

**Independence Charter School
Board of Trustees Meeting
Wednesday, July 14, 2004**

MINUTES

Board Members Present: Rebecca Baehr, Susan Gobreski, Rosina Miller, John Baram, Sean Hennessy, Pamela Prell, Michelle Campbell

Board Members Absent: Bruce LeBuhn, Eric Cramer, Gary Shepard, Bill Boyd

Others Present: Randi Ostrow, Foundations, Inc.; Krista Pfeiffer, Teacher Representative; Andrea Soelter, Dean of Students; Jurate Krokys, CEO/Principal; Mike Gonzalez, interested in ICS; Ramzy Andrawos, prospective employee; Gerry Santilli, Foundations, Inc.

I. Call to Order

The meeting was called to order at 7:15 pm by President Rebecca Baehr.

II. Reading and Review of Minutes

The minutes were circulated and reviewed.

Rebecca Baehr states that LNI should read L and I.

With that one change made the minutes were adopted.

The minutes from the emergency meeting on Wednesday, June 24, 2004 were circulated and reviewed. No objections were made and the minutes were adopted.

III. CEO Report

The days between our June and July meetings represent a shift from school to summer scheduling. The school year ended quite successfully and work has begun immediately to plan and support the beginning of a successful 2005-2006 school year.

Summer Schedule: The last day of school for children was June 18th. On June 19th, the teachers spent the morning reviewing Terranova results and also breaking down their classrooms. Lunch was a generous pot luck celebration that included presents and flowers for teachers who were leaving or going off to marry, and one who was expecting a baby in July. The afternoon was organized by Barbara Kay and Anna Evans and was a reflective and fun exercise in what was the best and the worst of the school year. That ended in a constructive note, and teachers said that they would like more of this kind of interchange.

The school took a week off without children. The Principal attended a whole day workshop at the School district that was an information session regarding safety, suspension and expulsion proceedings, food services, and annual report writing. In addition, there was a presenter from the Foreign Languages department who invited participation in their foreign teacher pool. She explained in detail the process whereby Philadelphia has recently been obtaining Spanish Speaking Teachers from Spain. I will look in to this more, though recently, we have been quite successful in recruiting teachers who are native speakers locally.

The summer schools started on June 28th and will continue to July 23rd. Tiffany Nguyen is overseeing the functioning of the summer school program assisted by Jamel Henderson. Approximately 60 children are attending the Voyager summer school which is of no cost to parents. The Spanish Immersion camp will begin July 12th and go to July 23rd. A special two day orientation camp for Incoming Immersion Kindergartners will also take place.

A group of representative teachers on the SWEBS (System Wide Effective Behavior System) team worked for several days in late June planning a student behavior support plan that includes building community spirit, reinforcing on-task behaviors, and creating a plan for school-wide behavior support. The plans include a School mascot, assemblies, school wide support and seminars for teachers. The SWEBS team has been successful in obtaining the services of Dr. Reginald Banks who will speak at the teachers' summer in-service regarding urban youth. Dr. Banks is a dynamic speaker who has often addressed public school teachers.

Dean of Students Andrea Soelter and our new Counselor Ann Tarbox Hall have been meeting to plan for their cooperative work this coming year. They are reviewing student cases and planning for smooth transitioning in the fall. Ann has made connections to Big Brothers and Big Sisters for the

older children. This is a very exciting undertaking that will be very helpful to many of our children. Both have also been planning for our very first Leadership Camp. Students were selected from Grades 4 and 5 (next year's 5 and 6) who demonstrated the potential for leadership. They have organized a 4 day camp for these 15 students that will take place at Independence. The goal of the camp is to foster leadership skills that will contribute to the success of our 5th and 6th grades in the coming year.

The last week of July: Teachers are invited to volunteer time to work on school planning in areas such as scheduling, program and event planning, and planning for in-services. My concern is that I have now been subpoenaed on behalf of one of my students and may not be able to be there for the full time. We may need to reschedule to the third week of August which is very late.

The annual report is also due on August 1st and so we will be expecting to finish that for submission. In August, I will be attending together with Spencer Davis and Jonathan Baram, the EETT grant recipients workshop on August 4th and 5th in Harrisburg.

New teachers will begin the seminar on August 23rd with "old" teachers joining them on August 25th for a full week of seminar.

Personnel: I am glad to announce that we have a full time nurse for the coming school year. We are in the final stages of an Operations Coordinator search. And I have four final candidates for the Gifted/Science teacher position. This last position will entail observations of demonstration lessons in the summer school program. Most of our part time staff who are classroom assistants are returning as such. A confirmation list for resolution will be presented in August. Currently, we are filling the few vacancies with highly qualified people. Our classroom assistants will be included in seminars before school starts in September.

We are eagerly awaiting news about the 21st Century Grants. This is a large grant that we applied for together with Communities in Schools. It includes a position for an after school coordinator. I have asked both the budget committee and the HR committee to consider that being a position in which we contribute the benefits.

And finally, I am working on a receptionist/tech person position to be filled. I have a candidate and am working on ascertaining skill level for compatibility with the job.

Standardized testing: We received the Terranova test results on the day before the last day of school. Two classroom test group results were missing, and we were told they would arrive shortly. Andrea followed through searching via the test coordinators when they did not arrive. Finally, this past week, we were told that the box with the tests was located in California. It will arrive this week and we will disburse the results to parents with a letter of thanks for patience. Generally, we did as well as last year with some greater improvements in grades 3, 4, 5. Spencer and I and Sean will be working later this week on Thursday, with the results to have a written synopsis for you. To date, Philadelphia has not posted their results.

Other events: We've begun preliminary planning for a whole school walkathon on Friday, October 8th. It is only in the planning stages but if we were to do it, would work with Philadelphia Cares. This is a day off for Philadelphia Schools, not for us. We would combine it with a study of the Schuylkill River. Our idea is to walk from the Art Museum across the bridge and back on West River Drive.

Remember our "One School, One Book" reading of Maggie's American Dream. A discussion of the book will take place on the evening of September 1st. If you as a Board Member have not received your copy, please be sure to ask Jurate for it.

Materials and furniture purchases: We are finalizing the textbook and book purchases for this coming year. You will see a breakdown this Wednesday. Furniture purchases for new classrooms will also be included. We are hoping that Renovations will be completed so that teachers can begin to work on setting up rooms. Our cleaning crew will be waxing floors this summer as well, most likely the first two weeks of August.

***Please remember that we have two guest speakers lined up for the next two Board Meetings in regard to the "Neighborhood Concept" that is being propagated by the School district. This Wednesday, Gerry Santilli representing the ABC the Association of Boards of Charter Schools will speak. Following that in August, Alice Heller, in charge of Charter schools in the Districts EMO and Charter Schools office will speak.

IV. Treasurer's Report

Be it resolved that the Independence Charter School Board of Trustees approve the spending of \$74,077.75.

Sean Hennessy moves to adopt the resolution.

Rosina Miller seconds the motion.

Discussion

A change to the expenditure list: Veronica Kim's expenditure is for supply reimbursement, not travel.

Roll Call Vote

Rebecca Baehr--aye

Susan Gobreski--aye

Rosina Miller--aye

John Baram--aye

Sean Hennessy--aye

Pamela Prell--aye

Michelle Campbell--aye

Unanimous to adopt.

Be it resolved that the Treasurer's report be adopted.

Sean Hennessy moves to adopt the report.

Rosina Miller seconds the motion.

Roll Call Vote

Rebecca Baehr--aye

Susan Gobreski--aye

Rosina Miller--aye

John Baram--aye

Sean Hennessy--aye

Pamela Prell--aye

Michelle Campbell--aye

Unanimous to adopt.

V. Updates

A. PTA announcements

The PTA has been meeting over the summer and has begun to plan for next year.

B. SWEBS (School Wide Effective Behavior System) presentation by ICS SWEBS Team member

We have received a two-year grant from the Pennsylvania Department of Education through the Department of Special Education. This grant requires that we institute a set of "School Rules" and teach them school wide. The rules (we are calling them "expectations") are: An "ICS" Citizen...

1. uses "ICS" words
2. uses "ICS" actions
3. follows directions
4. is a team player
5. respects themselves

These rules will be taught to all students in the morning directly following the pledge. We will be reinforcing rule following with the use of *ICS All-Star Tickets*. The focus of this program is on positive reinforcement, as opposed to negative reinforcement. We have been collecting behavioral data from teachers and students. We have also been collecting data from written referrals to the front office. This summer we are holding a "Youth Leadership Forum" for selected 5th and 6th grade students. We will be having leadership luncheons, peer mediation training, and career discussions. We will be going to a high ropes course with a rock climbing wall on our last day.

Andrea Soelter has asked if John Baram can help by creating an excel database to collect and sort all behavioral data. She will contact John Baram via e-mail. She will also give John Baram the number for Carl DiMartino (in charge of the grant) in order to determine if a program already exists.

C. Presentation re PSD Neighborhood Schools Concept: Gerry Santilli

There is an idea from the PSD to create “Neighborhood Schools” within the Charter Schools. Gerry Santilli is the President of a charter school and the Vice President of Alliance of Charter Schools. Gerry talks about the recent changes to Charter Schools: Charter schools now have the right to build a building, Charter Schools can create long-term debt, Charter Schools are now able to help divide their assets if the charter is not approved.

There are no other charter schools that have taken the school district up on their offer of a “neighborhood school”. The Russell Byers Charter School came up with the idea and presented it to PSD, however they did not end up agreeing to the proposal.

D. Teacher Representative Report

Summer school is going well and the children seem to be enjoying it and doing very well academically and behaviorally. The last day for staff was appreciated. It was a time to close everything up and deal with our successes and think about what we need to work on.

E. Renovation

We will be receiving a building permit next week so that we can begin renovations. We do need to make renovations to the roof that will cost around \$10,000.00. There will also need to be lighting added that will be on during dark. There is no longer any issue about a 2B vs. 3B building. We are 2B and therefore are able to hold classes on the fifth floor.

Krista Pfeiffer asks about a back up plan in case the renovations are not completed by September 07, 2004.

There has been a meeting with CHAD about their possible purchase of this building. CHAD is curious about our plans and is very interested in having us on the 1st and 2nd floor. We would have a shared auditorium, gym and “playground”.

F. Committees

1. Executive/Renewal

There was a meeting on Monday where each member went over their assigned tasks for the renewal application. We need to “crank out” a work product. Everything will be in MS Word. **We need outlines and first drafts to come in (1,000 words) by the August 18th Board Meeting.** Please send it electronically to Rosina Miller, Rebecca Baehr and Jurate Krokys.

October 13, 2004...final document should be completed. Rosina Miller and Susan Gobreski are on the writing committee and will focus on that this summer.

Executive Committee talked about goals for the final year. Each committee should come up with two goals that they would like to accomplish this year. Planning meeting could be an extended Board meeting. For example: 5-7pm--planning meeting and 7-9pm--Board of Trustees meeting. (August 18, 2004)

2. Budget

None

3. Human Resources

We have three great candidates up for resolution today. 1) A full time nurse that would begin September 01, 2004. 2) A full time secretary who has already begun and is doing a wonderful job. 3) A full time operations manager who would be able to begin in early August.

We have put in a search for a receptionist/technology staff member. We have been talking with Randi Ostrow about making some of our part time staff (classroom assistants) and making them full time. This would include arrival and dismissal and after school. This would allow us to have qualified staff at all times. We are short on classroom assistants and Jurate Krokys is still looking for a few more.

4. Curriculum

There is a resolution to approve Spanish Immersion curriculum to be discussed in New Business.

There was also discussion about the Middle Years Program. There was the thought of having different “tracks” civics, history, art....this would prepare our kids for the better high schools in the area. Susan Gobreski...likes the idea of “tracks”. Let’s be

sure that they remain the focus of our school. Dance and arts could maintain the focus of world culture.

We would also like to look into service learning projects. We are thinking about Block Scheduling, which would allow students to focus more intently on one subject area at a time.

Krista Pfeiffer asks if the school would be paying for the praxis costs for middle school. Jurate Krokys states that ICS would think about this as it is in our best interest.

What second language would we offer to our students? We would like to choose a language by the time of the renewal application. The next curriculum meeting is August 16, 2004 at 7pm. Anyone interested in discussing the second language is asked to attend. If you are unable to make it, please send your ideas and suggestions. Straw poll: If you had to choose a second language for 6-8:

Rosina Miller – non-romance language. Interested in Chinese or Arabic.

Jurate Krokys – Japanese or Chinese. Perhaps not Chinese...there is a Chinese immersion at McCall. (Would agree with Arabic.)

Michelle Campbell – Chinese (Mandarin). Would support Arabic.

Rebecca Baehr – non-romance language. Asian language would be the most useful.

Pamela Prell – Chinese.

John Baram – could support Chinese. Would definitely support Arabic.

Susan Gobreski – a language where they are learning characters (non-romantic).

5. Discipline

None. We could use a few more board members.

6. Legal

There has been a settlement that could be discussed in executive session if necessary.

7. Policy

We will have meeting on July 26, 2004 in order to look at the policies so they would be ready for approval on August 18, 2004. We need to make sure there is an approved privacy policy in the handbook.

8. Technology

John Baram is trying to find out about School Net through PSD. We have received 10 monitors, 4 computers and 6 printers. We have enough monitors for the 5th floor. Ernie Coates and John Baram will be doing a preliminary set-up to make sure that everything works. They will have things up and running for school in September. EETT Grant will begin as soon as school does. It will require a lot of data collection and professional development.

9. Nominations

We have one parent seat to be filled in October. We have one open community board seat with the possibility of a second open community seat. Michelle Campbell suggests we have a conversation about what we need most with a new board member. Rosina Miller states that we need someone with strong fundraising experience. Pamela Prell—ties with the Spanish speaking community. Rosina Miller will begin an e-mail dialogue.

We will discuss this at the executive committee meeting and also with the whole board at the planning meeting in August.

10. Community Relations

None

11. Fundraising

Sean Hennessy is looking into the idea of working with fundraising consultants. Ramzy Andrawos has a certificate in fundraising. Sean Hennessy is beginning to make contacts.

12. CEO Evaluation

There will be a meeting with Jurate Krokys to discuss the evaluation on Friday, July 23, 2004.

VI. Resolutions

A. Old Business

B. New Business

1. Spanish Curriculum Purchase

Be it resolved that the Independence Charter School Board of Trustees confirm the adoption of the following textbook series for the Spanish Immersion Reading and Language Arts Program:

Scott Foresman Lectura 2000

Rosina Miller moves to adopt the resolution.

Susan Gobreski seconds the motion.

Discussion

The Spanish Immersion teachers have asked for this particular curriculum.

Unanimous to adopt.

2. Zhang Sah Karate agreement

Be it resolved that Independence Charter School enter into an agreement with Zhang Sah (Gold Medal Karate) for the following services rendered in the 2004-2005 school year:

Martial Arts for Grades 5 and 6

Cost not to exceed \$6,800.00.

Rosina Miller moves to adopt the resolution.

Susan Gobreski seconds the motion.

Discussion

The 5th and 6th graders will take Karate for the entire academic year.

They will also have one semester of Dance and Movement. John

Baram asks how the decision was made between Zhang Sah and Krav

Maga. Jurate Krokys states: 1) it was more affordable. 2) Zhang Sah

had a more intensive program that included philosophy and discipline

as well as technique. Whereas Krav Maga was specifically about

technique.

Unanimous to adopt.

3. Personnel:

Be it resolved that Independence Charter School offer employment to the following individuals in the positions as listed, under the terms and conditions specified by the CEO:

Tracey Hill – Secretary

Leslie Burton – School Nurse

Ramzy Andrawos – Operations Manager

Rosina Miller moves to adopt the resolution.

Susan Gobreski seconds the motion.

Unanimous to adopt.

VII. Public Comment

None

The Board of Trustees moves to executive session at 9:25 pm to discuss personnel issues. The Board returns from executive session at 9:45 pm.

VIII. Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 9:45 pm.