

**Independence Charter School
Board of Trustees Meeting
Wednesday, June 9, 2004**

Board Members Present: Eric Cramer, Rebecca Baehr, Susan Gobreski, Rosina Miller, John Baram, Sean Hennessy, Pamela Prell, Gary Shepard, Michelle Campbell (via. Phone), Julia Colton (via. Phone)

Board Members Absent: Bruce LeBuhn, Ed Hanlon, William Boyd

Others Present: Randi Ostrow, Foundations, Inc.; Vicki Holm, PTA; Krista Pfeiffer, Teacher Representative

I. Call to Order

Meeting was called to order at 7:11pm by President Eric Cramer

II. Reading and Review of Minutes

Minutes were circulated. No objections were made and the minutes were adopted.

III. CAO report

Personnel: As evident in the resolutions brought forth in the last two months, we have filled almost all of the teaching positions that will be available in the coming year. We are still working on filling the positions of Science/Gifted Teacher and Nurse. We have candidates for both positions. I have set aside time for new teachers to have a brief orientation this summer apart from the usual August seminar. This will allow them to focus fully on the other information such as work with standards, and the like.

Several of the new appointments are helping to fill substitute teacher roles. This allows them to get to know the children, the ethos of the school ahead of time.

Another good piece of news is that Teacher Meredith Barkley will be able to stay on in a part time role as Special Education Teacher. We will be losing about 3 or 4 of our more significantly involved cases next year due to relocation, and will have a smaller need for staffing in special education than originally projected.

Curriculum: The Curriculum Committee met and discussed the introduction of a Writing Continuum to the school's overall curriculum. It would have the teachers working together to plan a continuum of writing skills from grade to grade so that no skills are missed and so that they developmentally support the development of skills down the line.

We will emphasize to a greater extent the need to prepare kids in handwriting for printing and for cursive.

We have two people assigned to help coordinate the preparation for World/Country Studies: Anna Evans and Eve Manz. They will work this summer to prepare sources for all of the countries being studied, will develop community resources and will support teachers in better understanding the potentials of integrating country studies into the regular curriculum.

We intend to send a representative to the International Baccalaureate Exploratory seminar this summer. Our sources tell us, however, that the undertaking for the initial year of full participation would cost approximately \$ 25,000 (all training and application fees). And so, we will seek out grants to make that possible. It is clearly a worthwhile investment, however, one which we will work on slowly.

Room arrangements: There are many changes in rooms precipitated by the addition of the fifth floor that will compliment curriculum: Besides the fact that the rearrangement of rooms allows for grade grouping in sections and therefore more potential grade level cooperative work, we also have been able to assign the following:

The Dance/Movement room moves upstairs to a slightly larger location,

Although this means that little kids have to travel upstairs for D/M.

This D/M space becomes the Art Room (finally!). The room will be furnished

With cabinets and tables that can compliment any assemblies or events that Happen when the sliding doors are open.

The Library space becomes a classroom. The Spec. Ed room tucked away in the Back of the Library becomes the PTA room which can also accommodate Speech Therapists during the day. The alcove where computers are now located in the Front of the library will remain for reading and math tutoring which will finally

Happen next year. The Spanish teachers' office near the commons area moves Upstairs and that room will be used for multiple purposes: Including housing library books. The PTA will open it to library use a Couple of times a week. The room will also serve small group sessions during the morning for ESOL and reading groups. And finally, it will be used as a "celebration" room for the Principal's challenge, for SWEBS Activities. Room 206 will become a Science and Gifted Support room. Children scheduled for science will move into that room for a 40 minute Session. We can house Science supplies there. (The Biegalski's have Donated a computer with a microscope, and printer for the science room. This room will also be the meeting place for the Gifted Support classes. On the fifth floor, we will have the Student and Family Support Office for Anne Tarbox Hall, office cubicles for the Spanish FLES teachers and the Teaching Interns, and there will be another Special Education resource Room. In addition, there will be a small computer lab. And finally, there will also be one room that will be shared by both FLES teachers. Although both teachers will be traveling to rooms most of the time, they are able to use this Spanish Activities room for a variety of activities such As a puppet theatre, a workshop for Spanish festivals. It is a small narrow Room, so a classroom would not work. Teacher Adrienne is happy with the prospect of having this breakout space.

Events: In the past month we have hosted various orientations for parents. **The Fourth and Fifth Grade parents** met with the Principal in May to discuss the move to the Fifth floor as well as the requirement to fill our Readmission to Middle Years at ICS. This is a document that reviews the Code of Conduct, Dress Code, Family Participation and responsibilities, student responsibilities. It requires that parents sign reaffirmations of supporting the Mission and Vision of our school as well as their willingness to support the work and behavior of their children. The dress code will be slightly different for the Middle Years kids with a narrower selection of possibilities still using the same school colors. The children are also required to submit two one page each written pieces: one a letter to the Principal indicated why they want to return to ICS. The second is an essay on who they want to be when they grow up. Completion of the documents is due June 16th. Approximately 50% of the parents participated that evening with another 20% requesting documents. We have noted that non-submission of documents may indicate intent to leave ICS. We will closely follow who does not submit and will contact each and every one of those parents until the process is complete. We also held a rousing **parent orientation for new incoming Kindergarten** and other grade parents. The nearly 150 participants were excited and energetic. Teachers Claire, Rachel, Paulina, Meredith, Andrea and Anne Tarbox Hall presented ICS programs and spoke of how to prepare kids for school. Noteworthy was a participant all the way from Michigan who is moving their family to our immediate location and whose child will transition from an immersion program there to our 2nd grade immersion.

A fantastic PTA sponsored, organized and executed **Talent Show** proved how our Mission is coming to fruition. A diverse audience of parents and grandparents cheered children on. One of our most challenged students performed a piano duet to the cheers first of his classmates and then of the entire audience. It also demonstrated the talent, the self-assuredness and feeling of community that our children have here. **And for sure, it showed how we are out-growing our space.** With each of the above mentioned meetings we had such a great turnout that all seats were filled and over-flowing. Next year, we will have to try to use Landmark space for larger audiences. I have deliberately staggered Back to School nights to service first the K-2 crowd, then the 3-6 so that we can fit everyone. We also need to purchase more chairs.

We are looking forward to our upcoming **Kindergarten Walk-through** slated for June 10th and 11th. Parents and incoming children are invited to join us on one of those days to walk up the Sansom Street entrance, eat breakfast, and tour the school.

We will be running a drive in the last weeks of school to gather needed items to help the people of the Dominican Republic devastated by floods. How important that we help the people of a country we are studying (first grade) more on that will come early this week.

Awards assemblies, report cards and Kindergarten Graduation are the final big events for the school year.

Summer activities: There are several activities planned for the summer. Summer schools will begin the last week of June and extend to the third week of July. The summer schools are: Voyager Reading and Math for select at-risk children (about 72). This is a four week program. The Spanish Immersion Camp is a two week camp for Spanish immersion kids. Although most work will be activity based, there will be a greater emphasis on language skill development. There will also be a two day mini-camp for incoming Spanish immersion kindergartners. This is tuition-based camp that is entirely financed by tuition monies. The Arts Camp run by Beth Paolini and Rebecca Hooper is currently registering participants. All of the camp participants will be able to get free breakfast and lunch at the school (although having seen the lunch menu would urge all parents to send a lunch—remember “mystery meat” when you went to school?).

The Arts Camp is also tuition based. All of the three camps will have the advantage of being able to offer WINGS after care.

The fourth week of school will have about three days for planning involving several teachers over about three days. They will contribute to doing some planning on scheduling, coordination of assemblies and celebrations, input on in-services, etc.

We will also be hosting a “leadership week” for approximately 20 fifth and sixth grade boys and girls. These selected children who show leadership potential will be trained in conflict resolution and leadership skills. This week is being coordinated by Andrea Soelter and Anne Tarbox Hall.

The last week of August will be very active with all returning teachers in in-service from Wednesday, August 25th to August 31st. New teachers will come in earlier for orientation on the 23rd, and we intend to include a great walking tour of our location.

The schedule will allow for plenty of quality in-service experience as well as time to work in grade level groups and of course, in setting up the classroom. The Painted Bride’s Lisa Nelson Haynes (also an incoming K parent) will be hosting our teachers for a working lunch to discuss all of the connections that can happen with the Painted Bride.

Grants: As mentioned previously, we received a SWEBS (System-wide effective behavior system) grant. The team has been attending all workshops sponsored by the state, and we have been interviewed and classroom activities filmed for grant purposes. We have a plan for the coming year and monies have been budgeted for teacher training, for the supplies needed to do the system wide effort. We will be scheduling time with the discipline committee to review the budget and system wide structure.

The EETT tech grant was awarded to us. Only three charter schools were awarded this. It is worth about 30,000 dollars and will bring training, computer upgrading and the valuable FastForward reading program for our most intense upper grades kids.

In addition, we have also been accepted into a new consortium of schools through a PENN program. It is headed by one of our ex- student teachers Nicole. It includes extensive training for teachers, 10 laptops awarded for the school, and 20 teachers who will receive (free of charge) 4.5 graduate credits of training at Penn. In the following year, 10 teachers will receive hand held computers for grading and other data purposes. We will be paired with the Penn Alexander School for training. Andrea has already attended the first orientation.

The Goldman Sachs and the 21st century grants have been submitted, and we are awaiting the results. The Lenfest grant is next for submission. Please send any other grant ideas to Jurate.

A New Initiative: I am inviting all ICS staff, Board Members and PTA officers to participate in a school-wide book reading over the summer. I have extended this invitation to all ICS parents as well. The book is **Maggie’s American Dream: The Life and Times of a Black Family by James P. Comer**. This is a book that I read in Graduate School at Penn. It was moving and inspirational on many levels. It helps us think about the power and importance of family. It raises the awareness of the struggle for equality. This book will be given to you at the Board Meeting as part of our community’s professional development. If you are interested in obtaining other copies, you may find them on line or visit Chris’ Corner at 1950 Pine Street. We have on **open night for discussing the book** open to the entire ICS community on **September 1st in the evening**. I chose this date because later in September it gets too crazy and parents have to come in for back to school nights and because the date is still distant from Labor Day therefore not intruding on that final vacation time. I have also

written an invitation to Dr. Comer who is at Yale. Spread the word...it is a great book, engaging reading.

Added Issues

There is a meeting scheduled with the Philadelphia School District department of transportation for June 10, 2004 at 9:30am. This meeting will be to address the problems that are still occurring with "DELCO" and our bussing service. **Eric Cramer** and **Gary Shepard** had a meeting with Paul Vallas and Ellen Savitz regarding ICS overall and also touched on our issues with transportation and space, indoor and outdoor. Paul Vallas stressed that he would like to help us with space (helping CHAD and ICS purchase the building) and our issues with transportation. **Discussion** continues about a "Set aside" creating a "neighborhood" school feeling. Paul Vallas would like us to fashion and write a plan/resolution for such a relationship. The feel is that we should discuss this over the summer, follow up with a letter to Paul Vallas telling him of our discussions. **Jurate Krokys** suggests having someone from ABC and someone from the School Board to the July or August Meeting to discuss this issue in more detail.

IV. Treasurer's Report

Be it resolved that the Independence Charter School Board of Trustees approve the spending of \$159,179.38.

Sean Hennessy moves to adopt the resolution.

Susan Gobreski seconds the motion.

Unanimous to adopt.

V. Updates

A. ICS PTA

The Silent Auction raised about \$13,000 this year. The officers met with the CEO and would like to give music, art and dance each \$2,000. The PTA will also be giving \$1,000 to the science program. They have also ordered a movable stage for the school. There is quite a bit left over to be spent as needed. The money will also be used to help the dance and movement room with flooring.

The new officers have been elected: Michelle Coates will be the President, Lynn Hunt is the Vice President, TJ Gobreski is the secretary, Dan Webber will be the liaison.

Talent Show had 200 people turn out to watch the over 50 acts. The feedback made everything worth it.

The PTA was able to contribute \$400 to recent field trips to cover student costs.

PTA is starting "Volunteer of the Year"...this year Megan Steelman. There will be a plaque where you can add a name per year.

The book fair went very well. Books were donated to all of the teachers and staff. \$2700 in books, total.

PTA will also be pushing Box Tops for Education. We can raise thousands of dollars just by collecting the Box Tops.

B. Renovation

Work has been started on the fifth floor. We are waiting for a variance from L & I. They have one objection and we are waiting to hear what the objection is. There is a meeting on Friday, June 11 at 9:00am to hand off the project from John Rowe. (Susan Gobreski will call Pamela Prell who is a back up.)

C. Committee Reports

1. Human Resources

Hiring is still taking place. There is a position for part time gifted, full time nurse. We will also be hiring an operations coordinator/administrative and front office staff/technology.

2. Budget

Talking about looking at cleaning and services for a "janitor" service.

3. Fundraising

None

4. Community Relations

Summary of the results will be posted on the WEB by the end of the school year.

5. Technology

None

6. Curriculum

We approved a writing program recommended by Kristen Long. This will be a way to track children and their needs and goals. Final scores for immersion children were reviewed. All students in first and second graders were at grade level. DIBELS testing is going on throughout the school (including immersion students) the children are all doing very well. Also discussed the International Baccalaureate Program and Rosina Miller will attend a meeting in Austin, TX to try and decide whether the program is right for us (there is a \$25,000 application fee). There will be meeting fourth Monday in June at 7pm.

7. Discipline

There was a hearing for expulsion. The family was offered a deal in which we would allow him to stay in the office until a report card is prepared and a packet of home schooling materials.

The other expulsion was not held. The parent stated that they would not be bringing the child back next year.

There is a possible expulsion in July.

A child was reinstated onto the bus, but the parents chose not to do so for the remainder of the year.

8. Legal

A Due Process Hearing has been scheduled on June 17th. Executive Session.

9. Policy

Attorney has the policies and is reviewing them at this time. We are talking about moving some non-teaching employees to at will.

Discussion

Krista Pfeiffer: Teachers would like a copy of the new pay scale.

There are also questions about termination of benefits when an employee is leaving the school. There are questions about being left “high and dry” for the summer. (However, if you sign a contract before the summer your benefits will continue over the summer.) **Jurate Krokys** states that she made sure that this was included in the information given to all teachers at the beginning of the year. **Sean Hennessy** asks if that is something important to add to the contract. **John Baram** suggests that we offer employees who are leaving the option for “pay out”.

10. Nominations

Eric Cramer and Rosina Miller are the only two members of the committee. Anyone interested should make this known.

11. CEO Evaluation

We are working with the available data and Sean Hennessy has created a draft and it is being gone over by other members of the Board of Trustees.

12. Executive/Renewal

None

VI. Resolutions

A. Old Business

1. 2003-2004 Budget Adjustment

Be it resolved that the Board of Trustees of Independence Charter School accept the adjustments made to the 2003-2004 School Budget (attachment A).

Rebecca Baehr moves to adopt the resolution.

Rosina Miller seconds the motion.

Roll Call Vote

Eric Cramer--aye
Rebecca Baehr--aye
Susan Gobreski--aye
Rosina Miller--aye
John Baram--aye
Sean Hennessy--aye
Pamela Prell--aye
Gary Shepard—aye
Unanimous to adopt.

B. New Business

1. Contracts:

a. Pediatric Therapeutic services

Be it resolved that Independence Charter School enter into a two year contract with Pediatric Therapeutic Services for the 2004-2005 School year, for the purposes of securing Speech and Language, Occupational, and Physical Therapy for eligible students, said contract not to exceed \$45,000.00 per year.

Rosina Miller moves to adopt the resolution.

Susan Gobreski seconds the motion.

Unanimous to adopt.

b. Dr. Larry Taylor

Be it resolved that Independence Charter School enter into a contract with Dr. Larry Taylor for the 2004-2005 school year for the purposes of securing psychological educational services in the form of psychological educational testing and consultation, said contract not to exceed \$20,000.00.

Susan Gobreski moves to adopt the resolution.

Sean Hennessy seconds the motion.

Unanimous to adopt.

2. Personnel

Be it resolved that Independence Charter School Board of Trustees offer contracts to the individuals for the positions listed below under the terms and conditions specified by the CEO and the terms of the Contract:

- a. Katie Jo Andreola- classroom teacher
- b. Allison Van Wyk- classroom teacher
- c. Jamarr Kellum- Non-Teaching Assistant

Rebecca Baehr moves to adopt the resolution.

Sean Hennessy seconds the motion.

Unanimous to adopt.

3. Salaries /teachers

Be it resolved that Independence Charter School confirm the salaries of the contracted ICS employees as listed on attachment B.

Sean Hennessy moves to adopt the resolution.

Susan Gobreski seconds the motion.

Unanimous to adopt.

4. Be it resolved that we, the Independence Charter School Board of Trustees, takes cognizance of the departure of John Rowe at the end of his contract.

Sean Hennessy moves to adopt the resolution.

Rebecca Baehr seconds the motion.

Unanimous to adopt.

5. Board Nominations

- a. Rebecca Baehr, Michelle Campbell, Susan Gobreski and Pamela Prell have been nominated for the four founder seats that need to be filled. These terms expire in 2007.

Rosina Miller moves to approve the nominations.

Sean Hennessy seconds the motion.

Roll Call Vote

Eric Cramer--aye

Rebecca Baehr--aye

Susan Gobreski--aye

Rosina Miller--aye

John Baram--aye

Sean Hennessy--aye

Pamela Prell--aye

Michelle Campbell—aye

Julia Colton--aye

Unanimous to adopt.

- b. The nominations committee has decided to leave the slot, vacated by Ed Hanlon's position, open until a person is found for the position.

- c. **Pamela Prell nominates Rosina Miller to the position of secretary.**

Susan Gobreski seconds the nomination.

Susan Gobreski-aye

John Baram-aye

Sean Hennessy-aye

Eric Cramer-aye

Rosina Miller-aye

Pamela Prell-aye

Rebecca Baehr-aye

Unanimous to approve the nomination.

- d. **Susan Gobreski nominates Sean Hennessy to the position of treasurer.**

Rosina Miller seconds the nomination.

Susan Gobreski-aye

John Baram-aye

Sean Hennessy-aye

Eric Cramer-aye

Rosina Miller-aye

Pamela Prell-aye

Rebecca Baehr-aye

Unanimous to approve the nomination.

- e. **Rosina Miller nominates Susan Gobreski to the position of Vice President.**

Rebecca Baehr seconds the nomination.

Susan Gobreski-aye

John Baram-aye

Sean Hennessy-aye

Eric Cramer-aye

Rosina Miller-aye

Pamela Prell-aye

Rebecca Baehr-aye

Unanimous to approve the nomination.

- f. **Sean Hennessy nominates Rebecca Baehr to the position of President.**

Pamela Prell seconds the nomination.

Susan Gobreski-aye

John Baram-aye
Sean Hennessy-aye
Eric Cramer-aye
Rosina Miller-aye
Pamela Prell-aye
Rebecca Baehr-aye

Unanimous to approve the nomination.

6. Be it resolved that the Independence Charter School Board of Trustees approve Eric Cramer to enter into a contract with Foundations for professional services with the same general terms of the previous year not to exceed the budgeted amount.

Sean Hennessy moves to adopt the resolution.

Rebecca Baehr seconds the motion.

Unanimous to adopt.

7. Be it hereby resolved that the BOT appoint Ron D'Alonzo and Julia Colton to the advisory committee.

Susan Gobreski moves to adopt the resolution.

Sean Hennessy seconds the motion.

Discussion

We will be inviting Senator Fumo to join the advisory Board.

Unanimous to adopt.

8. Be it resolved that the Independence Charter School Board of Trustees formally create the Executive Committee that will include all current officers and the group, upon a vote of the majority of those officers, has the ability to invite the past president to be a member.

Susan Gobreski moves to adopt the resolution.

Rosina Miller seconds the motion.

Unanimous to adopt.

9. Be it resolved that the Independence Charter School Board of Trustees formally recognize Eric Cramer for his service as the past president of the Independence Charter School Board of Trustees.

Sean Hennessy moves to adopt the resolution.

Susan Gobreski seconds the motion.

Unanimous to adopt.

VII. Public Comment Period

Discussion

Krista Pfeiffer brings things to the BOT that has been specifically requested to bring to the board. Krista also puts together a brief synopsis of the meeting for all the teachers to keep the abreast of the meeting. **Pamela Prell:** We should encourage teachers to come to the meetings, this position should not discourage their participation.

The BOT moves to executive session at 9:30pm to discuss a pending legal issue. The BOT returns from executive session at 9:50pm.

VIII. Adjournment

The meeting is adjourned at 9:50 pm.