

Independence Charter School

Board of Trustees Meeting

December 08, 2004, 7:00 PM

Board Members Present: Pam Prell, Becky Baehr, John Baram, Eric Cramer, Sean Hennessy, Susan Gobreski, Ingrid Schafroth, David Webber, Sandra Aidar, Rosina Miller

Board Members Absent: Michelle Campbell, Gary Shepard

Others Present: Jurate Krokys, CEO; Andrea Soelter, Dean of Students; Randi Ostrow, Foundations; Ramzy Andrawos, Operations Manager; Krista Pfeiffer, Board Liason; Luther James, Parent; Barbara Kay, 5th grade teacher; Anne Hall, School Counselor; Kenneth Poles, Po-Well

I. Call to Order

President Rebecca Baehr called the meeting to order at 7:09pm.

II. Reading and Review of Minutes

The minutes from the last Board meeting were circulated. No objections or modifications were made and the minutes were approved.

III. Public Comment Period

None

IV. CEO Report

1. Personnel: Recently there were some vacancies that opened up for part time classroom assistant positions. This was due to irregular attendance by one, a transfer of positions of another. We were able to fill those vacancies with qualified individuals.

I have recommended to the curriculum, human resources, and budget committees the creation of a "Spanish coach" position. This position would allow the adding of more Spanish time for grades 1-6. These times had been reduced due to my own overly optimistic "underplanning" for just two full time Spanish FLES teachers. Although 3 days of FLES with 45 minute daily sessions is still within the allowable range to be called FLES, our parents and the Board would like to see more frequent Spanish FLES opportunities. The Spanish Coach will work with the primary FLES teachers to develop a follow up "practice" day during which the vocabulary and language conventions introduced in the base lessons will be practiced in the practice days. For example, base teacher A teaches colors, fruit and the verbs want and do not want. The practice teacher has kids practice in skits "going to the store" to buy fruit: I want three yellow apples, please. I do not want red apples. Do you have green apples? I will be bringing to resolution the request to hire Kristen Schier as Spanish Coach. Kristen has been recommended by our FLES veteran Adrienne Lindstrom. Kristen comes with a college degree in theatre and we think that she will be able to prepare great lessons in concert with the base FLES teachers.

This will provide the following concentration of FLES Spanish as of January 2005:

Kindergarten: 5 FLES per week (30 minutes)= 150 min.

Grade 1: 5 FLES per week (30 min.)= 150 min.

Grade 2: 5 FLES per week (30 min.)= 150 min.

Grade 3: 4 FLES per week (45 min.) = 180 min.

Grade 4: 4 FLES per week (45 min.)= 180 min.

Grade 5: 5 FLES per week (40 min.)= 200 min.

Grade 6: 5 FLES per week (40 min.)= 200 min.

On November 30th, we transitioned from Metropolitan to Po-Well cleaners. They have a maintenance person on staff all day. This is wonderful and helps so much with lunch, bathroom and other wipe-ups. They are very receptive to all requested work. Why, I even caught them cleaning the air vents without being asked!

Megan Steelman will work her last day on Monday, December 13th as the Substitute for Nancy Hionides who returns. Megan has been wonderful, a real Powerhouse at the front desk. We hope to continue relying on her when the need Arises.

2. Enrollment: We have just completed registration for 2005-2006. Of 88 spots, approximately 80 have registered. 6 have not responded to our voicemail messages. The rest are coming in by Wednesday, 12/8. We will be hosting a special workshop for Immersion parents in February and the regular spring workshop for all incoming parents.

We have just completed an extensive push to get all parents whose children were without updated physicals and immunizations to get that paperwork. Kudos to Leslie Burton and Megan Steelman for mounting the "assault". Leslie meticulously reviewed records; Megan mercilessly contacted parents over and over requesting records. Finally in November, the Principal issued letters giving a deadline for those left on the list with exclusion from school being the alternative. To date, only 3 or 4 are left from a list of about 25. These children will indeed be excluded until the necessary documents are provided.

3. CHAD: CHAD has taken over ownership of the building. We have been issued a letter indicating where our rent is to go. We will soon be invited to a meeting to plan for use of the building and such issues as signage. A couple of good signs are the custodial person Sean and the Security people newly hired. Sean will be the maintenance person for the whole building. Today, I walked in at 7:30 to find him changing filters in vents.

The foundation which owns the building has hired a new security firm. I will be meeting with them to work out various details. I was pleased to see that there will be a sign-in procedure for all those entering the building. Following our meeting with the executive committee, I will be generating a letter to the CHAD regarding a few of the security concerns that we have.

4. Community: I will be meeting with the representative of the Fleisher to discuss cooperative work especially as it concerns our country studies. Similarly, I will be meeting with Lisa Nelson Haynes of the Painted Bride to map our spring work together.

Our community partners, the International Visitors Council sent us 10 Russian educators from Far Eastern Russian (Siberia) in November. They toured our school, visited classrooms, and then we sat down to chat. We had student representatives from gr.4, 5, 6, PTA and Teaching Interns meet with the guests. They were most interested in learning about diversity. They very much enjoyed meeting with the students especially.

5. Programming: We have just received the wonderful news from the Fulbright Exchange that we are accepted as hosts for two Uruguayan educators for February 9-25, 2005. These educators will be studying our school. As hosts, we will find lodging with host families, and will help to develop their itinerary. We are expected to fund their local travel and meals as well as cultural activities. Claudia had organized the necessary information to be able to ascertain whether there would be sufficient parent support. Two hundred dollars will be provided per guest to help defray the cost of hosting. The program also emphasizes the planning of future projects with Uruguay. Claudia is invited to participate in a similar program in the summer of 2005.

6. Renewal: We have received one letter with a template (that will be available at the BOT meeting) that indicates the kinds of areas that will be observed and checked when School District people visit. This is not the letter of engagement for auditing purposes. This may, however be an indication that the renewal process will begin soon.

Discussion

Would like to congratulate Tr. Jaime and Tr. Barbara on their presentation last Wednesday. The 5th grade students had done a project and set up a visual/interactive presentation for the public. Many parents and friends came as well as a representative from City Hall.

V. Treasurer's report / Budget Committee Report

Be it resolved that the ICS board of trustees approves the spending of \$137,946.53.

Eric Cramer moves to approve the spending.

Sean Hennessy seconds this motion.

Roll Call Vote

Pam Prell -- aye

Becky Baehr -- aye

John Baram -- abstain

Eric Cramer -- aye

Sean Hennessy -- aye
Susan Gobreski --aye
Ingrid Schafroth --aye
David Webber --aye
Sandra Aidar – aye
Rosina Miller --aye

Motion Carries.

Discussion

The next budget meeting is Wednesday, January 7th at 9:30am.

VI. Updates

A. Brief presentation: Counseling and Family Support at ICS—Anne Hall

Working with individual students as needed. Refer parents and families to outside service agencies. Run small group counseling sessions for students with similar concerns. Collaborate with agencies servicing our students. Conduct relevant classroom guidance lessons on an as-needed basis. Collaborate with faculty and staff regarding the mental health/well being of students. Partner with Tr. Meredith on CSAP (helping teachers fill out forms). Provide parent education through workshops. Assist students in transition in and out of ICS. Handle all paperwork for ACCESS funding. Coordinate Big Brother/Big Sisters school-based program. Field a variety of parent phone calls. Report to DHS.

Discussion

Access money (\$12,605.00)...is this new money and is it budgeted? This money is not budgeted because it changes depending on number of children and when they transfer or move in. We must first submit, in writing, a proposal for what we will spend the money on. This money must be approved by the City and State and once approved we will receive the money.

Big Brothers/Big Sisters...it is going slowly, as it is hard to get volunteers for the program. Anne will make up a flyer for Susan to hand out to help get volunteers for our kids).

B. Brief presentation: Middle Years Program—Krista Pfeiffer and Barbara Kay

Being on the 5th floor is very peaceful and quiet. The students seem to like the change and separation from the 2nd floor. The day is split into Language Arts and Math. Each teacher sees the entire grade every day. This allows the teacher to teach in depth. This allows for a warm up, an activity and a follow up. The other advantage is that there are two teachers seeing the child. There is a better perspective of the strengths and challenges of each child.

The 6th grade is beginning a cumulative writing portfolio. This allows the students to critique their own work and decide what they need to work on personally. Students find one thing they need to improve and for one writing assignment this is their goal. Once the first goal is achieved the students pick another goal.

Discussion

What is the plan in the future? Which grades will switch in the school? It works well with an even number of classes, but what happens when there are three 5th grade classes next year? There is a plan, which will be further looked into as the year progresses.

Looping—when a teacher travels up to the next grade level with the students. The advantage to looping is that the teacher knows the students and parents very well in the beginning of the year. They are able to move beyond the basics more quickly. The draw back is the amount of work it takes in order to prepare for a new grade each year.

The biggest issue is the elevator issue and making it between floors in a timely manner.

C. PTA report

The PTA has purchased a number of books from

D. Teacher representative report

E. Committee Report

1. Executive Renewal

Application is submitted. Board member orientation will be decided by e-mail (initiated by Rosina Miller). Language choice and school size will be discussed at the January meeting. This discussion will be announced at the January PTA meeting, inviting all interested parties.

2. Human Resources

The meetings will be held on 3rd Thursdays at 8:45am. The next meeting will be held on December 16, 2004 at 8:45am. The committee followed up with the

staff requests and will continue to discuss. ICS will “fill in” the FLES program with a Spanish Coach/Assistant.

3. Curriculum

Meetings will take place on the 4th Monday at 4:00pm. There was discussion of waiting to add a second language for another two years. Starting a second language when our First class of kindergarteners is in the middle years program. Until the addition of the second language the middle years students will continue in Spanish FLES.

4. Discipline

None

5. Technology

There are server problems that Eric Tippenhauer is working on. At this point the committee will wait a month and see how the trouble shooting works. There will also be investigation of new server prices. If anyone has input about the “redesign” of the web page please contact John Baram.

Discussion

Should we have teacher and board member e-mail links? There will be one link for Board of Trustees.

6. Community Relations

There is a meeting next week, a luncheon to discuss what the Board does and there goals for the year. This will be on December 16, 2003.

(Transportation committee...Susan is currently tallying the data. Susan Gobreski will be contacting teachers and parents for a meeting to discuss the issue of transportation and dismissal.)

7. Development

The committee will meet for a brainstorming session from 5:00-7:00pm before the January Board meeting. The gift certificates are ordered (with a savings of \$400.00). The letters have gone out and we will be able to tell if they were successful in January. Ingrid Schafroth will bring the current development list for Board members to look at, reminding everyone who is and is not on the list. The committee will be building a data base with the donor’s information.

VII. Resolutions

A. Old Business

1. Renewal application as modified

Be it resolved that the ICS Renewal Application to the School District of Philadelphia as submitted on November 15, 2004, modified from the Renewal application viewed by the BOT on November 10, 2004 be accepted in its entirety.

Susan Gobreski moves to adopt the resolution.

David Webber seconds the motion.

Unanimous to adopt.

B. New Business

1. Modification of adopted budget

Be it resolved that the Independence Charter School Board of Trustees approve the following transfers to the working budget:

Increase Instructional Books by \$2,000.00

Increase Instructional Furniture and Equipment by \$10,000.00

Increase Operation and Maintenance – Other by \$4,000.00

Decrease Administrative Advertising by \$3,000.00

Decrease Administrative Supplies by \$4,000.00

Decrease Administrative Furniture and Equipment by \$5,000.00

Decrease Operation and Maintenance – Construction by \$4,000.00

Sean Hennessy moves to adopt the resolution

Susan Gobreski seconds the motion.

Roll Call Vote

Pam Prell -- aye

Becky Baehr -- aye

John Baram -- aye
Eric Cramer -- aye
Sean Hennessy -- aye
Susan Gobreski --aye
Ingrid Schafroth --aye
David Webber --aye
Sandra Aidar – aye
Rosina Miller --aye
Motion Carries.

2. Personnel—Full time position: Spanish coach/assistant

Be it resolved that the Independence Charter School Board of Trustees offer the position of full time Spanish Coach and Assistant to Kristen Schier under the terms and conditions specified by the CEO and the ICS contract.

Sean Hennessy moves to adopt the resolution

David Webber seconds the motion.

Unanimous to adopt.

3. Termination

Be it resolved that the Independence Charter School Board of Trustees take cognizance of the termination of the following employees:

Jamarr Kellum – NTA

Marisol Rodriguez—Classroom Assistant

Travis Miller—Classroom Assistant

Sean Hennessy moves to adopt the resolution.

David Webber seconds the motion.

Unanimous to adopt.

X. Executive Committee

XI. Adjournment

Rosina Miller moves to adjourn.

Susan Gobreski seconds the motion

Meeting adjourns at 9:45pm.