

**Independence Charter School  
Board of Trustees Meeting  
September 14, 2005, 7:00 PM**

**Board Members Present:** Sandra Aidar, Becky Baehr, Michelle Campbell, Christine Chisholm, Susan Gobreski, Sean Hennessy, Rosina Miller, Lisa Nelson-Haynes, Pam Prell, Ingrid Schafroth, David Webber

**Board Members Absent:** Eric Cramer

**Others Present:** Jurate Krokys, CEO; Andrea Soelter, Dean of Students; Jerry Santilli, Santilli and Thomson; Ramzy Andrawos, Operations Manager; Anna Evans, Teacher Representative; Sean Gallagher, Vice Principal; Joana Davis-Diaz, parent; Blake Smith, parent; Nathaniel Popkin, parent; Laval Miller-Wilson, potential board member; Sheeba Verma, Development Director; Megan Steelman, Administrative Assistant

**I. Call to Order**

**President Susan Gobreski** called the meeting to order at 7:05p.m.

**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. CEO Report**

Jurate Krokys highlighted several items on her monthly report (attached):

-Today was the first staff meeting of the year and was very successful; seven committees were formed

-On 10/25/05 students will be participating in a special event at the Constitution Center

-ICS has several student teachers this year

-“The Kind of Schools We Need” article was circulated

**IV. Treasurer’s/Finance Report**

Jerry Santilli circulated three documents (attached): 1)Fiscal Year ended 6/30/05 Balance Sheet, 2)Financial Operations Report, dated 8/31/05, and 3)Proposed Changes in Insurance Coverage. Jerry reported that ICS finished the fiscal year with a \$98,000 surplus. Sean Hennessy noted that a higher surplus was anticipated. Jerry reported that the School District gave less than the anticipated amount and we have not received payment for all the out-of-county students. It was also agreed that better salary forecasting needs to be done. Becky questioned whether ICS is projecting higher than usual utility costs this year. Jerry stated that ICS pays for electric, but the building owner pays for the heat, so no immediate change is expected.

Sean Hennessy asked if a column, noting the percent of annual budget that has been realized for each revenue or expense line item can be added to the Financial Operations Report. Jerry said that will not be a problem.

**Rosina Miller** moved to approve the expenditures on pages 6 and 7 of the Financial Operations Report.

**Ingrid Schafroth** seconded the motion.

The motion was approved **unanimously**.

There was a question regarding the high maintenance costs on the 8/31/05 report. Jerry clarified that this report covered two months of maintenance costs. Jerry further explained that one of the terms of the charter renewal requires ICS to carry \$5 million in excess liability insurance. That would not increase the premium. However, Jerry recommends that ICS increase the excess to \$10 million due to the litigious nature of society. This increase would cost about \$3,800.

**Sean Hennessy** moved to approve this recommendation.

**Pam Prell** seconded the motion.

The motion carried **unanimously**.

Discussion ensued to clarify that the Board and all employees, except the nurse (who is covered by specific nursing liability insurance), are covered by this policy.

## **VI. Updates**

### **A. Teacher Representative**

Teacher Anna Evans reported that the school year is off to a good start and that today's staff meeting was very successful. She extended thanks to the Board of Trustees for the valuable meeting time on Wednesdays.

### **B. PTA**

Becky Baehr reported on behalf of PTA Liaisons Cassandra Carponter and Joan Bell. A PTA update went home with students today. The kindergarten parent breakfast reception was a success. Upcoming events include the Scholastic Book Fair, Corbi's, and Cherrydale Farm fundraisers. Volunteers, especially people who are not parents attending the two Back-to-School Nights, are needed to help with the book fair. ICS may also organize a few "First Friday" events, possibly in conjunction with CHAD. Susan Gobreski clarified that PTA membership is individual; they do not offer a family membership category.

### **C. Committees**

#### **1. Executive**

**a. By-Laws**

Susan reviewed the proposed resolution to revise the by-laws in regard to the number of seats and the term lengths for seats. Discussion ensued regarding the need for smooth transitions as Board members move on and off the Board. Several members voiced their preference that one of the current Parent members agree to stay on longer in order to give time for a new Parent member to become acclimated with the Board. The plan would be to have one Parent elected each Spring for a 2-year term. Both Sandra Aidar and David Webber stated they have enjoyed their time on the Board, but that both are most likely ready to rotate off at the end of their terms. Both were applauded for their diligent work on the Board. Discussion also included the challenge of filling Board seats, especially if the Board is increased to 15 members.

**b. School Size planning**

Rosina reviewed that the plan for 2006-2007 to fill only 3 kindergarten classes, 2 Immersion and 1 General in order to start controlling the size of the school. She also noted that there is usually a 5% loss in Immersion classes. Rosina and Sean outlined several scenarios regarding school size.

Scenario A would have a maximum of 535 students with 27 classes (3 classes for each grade). There would be approximately 20 students per class. Scenario B would have a maximum of 721 students with 32-36 classes (4 classes per grade) with approximately 24 students in each class. Discussion ensued regarding sizes of other schools. McCall and Meredith have 400-500 students and Greenfield has 650. Jurate noted that Meredith and McCall have multiple funding sources, which allow them to stay smaller. If ICS stays too small, we may not be able to offer options. Several members noted that ICS started with 287 students and now has over 590, yet doesn't have a big-school feel. Jerry stated that to pay for Center City space, ICS would need 535 students to afford 55,000 square feet and 720 students to afford 75,000 square feet. He also noted that you always need a comfortable reserve.

Rosina noted that if there is just one General class, those children are always together. Is that a good thing? Several people noted that in older grades more mixing may be possible. Becky stated that she likes a small school and suggested that ICS may want to more deliberately separate the younger and older classes in order to keep the small-school feel. Rosina suggested having four of each class, but to reduce class size. Michelle pointed out that you can

have a high quality big school. Susan Gobreski noted that research shows that having 2 adults in a large class is not as good as having 1 teacher in a small class. Joanna stated that she feels teachers can have stronger relationships with students in a small school. Lisa stated that “big” doesn’t work well for recruitment and that relationship-building is the key. Christine stated she feels smaller school build more community. Sean Gallagher pointed out that ICS currently does have a physical separation of space between younger and older students. He feels that due to the high skill level of the staff, this works well for ICS. He also pointed out that research on Middle Schools tend to focus on big schools. Jurate stated that middle school problems usually stem from transition issues. Susan observed that this issue needs to be put out for discussion. She also emphasized that due to pressure the charter schools have put on the School District, charter schools are now going to have tougher competition. Rosina asked Anna what her thoughts are on school size. Anna stated that she feels 17 is small and makes for an odd classroom dynamic. She feels 20-23 students is the ideal number. She emphasized that teaching assistants are invaluable. She really likes the lower school/upper school split at ICS and is in favor of 4 classes per grade (2 General and 2 Immersion). Pam suggested that we may consider accepting 3 kindergarten classes one year, then 4 the next. Susan and Jurate pointed out that going up and down can be costly in terms of textbooks and other items. A straw poll was taken and most members are leaning toward four classes per grade, which would give school enrollment of around 700. Sean recommended that the Board try to resolve this issue at the October meeting. It was agreed that a strategic, organized planning session should take place in early October and then again in the Spring.

**2. Human Resources**

Becky reported that there will be an HR meeting on 9/16 at 9a.m. Topics for discussion include staffing as the school grows, observation schedules and teacher support.

**3. Diversity**

Lisa reported that the 9/13 meeting was great and that the committee is sponsoring a tour of the school on 9/27 at 6p.m. that will focus on families of color. The committee is also intending to plan small group social Back-to-School Nights by zip codes. Susan reminded everyone that these events, as well as other ICS events, can easily be advertised through the Yahoo list.

4. **Discipline**

Michelle reported that the committee met before the last Board meeting. The next meeting is projected for October. She also asked what the reaction was to the discipline in-service that was presented to the teachers. She was told the reaction was positive and that staff would like follow-up. She also noted that there are two codes of conduct this year, one for the lower school and one for the upper.
5. **Development**

Ingrid welcomed Sheeba, who is scheduled to start on 9/19. The committee will meet with her on 9/20.
6. **Curriculum**

Christine reported that the committee met last Wednesday. The Gifted program will start in October. Tr. Salim will offer work for all students; students in the Gifted program will be required to complete that work. Tr. Salim will offer the opportunity, but the classroom teachers will follow-up with the students. Jurate also noted that the Gifted program will offer some additional creative options, such as chess. The Enrichment program will also start in October. The staff will continue to identify additional gifted students. The committee has set long-term goals, which include: 1)curriculum for 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> grade, 2)more formalized curriculum for all grades, and 3)graduation requirements.
7. **Facilities**

Sandra reported that ICS sent a letter to the School Reform Commission, regarding the situation with the vacant Durham School building, but that the situation is not very promising. She also noted that location is part of our charter and that ICS will be in discussion with School District regarding those parameters. The committee will be visiting 4 buildings tomorrow (4<sup>th</sup> & Race, 801 Arch, 636 N. 5<sup>th</sup> and Richmond & Columbus Boulevard). Sandra also noted that this committee needs to meet with the Finance Committee.
8. **Community Relations**

David reported that recruiting needs to be done for this committee. He encouraged everyone to invite potential Board nominees to Board meetings. Susan suggested also getting more non-Board people involved in committees. Susan also noted that the CEO evaluation went well and that it will be written up soon.

## V. Resolutions

### A. Old Business

1. **By-laws: Resolution to expand board to 15 members**

Be it resolved that the ICS Board of Trustees adopt the revised by-laws as discussed and presented on this day, Wednesday, September 14, 2005, along with the attached resolution regarding terms and expiration dates of Founder, Parent, and Community Seats.

**Becky Baehr** moved that the motion be approved with changes as reflected in the attached resolution.

**David Webber** seconded the motion.

**Roll call vote:**

Sandra Aidar-- aye  
Becky Baehr-- aye  
Michelle Campbell--aye  
Christine Chisholm--aye  
Susan Gobreski-- aye  
Sean Hennessy-- aye  
Rosina Miller--aye  
Lisa Nelson-Haynes--aye  
Pam Prell-- aye  
Ingrid Schafroth-- aye  
David Webber-- aye

**Motion Carries.**

**B. New Business**

**1. 4<sup>th</sup> floor lease**

No action was taken on this item yet, since there is no lease at this point in time.

**2. Personnel**

**a. Development Director**

Be it resolved that ICS offer the position of Development Director to Sheba Verma under the conditions and terms specified by the CEO and the employee handbook.

**Ingrid Schafroth** moved.

**Becky Baehr** seconded.

**Unanimous** to approve.

**b. Other personnel**

Be it resolved that ICS offer the following positions to those named under the terms and conditions specified by the CEO and the employee handbook:

Teaching Assistants (part time):

Jaelyn Blank  
Ariel Hegedus  
Nikolas McConnie-Saad  
Talia Barrows  
John Alexander

Non-Teaching Assistant (full time)  
Shariff Roseboro

Lunch-Time Assistants (part time)  
Alice Lisby  
Nabila Simms  
Adriane Polen  
Gail Linder

**VI. Executive Session**

The non-Board members were excused and the Board and CEO went into Executive Session at approximately 9:35pm to discuss legal matters relating to ICS's lease and charter.

**Board returned from Executive Session and meeting was adjourned at 10:00 pm.**

**Resolution regarding the terms and expirations dates of Founders, Parent, and Community Seats.**

Whereas the by-laws have been amended to change the terms of the Parent Seats to become two seats with a term of two years each that are staggered, such that one shall begin in an even numbered year and one shall begin in an odd numbered year with terms to being at the end of the annual meeting in June, rather than two one-year terms that begin in October and the adoption of the bylaws calls for a resolution to provide for a transition:

And whereas two community seats have been added and the terms of community seats were changed to become two year seats;

And whereas the BOT at the time of the adoption of this resolution and bylaw changes wish to evenly distribute the founder seats such that three terms expire each year;

**Be it hereby resolved the following:**

Parent Seats:

EITHER:

The two parents holding the seats at the time of this resolution shall have their terms extended by one month, until the beginning of the meeting in November 2005.

OR

The two parents holding parent seats at the time of this resolution shall have their terms extended as follows:

- Parent Seat 1 to November 2005
- Parent Seat 2 to June 2006

Elections shall be held, in accordance with the by-laws, upon expiration of each seat.

The regular elections shall be held beginning May 2006, with the two-year term for Parent Seat One to begin at the end of the annual meeting in June, 2006 to end in June 2008; the election for Parent Seat Two to be held in May 2007 for a term to begin June 2007 and expire June 2009.

Community Seats:

The seat held by Christine Chisholm shall be designated CS 1 and the seat held by Ingrid Schafroth shall be designated CS 2.

The two new seats shall be designated CS 3 and CS 4

The community Seat terms shall be as follows

	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011
	1. Christine	2. Ingrid				
cs 3	Chisolm	Schafroth	cs 1	cs 2	cs1	

cs 4                      cs 3                      cs 4                      cs 3                      cs4

Founder Seats:

The Founder Seats shall be as follows:

The term of Pam Prell shall be extended by one year to align the Founder seats such that three seats expire each year, as follows:

	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011
f1 Eric Cramer	f4 Michelle Campbell	f7 Pam Prell	f1	f4	f7	
f2 Sean Hennessy	f5 Susan Gobreski	f8 Rosina Miller f9 Lisa Nelson-	f2	f5	f8	
f 3 open	f6 Becky Baehr	Haynes	f3	f6	f9	

Therefore a chart representing all the terms for all the seats is as follows:

	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011
Founder	f1 Eric Cramer f2 Sean Hennessy f 3 open	f4 Michelle Campbell f5 Susan Gobreski f6 Becky Baehr	f7 Pam Prell f8 Rosina Miller f9 Lisa Nelson Haynes	f1 f2 f3	f4 f5 f6	f7 f8 f9
Community	cs 3	1. Christine Chisholm cs 4	2. Ingrid Schafroth cs 3	cs 1 cs 4	cs 2 cs 3	cs1 cs4
Parent	ps 1	ps 2	ps 1	ps2	ps 1	ps 2

Therefore: The BOT, using guidelines and procedures in the by-laws and these resolutions shall take the following actions:

Nominate and fill:

- Founder Seat 3 (F3) for a term expiring 2006
- Community Seat 3 for a term expiring 2006 and Community Seat 4 for a term expiring 2007.
- Administer Parent Seat Elections for terms ending in 2006 and 2007.

Notes: Any current member wishing to serve a shorter term than currently scheduled may request to take over a seat expiring sooner than their current term and that shall be given preference, which would then leave their present seat as the open seat.