

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

Board Members Present: Becky Baehr, Anyabwile Bankole, Ryan Boyer, Michelle Campbell, Christine Chisholm, Eric Cramer, Joana Davis-Diaz, Susan Gobreski, Sean Hennessy, Nicole Perkins Kilcullen, Rosina Miller, Laval Miller-Wilson, Lisa Nelson-Haynes, Pam Prell, Ingrid Schafroth

Board Members Absent: None

Others Present: Jurate Krokys, CEO; Jerry Santilli, Santilli and Thomson; Ramzy Andrawos, Operations Manager; Sean Gallagher, Vice Principal; Richard Taggart, Teacher Representative; Kerri Tobin, Teacher Representative; Sheba Verma, Development Director; Megan Steelman, Administrative Assistant; approximately 30 ICS family members were present

I. Call to Order

President Susan Gobreski called the meeting to order at 7:10 p.m.

II. Swearing in of New Members:

Laval Miller-Wilson, Ryan Boyer, Anyabwile Bankole were sworn in as new members of the BOT. Ryan and Anyabwile will serve in the parent seats.

III. Review of Minutes

The minutes from the last Board meeting were circulated. Laval motioned to accept the minutes. Nicole seconded. Unanimous to approve.

IV. Facilities Presentation/Facilities Report

President Susan Gobreski thanked former BOT member Sandra Aidar for her great work as Facilities Chair and introduced BOT member Nicole Perkins Kilcullen, the new Chair of this committee. Nicole introduced ICS parents and architects Ellen Pennell and Robin Kohles, who gave a Powerpoint presentation (attached) summarizing the committee's work to date and comparing features of three potential sites: 1600 Lombard Street (the Durham School building), 851 N. American Street (the Ortlieb's brewery site) and 401 Race Street (the Pincus building). It was emphasized that renovations would be needed in all of the sites and that the only possible site that could be ready by the start of the 2006-2007 school year is the Pincus building and that would be difficult unless a decision is made in the very near future.

Susan Gobreski opened the public comment period by explaining that the BOT wanted to hear everyone's reactions to how a potential move to any

of the sites would impact their particular families. She also noted that the BOT would be listening to the comments, but in most cases would not be responding to the specific comments at this meeting. Preliminary results of the Parent Facilities Survey were circulated (attached).

Comments included:

- Be sure to include a “4th column” to the presentation of possible sites, which would include the possibility of staying at the current location
- Getting to the N. American Street location may be time-consuming and more difficult to access public transportation
- Traffic at 4th & Race Streets may be hazardous
- Make sure we have adequate space, wherever we go
- Be realistic about construction timeframes
- Make sure to find out what the teachers want; we want happy teachers
- There are safety concerns about leasing space due to having to share space with other tenants
- It would be nice to continue to use the Durham School as a school
- Make the new space energy efficient
- Concerns about staying at the current location, including sharing and waiting for elevators
- Get more space, so ICS can be very creative
- Be central to make it possible for people from all over the city to get to ICS
- Post the presentation on the ICS Yahoo group to share with more people
- Does our charter prohibit us from moving? Shouldn't we stay in touch with our roots?
- If we rent again, make sure the lease is long-term, so we don't need to be worried about change too frequently
- The Northern Liberties location wouldn't work
- Stay in Center City to make it easier for parents to volunteer
- We're committed to ICS, wherever it is located
- Give all the kids natural light

The BOT responded generally to the comments:

- The School Reform Commission (SRC) needs to give the approval for a move.
- ICS has been frugal; we're only considering sites we can afford.
- There's always a trade-off, no matter the decision.
- What's best for the students will be the deciding factor.

V. Updates

A. ICS Teacher Representatives

Teachers' Representatives Rich Taggart, 5th grade teacher, and Kerri Tobin, 7th grade teacher, were welcomed. Teacher Rich commented that teachers lose a lot of teaching time due to waiting for the elevators.

B. PTA- Cassandra reported that the Corbi sale raised about \$4,500 and the products will be delivered on Saturday, November 19th. Sales were down from last year, possibly due to our experimenting with having two fundraisers close to each other. Next year, we may plan one for the fall and one for the spring. Tickets are being ordered for K-3rd students to attend the Arden's *Dinosaurs* production in December. The 4th-7th graders will attend a theatre performance after the new year, possibly at the Annenberg. The December PTA meeting will feature "special person" presentations by students and will be a family event.

C. Reports:

1. CEO Report

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

- Several staff members and parents represented ICS at the Center City School Fair at the Convention Center in October. Our booth stayed busy all day with many interested parents asking questions.
- Students enjoyed celebrating the UN's birthday at the Constitution Center
- On Friday, we will have 15 guests from 10 different Latin American countries through our partnership with the International Visitors Center.
- American Education Week will be celebrated this week with parents visiting classrooms and having tea with the Principal
- Tr. Bobby is organizing a quarter drive to have ICS purchase a llama for a family in Bolivia through Heifer International

2. BOT Committees

a. Treasurer/Finance

Jerry circulated the Financial Operations Report for October 31, 2005 (attached). Resolutions will be discussed later in the meeting.

b. Curriculum

Christine reported that 6th and 7th graders will be receiving traditional letter grades of A, B, C, D and F. The committee has also been discussing graduation requirements, which may include a community service component. The Gifted Program is also being discussed. Pr. Jurate reported that most parents surveyed want to have children from the Gifted Program "pulled out" for meetings with their academic peer groups, as opposed to "pushing in" the program to the classrooms. The parents also don't want the children to get extra work, but to be part of discussion groups. Pr.

Jurate stated that we need to find out how much after school time parents are willing to commit to the Gifted Program and that the committee hopes to finalize plans at its December meeting. Christine noted that the committee will also be discussing a suggestion that's been made in regard to finding a particular focus that would make the FLES option have its own identify, as the Immersion option already does. She mentioned that science could be a possible focus. Discussion ensued as to whether a particular focus was needed. Susan asked why we would want to add another focus when the school's charter already includes multi-cultural studies. Rosina suggested building on that, rather than choosing a new focus. Christine stated that the discussion is just beginning and no specific plans have been made.

c. Human Resources

Becky reported that the next committee meeting is on Friday. The committee continues to work on updating personnel policies and has been discussing the issue of corporeal punishment. The committee is also working on a summary of benefits to be used as a marketing tool, working on ensuring racial diversity in the ICS teaching staff and moving towards having fully certified Immersion teachers.

d. Diversity

Lisa reported that the committee would like the BOT to consider an event presented by the musical group "Sol y Canto." It would be a two-pronged event, starting with workshops for all the students, which would be held at the school a few days before the second event. The second event would be a matinee concert by the group, which would be held at the Painted Bride. The committee anticipates this being a cultivation event, not a fundraiser. The proposed date would be March 5th; the date is being tentatively held by the Painted Bride, but cannot be held for much longer without a commitment. The event would cost approximately \$7,800 and the committee hopes to get some support from outside sources, such as the Delaware River Port Authority (DRPA) and/or Verizon, who may favor this type of event.

Discussion ensued regarding the cost of the proposed event and concern about whether ICS families would be able to afford the cost of the concert, proposed at \$20 per ticket with the potential for a discount rate for ICS families. It was pointed out the PTA has already discussed the possibility of defraying some on the cost of this event. A resolution was moved and passed (see Resolution #9)

The committee is also working on a strategy to have better diversity among the FLES and Immersion classes. Michelle also reported that the committee is actively recruiting Latin American and African American teachers. She suggested the school conduct

a survey of ICS parents to find out if some are willing to recruit at their alma maters.

e. Development

Ingrid gave the floor to Sheba, who reported that plans for the November 29th fundraiser are well underway; she encouraged all BOT members to invite at least two people. She stated that the November appeal letter will be mailed on the 18th and that the credit card processing is being arranged. Sheba then presented the committee's proposed changes in the Development budget (see attached), which reduces the anticipated amount expected from fundraising this year. Sean asked what the monthly development income has been; Sheba agreed to bring that information to the next BOT meeting. Laval asked how the proposed new budget will affect the overall ICS budget. Sean replied that if the BOT accepts the changed development budget, the lower number would be included in the next revised budget.

f. Community Relations

Joana reported that work is still being done on website updates; the committee is working on developing a priority list.

g. Discipline

Michelle reported that the mock expulsion hearing presented at the last teachers meeting was well received. The purpose was to prepare staff for the process, to understand the BOT's role in the process, and to remind staff of the importance of useful documentation. The committee's next priority is dealing with Middle School issues.

h. Healthy Kids

Pam has agreed to be the interim Chairwoman for this committee.

i. Executive

Susan reported that the BOT conference held this past Saturday was a good working session; the hope is to have another conference in the winter. Susan said that the two information teacher meetings have been well received and more are being planned. Susan also noted that the BOT's intention to have well functioning committees that meet regularly and report to the full Board.

VI. Old Business and Resolutions

A. Old Business- no old business was discussed

B. Resolutions

Rosina pointed out that the intention is to have all proposed resolutions submitted in advance of the monthly BOT meetings in order to give all members time to review and make comments. The plan is to get them out to all members a week before the BOT meeting. Susan added that the committee reports should also be circulated ahead of time and reminded

members that the reports should look toward the future. The reports should be uploaded into sub folders.

1) Be it hereby resolved that the Board of Trustees authorizes the President, in conjunction with Executive Committee, to enter into a negotiation with Designing Futures and CHAD to sign a 1-year lease for existing and additional space of approximately 42,952 square feet (to be finalized in negotiations) for 9/1/06-8/31/07, at 105 South 7th Street.

Sean moved the motion; Lisa seconded.

Passed unanimously.

2) Be it resolved that the Independence Charter School Board of Trustees expresses its intent to admit a total of four kindergarten classes per year, two of which are Foreign Language in Elementary School classes and two of which are Spanish Immersion classes, contingent upon appropriate facilities being available to accommodate that number of incoming classes.

Sean moved the motion; Ryan seconded.

Discussion: Sean reminded people that because of the fixed costs inherent in operating a school, having more students allows an even greater proportion of revenue to be spent on programs rather than administration, and emphasized his feeling that the BOT needs to make a decision on this issue. Christine stated that she feels having only one FLES class (K-8) doesn't give those kids flexibility. It was also stated that FLES teachers are often mentors for Immersion teachers. Susan stated that this resolution doesn't change the decision for next year, until we know if there's enough space. Lisa and Ryan stated they didn't agree and that the BOT would need to pass a different resolution if there isn't enough space. Jurate noted that she feels equity in Immersion and FLES has a lot to do with our social fabric and that it's not just an issue of numbers. It was suggested to change the word "view" to "intent."

Passed unanimously with the suggested change in wording.

3) Be it hereby resolved that the Board of Trustees reinstate a Board Committee called the Policy Committee to review, update and develop policies for Independence Charter School.

Eric moved the motion; Sean seconded.

Discussion: Susan agreed to chair this committee.

Passed unanimously.

4) Be it resolved that the Board of Trustees of Independence Charter School approve an increase in the Petty Cash (Imprest) account from \$500 to \$2,500 and adopt the revised policy and procedure (attached), effective immediately.

Sean moved the motion; Rosina seconded.

Passed unanimously.

5) As re-worded by Eric Cramer:

RESOLVED, that the Board of Trustees of the Independence Charter School prohibits its officers, officials and its representatives or agents from taking any punitive action against any employee or employees in retaliation for any of the following:

Disclosure of threatened disclosure to a supervisor or to a public body about an activity, policy or practice of the Independence Charter School that the employee reasonably believes is in violation of applicable law or any regulation issued under applicable law: or

Provision of accurate information to or truthful testimony before a public body conducting an investigation, hearing or inquiry into any violation of law, or regulation issued under the law; or

Objection to, or refusal to participate in any activity, policy or practice of the Independence Charter School that the employee reasonably believes is (a) in violation of a law or regulation issued under the law and/or (b) fraudulent or criminal.

IT IS FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Chief Executive Officer be required to execute this policy and answer questions and provide information to employees relative to this policy, and be it

FURTHER RESOLVED, that all employees of the Independence Charter School be notified of this policy and that this notice be posted prominently for all employees to see, and, be it

FURTHER RESOLVED, that employees shall provide written notice to the Chief Executive Officer and/or the President of the Board of Trustees any perceived violation of the above policy and allow appropriate officials to address any perceived violation.

Eric moved the motion; Sean seconded.

Discussion: Sean reminded members that we must have this policy on record.

Passed unanimously.

6) As re-worded by Eric Cramer:

RESOLVED, that the Board of Trustees of the Independence Charter School direct its officials and other representatives to maintain all financial and personnel records, paper files, electronic files and all other documentation that could possibly be the subject of actual or potential litigation for not less than seven years. This would include, but not

limited to, contracts, rental agreements, fund raising documents, invoices, financial statements, tax documents, personnel evaluations, other legal documents, and student records and files. At all events, any disposal or such files or documents shall be made in accordance with law.

Eric moved the motion; Becky seconded.

Discussion: Jerry commented that even after 7 years, you need the Historic Record Commission to get the okay to destroy the documents. Rosina asked if the BOT hadn't already passed a similar resolution; it was agreed that it had, but this one, if passes, would nullify the other.

Passed unanimously.

7a) Be it resolved that the ICS Board of Trustees authorize the Finance Committee to approve the renegotiated contract with Standard Digital Imaging for copier use to include 2 new Sharp M700 copiers at a rate not to exceed \$1,262.90/month total, with a rate of .0049/copy, the term of the leasing contract to be 36 months for a renegotiated savings of approximately \$800.

Sean moved the motion; Pam seconded.

Discussion: Ramzy clarified that the savings was \$800 per month. It was suggested that the resolution be amended to include that fact.

Passes unanimously with the proposed change.

7b) Be it resolved that the Board of Trustees approves the payment of the following budgeted line items:

Zhang Sah Karate \$2,000 for ten weeks of martial arts lessons at \$50 per hour for 4 hours per week.

Cheryl McDonough for August in-service "Kidspace" through the professional development line at \$2,431.77, including materials.

Nicole moved the motion; Rosina seconded.

Discussion: It was pointed out that the math doesn't work out. Pr. Jurate said it should actually read "ten" weeks, instead of "six."

Passed unanimously with the change.

8) Be it hereby resolved that the Board of Trustees hereby adopt the development plan as proposed by Sheba Verma 11-14-05 and make adjustments to the budget accordingly.

Becky moved the motion on Ingrid's behalf; Sean seconded.

Discussion: Jerry noted that such a change would have a \$99,000 impact on the budget. Sean asked whether our initial goal was reasonable and pointed out that the budgeted development revenue was based on hiring costs rather than our fundraising history. Rosina asked if the Development Committee can reconsider its plan. Jerry warned that if the committee considers government money, it needs to be aware of any "strings" attached. Becky asked whether we have enough in savings to cover this. Sean stated that the budget surplus could accommodate this and he thinks the proposal should be approved.

Passed unanimously.

9) Resolved that the Independence Charter School Board of Trustees authorizes a special event to feature “Sol y Canto” in two in-class workshops at ICS on March 2, 2006 and a concert at The Painted Bride on March 5, 2006 under sponsorship of the Committee on Diversity at a budget, as presented to the Board of Trustees and incorporated by references herein, not to exceed \$5,800.

Lisa moved the motion; Ingrid seconded.

Discussion: Rosina asked what we’ve spent on workshops in the past. Jurate said we’ve probably spent \$800 at the most. Rosina stated she loves the idea, but thinks we should find the money first. Lisa stated that in order to request grant money, you usually need a date first. Michelle asked David Webber, who was present in the audience, for comments since he has also worked on this plan. David stated he’d prefer not to be so cautious and that he thinks we’d at least break even. He stated that if the BOT doesn’t want to do it, then they shouldn’t. Pam stated that the full BOT is just hearing about this for the first time and asked how this can be an inclusive event. Ingrid stated that all ICS students would have the opportunity to participate in the workshop. Lisa said one reason she’s suggesting applying to Verizon and DRPA is that they have quick turnaround times and you can apply on-line. Becky stated she feels uncomfortable putting the event before funding and asked what Jurate thinks. Jurate stated she supports having the event. Lisa stated that she feels this is the perfect complement for what ICS is trying to do. Susan noted that we cannot invest a lot of staff time to this. Michelle suggested that each BOT member donate \$100 to defray expenses. Eric stated that we’d have a problem if someone would bring a new proposal to each meeting. Anyabwile suggested amending the resolution by saying it’s “contingent on” funding. Becky suggested an amendment of “not to exceed \$3,000.” Lisa suggested a compromise of “not to exceed \$5,800.”

A roll call vote was taken:

Sean- No
Becky- Abstain
Anyabwile- Abstain
Ingrid- Yes
Nicole- Yes
Christine- Yes
Lisa- Yes
Joana- Yes
Laval- No
Pam- Yes
Michelle- Yes
Rosina- Yes
Eric- No
Susan, Chair: did not vote

Ryan- had left the meeting before the vote was taken
Resolution passed with 8 votes.

VII. New Business

A. Uniforms- This issue was referred to the Policy Committee

B. Homework Policy- This issue was referred to the Curriculum Committee

VIII. Public Comment Period- There were no additional comments made.

IX. Adjournment

Sean moved for adjournment; Joana seconded. Meeting was adjourned at 9:59 p.m.