations, development, outreach

The draft goals for this new year proposed by the Executive Committee are:

- Create a 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

Naomi asked if anyone feels things are missing. Rona asked whether the facilities discussion would be part of that; John said it would have to be. Dana said it seems that if a goal is the strategic plan, the others could be subcategories. Naomi said there are timing issues, because there are some things we want to accomplish right now and others that are more long-term. Rona stated that having a permanent Lower School Principal in place is something important, but may not be an appropriate Board goal. Naomi asked whether there were any strong thoughts about whether the plan should be a 3, 5 or 7 year plan. It was agreed that 3-5-7 makes sense. Elsie stated her sense is the Board needs to figure out its role in program development. Under goal #4 items like the Middle States goals, etc would be worked in. Rebecca asked whether broader fundraising is something for the whole board to discuss or something the External Relations Committee would be doing. Rona stated it seems we need a more aggressive board fundraising strategy--- possibly a specific goal if the cafeteria expansion is feasible. **Strategic plan goal, financial plan, board structure.** Gloria asked whether we found the need for a Development Director. Jurate stated the work with Fairmount Ventures was worthwhile and we did get some grant funding. Jurate stated that through meeting with funders, we learned there are others who have a bigger school system, as well as more needy places which seem to be two reasons why ICS does not often get large grants. The Development Assistant position helps with writing thank you notes, completing requirements for existing grants, Gloria stated the Board won't be fundraising full time. Naomi stated that is something the Board needs to decide---is development important enough to spend the money on a Development position to do that full-time. Naomi stated we want to solidify these goals at the next meeting.

XI. Adjournment

Rona moved for adjournment; John seconded. The meeting was adjourned at 9:53 p.m.

Handouts circulated prior to this meeting:

Agenda
 CEO report
 July 2011 financials
 Teacher Supervision & Evaluation Plan Summary
 Anniversary Event Information Sheet

**Independence Charter School
September 14, 2011
Resolutions**

ADOPTED

1. July Disbursements

Be it resolved that the Independence Charter School Board of Trustees hereby approve disbursements from the month of July 2011 in the amount of \$103,830.52 as presented to the Board.

2. Funds for Anniversary Celebration

Be it resolved that the Independence Charter School Board of Trustees hereby approve that up to \$12,000 may be expended under the direction of the CEO for the preparation of the anniversary celebration in November 2011.

**Resolutions
DEFEATED
None**

**Resolutions
TABLED
None**